

# NEWSLETTER

## The Town of York Historical Society

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### END OF AN ERA IN RIVERSIDE

When the news broke in May that Streetcar Developments had purchased the old hotel at Queen and Broadview, and that it was *not* to be a condominium, many speculated that it might become the “Gladstone” of the east end. Comparison to the Gladstone Hotel is understandable; the buildings are similar in age and appearance. Both hotels are four-storey, red brick and sandstone structures in the Romanesque Revival style, and each has an imposing corner tower. The Gladstone (1889, George Miller architect) faces west, and the Broadview (1891, Robert Ogilvie architect) faces east. They might be bookends, but they are not. When the Gladstone was transformed from a flophouse to a boutique hotel and art nexus, it staked a claim on a liminal end of what some call “west Queen west” and gentrification followed it there. The Broadview Hotel, which everyone knows as Jilly’s for its ground-floor strip-club tenant, sits like the gatehouse to a stretch of Queen that has been undergoing serious transformation for half a decade. Reacting to the news that the strip-club’s home was to be redeveloped, *The Star*’s Christopher Hume merely asked, “What took so long?”



Jilly's. Photo: Nicole Prezeau

*Continued on page 2*

### Proposed New Home for “Sam” Sign



The iconic Sam-the-Record-Man sign, once a Toronto landmark, is to have a lofty new home overlooking Dundas Square. On July 7th, Council approved its installation atop the city-owned Toronto Public Health Building at 277 Victoria Street. Ryerson University, having reneged on a deal to restore the sign to its original location, will be responsible for the installation and ongoing maintenance costs. While the sign will be visible from Yonge Street, the location is a compromise and may only be temporary, as the building on Victoria Street is slated for redevelopment in the next ten or fifteen years. Not the best resolution, perhaps, but most proponents of the sign’s salvation seem content.



## Jilly's, from page 1

Dingman Hall (now Jilly's) was built not long after the City of Toronto annexed the old village of Don Mount on the east side of the river. Just as it is now, the corner was serviced by two streetcars: one that continued east along Queen to The Beach, and one that turned north on Broadview toward the village of Chester, at Danforth Avenue. Dingman Hall, albeit the tallest building east of the Don, was soon in good architectural company, as the postcard view at left attests. As its name suggests, the building was not originally conceived as a hotel. Rather, like St. Lawrence Hall, it was a place for community social and cultural gatherings. Paying the rent on the ground floor was the Canadian Bank of Commerce. Lawyers, dentists and realtors occupied the middle floors. The grand halls at the top, with their high ceilings and large windows, were for concerts and meetings. A 1903 list of those who met there is almost as fanciful as the terra-cotta figures on the building's exterior: Templars, Orangemen, Foresters, Odd Fellows, Sons of Scotland, Maids of England and, given the era, the Royal Canadian Bicycle Club. Meanwhile, the building's owner and namesake, Archibald Wayne Dingman, had patented several coaster-brake designs for the "safety bicycle," made a fortune in the manufacture of soap, run an electric streetcar deep into Toronto's eastern hinterland, and moved on to what would soon be Alberta.

By the time Archie Dingman had made his fame and another fortune in Alberta's oilfields, T.J. Edwards had paid architect George Gouinlock \$3,000 to turn Dingman's Hall into the Broadview Hotel, where rooms started at \$1.50 per night. The hotel provided beds to passengers arriving from Kingston by rail at either the Riverdale (DeGrassi Street) or Don Stations. During the 1930s, when it was briefly known as The Lincoln Hotel, its guests could take in a movie – such as (seen on the marquee above) the Gershwin musical *Delicious*, starring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell – at the Teck theatre just next door. In 1986, by which time the strip club was well established on the main floor, Harold Kamin paid almost \$2 million for the building that had cost Dingman \$25,000 to build. In May, after numerous offers, a numbered company owned by Kamin's widow finally sold the hotel to Streetcar Developments for an undisclosed sum.

"We've been admiring the building since...2002," said Les Mallins, Streetcar's President and CEO. "A building that's so important and significant to the city but more so to the neighbourhood really should have some sort of public use" (*Globe and Mail*, May 13, 2014). "We'll talk to potential partners or organizations that have concepts that might work and see where it goes." Streetcar has been helping the hotel's long-term residents find new homes by giving them three months rent and transportation assistance. The building needs to be empty in order for structural issues – perhaps caused by all those streetcars rattling past! – to be addressed. Meanwhile, City Council has moved to designate the old place under the Ontario Heritage Act. [Ed: Could somebody pinch me?]

Photos: Above: Postcard view looking west on Queen Street East c.1903 toward Postal Station "G" at Grant Street [E.J. Lennox, architect] with the peak of Dingman's Hall in the background (reproductions available at Toronto's First Post Office); terra cotta detail from *Jilly's Faces* by David Sky, 2006; Teck Theatre, 700 Queen Street East, next to the Lincoln Hotel, 1932, City of Toronto Archives, F1231, I641. Right: Broadview Hotel, 1945, City of Toronto Archives, F1257, S1057, I518.





## Maclean House Revisited

We first told you about the John B. Maclean house in May of 2011 (*Maclean House Designated Too Late?*) when we feared the property at 7 Austin Terrace might be doomed. Boarded up and surrounded by a chain-link fence, the Georgian Revival residence designed by John Lyle in 1910 for newspaper and magazine publisher John Bayne Maclean seemed destined for demolition by neglect. In order to prevent an impending heritage designation, its owner/developer had smashed out the century-old sash windows and removed the portico. The desecration was only halted when the City requested, and was granted, a stop-work order from the province (the second in Ontario's history) in December of 2009. By February of 2011 the designation under the Ontario Heritage Act was complete, but there was no legislation available to require the owner to reverse the damage.



Photos: Marcus Mitanis, urbantoronto.ca

We are happy to report, however, that this built-heritage story has a happy ending. The perhaps aptly named Renaissance Fine Homes purchased the building in 2011 and has since converted it into high-end residential units.

With the help of E.R.A. Architects, the lost architectural elements from the north façade were meticulously recreated, down to the “lead-covered copper eavestroughing.” (Patricia Treble, *Macleans*, May 13, 2014) While the interior, save for some small elements that could be rescued and restored, is brand new, the exterior now appears much as it would have when J. B. Maclean moved in a hundred years ago.

On May 12 of this year, Heritage Toronto unveiled a plaque on the lawn of the restored residences on Austin Terrace – a stone's throw from Casa Loma. For the record, what was originally intended as the gatehouse for a much larger estate that Maclean never built is now three homes, ranging in size from 2,715 to 3,425 square feet. The demolition of a 1936 addition allowed for the construction on the property of three entirely new homes on a similar scale. All have wine cellars. Prices start at \$2.35 million.

## Postal Union Launches Bid to Save Jobs and Service



The Canadian Union of Postal Workers reacted angrily earlier this month to news that the Harper government has been researching the privatization of public postal services. An Access to Information request by *Blacklock's Reporter* has revealed a heavily censored study prepared for the Prime Minister on the recent privatization of Britain's Royal Mail.

Union spokespeople feel strongly that a potential sell-off is linked to the elimination of door-to-door delivery, plans for

which were announced two weeks before Christmas (!). This would eliminate thousands of letter-carrier jobs, costing as much as \$50 million a year in lost income tax. It would, however, make the service more attractive to the private sector – hardly necessary for a company that has reported a financial loss only once in this century. That was in 2011, the year that postal workers were locked out.

In response to what they perceive as a manufactured crisis in the crown corporation, CUPW has launched a campaign to “Save Canada Post.” Their stated mandate is that “Canada Post belongs to all of us.” To learn more, go to [savecanadapost.ca](http://savecanadapost.ca).



## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

### Annual General Meeting



The 31<sup>st</sup> AGM of the Town of York Historical Society, held on May 12th, marked a turning point in the organization's three-decades-long history. While introducing an almost entirely new and invigorated Board of Directors, it also witnessed the retirement from the Board of Sheldon Godfrey, the Society's erstwhile godfather. Mr. Godfrey was on hand, however, to present the 7th annual award in his name to Alec Keefer. The latter's longstanding work on behalf of the Toronto branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario recently culminated in the publication of the book *Smart Address: Art Deco, Style Moderne and Their Contemporaries in Toronto*. Following the business meeting, TYHS members were treated to the enthusiasm of Stewart Boden and Samantha Cutrara of the Archives of Ontario, who highlighted the AO's online exhibition, *Dear Sadie – Love, Lives, and Remembrance from Ontario's First World War*, while doing a bang-up sales job on their new facility.

Clockwise from top left: Samantha Cutrara and TFPO's Janet Walters; Stewart Boden enthralled the crowd; Sheldon Godfrey extols the virtues of Alec Keefer, below.



## Pop-Up Museum

Oriana Duinker, originally from Halifax, proudly displayed her graduation certificate from the University of Toronto (right) at the City's first ever pop-up museum – *Toronto Treasures* – on June 6th. Held on the mezzanine level of St. Lawrence



Market, this event invited all Torontonians to showcase personal artifacts of relevance to the city's history in a kind of grown-up "show and tell." "We're trying to reach new audiences and break away from the static perception of history by involving people in



our community through interactive participation," said Ilana Aldini-Messina, Design and Development Supervisor with Toronto's museum services. Geoff Kettel's mystery object (left), discovered in an old toolbox, turned out to be a set of bloodletting lancets or fleams. (Bloodletting, once used to treat almost every disease, fell out of favour in the late

19<sup>th</sup> century. Whew!) The City of Toronto's display highlighted various turning points in city history as reflected in popular culture, including some rarely seen objects not on display at any of their museums.





## MORE NEW FACES One in the Post Office...



Continuing in our habit of hiring the best and the brightest (and hoping they don't get picked off!), we have engaged **Katherine (Katie) Dennis** as our weekend postal clerk and front desk attendant at the museum. Katie has an

Honours B.A. from the University of Toronto Scarborough and a Graduate Certificate from Fleming College, Peterborough, in Museum Management and Curatorship. While studying in Scarborough, she worked at the Doris McCarthy Gallery, where she seems to have done just about everything. She has since worked at Black Creek Pioneer Village as a children's programmer, and as a Cultural Collections Intern for the Ontario Heritage Trust. For the latter, she accessioned, registered and prepared for long-term storage a total of 1245 artifacts from Trust Collections. Last summer, she also worked as an Exhibit Facilitator at the CNE. In addition, she is fabulous. We hope you will make her feel welcome.

## ...and One on the Board



**Allan Boynton** was elected to the Board of Directors of the Town of York Historical Society at its Annual General Meeting on May 12. At the age of 24, the irrepressible Mr. Boynton was elected to Municipal government as a City Councillor for the Township of East Garafraxa,

where he sat on the Library, Arena, Fire Department and Tourism committees. Currently, he owns and operates his own booking agency, and helps numerous corporate and non-profit groups book entertainment. Allan worked with members of our board and staff on the Soldiers of Song presentation on March 6. He looks forward to being on the Board of Directors and doing his best to help our organization to fulfill its goals.

## New in the Gift Shop



**Dance Collection Notecards**  
Dance Collection Danse (see article on page 6) have reached into their vast archive of vintage photography to create a set of six charming cards. Portrayed are dancers Maud Allan, Edna Malone, Fleurette McCuaig (seen here), Marial Mosher, Nesta Toumine and Conchita

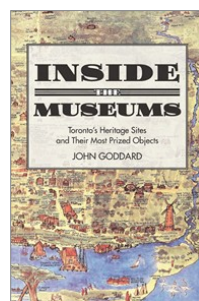
Triana. Purchasing these cards at Toronto's First Post Office (the set sells for \$19.99) helps support the work of *both* the Town of York Historical Society and that of Dance Collection Danse.



### Blue Q Bags

As we can never resist anything with a postal theme, the gift shop is now carrying a small selection of messenger bags, pencil cases and zippered pouches by

Blue Q, "the proud designer and manufacturer of life-improving, joy-bringing, mind-altering, universally praised products since 1988." These affordable items are made from 95% post-consumer waste (and soften up nicely with use), and 1% of the sales go to support the work of The Nature Conservancy.



**Inside the Museums, Toronto's Heritage Sites and Their Most Prized Objects**  
John Goddard

Dundurn Press (2014), 224 pages, \$19.<sup>99</sup>

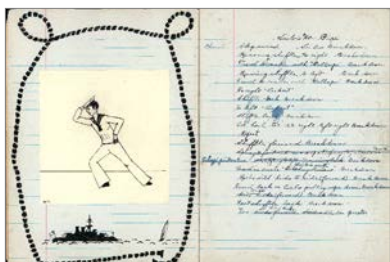
William Lyon Mackenzie stares out from a mural by John Boyle at the Queen subway station. Three blocks from the station, Mackenzie died in the upstairs bedroom of a house now open as a heritage museum, part of a network of such homes and sites from early Toronto. *Inside the Museums* tells their stories. It explains why Eliza Gibson risked her life to save a clock, reveals the appalling instructions that Robert Baldwin left in his will, and examines how the career of Postmaster James Scott Howard shattered on the most baseless of innuendos at one of the most highly charged moments in the city's history.

## Meet Some More of Our Neighbours and Customers!



“Why is it that we don’t drink amazing coffee every day? Especially at home, where we control the ingredients and the brewing?” These are questions Kara Isert, the proprietor of Sparkplug Coffee™, asked herself, and then answered, after years of research around the world and finally at home in coffee-mad Vancouver. The secret to great coffee, she learned, is in the freshness of the beans and the consistency of the roast. “When it comes to coffee, fresh tastes best. Most of the coffee we buy is at least a couple of months old, whether it comes from the grocery store or a specialty shop.” Consistency is another factor. A scientific roasting process can ensure a roast level that suits each type of bean and recreates the same great taste again and again.

And so Sparkplug Coffee was born, with the goal of bringing freshly roasted, reliably tasty coffee (in five unique, fairly traded blends) to your doorstep – by mail! You can even subscribe to Sparkplug Coffee and never confront an empty bean bag again. Kara’s coffee gets your day up and running the way a sparkplug starts an engine. A great cup can be yours every time. Check it out at [sparkplugcoffee.com](http://sparkplugcoffee.com). [Psst! You will receive a \$2 discount on your first order if you mention this article.]



Marial Mosher's notebook describing the steps for a "Sailor's Horn Pipe". c. 1930



In the halcyon days of the 1970s, when government funding was available to both companies and individual artists to create new work, dance flourished in Canada. Among its instigators and iconoclasts were Lawrence and Miriam Adams (seen at right with Stanley), co-founders of *15 Dance Laboratorium*, Toronto’s first experimental dance venue. The couple also began to document dance activity in Canada, both in print and on videotape. By the early 1980s they realized that the country’s earlier theatrical dance history was a fleeting one. With the assistance of the Laidlaw Foundation and under the banner *Encore! Encore!* they began to do something about it. Initially they focused on the work of six seminal Canadian choreographers from the 1940s and 1950s. After three years of interviews and intense research, they rented studio space and enlisted dancers and other personnel to reconstruct, notate and videotape the choreographic works. Out of this labour, from which a performance for Vancouver’s EXPO ’86 was distilled, Dance Collection Danse (DCD) was born.



Robert Bruce's cover design for the Winnipeg Ballet 1941/42 souvenir program.

Since, DCD has published 39 books, 73 issues of a semi-annual journal, and has collected and preserved the archives and many artifacts of Canadian theatrical dance dating back to the late-19th century. However, although DCD grew, it didn’t properly grow up and leave home – meaning Miriam Adams’ own home – until last August. Its new location, in addition to expanded office, research and storage space, includes a gallery where artifacts from its collection of Canadian dance memorabilia can be displayed through rotating exhibits. The current exhibition, *Dancemakers at Forty: Celebrating Exploration, Innovation and Inspiration*, runs until December 19.

**149 Church Street, Third Floor. Monday to Friday 11 am to 4 pm or by appointment.**



# THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND BEYOND



## **TORONTO DOES HER BIT: The Home Front in the Great War July 26, 2014 – January 17, 2015**

With a population largely of British stock, and pro-British in outlook, Toronto eagerly mobilized for war in 1914. The city quickly became a hub for recruiting, training and sending men and women overseas, and then raising funds to support both the troops and the families left behind. Using archival photographs, artworks and artifacts, this exhibition explores the texture of life on the Toronto home front during 1914-18.

**The Market Gallery, 95 Front Street East, 2nd Floor, free admission.**

## **THE WORKERS' CITY: Lives of Toronto's Working People**

**Wednesday, August 6, 7:30 pm (doors open at 7:00)**

Generations of working people literally built this city and created the goods and services to sustain a large metropolitan population, yet their stories are seldom told. In this year's Toronto History Lecture, historian Craig Heron will explore the opportunities and challenges that members of the city's working class have faced over the past 150 years and will share his insights into major changes and common themes during that period, through the lives of eight different Toronto workers.

**City of Toronto Archives. Free, but reservations are required: [torontofamilyhistory.org](http://torontofamilyhistory.org).**



## **SUBURBAN STEAM: A Steampunk Fair**

**Saturday, August 23, 11:00 am – 6:00 pm**

Don't miss Suburban Steam, a retro-futuristic community festival celebrating all things *Steampunk*! It will be a day of inventions, merchants and performers that imagines an alternate universe filled with steam-powered gadgets. Tour through an outdoor arcade of vendors and demonstrations; enjoy hourly performances at centre stage; learn about Victorian styles and the technological advances of the era. Hands-on activities for all ages!

**Historic Zion Schoolhouse, free admission. 1091 Finch Avenue East.**

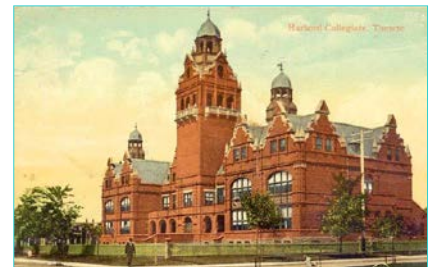
**For further information call 416-395-7435.**

## **THE BOYS OF HARBORD COLLEGIATE AND THE GREAT WAR**

**Saturday, August 23, 10:00 – 11:30 am**

This tour follows the true stories of five Harbord students as they enlisted, fought in the trenches, and died or returned home. Visit their homes and churches, relive the streets and shops they knew, and reflect on how the war left nothing unchanged.

**Heritage Toronto walking tour. Free. Meet at the Ed and Anne Mirvish Parkette by the Bathurst Subway Station.**



## **CABBAGETOWN SOUTH: Old and New**

**Sunday, August 31, 2:00 pm**

From the Irish of the nineteenth century to the global citizens of the twenty-first, Toronto's Cabbagetown has been a home to immigrants. This walking tour includes Victorian workers' cottages, the former Trinity College Medical School, the Spruce Court Co-op and the arts and aquatic centres of the revitalized Regent Park. Included in the walk is a tea and tour at Paint Box Bistro in the Daniels Spectrum.

**ROMwalk Plus. \$30 per person. Tickets must be reserved in advance: 416-586-5799.**



## "Heritage Matters" Mayoral Debate

**Thursday, August 21, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm**

While dozens of debates have been scheduled across Toronto as the race for the city's top job draws nearer to a close, this is one you won't want to miss. Come and hear what mayoral candidates Olivia Chow, Rob Ford, John Tory, Karen Stintz and David Soknacki have to say about conserving and promoting Toronto's heritage. The moderator will be Nicole Swerhun, Principal at Swerhun Facilitation. This debate also informs Heritage Toronto and the Toronto Historical Association's "State of Heritage Report" coming in early 2015. This report provides City Council, senior staff, and decision makers a view from the field, gathered through research and stakeholder consultations, of what is and is not working pertaining to Toronto's cultural, architectural, archaeological and natural heritage, and how to best direct resources toward heritage conservation.

**The Cathedral Centre, 65 Church Street (southeast corner of Church & Adelaide Streets). Free, but registration required. To register, go to the Heritage Toronto events page, or call 416-338-1338.**

## Can you believe it?

Over 20,500 people viewed our most recent exhibit at Queen's Park, *Putting Pen to Paper*, from April to mid July. That number doesn't even include bus tours (hundreds of people per week), MPPs' visitors, staff (400), or conference attendees!

## POST BOXES FOR RENT



Simply put, you're not going to find a better deal on a post-office box anywhere in downtown Toronto. The level of service is unparalleled. And what could be finer than to pick up your mail at a National Historic Site? Courier deliveries too! We take care of all your needs in a charming 19th-century location!

## Town of York Historical Society *Care to join us?*

Individual Memberships	\$25
Family Memberships	\$40
Lifetime Memberships	\$250

Directors: Tom Arnold, Kevin Both, Allan Boynton, Luisa Giacometti, Sanford Hersh, Susan Grav, Suzanne Kavanagh, Judith McErvel, Councillor Pam McConnell and Nancy Wigston.

## Toronto's First Post Office is administered by the Town of York Historical Society

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Monday to Friday: 9:00 – 5:30  
Saturdays: 10:00 – 4:00  
Sundays: 12:00 – 4:00  
Closed on holiday Mondays and the Sundays preceding them.

**The Post Office will be closed August 3–4 and  
August 31 – September 1 (Labour Day).**

The Town of York Historical Society is a legally incorporated non-profit organization and registered charity. Toronto's First Post Office is a museum, National Historic Site and fully functioning post office. Gratefully acknowledged is the support of the City of Toronto; the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport; our members, donors and customers; and Canada Post Corporation.