



Outlook

Volume 13 Issue 5 September 2008

www.hastingshistory.ca

Issue Number 236

Renowned Author and Political Columnist Richard Gwyn Is Guest Speaker For Annual HCHS Banquet November 1 at Ramada Hotel, Belleville

A Chance to Meet Sir John A. by Orland French

Not many of us have had an opportunity to meet Sir John A. Macdonald. This is not surprising, given that he died in the century before the last one. But we will have the pleasure of meeting a reasonable facsimile if we attend the annual Hastings County Historical Society banquet on November 1.

The theme of the evening is our beloved first prime minister, sometimes a rascal, the man who made Canada. Joining us for dinner will be two re-enactors from Brockville who portray Sir John A. and his wife Lady Agnes. Charming in their own right, they will circulate among the banquet guests as if we were all gracious guests in the late 1800s.

The main star of the evening will be **Richard Gwyn**, a renowned author who will take us inside the life, the head and the heart of Sir John A. Gwyn recently won the \$25,000 Charles Taylor Prize for literary non-fiction for his book "John A.: The Man Who Made Us: The Life And Times of John A. Mac

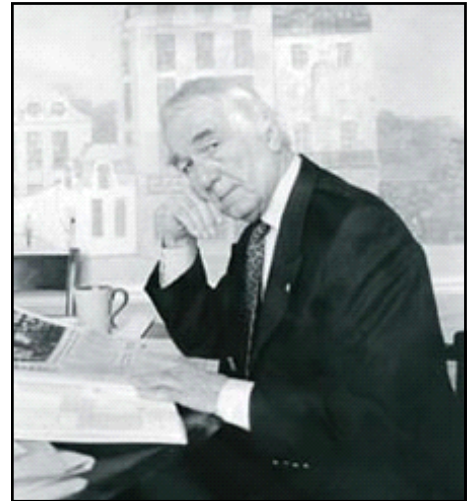
donald, Volume One: 1815 – 1867." The first volume follows the life of this country's first prime minister from his birth in Scotland in 1815 to Kingston, where he became a lawyer and struggled through a tragic marriage, eventually turning to politics and led the formation of the new nation of Canada. He is currently working on the second volume.

There will also be some entertainment supplied by the Renaissance Society of St. Theresa's Catholic High School. The Renaissance Society is a student historical group directed by teacher Joe Stafford.

Tickets are available now from Vera Morton (966-4859). The price is only \$45 per ticket. We expect a large demand for these tickets so order early.

The venue has changed, and so has the menu. This year's banquet will be held at the Ramada Inn in the Park Ballroom. The date is **Saturday, November 1**. This is a change from the last Saturday in October as in previous years.

We are looking for volunteers to assist with publicizing this
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Richard Gwyn, 2007 winner of the prestigious Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction for the first volume of his book "John A, The Man Who Made Us." *Toronto Star photo*

New Archives Centre Concept

Hastings County Council has endorsed a concept for a new archives centre, proposed by the Hastings County Historical Society.

The City of Belleville or the County of Hastings, or some other donor, provides a building site. The Historical Society will raise the funds necessary to construct the archives, then turn it over to its municipal partners to operate. This means paying ongoing operational and maintenance costs.

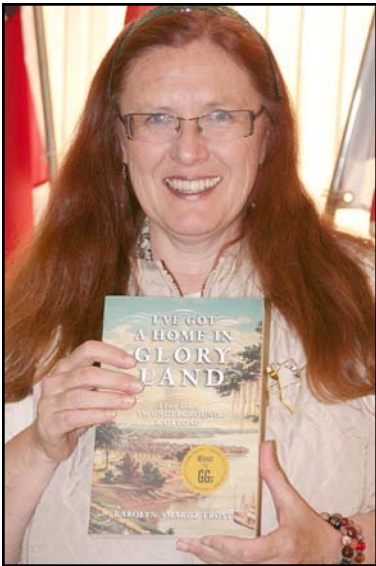
The archives centre would operate as

Standing Ovation for Society Speaker Karolyn Smardz-Frost

by Bill Hunt

In twenty years of attending the HCHS meetings I have never seen a speaker receive a standing ovation. But at the Society's May meeting an audience of over 100 people did just that for Karolyn Smardz-Frost upon the conclusion of her story about the perilous adventure of a young couple's escape from slavery to freedom in Canada.

Dr. Smardz-Frost's book *I've Got A Home In Gloryland, A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*, recounts the lives of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn who, in the early 1830s against overwhelming odds, made their way out of the southern United States to Detroit. After a year they were again captured but freed by an angry mob and eventually landed in Toronto. Here, despite poverty and illiteracy, Thornton and Lucie started Toronto's first cab company. As their business flourished they gradually acquired six homes in the city's core which they used as centres of refuge for escaped slaves. Their story was well known to Torontonians of the period but as time passed it was gradually forgotten.



Author Karolyn Smardz-Frost holds a copy of her book "I've Got A Home In Glory Land." It won the Governor General's award for nonfiction in 2007.

In the 1830s slaves were valuable property and were traded among slave owners like livestock at a cattle barn. Absolutely no regard was paid to family units;
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Marion Fisher Retires With Over 20 Years of Volunteer Service At Hastings County Archives



Marion Fisher is presented with a certificate in appreciation of her long years of volunteer work with the Hastings County Archives by HCHS President Orland French. Her chief occupation with the archives was cataloguing and filing photographs, many of which looked back into the nineteenth century. When President French suggested she was quitting because of the recent acquisition of thousands of more photographs from *The Intelligencer* she replied, "No, I quit because I'm 92."

Marion, a graduate of Queen's and McGill Universities with a Bachelor of Library Sciences degree, estimated last year that she had catalogued over 4,000 pictures during her tenure. Congratulations Marion and from the Hastings County Historical Society a hearty thank-you for your invaluable work in the preservation of our past!

Hastings County Historical Society Participates In Canada Day Celebrations At Zwick's Island!



Canada Day celebrants, top to bottom: A game of checkers is underway at the Zwick's Island Garvy Pavilion amid the Historical Society's display while another visitor checks out the "unknown persons" album; volunteer and Society executive member Bobby-Jo Morris with a big smile for the photographer; children at work answering their scavenger hunt questions; a mysterious but smartly attired gentleman in top hat and cape stops by. Society treasurer Mike Shaw, left, and Vice-President Dick Hughes were among the many volunteers helping the Society to a great Canada Day!



Doors Open - Explore 4700 Years of our History



In conjunction with Doors Open Ontario and Ontario Heritage Trust, Belleville and District will host again this year its Doors Open program with participation by more than thirty businesses and organizations including the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment Military Museum, Loyalist College, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, City Hall, the Hastings Heritage Centre and the Pinnacle Playhouse. The dates are **September 13 and 14**. This is a family affair so get the kids out and give

I've Got A Home In Gloryland

cont'd. from page 2

as a matter of routine, mothers were separated from their children, husbands from their wives, even little children - brothers and sisters - were sold to separate owners at the slave auctions.

Lucie Blackburn was an exceptionally attractive woman. This was her curse because attractive, light skinned slaves like Lucie were frequently "sold down the river" to owners who installed them in New Orleans brothels where they could earn large profits for their masters. Lucie was facing just such a fate when she and Thornton, very much in love, made their decision to attempt an escape to freedom.

The following review of Smardz-Frost's book captures something of the essence of that story: "Only by piecing together such stories and revealing the bold choices runaway slaves were forced to make, the dangers they faced, and the courage required to forge ahead, can we ever fully grasp how difficult it was for a slave in antebellum America to achieve freedom and just how desperate people can be to become free."

But this was not the only reason our speaker held her audience so enthralled. How Dr. Smardz-Frost unearthed the story was, if anything, even more gripping than the story of two runaway slaves.

It began in the playground of a former Toronto school. At the time, Smardz-Frost was an archaeologist with the School Board in charge of a project at the old Sackville Street school ground. Her findings attracted international attention because what she and her team discovered was the home of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn. It was the first archaeological dig of an Underground Railroad site in Canada.

It was this discovery that led her on an odyssey to unearth the story of Lucie and Thornton. The New York Times book reviewer captured her journey with these words: "She spent two decades piecing together the Blackburn's tale from scattered sources like court records, census reports and artifacts almost two centuries old... The result of her unflagging detective work is this absorbing book."

Annual Banquet *cont'd from page 1*

event, ticket sales and raising money from table sponsors. Please contact one of the banquet committee: Vera Morton, Bill Kennedy, Orland French, Sharon White, Mary Jane Throop, Bobbi Jo Morris, Richard Hughes.

Please support the banquet. We always have a delightful time and raise a substantial amount of money. The proceeds go towards operating the archives and the Archives Relocation Fund.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Speaker

Dick Bird

Topic

Canoe History

Monthly meetings start at 7:30 and are held in the Auditorium of the Quinte Living Centre, 370 Front Street, Belleville

Archives Centre *cont'd from page 1*

and the Historical Society, supervised by a board of directors named by each of the partners.

The estimated building cost of the 7,000 square foot structure would be about \$1 million. The proposal will be taken before Belleville council in September for an endorsement.

Hastings County Historical Society Directors

President	Orland French
Vice-President	Dick Hughes
Treasurer	Mike Shaw
Secretary	Diane Sule
Archive Location	Sharon White
Membership & Outlook Distribution	Vera Morton
Photo Collections Manager	Mary Jane Throop
Promotion	Bobbi-Jo Morris
Publicity	Bruce Bedell
Outlook Editor	Bill Kennedy
HCHS Website	www.hastingshistory.ca

Hastings County Historical Society is based at the old township office in Cannifton. Please address mail to General Delivery, Cannifton, ON, K0K 2K0. Outlook is published in January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November for the friends and members of the Hastings County Historical Society. The editor, Bill Kennedy, can be reached at 613-962-5991, or email <kennedypec@aol.com>

HCHS MEMBER ADDRESS