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Battle of the North Atlantic Longest in History of Mankind

By Bill Kennedy



Roger Litwiller—Guest Speaker at November 20 Public Event Photo: Nick White

The longest single battle in the history of mankind was the Battle of the North Atlantic. Within three hours of WWII being declared the first casualty, the British passenger ship SS Athenia, was sunk on a voyage to Canada. Thousands more would follow and tens of thousands of men would go down with them until the last days of the war. Among the ships that served, six had names familiar to this part of Ontario. They were HMCS Napanee, HMCS Belleville, HMCS Hallowell, HMCS Quinte, HMCS Quinte II and HMCS Trentonian. Together these ships span almost twenty-five years of history in the Royal Canadian Navy.

You can read about the exploits of these ships in Roger Litwiller's new book *Warships of the Bay of Quinte*. Litwiller is firm in his belief that history has to be told through stories, a number of which he imparted from the book to his Historical Society audience at its November public event. One of the first things we need to learn, he says, is that a sailor serves "in" a ship, not "on" it. And it is, for example, HMCS Belleville, not "the" HMCS Belleville. Litwiller is a sailing instructor,

has sailed aboard the destroyer HMCS Ottawa, established the Navy League Cadet Corps in Trenton, received the Governor General's Medal for his safety related work and is a recipient of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh award presented to him by HRH Prince Philip.

We hear often battle names like Passchendaele, North Africa, Ortona and Normandy, he said, but the Battle of the North Atlantic in which Canada played a major role (by war's end Canada would have the world's third largest navy) is less well known. It extended right into the St. Lawrence River. HMCS Napanee saw action in some of the worst battles in that theatre of war. In one battle alone fourteen ships and five hundred sailors were lost. There are first hand accounts of German U-Boats shadowing convoys during the day just out of reach of Allied guns, the crews knowing all the while that come nightfall the terror would begin.

HMCS Quinte, a minesweeper built in Esquimalt, held the distinction of sinking twice in ten days. Setting sail before it was fully ready, the ship suffered navigational equipment failures, got lost and hit a rock where it beached and settled. It was salvaged, refitted, and sailed off only to sink again in St. Peter's Canal, NS, where it would take six months to refloat her. We think of the ships of the Normandy invasion all departing for France the day before, but in fact the timetable was spread out over days. For example, HMCS Trentonian departed England five days ahead of the landing in order to be in her proper location for June 6th. In his book White Ensign Flying, scheduled for publication next summer, Litwiller tells the full story of HMCS Trentonian, much of it through his personal interviews of thirty men who served aboard her. That book includes a story and photos about fishing with depth charges and a ten day boiler overhaul at a fish dock.



Painting of HMCS Trentonian by Magel

The Shady Corner The Ed Thomas Story - Part 2 The Raid & The Fall Guy

By C.W. (Bill) Hunt

Part 1 has been printed in the 2012 November issue of the Outlook.

Prior to 1955, gambling in Ed Thomas's Cigar Store was carried on in a smoky back room. In those days, anyone over the age of eleven smoked something—usually cigarettes, but also pipes and smelly cigars. Consequently, the air in the Thomas's store was always a murky blue and had the consistency of thin molasses. Old-timers joked you could cut it with a knife.

The atmosphere and layout of the place defied every health rule known to man. The buttermilk and ice cream, for which Ed was famous, were kept right next to the tanks that held worms and other live bait. But in the lax attitude of the time, health officials seldom bothered to enforce rules for cleaner, safer premises; in short, sanitation was generally ignored. It is hardly surprising that few women ventured into the dank, smudged atmosphere of the Thomas tobacco emporium.

Ed kept an old pistol on top of the safe under the counter as a deterrent to any would-be robber. Don McInroy, who worked for Ed in the fifties, remembers that the gun was so rusty it would have been more dangerous to discharge it than to any would-be robber. Despite the lack of an effective deterrent, no one ever attempted to rob the store. Perhaps the reason for this immunity from bandits was the proximity of the police station. Located about a hundred yards behind City Hall, it was perhaps a ten-minute walk from Ed's Cigar Store for an amputee using a walker.

This proximity to Belleville's law enforcement agency did not, however, create problems for Ed's gambling enterprise. Whenever the city's finest planned a raid, Ed, who seemed blessed with a sixth sense, ordered all gambling to cease. Cards were put away, chairs and card tables pushed into corners, the door to the back room unlocked—to avoid breakage by over-zealous young officers—and the room emptied of its denizens. After a quick walk through, the officers strode back to their station, satisfied that no illegal activities were taking place under their hawk-like noses. As soon as the police left, cardplaying resumed. A formality had been observed, and all would be well for some weeks until Ed's sixth sense once again kicked in, usually after a short phone call from some unknown source. Then the whole pantomime would be repeated.

About 1952, Ed retired and turned the store over to his son. A few years later, Don decided to replace the old store with a brand new one, complete with a second story. The gambling operation was moved upstairs where Nick Christopher presided over both the roulette and poker tables.

Don McInroy worked nights from 6:00 PM until midnight when Don Thomas would come in and close the downstairs operation. As long as there was sufficient action upstairs, Nick Christopher would remain, often closing in the wee hours of the morning. As the house took a percentage of each pot, Don's profits were huge.

While the nearby Belleville Police posed little threat to this thriving business, the OPP's Flying Squad did. Led by Inspector Jack Hatch, they successfully raided several gambling emporiums in Prince Edward County. As a precaution, Don had a buzzer installed downstairs which he could press to warn Nick of trouble, giving his maître d' time to shut down the action.

But Hatch outwitted him. About 9:00 PM on a busy Friday evening, Hatch planted a plainclothes officer inside, looking over the magazines. When Don was nowhere near the buzzer, the plainclothes cop signaled Hatch. Three OPP officers rushed in from the rear and three more came in the front. Don was stopped by the cop inside who blocked his way, asking questions, and preventing Don from pushing the buzzer.



Inside the Thomas emporium. Nick Christopher is the portly gentleman closest to the camera, standing on the left. Those with allergies should stay out of this photo. Photo: Hastings County Historical Society

The found-ins were all charged, the cash and cards confiscated, and Nick Christopher, who admitted being the game's organizer, was charged for running an illegal gaming operation. As was the case in the County raids, each of the distraught players was fined about ten dollars, but their real loss was the money in the pot which naturally had been enthusiastically seized by Hatch's raiders as prima facie evidence. Nick went before the magistrate and was fined the unusually large sum of one thousand dollars. Don Thomas paid it, but Nick was fin-

ished in Belleville. A bachelor, he had been living in an apartment over the Belmont Restaurant. Nick went to Toronto where he was employed for many years as the manager of the Letros, a commodious, high-end restaurant.

It looked as though the Biggest, Grandest Gaming Emporium in the history of Belleville was kaput, finished, over; gamblers around the city were reputed to have sobbed like babies. Although things would never be quite the same, the punters needn't have shed so many tears.

Part 3 of the Eddie Thomas Story, will continue in the February issue.

With special thanks to Don McInroy, whose memory is sharper than a fresh razor blade. Most of Bill's books are for sale in Bloomfield at the Country Magazine, at Picton in the Books and Company on Main Street and on County Rd #13 near Milford in the Black River Cheese Store.

Death of a Village - Part 2

By Vern Whalen

Part 1 has been printed in the 2012 November issue of the Outlook.

Built and maintained by the company, the "Clubhouse" was a magnificent large structure on the bay shore. It served as a boarding house for *Cementkarrier* and single plant workers. It also contained a poolroom, canteen and large rotunda with chairs, granite floor, pillars, dining room, fireplace and even a library. There was a splendid cement porch on the rear, overlooking the bay. Once a week, glasses clanging, voices and cigar smoke in an upstairs room signalled a not-so-legal, high-stakes poker game. Participants were company executives and of note, among others, the Fire Chief and Deputy Police Chief of Belleville. My maternal grandparents were at one time the proprietors of the Clubhouse.



Point Anne Club House—1946

Photo: Vern Whalen

The village would have been classed as "insular," as it had almost anything a family needed, particularly in the postwar era of the '50s and '60s, when I grew up there. The streets had names: Front, Centre, Foremen's Row, Bayview, Four, Six and Eight Rows and "Hunk

Town." The last was slang for the street where the Europeans (mostly Polish and Lithuanian) who came both before and after WWII, lived. There was both a Public (1908) and a Separate (1955) school as well as an Anglican, a United and a Catholic Church in the village. Groceries and dry goods could be purchased at MacLaurin's General Store or McConnell's, the former being also the post office. As cars were not plentiful then, Juby's Bus Line made several daily round trips to Belleville ("into town" as it was referred to) and transported students to city high schools. There were always venues for parties, dances, card games or concerts, and they included the local Orange Lodge, the Public School Auditorium, the Anglican Parish Hall or the Clubhouse. A plant worker was also a part-time barber and had his own shop in the evenings. I remember nights there waiting for my turn, as cigarette and cigar smoke filled the air with the local gossip or tales from the older men of the village. There was even at one time a shoe repairman, a Russian immigrant named Sergei who, as folklore went, had killed a man with a hammer and had been imprisoned for manslaughter.

The villagers were a proud lot and Point Anne had its share of prominent people, none more prominent than hockey star Bobby Hull, the Golden Jet. For a number of years, a billboard proclaimed "Point Anne - birthplace of Bobby Hull, the World's Greatest Hockey Player." His brother Dennis followed him into the NHL and was a member of Team Canada in 1972. Men's softball teams from the village, sponsored by Canada Cement, were dominant for many years, and over a span of 30 years, won no less than five Ontario championships. A pitcher on some of those teams, Pat Maracle, is a member of the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame. Manly MacDonald became a very famous artist and many of his paintings hang in the Belleville Library building. When we were youngsters, he could be seen near the bay or in the woods creating his masterpieces. Odd at the time, we thought of him as a strange old man with a funny hat. Another Mac-Donald named Earle was a prominent physician in Belleville for many years. There were so many MacDonalds in Point Anne that the sayings were that "if you're not a MacDonald, then you are related to one" or that "the village is inhabited mainly by MacDonalds and black snakes." To Bellevillians, we were known as "Ox-Pointers, cement-heads or cement farmers."

More than figuratively speaking, a unique way of life came crashing down in Point Anne in the early '70s with the closing of the cement plant. Most of the factory buildings were demolished. Contrary to some reports, Canada Cement, saying that "it was not in the real estate business," did not sell off houses to employees to move. The cement stucco structures and bases of the houses would not have made it feasible for them to be moved.

There was some salvage of building materials, but basically the company bulldozed them into the ground. They did the same to the magnificent Clubhouse, ballpark dugouts and scoreboard and playground equipment. The United Church, Anglican Church and Parish Hall were torn down. The Catholic Church building now houses a small business. The Public School has rented apartments and the Separate School is a residence and business. Large boulders were put in place to block off many roads and access to the beach and ballpark. One of my prized possessions is the salvaged home plate.



Bobby Hull billboard on a Point Anne Street *Photo: Vern Whalen*

Although people still live in the village, now part of Belleville, they are few in number compared to those of the "boom years" of our youth. There are only the forlorn remnants left of a bygone era of the company town, which flourished for so many years. Many former villagers, including myself, still live in the area and often wander back for a look, and to reminisce about those memorable times. The nostalgic euphoria ceases when we leave, sensing a large void caused by the death of our village.

Dr. Pearce Initiates Public Recognition of Dr. James Collip

By Lindi Pierce & Nick White

"George Pearce is relentless." These were the admiring words of one of the podium speakers for today's proclamation of November 20 as Dr. James Bertram Collip Day in Belleville.

Dr. George Pearce, a long-time Society member, has devoted years of personal research, including a trip to Western Canada, to document the accomplishments of James Bertram Collip who was born in Thurlow Township (now part of Belleville). He has been persistent in championing the cause of this remarkable scientist and

his contribution to the work of the team credited with the discovery of insulin.

Today marked the beginning of the public recognition in Belleville that Dr. Pearce has long sought for this important Canadian.

After years of painstaking research, things have moved quickly. In October, a delegation from the Society met with Heritage Belleville to plan a joint project to recognize Dr. Collip. Impressed with the work that had been undertaken, Heritage Belleville asked Council to proclaim November 20 as Dr. Collip Day. The motion was made by Councillor Culhane and passed unanimously by Council on November 13.

Plans were sketched out for a public event to announce the proclamation on the 120th anniversary of Dr. Collip's birth, and emails and telephones started to hum.

The happy result was a podium event on the Parrott stage, overlooking the market where the young Belleville lad doubtless assisted his market-gardener parents with their vegetable stall.

After so many years, it was heartwarming to hear the accomplishments of Dr. Collip recognized publicly by so many people including His Worship Mayor Neil Ellis, Councillor Pat Culhane, Heritage Belleville Chair Stanley Jones and Vice-Chair Jeremy Davis, Hastings County Historical Society President Richard Hughes, the Canadian Diabetes Association's Rosalie Spargo and Dr. Bruce Cronk.



120th Anniversary of Dr. Collip's Birth *Photo: Nick White*

And along with the words on the importance of the Canadian pioneers of insulin were words of thanks to Dr. Pearce whose work and persistence brought this together. The next steps in the recognition of Dr. James Bertram Collip will involve a joint Society and Heritage Belleville application to Ontario Heritage Trust for one of the familiar blue and gold plaques to be erected in Belleville.

Dr. George Pearce's Comments

It was a fair and fine day when James Bertram Collip (born November 20, 1892, died June 19, 1965) was commemorated in the area of his birth and early life for his role as one of the so-called insulin discovery collaborators; his volumes of collected scientific publications; credits for development of parathyroid, pituitary, estrogenic, and adrenal cortical hormonal substances; the nurturing of the development of medical research in Canada; his dedicated military service to the Allied cause during World War II; and his dedication to the quest for new knowledge for the benefit of all living things. His great dedication also extended to his family and friends. He and his family were hosts to Sir Frederick Grant Banting on the day preceding Banting's death in service to King and Country in the Allied cause: February 21, 1941.

It is most appropriate to recognize these men for the example of leadership in service that is their legacy for future generations!

(May I share my gratitude to the authors, librarians, university and church archivists, journalists, and members of our Hastings County Historical Society who have contributed the information on this important work: a Canadian gift to the world. It is not the work of one person alone.)

Dr. George Pearce, C.D., M.D., C.C.F.P. (C), (ret.)

From Tragedy Comes a Community Christmas Tradition

By Annis Ross

When Don and Rita Foster's son Billy and his friend, my brother Art "Sonny" Culloden were killed together in a 1958 Christmas Eve tragic car accident, the Fosters decided to focus on the joy of Christmas instead of their grief, and the Foster Family Christmas Light Display was launched.

For over fifty years, the Light Display has become a tradition in our community, enjoyed by young and old alike for several generations now. It was unique in our community, because in those days, lawn ornaments, outside lights and decorations were not as common as they are today. Each component was originally built by Don, some powered by washing machine motors to drive all of the moving parts.

The Foster and Culloden families and their friends would don Santa Claus, Elf and Clown costumes, and each evening during the Christmas season, would hand out candy canes to the little ones coming by the display with their families, all wide eyed and mesmerized by the lights and sounds and the magic of Christmas.

For twenty-two years, the front lawn at the Fosters' home on Emily Street was alive with all manner of moving and dancing ornaments that expanded each year as Don lovingly built more components in his backyard barn workshop. As the Fosters aged and could no longer look after this, Bruce and Marjorie Nickle continued the tradition at their home on Marsh Drive for many years. The Tom Gavey Alemite Park on Pine Street has been the recent home of the Display, refurbished courtesy of the Belleville Professional Firefighters Association.

But the old display needed more tender loving care and a permanent home. The City of Belleville, recognizing the historical importance of this Light Display in the tradition and culture of our community, initiated a project that culminated in "Christmas at the Pier" which was launched on Friday, November 16, 2012, with a Lighting Up Ceremony attended by over five hundred awestruck onlookers. Fifty-six of the Culloden and Fos-



The Lighting up Ceremony took place on November 16, 2012. *Photo: Nick White*

ter families and our friends were part of that group.

With the City of Belleville funding for this project, supplemented with generous donations by individuals and businesses in our community, the Foster Family display has been refurbished, and has a special place in the centre of the Jane Forrester Park at Myers Pier, surrounded by several new components which will continue to be expanded each year by the City of Belleville. It is absolutely spectacular!

The City dedicated the display to the memory of

were best friends, well known in the sports community, excelling at hockey and baseball. They grew up playing hockey with their friend Bobby Hull, who was supposed to be in the car with them that night going to visit their coach, but family commitments kept Bobby at home instead. He was playing with the Chicago Blackhawks during the 1957–58 season, and the story goes that he missed an NHL game to attend the funerals of his friends. Bobby remembered both pals some years later when he dedicated a trophy for Most Gentlemanly Player in memory of both young men for the now defunct Junior B League in Belleville.



Belleville's Christmas Light Display formerly set up at Tom Gavey Alemite Park finds a new home at Jane Forrester Park.

Photo: Annis Ross

I remember very vividly that Christmas morning in 1958. As the youngest of six children, I was only six years old and barely remember my brother. When I awoke that morning, I thought it strange that many of our family and friends were already at our home, as they usually visited during the afternoon of Christmas Day. Everyone was very sad and crying. When I opened my Christmas present from Sonny, my mother broke into tears. It was exactly as I had asked for on my Christmas list—a mauve crinoline. My gift to him lay under the tree unopened, a box of hankies.

Every Christmas Eve since then, our family gathers together to celebrate the joy of Christmas, thankful for our blessings, and to remember Sonny. Afterward, my mother always had to hear from each of us when we arrived back at our own homes so she could be sure we were all safe, and only then could she settle down for the night.

Our family is so grateful to the City of Belleville for all that they have done to bring this Light Display to life and for their commitment to take care of it so that this community tradition can be enjoyed by generations to come.

A signboard located at the Light Display out-

lines its history and concludes with "May all who enjoy the beauty and sentimentality of this display find peace, contentment and the love and family and friends this Christmas season." Well said.

Fighting to a Draw The War of 1812

Contributed by Orland French

The following is a brief and sassy description of the War of 1812 as contained in a book titled *War of 1812*, originally published sometime between 1828 and 1854, and reprinted in 1964 as part of the Canadian Heritage Series by Baxter Publishing Company, Toronto. Major General Sir Isaac Brock (above), Commander of His Majesty's British and Canadian Forces in North America, was killed in action at Queenston Heights, Niagara, on October 13, 1812.



General Sir Isaac Brock
Wikimedia Commons

"From reading descriptions of the War of 1812 ... one gets the impression of a confused and rather purposeless conflict. Great Britain certainly fought it unwillingly. Throughout the war a principal aim of the British government was to stop or limit the fighting, or at least to arrest it temporarily even if by doing so strategic advantages were occasionally forsaken. The ultimate American aim - to cement the independence it had won

some twenty-five years earlier by eliminating finally the threat of colonialism on the North American continent - was reasonable enough. Some new states which have gained their freedom in recent years have been attempting to do very much the same. But the Americans went about it half-heartedly and clumsily, and they never took advantage of the popular forces which that grand design, had it been clearly revealed, might have brought to the surface.

"So, the war became very much like a contest between a powerfully built boxer swinging wildly and hitting mostly air, and a nimbler one, content to duck or parry blows and keep his adversary off balance. After a good deal of chasing around the ring, and to the booing of the gallery, such a fight might end in a draw. The British - American War did end that way after almost three years of just such inconclusive fighting."

President's Comments on Annual Report



Richard Hughes
Photo: HCHS

Each year the preparation of the annual report, for presentation to the Annual General Meeting of the Society in January, gives us an opportunity to review the activities of the past year. We can enjoy the memories of past successes and ponder how to better achieve our goals of bringing the history of Belleville and Hastings County to life for all of our citizens in the coming year.

The major efforts of the Historical Society in 2012 were the eight

monthly public presentations which brought a variety of guest speakers to consistently full houses; the newsletter The Outlook which brought not only stories of our colourful history but also current news and announcements of coming events to the homes of members and to schools across our area; and the annual banquet which brought Al Capone to Belleville to celebrate his birthday with Quinte rumrunners and, at the same time, raised a substantial amount for our Archives campaign.

Beyond these high profile events, our busy team of volunteers carried out many other projects and public activities while laying the groundwork for future activities. It was a very productive year in 2012; the full text of the annual report will be available immediately after the Annual General Meeting on the Society's website and paper copies will be available as well.

I would encourage you to read the report and feel free to comment. Your ideas on how to improve our Society are always most welcome.

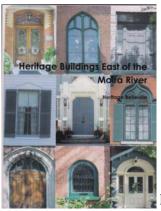
Richard Hughes, President of HCHS

Change of Hats for Outlook Editor

For all Society members, one of the highlights of the month is the day the new issue of *Outlook* arrives in the mail. Fascinating stories, important coming events and lots of news all packed into eight pages. For the past six years and over 50 issues we are grateful to Bill Kennedy for ensuring that each one had good variety and was attractively presented. Now, Bill is stepping aside to concentrate on some other Society projects and his large shoes are being passed to Donna Fano as editor and Lau-

rel Bishop as co-editor. Fresh thoughts and approaches can only be a good thing for every *Outlook* reader, as you will see in this January issue. Everyone says a big THANK YOU to Bill Kennedy and wishes GOOD LUCK to Donna and Laurel.





Latest Books for Sale

Heritage Buildings
East of the Moira,
2012 Edition
Now Available

Over 400 pages, in paper-back format, with detailed descriptions of heritage homes,

civic and commercial buildings and churches east of the Moira River, with architectural information, a brief history of builder and occupants and a B&W photo. Originally issued in 1991 by Heritage Belleville, based on years of research by Lois Foster and Beth Green of the Historical Society's Building Research Project, the 2012 edition has been updated by Lois Foster and Lindi Pierce. The new edition also retains the glossary of architectural terms and a brief history of Belleville with historic maps.

Heritage Buildings East of the Moira is available at the Community Archives (Hastings Heritage Centre in Cannifton) phone 613-962-1110 and at the Monthly

Lennox & Addington Historical Society Special Meeting

EXCITING CHANGES AT THE COUNTY MUSEUM

The Archives Expansion—The 150th Anniversary of the County (2014)

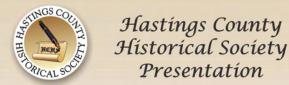
The County of Lennox and Addington has identified "Preservation of the County's History and Heritage" as a strategic priority. This is your chance to find out what is happening. Special Guest Speaker is **Larry Keech**, CAO, County of Lennox and Addington. The meeting is on Saturday, January 26th, 2013 - 2:00 pm at Greater Napanee Fire Services Headquarters, (Meeting Room), 66 Advance Avenue, Napanee. All are welcome. The Lennox and Addington County Museum is now closed until the renovations are completed in 2014.

Presentations February to May, 2013

Tuesday, February 19, 2013: Hastings County Historical Society Presents: Local author, Paul Kirby, speaking on his new book, *Mary Aylward*. "In December 1862, young Catholic settlers, Mary and Richard Aylward, were hanged side-by-side at Belleville, for the murder of a North Hastings neighbour, leaving three infants, orphans. Were they guilty of murder, or victims of religious intolerance?"

Tuesday, March 19, 2013: Hastings County Historical Society Presents: Historical author, journalist and broadcaster, Mary Thomas, sharing details from her popular book, *Canadians with Custer*. Hear dramatic tales of the 17 Canadians involved with Lieutenant-Colonel George Armstrong Custer during his last stand at the battle of Little Bighorn River, in 1876.

Tuesday, April 16, 2013: Hastings County Historical Society Presents: The Archive Angels' annual highlights of local heritage gems through the fascinating stories found in our community archives.



Special Guest Speaker:

Major John Grodzinski, CD, PhD. Assistant Professor at Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario

Topic:

The War of 1812

with events near Quinte and along Lake Ontario

Date: Tuesday, January 15, 2013
Time: 7:30 p m

Location: Quinte Living Centre Auditorium (North Corner Door) 370 Front Street, Belleville

Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend! Visit our website: www.hastingshistory.ca

Tuesday, May 21, 2013: Hastings County Historical Society Presents: Stirling's Lloyd Jones speaking about the intriguing stories of historic wooden ships' masts, from felling in Hastings County, to their fixture aboard ships bound for high seas.

Bus Tour, Saturday, May 4, 2013 Tickets \$65 Gift Certificates Available

"Ghost Towns and Pioneer Villages in Our Backyard." Come away for the day and be transported back in time as you explore the mysterious disappearance of many of the thriving villages of Hastings County. For tickets and gift certificates call Mary-

Lynne Morgan at 613-961-7091. These HCHS bus tours are always popular events, so don't delay — get your ticket today!



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Outlook Editor Donna Fano
Outlook Co-editor Laurel Bishop
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HCHS Website www.hastingshistory.ca
Heritage Centre Phone No. 613-962-1110

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email < outlook.hastingshistory@gmail.com >

Member Designation