



The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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Introduction

Much has happened since the last Fife & Drum was issued. This has kept your executive very busy and consequently has delayed your editor in putting pen to paper. It also means that this Fife & Drum will be a bit longer than usual. We apologize for the delay in communicating with you and will strive to get to press more regularly in the future.

Fort York Festival 99 - Napoleon comes to Toronto

The Fort York Festival 99 will take place on May 22 and 23, 1999 and all indications are that it will be the biggest and best yet.

Our festival depends upon being able to draw large numbers of re-enactors and sutlers to make the Fort return to the spirit of the early 19th century. To make this happen, it is important that we provide a changing experience for the re-enactors over the years. We cannot re-enact the Battle of York every year. Hence, for 1999, we will base the festival on a Napoleonic theme and our battle re-enactments will relate to events in the Napoleonic Wars.

As a result, it is exciting to be able to announce that the Imperial French Cavalry (based in Baltimore) will be attending with 10-12 horses. This will enable us to demonstrate cavalry charges and the British defensive response to cavalry charges, the famed British Square. As well we expect the Italian Imperial Guard based in Alabama to attend along with re-enactors from California, Minnesota and various cities on the Atlantic coast. Together with our fine re-enactment regiments in Canada we should have about 200 troops - and many varied and colourful uniforms.

In 1998, our festival ran in competition with a new festival in the London area based on the Battle of Culloden. This festival attracted many re-enactors and most of the sutlers were drawn to the Scottish theme. In 1999, we have the Victoria Day weekend essentially to ourselves. Hence we expect that many of the Sutlers who joined us in 1997 will be returning together with a number of new ones. As well, given the Napoleonic theme, we plan to invite several vendors of period crafts derived from European nations. All of this will make our Sutlers lane truly unique.

We will again have a variety of entertainment to join the various activities of the re-enactment regiments. These will include dancers, pipers, a town crier, fiddlers, our classical quartet, a puppet show for the children (old and young) and, of course, Ken Purvis (as either or both of The Hogarth Trio and Malarkey).

This year's festival is being produced in close cooperation with the staff at Heritage Toronto. Kim Corby has been working very hard with Don Brydges to publicize the festival. The staff at the Fort itself, under Richard Haynes, are working on many of the production details with Murray Philp and will be active during the festival. Ken Purvis is organizing much of the entertainment. This was help we really needed and are thankful for.

We also will have a new tent facility for the Festival this year. Paul Fortier and Jessup Foods will be erecting a 30'x90' tent for their operations over the summer and have graciously made the tent available to us.

We will be having the same assortment of quality food available including "Roast Beast" for the Saturday evening dinner. Jane Kennedy and Hank Young are busy planning the food operations.

"Attention Volunteers"

We will be contacting all of our volunteers during April - we will require even more volunteers in 1999 to handle the expected larger attendance. If you have any questions about the activities for volunteers this year, please do not hesitate to call Joe Gill at 864-1300. All volunteers will receive a red cap with the "Fort York Guy" crest this year.

The Friends and Molsons host a dinner for the Dragoons

After the "Great Snow Storms" of January, 1999, Mayor Lastman arranged for units of the Canadian Armed Forces from Camp Pettawawa to be sent to Toronto to join the Reservists from the 32nd Brigade to help Torontonians to cope with the snow emergency.

On a Sunday morning in January Councillor John Adams contacted Joe Gill to ask whether the Friends would be willing to arrange a thank you dinner at Fort York for 60 regular forces being the Engineering Section of the Dragoons who were specialists in snow removal, and the Crew for the Bisons who had operated as emergency ambulances. It quickly became evident that the Fort York location might prove difficult. As a result it was decided to hold the dinner at the RCMI. Chris Bovaird of Molsons responded immediately to our request for financial support - and Molsons sponsored the event. Essentially the event was fully arranged by early Monday morning.

The dinner was held the on Tuesday evening - under a tight schedule as the troops were scheduled for duty that evening. Mayor Lastman spoke to the assembled men and women - the troops, and their officers, ambulance crews from Toronto and Commissioner Barry Gutteridge and several of his Directors.

It was a fine event. The Friends were pleased to be involved and we thank Molsons for their quick generous and effective support.

Heritage Development - Fort York moves closer to an independent management Board

It would appear that the model for the delivery of heritage services in the new Toronto will be finally resolved in two upcoming meetings. The first of these is a meeting of the Economic Development Committee to be held *9:30 on Tuesday, April 6, in Committee Room 2, 2nd Floor, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street East*. The report of this Committee will be considered at the April meeting of Council - April 13, 14 and 15 (the specific time at which the heritage issue will be considered by Council is not yet known).

At the April 6 meeting of the Economic Development Committee, the Commissioner for Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Joe Halstead will deliver his recommendations on the "Implementation of Council Decisions on Heritage Governance". His report is the culmination of much debate over the past year involving the Culture Department, various boards involved in delivering heritage services in the predecessor cities, council members and citizens. It has also resulted from a more recent

process involving three “study groups” dealing with three areas of heritage governance being museums, LACAC’s and the central Heritage Toronto body. (These study groups were made up of citizens with governance responsibilities in the respective areas). After three to four meetings of these groups the chairs of each of the groups (being Heritage Toronto - Marion Joppe, Chair of Heritage Toronto, Museums - Earl Jarvis, Chair of the Etobicoke Heritage Board, and LACAC’s - Rick Schofield, Chair of the Scarborough LACAC) met with Commissioner Halstead. We understand that these four arrived at a consensus agreement that they considered to be workable- and that the Commissioner’s report is based on this consensus agreement. The Friends of Fort York were actively involved in this process. Rollo Myers and Joe Gill were members of the study group on Heritage Toronto. Joe Gill represented Fort York on the Museums Study Group.

It is beyond the scope of this newsletter to discuss the full agreement. However, in general, the report goes much further in support of citizen management boards in all areas than any previous proposal. Your Executive Committee has recommended that the report be supported by the Friends of Fort York. The full report is available through the City’s Clerk’s office at City Hall.

Each museum would be managed and directed by its own management board - in the case of Fort York, the management board would be appointed by City Council. Heritage Toronto, in its new configuration, would not have responsibility for any museums and the proposed structure would therefore involve a transfer of operating responsibility for Fort York from Heritage Toronto to the new Fort York Management Board. This will involve the transfer of some staff presently at 205 Yonge to Fort York itself. Fort York would be funded by a budget envelope.

The Board of the Friends of Fort York has agreed that the Friends should form an Interim Board to represent Fort York until a formal Fort York Management Board is approved by City Council. The Friends of Fort York will also ensure that a full slate of nominees for the Fort York Management Board is presented to City Council for their consideration.

The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common will continue to be active as an independent citizens’ organization supporting Fort York’s interests. The Friends will

serve as the fundraiser for Fort York. As well, the Friends will continue to provide volunteer support for functions at the Fort such as the Fort York Festival.

Over the past year many of the Friends have joined with other members of the heritage community and have devoted much time and energy in support of citizen control of heritage in Toronto. They should feel proud that the final proposal to be presented by Commissioner Joe Halstead reflects much that they have fought for. This proposal provides the basis for the future development of Fort York in the manner outlined in the Fort York Business Plan. Now it is our responsibility as citizens to ensure that a citizen management board for Fort York lives up to its billing and develops Fort York responsibly and successfully. We will need the positive cooperation and support of the city to enable us to do this.

Fund raising dinner at Fort York

One of the major activities of the Friends of Fort York is, and will be, fund raising. Our fund raising activities to date have largely involved contacts with a relatively few of our supporters to raise funds for specific projects.

On Thursday, May 20th we will hold a fundraising dinner at Fort York. It is hoped that this function will become an annual event and will provide significant funds for the benefit of Fort York. The price for the dinner is \$150 per person. This price was determined solely with the fundraising purpose in mind. (A tax receipt for a significant proportion of the price will be available). While we obviously welcome all Friends who are able to attend, it is not a "members' event" and we will be actively seeking to sell tickets and tables to the community generally in line with the fundraising purpose.

The dinner will be a Georgian style period dinner. Entertainment will be provided consistent with our Napoleonic theme. Dress will be period costume, military uniform or black tie. Richard Dodds has agreed to serve as President of the Mess.

We are thankful to Paul Fortier of Jessup Foods who is drawing on his extensive experience to make this Georgian dinner as authentic as possible. He is being ably supported by Fiona Lucas and Bridget Wranich from the Fort York staff who have spent

Progress on the Fort York Visitor Centre

Over the past few weeks we have been working with Eb Zeidler to update and modify earlier plans and designs for the Fort York Visitor Centre. John Barclay, Joe Gill and Carl Benn joined Eb Zeidler on a tour of the Fort grounds and a review of the possible location for the visitor centre. We also met with Heritage Toronto staff to review all the earlier proposals for the visitor centre. (Jo Ann Pynn had collected all of this material and prepared a very useful summary). Lastly a meeting was arranged with Lynda Macdonald, Eric Pederson and Ian Cooper of City Planning and Bill Johnston of Councillor Joe Pantalone's office to review the plans for Fort York Blvd. and related projects such as the water feature and a pedestrian bridge across the tracks.

Carl Benn and Jo Ann Pynn are proceeding with an updated review of the facility programme requirements for the visitor centre.

Now that we have collected the basic background data, we will assemble a larger group of the Friends with specific interest and background in the visitor centre project for a broader discussion.

The purpose of this process is to enable an initial "project description" to be prepared in a format appropriate to be used in fundraising activities and to assist in promoting the value of the project to city councillors.

New Directors for the Friends

At January meeting the Board of Directors approved the addition of two new members of the Board of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common.

Bret Snider comes from loyalist stock who trace their Toronto residence back to before 1812. One of Bret's ancestors served at the Fort in 1812 and marched with Brock to Detroit. Bret is the President of York College of Information Technologies. We welcome Bret and his wife Lee to the Friends.

many years researching the historical recipes of the 1812 period. Paul has also offered to provide the meal to us at very attractive special prices showing his strong support for the Friends. Thank you, Paul. (Please see our article on Jessup Foods).

If you wish to attend and have not received an invitation please contact either John Barclay (486-0763) or Joe Gill (864-1300).

Year 2000 - Millennium Celebrations

The Executive Committee is looking forward to the year 2000 and how the Friends should help celebrate the Millennium.

One possibility is attracting our interest. We are considering joining together with the Toronto Harbour Parade of Lights to provide a festival over the July 1 holiday that would focus on the War of 1812. The Toronto Harbour Parade of Lights hopes to attract several hundred American boats to participate in their harbour event on the evening of July 1. Their July 1 event may also involve a march of "soldiers" on Queen's Park reminiscent of the burning of the Parliament Buildings in 1812. However in the year 2000 event, the only burning would involve the lighting of a Friendship Flame.

On the following day the Friends would organize a re-enactment of the American landing at Sunnyside involving six or more tall ships. This would be followed by a re-enactment of the Battle of York at Fort York with related events for the re-enactors.

On Saturday, the tall ships (and accompanying flotilla) would sail with re-enactors to Niagara where an invasion of Fort Niagara would be staged. Events would take place at Fort Niagara on July 4th - and we would then bus the re-enactors back to Toronto

While none of our plans are firm, we thought our readers would be interested in the concept.

perhaps a large outdoor event or two). We congratulate Paul on his ability to attract new visitors to the Fort.

If you are planning a dinner party, why not consider something unique and let Paul provide your guests with an historical experience at the Fort. Paul can be reached at 416-203-7600.

Thanks to the Royal Canadian Military Institute

The Friends of Fort York is building a very positive relationship with the RCMI. We hold many of our Directors' meetings, our Fort York lecture series and our annual Members' Reception at the RCMI and, at most of these functions, groups from the Friends enjoy dinner at the RCMI (and some have even been seen in the Mess).

The RCMI advertises our functions at the RCMI in their monthly journal, the SITREP, and we are pleased to have RCMI members attend our lectures and other functions.

Hopefully, this relationship will grow to both our benefits.

The Loss of Two Friends of Fort York

The Friends of Fort York has suffered the loss of two members of our organization.

Brigadier John McGinness

No man made a more important contribution to Heritage in Toronto than Brigadier John McGinness. Brigadier McGinness was appointed the first Director of Fort York in 1952. On July 4th, 1960 he became the Managing Director of The Toronto Historical Board (its first full-time employee), a position he held until his retirement in 1984. As was stated in one tribute to Brigadier McGinness on his retirement - "John McGinness is the Toronto Historical Board."

John kept his interest in Fort York throughout his life and became a member of the Friends of Fort York in recent years. The depth and longevity of his interest was shown

in June 1998 when he came to a public meeting at City Hall to speak passionately in favour of citizen control of heritage.

Those of us with a devoted interest in Fort York in the present time owe a great debt to John McGinness and we can repay that debt by continuing his work in preserving Fort York for the future. Brigadier John McGinness passed away on February 14th, 1999.

Contributions in his memory made to Heritage Toronto total \$1,100 to date and further contributions are welcome.

Louise Beck

Louise Beck was a supporter of the Friends from its early stages. Louise was an active member of the Governor Simcoe Branch of the United Empire Loyalists and had a great interest in history. She particularly enjoyed our Fort York lecture series. Louise passed away on January 8, 1999 and will be missed.

Progress on the Gardiner Expressway

City staff has reported to Council in response to the proposal to replace the elevated expressway with a below grade toll road. Your Board of Directors has responded to the City, expressing our support for the proposal, subject to a number of conditions related to the Fort. A new staff report is in preparation, dealing with the questions raised, for presentation to Council on May 17, 1999. "Watch this space" and your local paper for further developments.

Governor Simcoe's Tent

Last fall, we seriously considered re-constructing Governor Simcoe's Tent as a fundraising project. When Simcoe realized that he would be assuming the role of Lieutenant Governor of the newly created Upper Canada, he acquired a two room tent from the estate of Captain Cook and brought it from England. Later, upon the transfer of the capital of Upper Canada from Niagara to York, Simcoe brought the tent with him and

lived in it with his family through his first summer in York. The tent had wooden walls covered in wallpaper and was furnished in a manner suiting Simcoe's position.

The project was exciting. Rollo Myers made contacts in Australia who showed great interest because of the Captain Cook connection. Unfortunately, we determined that the cost of the project was higher than anticipated and difficult security problems existed in leaving a furnished structure of this type exposed at the Fort.

For the moment the project is on hold. Possibly an appropriately sized model of the tent supported by research is the answer. We don't want to lose the concept.

A Walking Tour of the Fort York Area

Ward McBurney, a former member of the Fort York Guard, has been writing creative non-fiction stories and broadcasting them on CBC Radio One's *Fresh Air* for the past two years. Several of these draw on the area around and in Historic Fort York. In order to launch his second chapbook of radio stories, he has decided to lead a walking tour through the Niagara Neighbourhood, over the Bathurst Street Bridge, through Coronation Park, and over Garrison Road into the fort proper. There, on the top floor of the centre blockhouse, there will be a catered reception, a reading of one of his stories and copies of *Wardstories 2: Romancing the Ground We Walk on*, will be available for purchase. The walk is free and the book is optional.

The walking tour will begin at 2 sharp on Saturday, May 15th at the centre of Victoria Square at Wellington and Portland. It will last about two hours (max.); the reception at the fort will last one hour, from 4 to 5.

Strachan Avenue Burial Grounds

Many of you will recall Stephen Otto's presentation on the Strachan Avenue Burial Grounds as part of last year's lecture series. Since that time Stephen has done further research on specific names of those buried in the grounds. He has now produced a paper combining his new research with his earlier talk. We hope to reproduce the paper in the near future.

Fort York Lecture Series

The Fort York Lecture Series has been successful once again, thanks mainly to the efforts of Dr. Carl Benn.

The last of this year's lectures will take place on Thursday April 15 at the Royal Canadian Military Institute (426 University Avenue) at 7:30 P.M. Carl Benn will speak to us on Fort York in the Civil War Period including the defence of Canada during the Fenian Raids.