

COVID Update: To find out when our programmes will resume, check the Toronto Public Library website: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/programs-and-classes/> or call the Answerline: 416-397-5981

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View of the Toronto skyline from Centre Island in 1984 by Doug Taylor
See p. 3



Advertisement for Sonora
Phonograph, 1920 TPL



Toronto skyline from the Island
1932? CTA



Dominion Centre under construction
1966 Toronto Star Archives, TPL

The Society meets at the Northern District Library, 40 Orchard View Boulevard (one block north of Eglinton, just west of Yonge) at 7:30 pm on the last Wednesday of each month from September to November & January to May. Programmes are free and are open to the public. Our co-sponsor is the Northern District Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

President's Message

Greetings to everyone during these strange COVID-19 times.

The North Toronto Historical Society monthly meetings will not take place this Fall at Northern District Library, which co-sponsors us, because the Toronto Public Library has cancelled all in-branch in-person programs for the remainder of 2020. Library branches, however, have re-opened for use of computers and borrowing of materials. You can use this period to check out the wonderful resources on line as well.

We will not be conducting our annual Fall walk, but there are many virtual tours available. Or you may consider borrowing or downloading some of the local history walking tour booklets published by the Toronto Public Library and do your own walks. For example, "Historical Walking Tour of Lawrence Park" which I co-authored and our society helped produce, is available for loan, as an eBook and in PDF.

Special thanks to Hilary Dawson for continuing to produce the NTHS quarterly newsletter which is such an integral part of membership in the Society. The Summer edition, an expanded version to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE- Day included entries from the diary of Bill Dawson's late father, Squadron Leader Ross Dawson.

I would encourage you to keep your membership status active. The expiry date appears on the front of your mailing envelope. NTHS rates and mailing address appear at the end of the newsletter.

We will meet again! In the meantime, keep safe and well, and enjoy the newsletter.

Lynda Moon, President

Walks : Do-It-Yourself

Lost Rivers

Discover Toronto's lost and disappearing rivers.

<http://lostrivers.ca/disappearing.html>

Mud Creek flows from Downsview through culverts, ditches and water courses to the Don.

Can you track it?

<http://lostrivers.ca/content/mudcreek.html>

Discovery Walks

<https://tinyurl.com/y83lx7eu>

Central Ravines, Belt Line & Gardens and *Northern Ravines & Gardens* both cross North Toronto.

City of Toronto

A database of Toronto walks, maps and audiotours

<https://tinyurl.com/y23uk55f>



Heritage Toronto

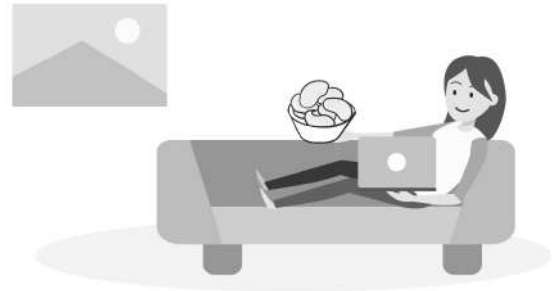
Maps and audiotours:

<https://tinyurl.com/y46gqjd5>

Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO)

Eight Toronto walks online:

<https://acontario.ca/COVID.php>



In Quarantine?

Guild Park

Join Friends of Guild Park volunteer Janet Heise on a virtual tour of the Nature in Art found at the park in east Toronto, atop the Scarborough Bluffs.

<https://tinyurl.com/y2efgoo9>

Toronto City Hall

Celebrate the 55th birthday of Toronto City Hall with a virtual tour.

<https://tinyurl.com/yxw3axl6>

National Trust Canada

Stay home and visit historic places across the country.

<https://tinyurl.com/y68lb7g3>

IN MEMORIAM

Jane Somerville-Caspari, 1949-2020

When NTHS member Jane Somerville passed away in April after a courageous 24-year battle with brain cancer, the Lawrence Park neighbourhood lost a passionate heritage advocate. A number of decades ago, Jane and her husband Dr. David Caspari rescued their home at 24 Dinnick Crescent from its almost derelict state. Designed by Chadwick and Beckett, the official architects for Lawrence Park, 24 Dinnick was built prior to WWI as one of the original “model homes”. It was featured on the cover of the first edition of the Lawrence Park walking tour booklet and is one of the sites on the tour.

Some years ago, Jane became convinced that Lawrence Park should be protected as a heritage conservation district. She chaired the Lawrence Park Heritage Committee which encouraged local heritage conservation. For its efforts, Heritage Toronto awarded the Committee its Community Heritage Award. Finally, in the Fall of 2016, City Council authorized a heritage conservation district study for “Lawrence Park West” – west from Mt. Pleasant to Yonge and south from Lawrence to the ravine. Unfortunately, due to the City’s “heritage backlog”, the study was postponed once again in 2020!



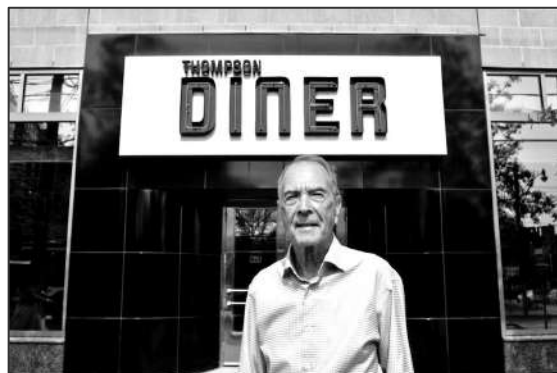
An eternal optimist, Jane lived her life with a passion – advocating for heritage, traveling, running and writing children’s books. She was honored in 1996 as Canadian Women’s Entrepreneur of the Year for her many creative endeavours.

I miss Jane’s gracious hosting of our Heritage Committee’s meetings and her positive and creative approach to heritage. She was truly “one of a kind”. We extend our sympathy to David and the family.

Alex. Grenzebach

John Douglas Taylor, 1938-2020

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Doug Taylor, community historian, heritage advocate and blogger extraordinaire. Doug shared his passion for “Toronto Movie Theatres of Yesteryear” with NTHS in September, 2017. He will be missed by the heritage community.



DOUG TAYLOR’S LEGACY

Doug’s 1000 blog postings on Toronto stories and landmarks: <https://taylortonhistory.com>

Some of Doug’s Toronto books:

Lost Toronto, 2018

Toronto Then & Now, 2016

Toronto’s Local Movie Theatres of Yesteryear: Brought Back to Thrill You Again, 2016

Toronto’s Theatres and the Golden Age of the Silver Screen, 2014

The Villages Within: an Irreverent History of Toronto and a Respectful guide to the St. Andrew’s Market, the King West District, the Kensington Market, & Queen Street West, 2010

There Never Was a Better Time: Toronto’s Yesterdays, 2008

Ghost Neighbourhood continued from page 4

Continuing east, we cross over Yonge Street on rickety heavy timbers that span the deep open trench being dug for the original subway. We cross through the Gay Village centred on Church Street and arrive at Jarvis Collegiate Institute, which the lady who became my wife and I attended from 1955 to 1960.

Returning to Yonge and Wellesley, we turn south on Yonge Street. Let's pretend it's Halloween. Very soon we start seeing tour buses bearing licence plates from New York State. The buses are parked as close as they could manage to the St. Charles Tavern. A crowd has gathered in front of the tavern, which is just a bit south of Grosvenor Street (we are now two long blocks to the east of where we started our walk). The St. Charles was a watering hole for gays and drag queens at that time. Halloween was the only night of the year when men could dress up as women without getting arrested, and they were absolutely gorgeous parading up and down outside the tavern. Tourists came from Buffalo to see them. The crowd there was divided between those of us who admired the show, and the others who shouted homophobic taunts and sometimes threw tomatoes.

The St. Charles was a former fire station and its clock tower (originally used for drying fire hoses) still stands due to its heritage protection, but everything else is gone. The cautious code words were "Meet me under the clock."

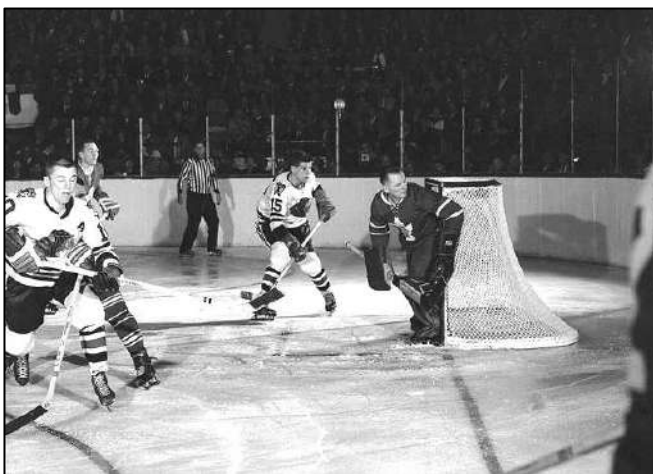
This is the western side of the Gay Village. Ghosts live here too – not just ghosts of buildings - but the



Clock tower of the former St. Charles Tavern

ghosts of many area residents who died from AIDS at a time when no-one really knew what HIV/AIDS was, except "God's punishment of homosexuals" according to some commentators.

Let's continue walking south on Yonge Street to Carlton Street, which is what College Street is called east of Yonge, and turn east to Maple Leaf Gardens, the former home of the Toronto Maple Leafs, whom I idolized. In the apartment right beside ours in the Athelma lived an attractive and vivacious French lady named Antoinette, who was frequently visited in the late afternoon by George, a businessman on his way home from work. Once a year, George would give my father (for his discretion) two Leafs home game tickets for front row red seats right behind the Leafs' bench. Dad would take me with him. For a kid, life never got better than that!



Johnny Bower in goal for the Leafs

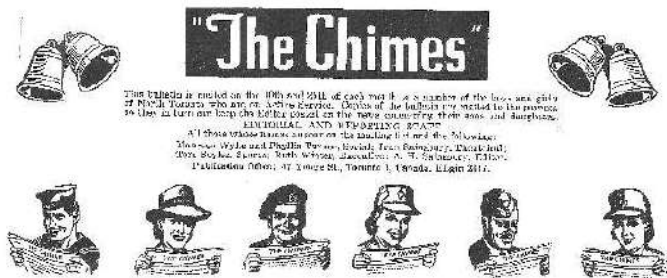
Our walk through Fred Keenan's *Ghost Neighbourhood* will continue in a future Newsletter.

North Toronto Memories.

World War 2: on the Home Front and Overseas

The idea of *The Chimes* came from Arthur and Jean Sainsbury, 106 Lytton Blvd., as they sent news to their sons Van (RCAF) and George (Navy), and shared the lads' letters home with friends and neighbours. The newsletter evolved, with several writers contributing to "Departments" covering different interests – sports, movies, gossip, engagements, etc. Each issue was typed onto a stencil and duplicated at Gestetner Co., collated by hand and mailed to "the boys and girls of North Toronto who are on Active Service" and their parents.

Earlier excerpts from *The Chimes* were printed in the Fall issues of the NTHS Newsletter from 2016 to 2019.



Issue No. 31, August 25, 1944.

Nothing has thrilled the Chimes more than to receive and read a letter written by P/O Howard Egli [*H.D. Egli, 89 Douglas Dr*] to his family .. Howard's father tells us that Howard is flying with the Lion Squadron and has just completed his 25th mission over enemy territory. By way of explanation, Howard was reported missing on July 25th but a little over a week ago his folks learned he was safe in England...

Dear Family August 9, 1944.
I am indeed sorry for having caused such an upset. I will relate to you the entire story from beginning to end. The target was Stuttgart and we only carried sufficient petrol to get us there and back to England and no extra in case of emergency. Well, after a long trip into the target, we dropped our bombs but as has been our luck lately, we were hit with flak which at the time didn't seem serious. Apparently, our hydraulics were hit and the fluid leaked out and down came the undercarriage

necessitating a reduction in speed of over 40 m.p.h. and a consumption of more petrol. It didn't take long before we were left way behind, stooging all alone. Naturally, the boys kept their eyes open as they never did before, as we had a four hour journey through enemy territory ahead of us. I was trying to save just enough gas to reach the English coast but it looked like a very tight situation at that time. ... [The navigator and engineer's] calculations proved that we would be about 40 gals. short, which was definitely cutting it too close.... I then ordered the crew to bail out under very trying circumstances. We had two aircraft edging in on us and had reason to believe they were enemy aircraft. Reggie stuck to his post until the boys up front got organised for the jump. Then out they went, first the navigator, second the bomb aimer, third the engineer, fourth the wireless operator, fifth the rear gunner and sixth, mid-upper. At the same time our own side opened up with flak failing to recognise the aircraft and they registered four direct hits on our plane, causing so much damage that I couldn't trim it sufficiently enough to maintain level flight to give me time to bail out.

... The boys had bailed out at 3,000 feet. The only way for me was to crash land it ... I immediately brought the aircraft down to tree-top level ...

[Howard crash-landed and passed out]
I heard voices and I could distinguish the American twang so I felt better. They had no idea who I was, foe or friend, so I opened my eyes to see myself gazing down the business end of a Sten gun. Immediately in my best Canadian accent, I introduced myself and asked for a cigarette. They gave me first aid...I was immediately transported in a stretcher on a "jeep" to the nearest American Field Hospital.

Chimes continues on page 7

**3 TORONTO R.C.A.F. OFFICERS
AMONG 19 WINNING AWARDS**



**Howard Egli (centre) was awarded the D.F.C.
and promoted to Flying Officer**

Toronto Daily Star 13 Dec 1944

Howard D. Egli

Howard was the son of Clarence and Alice Egli. He grew up at 89 Douglas Drive in Rosedale. Howard and his wife Brenda lived at 92 Bedford Park Ave. He became President of Parker Pen Co.

[Letter from Stu Sheils, who grew up 99 Wanless Cres; son of George Kingsley Sheils, Deputy Minister of Munitions and Supply]

Italy, August 3, 1944
[Stu's birthday]

I was presented with three hand grenades tied with pink ribbon along with a mess tin full of rice pudding sporting an enormous candle so it was just like any other birthday - well nearly ...

We know you will be glad to learn that the condition of Major Conn Smythe, general manager of Toronto Maple Leaf Gardens, wounded in Normandy last July, has improved sufficiently to leave his hospital bed for short periods.

AROUND THE TOWN
by Bill Houston

The poor old Toronto Transit Commission is nearly creaking under

the terrific pressure of wartime loads ... I notice that they have secured a dozen or more new buses which should help considerably. ... Their present colour is a factory colour which after all is hardly any colour at all. I understand that the Commission will get around to a paint job, either grey or red or both, in due course.

While on the subject of the T.T.C. I might tell you that their new route out from Eglinton East which runs from Eglinton and Yonge to Pape and Danforth is a riot in colour and in shapes and sizes especially during the warwrker's *[sic]* rush hours. You will find the oldest of the old buses, grey or red, it doesn't make any difference, to the newest and swishest highway buses all pounding down Eglinton Ave. jam-packed with the Leaside war plant crowd.

Shift change time in Leaside during World War 2. Over a dozen buses can be seen in this picture, lined up waiting to load their passengers.

TTC



??? ??? ??? ??? ???

Who's Who in Mount Pleasant Cemetery?

by Doug Campbell

From time to time we will have 3 or 4 names of people interred in the cemetery who have one or two things in common, for instance a position or a business.

What business were these 3 men engaged in?

- Robert Carswell**
- William Gage**
- John (Jack) McClelland**

The answer is on page 10

50 Years Ago

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1970 contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.



Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau succeeded in his bid for the 1976 summer Olympics. He had lost an earlier bid for the 1972 Olympics.

It was predicted that there would be fewer subways and buses, but more streetcars and trolleys in Toronto's transit future. Apparently, the TTC was "scouring the continent for additional trolleys they can buy up and rebuild."

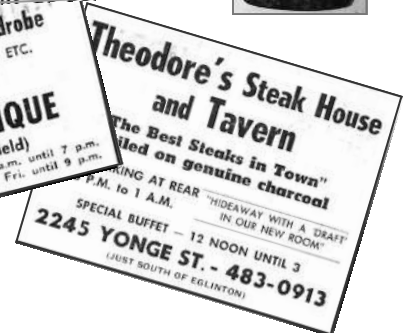


Lana Morris and Kenneth More are in the distinguished cast of *The Forsyte Saga*, a dramatization of John Galsworthy's novels about a wealthy English family in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The 26-week series, termed "a television masterpiece" by critics in some 30 countries where it has been shown, makes its Canadian debut on CBC television Sunday, April 3, at 9 p.m. ...

The Financial Post reported on a forecast that "by 1980 tires will be so reliable that new cars won't need to be equipped with spares." Also predicted: totally puncture-resistant tires by 1984; tires good for 200 mph by 1985.



On September 28, Channel 19 (TVO), Canada's "first television station fully devoted to entertaining education", began regular broadcasting. It was on the air 13.5 hours per day Monday to Friday and 5 hours on weekends in an area bordered by Oshawa, Hamilton, Newmarket and St. Catharines.



The Toronto Real Estate Board opened its new headquarters at 1883 Yonge St., just south of Davisville. Founded in 1920, it had become "the largest organization of its kind in the world."

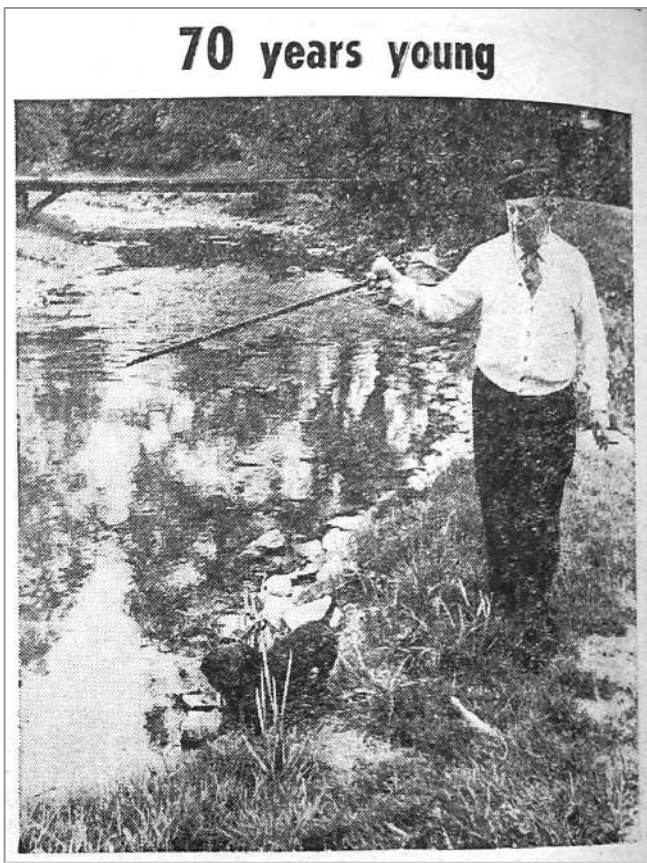
Out of 25 life insurance companies surveyed, 22 said "that they would refuse outright to write insurance on marijuana users."

50 Years Ago continues on page 9



The CNR was eager to dispose of its little-used Belt Line and the future of this right-of-way was the subject of considerable controversy. Fortunately, the City retained the right-of-way and prevented the land from falling into the hands of private developers!

There was “a free-for-all raging in Metro Council about the Spadina Expressway.”



Gordon Sinclair was honored by friends and employers on his 70th birthday. The star of Front Page Challenge takes a morning stroll with his dog Alfie before heading for the office. Sinc has no intention of retiring.

A nonphosphate dishwasher detergent was announced.

Mrs. Ada A. Presgrave turned 100. She had been in the drygoods business for 57 years and had worked in her store at 3199 Yonge St. (just below Ranleigh) until 5 years ago. She still lived in her apartment above the store. Miss Ruby Robins, a mere 66, worked as a clerk for Mrs. Presgrave for 51 years. This store is featured in our Bedford Park walking tour booklet.

Plastic milk pouches, introduced the previous year, were “reported to be cutting into the glass and plastic jug container market”. It was estimated that within five years, 40 percent of all milk sales would be in pouches.

Receive the *NTHS UPDATER* by email!

Would you like us to remind you of upcoming meetings and heritage events with an electronic newsletter?

Email me at alexg@alumni.uwaterloo.ca and I will add you to the distribution list. *We will not give out your email address.*

Alex. Grenzebach

Bored?

**Volunteer to
Unlock History!**



There are now countless digitised documents online, but handwritten papers and diaries are not electronically searchable. Thousands of citizen-historians around the world are transcribing them so the content can be searched.

Will you have time on your hands this winter? Can you decipher handwriting? Consider contributing to one of the many transcription projects to make valuable information accessible to all. Here are two.

**The University of Guelph Library hosts the
*Rural Diary Archive:***

<https://ruraldiaries.lib.uoguelph.ca/home>
This online archive is home to 150 Ontario diarists dating between 1800 and 1960. The original diaries are in various repositories, or owned privately, and have been scanned and uploaded. It is a wonderful resource! Diaries present “Reality History,” with family secrets, triumphs and disasters; births, marriages and deaths; schooldays and barn-raising.

**Library & Archives Canada transcription
project is called *Co-Lab:***

<https://co-lab.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/>
You can transcribe nationally significant letters, diaries and documents, or tag names in photographs.

Both websites have guidelines for transcribers. Consider unlocking history this fall or winter!

University of Toronto online

Architectural historian and annual Society speaker
Marta O'Brien is presenting her popular U of T courses
online.

Toronto's Residential Architecture: A History

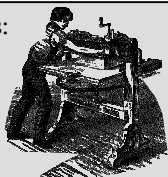
course code 2033

online Tuesdays 10:00 am - 11:00 am (2nd hour posted),
Sept 15 - Nov 3, 2020

Have you wondered how to tell a Georgian house from a
Second Empire house? This course illustrates the
characteristics of over twenty architectural styles used in
Toronto residences during the past 200 years. We'll
explore the evolution of each style and you'll gain some
ability to date houses and other residential buildings.
Heritage preservation will be discussed, along with the
surprising controversy surrounding early apartment
buildings. Examples will cover workers' cottages to
mansions, and one class is a virtual walking tour.

INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/y53hflzy>

We welcome contributions from members:
heritage events and achievements, brief
articles and photographs of local history
interest.



**Submissions for the next Newsletter by
1 Dec. to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.**

??? ??? ??? ??? ???

Who's Who in Mount Pleasant Cemetery?

What business were these 3 men engaged in:
Robert Carswell, William Gage, John (Jack)
McClelland?

Answer:

All 3 were book publishers.



Leadley House, Augusta Ave. Photo: Marta O'Brien

Architecture of Southern Ontario

course code 3103

online Thursdays 10:00 am - 11:00 am (2nd hour
posted), Oct 8 - Nov 26, 2020)

Many towns and cities in southern Ontario have
beautiful well-preserved historic buildings – some in
architectural styles no longer found in large cities. We'll
examine town halls, inns, libraries, shops, post offices,
and more from over a dozen communities, focusing on
pre-1930s buildings. The wide variety of houses range
from grand mansions built for the most important people
in town to farmhouses and cottages. You'll discover how
local materials were used, and hear how town histories
affected what was built.

INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/y36yrzh8>

North Toronto Historical Society

An affiliate of the Ontario Historical Society, and a non-profit charitable organization.

% 283 Deloraine Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5M 2B2

www.northtorontohistoricalsociety.org

Annual Memberships: Seniors & Students \$5, Adults \$7, Families \$10

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Treasurer: Bill Dawson

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