



North Toronto Town Hall

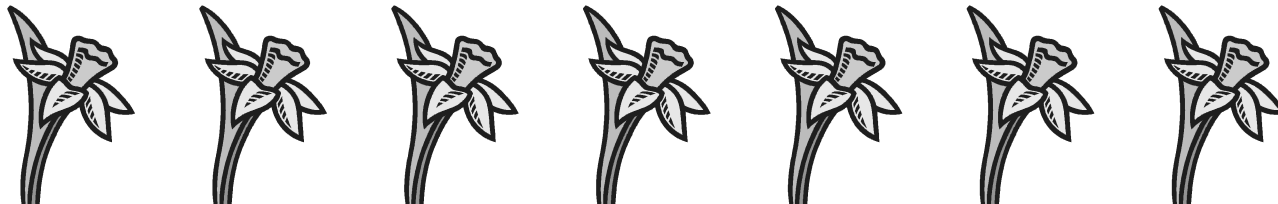
NORTH TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 33 NO. 1

MARCH 2009

Spring Programme



Wednesday, 29 April, 7:30

**TORONTO'S FOREIGN QUARTER:
The Jews and Other Immigrants of St. John's Ward After 1900**

Bill Gladstone presents an illustrated lecture on the old downtown neighbourhood once called "the Ward" - a receiving ground for tens of thousands of Jewish, Italian and other recent arrivals, so densely populated it was once known as the city's foreign quarter. Bill Gladstone, who grew up in North Toronto, is an author, journalist and genealogist whose most recent book is *One Hundred Years in Canada: the Rubinoff-Naftolin Family Tree*.

Wednesday, 27 May, 7:30

**TORONTO'S VISUAL LEGACY:
Official City Photography from 1856 to the Present**

Staff of the City of Toronto Archives will present an overview of Toronto's history and development through the legacy of official city photographs. Copies of the book *Toronto's Visual Legacy*, which was published this year to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the City's incorporation, will be available for purchase.



Join us at 7:10 for refreshments before the programme.

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.

Toronto Celebrates 175 Years

On March 6, 2009, the 175th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation as a city, there were special events at City Hall.



On Nathan Phillips Square there were vintage vehicles from the Toronto Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services. The horses of the Police Mounted Unit were a popular attraction and performances on the outdoor stage ranged from school choirs to aboriginal drummers.

Inside City Hall there were many exhibits including community organizations, historic photos and street art. I attended a literary reading at City Hall Library featuring Toronto's Poet Laureate Pier Giorgio di Cicco, and, as a result, missed the film screenings which included *Toronto in Silent Cinema*, narrated by Mike Filey.

After visiting Mackenzie House and the display on William Lyon Mackenzie as mayor, I returned to City Hall for the launch of the commemorative book *Toronto's Visual Legacy* (the topic of our May program). The City Council Chambers then filled to capacity with Torontonians eager to watch the debate between Toronto's first mayor, as played by Eric Peterson, and the current mayor, David Miller. Peterson, a true 'Firebrand' with his red wig and rousing calls to the citizenry, was priceless in his portrayal of Mackenzie.

I concluded my day by attending the *Bohemian Embassy Revival* at City Hall Library, a wonderful nostalgia-filled two hours of readings, reminiscences and music. The

event was hosted by Don Cullen, founder of the *Bohemian Embassy*, one of the first of Toronto's coffee houses of the early 1960s which helped launch many literary and folk singing careers. Participants included John Robert Colombo, Greg Gatenby, Rosemary Sullivan (on Gwendolyn MacEwen), poets George Miller and Dennis Lee, and singers Sharon Hampson (of Sharon, Lois and Bram) and Sylvia Tyson. When Sylvia concluded the evening by singing "You Were on My Mind", she was joined by many in the audience.

All in all, a wonderful day!

Lynda Moon, President, NTHS

Heritage Conservation Districts

Toronto has 15 HCDs with 16 more under study:

www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_districts.htm

See *Marta O'Brien's article on South Rosedale HCD*, p. 3.

The 2009 Heritage Toronto Awards Call for Nominations

The Heritage Toronto Awards celebrate outstanding contributions in the promotion and conservation of Toronto's history and heritage landmarks. Heritage Toronto invites the public to nominate significant 2008 projects they think should be celebrated.

Please see the nomination forms on the Heritage Toronto website www.heritagetoronto.org. The deadline for nominations is Monday, June 1, 2009.

The 35th Annual Heritage Toronto Awards will be presented in October 2009, in conjunction with the William Kilbourn Memorial Lecture.

Professor J. M. S. Careless 1919 – 2009

A native of Toronto, Professor Careless was a long-time resident of North Toronto and a member of the North Toronto Historical Society. Lynda Moon recalls that he did original research for his presentation on the Town of North Toronto at one of our meetings. Before a recent move, he lived on Ranleigh Ave. I enjoyed chatting with him when he was walking in the area, as did Lynda.

A graduate of the University of Toronto and Harvard, he served as Chairman of the Department of History at U of T from 1959 to 1967. He was a President of the Ontario Historical Society and also served as Vice-Chairman of the provincial Archaeological and Historic Sites Board. In 1981, he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada for his "ability to interpret Canadian history to the general reading public." In addition to numerous other awards, he received the Order of Ontario in 1987. Amongst his many books, several of particular interest are *Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History*, which won the City of Toronto Book Award in 1984, and *Brown of the Globe* which received the Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction.

We extend our sympathy to his family. He will be missed.

Alex. Grenzebach

Items from the North Toronto Herald, 1959, contributed by Alex. Grenzebach. The Herald is available at Northern District Library.



WEATHER MAKES RINK OF CITY CENTRE
The underground parking garage at City Hall was built before the “new” City Hall. Freezing rain followed by a quick drop in temperature turned the top into “a perfect skating rink, probably the biggest in all Canada.” This was some years before the present rink was constructed.

On New Year’s Day 1959, Ontario “celebrated the start of its long-awaited provincial hospital insurance plan, covering over 90 per cent, or 5,300,000 of the province’s population.”



It was reported that “most people are confident that recovery from recession will continue to manifest itself through most of the New Year.”

Unemployment would remain a problem, but the biggest worry was inflation.

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JANUARY Rosedale: Mansions and More

Marta O'Brien

South Rosedale extends north to the railway tracks on the west side of Mount Pleasant Road, and up to the Glen Road bridge on the east side of Mount Pleasant. South Rosedale's settlement history extends back to Captain George Playter, a United Empire Loyalist granted land by the Crown in 1796, including some northeast of Yonge and Bloor. Francis Cayley purchased land from Playter's heirs and later built Drumsnab (this 1834 house, with additions, is still a private home). Further west, Playter sold land to James Small who in turn sold to William Botsford Jarvis. The speculative development of Rosedale began then.

Much of Rosedale was part of the Village of Yorkville, and Jarvis and local brewer Joseph Bloor laid out many Yorkville streets and began laying out lots in Rosedale around 1836. Development of the area floundered: an economic depression in 1855 hurt, and only one house was built in ten years (Geary House, 124 Park Road, 1855 and additions).

East of Mount Pleasant, Edgar Jarvis (William's nephew) laid out a residential neighbourhood, beginning in the mid-1800s. Edgar became the major developer of Rosedale and persisted for decades with his dream of an enclave for Toronto's wealthy. He laid out streets, planted trees, built bridges, and constructed a series of large homes to entice buyers to the area.

Edgar became the second Jarvis to have trouble attracting people to Rosedale. His wife Charlotte identified one reason: “Toronto women thought it was so far out of the city they could not get maids and were afraid of roughing it.” There were only about twenty houses in Rosedale by 1880.

Increasing pressure on residential prices and improved access to public transit finally made Rosedale desirable in the 1890s. Larger lots were subdivided to accommodate more homes. One of the fine South Rosedale houses built during this period is 128 Park Road (*pictured next page*).

Rosedale benefitted from Toronto's real estate boom in the early 1900s when a housing shortage

Rosedale continues on page 4



128 Park Road

Photo: Marta O'Brien

combined with general prosperity. Architectural styles included Cottage Style, Edwardian, and some Revivals. South Rosedale has homes designed by some of Toronto's best architects, including E. J. Lennox, Eden Smith, John Lyle, and Chadwick and Beckett (familiar to North Torontonians as the official architects of Lawrence Park).

Building slowed between the Wars although a number of grand homes were built (including Gerald Larkin House, 8 Castle Frank Road, and Norman Seagram House, 2 Hawthorn Gardens – the latter, *pictured right*, designed by Vaux Chadwick).

By the 1940s South Rosedale began to lose its appeal and property values fell; many well-off homeowners moved out of the City. During World War II, a housing shortage led to relaxed zoning regulations and about 200 homes were converted to rooming houses or nursing homes. Later many old houses were replaced by apartment buildings. South Rosedale changed more than the North, probably due to its proximity to Bloor and the downtown.

After many unremarkable apartment buildings and townhouses were built between 1950 and 1980, planning regulations were changed to allow only single-family detached houses in South Rosedale.

The area ratepayers' association convinced the City to allow division of large houses into condos while maintaining their single-family-dwelling appearance from the streets. This made preservation of the largest dwellings viable.

One of the most impressive mansions in South Rosedale is Fudger House at 40 Maple Avenue. This grand red sandstone and brick home was begun in the late 1890s for Harris Henry Fudger, a prominent businessman and philanthropist. Following World War II, the mansion became a rooming house divided into 12 apartments. During the 1980s and '90s it was used for filming. After a 1999 sale, Fudger House was restored inside and out and converted into seven condos.

Rosedale comprises two Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). South Rosedale was designated in 2003, North Rosedale in 2004. The South process began with neighbourhood concern about the demolition of houses that contributed to the area's character. This led to commissioning a professional study with research assistance and financial help from the community. Changes that will be visible from the street must conform to the area's character as defined in the designation.

During the last 20 years Rosedale has again become very desirable. Existing homes have been restored or renovated. Some new houses in Rosedale incorporate traditional architectural elements such as steep roofs or classical columns to replicate the appearance of the older homes. Other contemporary houses are dominated by rectangular forms and flat roofs.

Edgar Jarvis's dream of a wealthy enclave was finally realized and it seems unlikely that hard times will return to Rosedale.



Norman Seagram House, 2 Hawthorn Gardens MO'B

FEBRUARY Slavery in the Town of York

Hilary J. Dawson

Some of the 688 “inhabitants in the Townships of York, Scarborough & Etobecoek” in 1801 were slave-owners; some were slaves. In this annual listing of the population, seven householders were identified as Black: Robert Franklin, Pombadore, Moses, Sussex, Peter Martin, William Willis and Lester. Some of these men were free, and some (or their families) were enslaved.

No of Blacks			
Robert Franklin	1	1	York
Pombadore	3	3	
Mosep	2	1	
Sussex	4	1	
Peter Martin	2		
Wm Willis	1		
Lester	1		
Total	1,00	2,00	
For the Year 1801			
Ely Mather Town Clerk			

Robert Franklin and Pombadore worked for Peter Russell, Receiver General for Upper Canada. Peter Russell and his half-sister Elizabeth lived at King and Sherbourne, in a house known as “Russell Abbey.” The Russells also owned “Petersfield,” a 100 acre farm running from Queen to Bloor between Beverley and Huron.

Robert Franklin was an employee: that is, he was paid for his work. Whether he had ever been enslaved by Peter Russell is unclear. The relationship between Russell and Franklin had its stormy moments. In 1798, Robert Franklin wrote to Russell, “I give your Honor 2 Month Warning from the 29 of this Present month of September Sir I Will not stay to Be beten with great walking Stack this the tird times.”

Another of Peter Russell’s employees was Pombadore, who worked as a day labourer. Pombadore’s wife Peggy was enslaved by

Russell. That meant that their children Jupiter, Amy and Milly were also slaves – children “took the condition of the mother.” Elizabeth Russell gave Amy as a gift to Mrs. Denison.

Often, slaves would protest their condition by doing the bare minimum work, purposely misunderstanding orders, and perhaps indulging in a little petty crime. Elizabeth Russell described her slaves as “very much addicted to pilfering and lying” and “very dirty, idle and insolent.” Peter Russell despaired of Peggy, who he claimed was “doing all in her power to corrupt her children who are part of my family...”

Peggy’s behaviour became more than the Russells could stand, and when Jupiter was charged with threatening to poison John Denison’s family, Peter Russell advertised the two of them for sale.

To be Sold,

A Black Woman named Peggy, aged forty years, and a Black Boy, her son, named Jupiter, aged about fifteen years.... The woman is a tolerable cook and washerwoman, and perfectly understands making soap and candles. The boy is tall and strong for his age, and has been employed in the country business, but brought up principally as a house servant. They are each of them servants for life. The price of the woman is one hundred and fifty dollars. For the boy two hundred dollars, payable in three years, with interest from the day of sale, and to be secured by bond, &c. But one-fourth less will be taken for ready money.

PETER RUSSELL

York, Feb. 19th, 1806.

Peter Russell died in 1808, and Elizabeth in 1822. Their wills do not mention slaves in their estates, so presumably the Pombadore family had been sold, given away or freed.

Another York slave-holder was Provincial Secretary William Jarvis, whose household included Moses and Sussex, and their wives. Minutes of a court case in March, 1811, show that Jarvis had his share of trouble with his enslaved household, when he charged “a negro boy and girl, his slaves” with stealing gold and silver from his desk. The boy “Henry, commonly called Prince”

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Slavery continued from page 5

was sentenced to jail, and the girl was released. A “free negro” named Coachly was implicated, but he was discharged.

The remaining men on our list of “Blacks in the Town of York” in 1801 are Peter Martin who had alerted Simcoe to Chloe Cooley’s abduction (*see Simcoe the Abolitionist, below*), William Willis who, with his partner Jack Mosee, secured the contract to open a road west from Yonge Street through “the Pinery” in 1799, and Lester Steward.

There were more people of colour (including slaves) in the Town of York than the few listed. For instance, Solicitor General Robert Isaac Dey Gray always travelled with his “servant” Simon Baker, leaving most of his slaves at his farm near Cornwall. In his will, he freed them all and provided a fund for their upkeep.

On 1st August, 1834, the Imperial Emancipation Act freed slaves throughout the British Empire. The British government offered compensation to slave-owners, but there were no applications from Canada. It is doubtful if anyone was still enslaved in Upper Canada.

Simcoe the Abolitionist

14 March 1793 - William Vrooman of Queenston sold his slave, Chloe Cooley, to an American. Her screams as men dragged her into a boat attracted attention. Peter Martin, who may have been a slave of Col. Butler, notified the Lt.-Governor. Although Chloe Cooley could not be helped, Simcoe immediately determined to abolish slavery in Upper Canada.

9 July 1793 - *An Act to prevent the further introduction of slaves, and to limit the term of contracts for servitude within this Province* is often dubbed *Simcoe’s Compromise Act*. Slave-owning members of the legislature would not entertain the idea of total abolition, and the Compromise Act did not immediately free anyone from bondage. Slaveholders kept their current slaves, and children of slave mothers could be put to work. But every child born of a slave mother after 9 July 1793 would be free at the age of 25, and their children would be free at birth. Perhaps most importantly, the Act distinguished between slaves and other property.

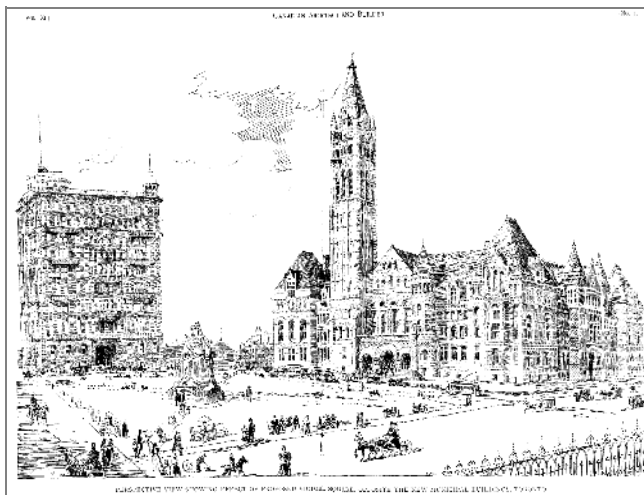
With all its shortcomings, this was the first anti-slavery legislation in the British Empire.

MARCH Unbuilt Toronto: a History of the City That Might Have Been

Author Mark Osbaldeston took us to “an alternate universe,” focussing on projects proposed for Queen Street, between Yonge Street and University Avenue that would have produced a very different Toronto, had they been implemented.

Mark began with a startling image of new City Hall dwarfed by three office and apartment towers, which were to be the tallest in the Commonwealth. This was an ambitious development proposed by Eatons in the 1960s. Their flagship department store would front Bay Street, and to make best use of the valuable property, only the clock tower of Old City Hall would be retained as a nod to the past. After years of negotiations, it was community opposition to the demolition of Old City Hall that forced Eatons to withdraw this plan in 1965.

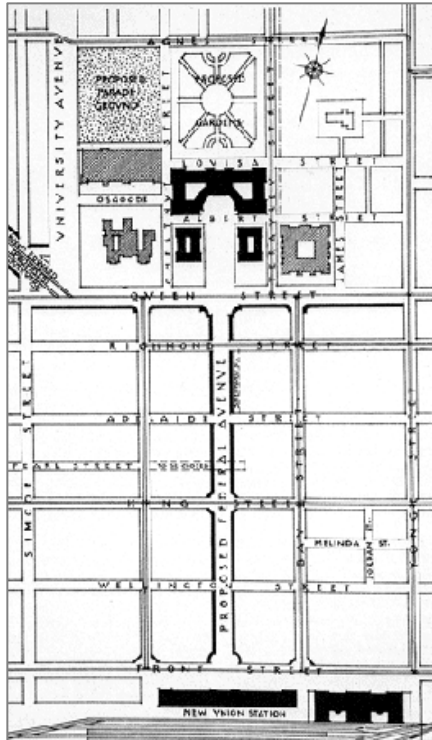
Ideas for rebuilding the area around the City Hall began before E.J. Lennox’s building was completed. In 1897, petitions from citizens suggested that Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee be commemorated by giving Toronto a downtown park – called, of course, Victoria Square. South of Queen Street, opposite the City Hall, it would have a statue of Her Majesty as the focus of its pathways. On one side would be the new Temple Building (demolished 1970) of the Independent Order of Foresters. However, the city fathers thought that the cost of buying the property was too high, and the space too small.



Perspective view showing effect of proposed Victoria Square opposite the new municipal buildings, Toronto. *Canadian Architect & Builder*, Vol.11, No.1, 1898.

Unbuilt Toronto continues on page 7

A later suggestion was to locate the proposed square west of City Hall, with Osgoode Hall on its west side, and a new art gallery to the north. By 1911, this idea also incorporated an elegant thoroughfare (Federal Avenue) south to the new



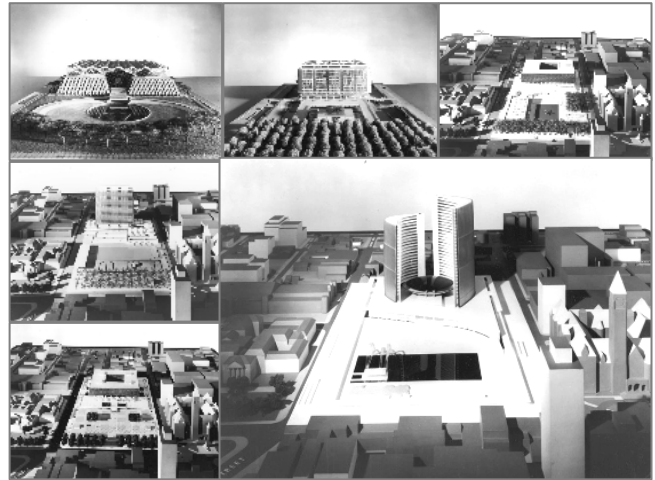
Union Station. (University Avenue originally stopped at Queen Street.) Over the decades there were several variations on this theme, and as municipal needs outgrew Lennox's building, ideas for municipal buildings were incorporated into these visions. There was a suggestion

that both Old City Hall and Osgoode be demolished (described by one councillor as "two old crocks"). One city hall design was condemned by U of T's Faculty of Architecture as "a monstrous monument to backwardness," and reminiscent of a funeral home. Lengthy debates, discussions, and disputes prevented any of these proposals becoming reality.

Queen Street Ghost Station

In the 1940s, the Toronto Transit Commission anticipated tremendous growth in ridership. The busiest streetcar lines were on Yonge Street and Queen Street, and so these were the routes picked to be the first underground transit lines. When the Yonge subway line was constructed in the early 1950s (opening in 1954), a "City Hall" station for a future Queen streetcar line was roughed in, under the Queen subway station. In the 1960s, plans for an underground Queen streetcar line were abandoned in favour of the Bloor-Danforth line. Mark Osbaldeston was fortunate enough to be able to visit the "ghost station," and photographs are in his book.

Finally, in 1957 the city launched an international competition for a new city hall design, to include a civic square where citizens could sit and stroll. Eric Arthur was appointed advisor, and an international panel judged the 520 entries. As we know, the eventual choice was Viljo Revell's design.



Some of the entries in the international competition for a new city hall design, including Viljo Revell's.

These are just a few of our city's unrealised plans. Mark Osbaldeston showed us not only what might have been, but what might have been lost: Old City Hall, Osgoode Hall and Union Station come to mind. There are many more examples in his book.

Unbuilt Toronto - A History of the City That Might Have Been, Mark Osbaldeston
Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008

The Mystery Block

By 1910, much of the property bounded by Yonge, Church, Alexander and Carlton had been purchased by "a mysterious syndicate." From time to time there was conjecture in the newspapers about "British capital," or "New York investors." Finally in 1930 it came out: the International Realty Co. that owned the block was a subsidiary of Eatons. Originally the T. Eaton Co.'s plan had been to build their second store on Carlton street, but as time went on the store was constructed on land they had consolidated south of College between Yonge and Bay Street. Eatons gave the city the right-of-way to extend College Street across Yonge, and join it with Carlton, in exchange for the now redundant part of Carlton. When the new right-of-way was established, Eatons sold the surplus land.

Heritage Calendar

Market Gallery, South St. Lawrence Market, 95 Front St. E.

<http://www.stlawrencemarket.com/gallery/>

7 March - 13 June, 2009

Lit City: Toronto Through the Eyes of Authors and Artists, including Toronto artists Aba Bayefsky, Sybil Goldstein, Gerald Lazare, Doris McCarthy, Louis de Niverville, and authors Margaret Atwood, George Elliott Clarke, Cory Doctorow, Ramibai Espinet, Joe Kertes, Antanas Sileika, Russell Smith.

University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies
www.learn.utoronto.ca; phone 416-978-6666
Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm, 6 May – 24 June, 2009 (8 classes)

Toronto's Residential Architecture: a History. Join Marta O'Brien for an enjoyable exploration of two hundred years of residential architecture in Toronto. One class will be a walking tour of Rosedale. (This is a non-credit course; there are no assignments or tests.)

Location: University of Toronto downtown campus
Fee: \$290 Course code: SCS 2033-002

Heritage Toronto Walks

<http://www.heritagetoronto.org/discover-toronto/walk>

Sunday, May 10, start at 1:30 pm, end approx. 3:30 pm
our own Marta O'Brien leads a walk through the **Wellington Place Neighbourhood**. Start point: near the statue in Victoria Memorial Square, Wellington St. W. at Portland St. (just east of Bathurst) Finish point: Bathurst & Adelaide Streets.

Yonge Lawrence Village BIA Street Festival

www.yongelawrencevillage-bia.com

Saturday, 13 June, 2009 10 am to 5 pm

Annual **Village Day Street Festival** on Yonge Street from Lawrence Avenue to Yonge Boulevard.

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Johnstone & Bobcock
ESTD YONGE ST. TORONTO
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THE CHOICE THAT GIVES YOU MORE!

It's Spring at Madeleine's
OVER 1,000 NEW SPRING HATS
Madame and Mademoiselle:
Easter is almost here and in preview of the chic chapeaux Parade is now at Madeleine's.
Gay colours and flowers are really high fashion news this season. The shades to look for — to be looked at — include Blazing sassy, Steamer blue, Giltter red, Daffodil yellow, Green grass, Bright pink, turquoise, beige, white, black and navy.
Spring Hats '08 feature... satins, tulle, small and large, ruffled brims and clothes made up in Milan, panache and fancy French straws.
Don't wait another day, choose your new hats now at
Madeleine
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3319 YONGE ST.
(at Fairlawn) HU. 8-5408
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Order Delicious
HOT CROSS BUNS
Fresh Baked Daily on the premises.
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2568 YONGE STREET
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Email Addresses Requested!

We have a few member email addresses in our database. With a more complete list, we can remind you of upcoming meetings and heritage events, and send an electronic newsletter, if you like. We will not give out your email address.

If this interests you, just email me at alexg@alumni.uwaterloo.ca and I will add you to the distribution list. Thank you. **Alex. Grenzebach**

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

Submissions for the next *Newsletter* by 15th June to dawsonbh@rogers.com or call 416-481-6622.



North Toronto Historical Society

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

% 129 Blythwood Road, Toronto, Ontario M4N 1A5

www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/8809

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

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