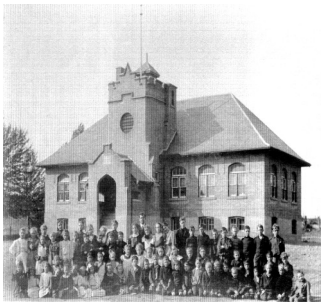


News from the Museum School



The Board of Directors for the Museum School has certainly been on a steady roller coaster ride for the last year. Disappointments have abounded and frustrations have met us at every turn.

At last, we have a bright beam of hope! The Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum in Ingersoll has invited us to move to its historical park just off the 401. We are very excited about returning to our original name - The Oxford County Museum School - and forming a partnership with the members of the Museum Board and the Town of Ingersoll. You cannot imagine the excitement that has permeated our board meetings after so many months of worry and dismay. To find a body of people such as those in Ingersoll who can see the historic value of our collection, who can appreciate the place we hold in the history of education, and who is willing to find room for us to function within its organization is truly heartfelt!

Sadly, that means we will be leaving our beloved building in June. We want to give you one last chance to visit the Oxford County Museum School, as it has been called for the past thirty-six years. On Saturday, May 28, from 2 pm to 4 pm, please plan to help us say good bye to our old friend. Bring a lawn chair, visit, and reminisce about your experiences here, about your teaching career, and about your days as a student. Come be a part of the celebration with those who will always hold a special place in their heart for SS# 6 - the Oxford County Museum School.

Continued on page 4....

The View from the Basement

The past few months have indeed been challenging for all of us concerned with the Museum School. Since learning of the Thames Valley District School Board's decision to stop all support – funding and providing the building – it has been an exercise in patience, ingenuity, and determination as we have tried to find a solution to our situation.

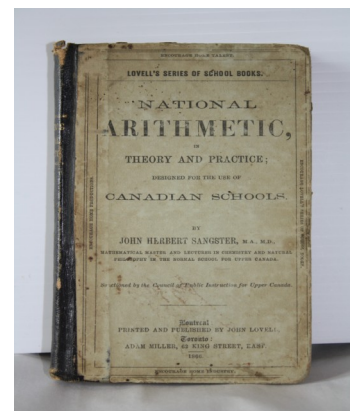
What were we looking for? A new home that would respect and assist us in our mission of providing educational programs and community activities that focus on preserving and presenting the history of education in southern Ontario.

We are thrilled to announce that within the community of Oxford County, we have found what we need. First, the Woodstock Museum has given us exhibit space in their temporary gallery that allows us to remain open and serving the public until the end of the year. During that time, we will be moving our collection and archives to the Town of Ingersoll, where we have entered into an arrangement to partner with The Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum.

Remaining in Oxford County is of paramount concern for us. It is here that we can tell the stories of rural education and share our artefacts with the public. As part of The Ingersoll Cheese and Agricultural Museum site, we will retain our individual status as we assist in providing a rich and entertaining visitor experience as they enter into a new phase to further develop their site.

Jennifer Beauchamp

**What the Heck is it?
See page 4 for a description!**



Packing up!

To every cloud there is a silver lining. Sometimes these expressions can be annoying, even when they are true. The Museum School must pack up and move, but this has been a great opportunity to not only see, but to handle every artefact in the collection. I feel very 'curatorial', having had that chance.

I also feel the aches and pains of packing. Strained muscles and cut fingers aside, it has been a peculiarly rewarding experience. There really are some fabulous artefacts in this collection! There are also some fabulous ones we must leave behind. The beautiful and rare slate blackboards, the unique architectural details that enhance this building, and the wonderful collection of graffiti in the front entrance – all must stay and await what the future holds for this old schoolhouse.

Our move could not have gone as smoothly without the help of volunteers. While our basement has looked like the scene of a frat party, with liquor boxes (empty of course!) piled to the ceiling, it has been a beehive of activity. Leading the way has been the Museum Board members. In small teams, they have been in to pack textbooks. Toiling in the storage room, entertained only by a radio and the frequent groans of frustration over our aging laptop computer, they will have packed over 300 boxes of books by the time we are done! Surely they deserve a toast!

Jennifer Beauchamp



Marilynn Smith and Brenda Seaton at work.



Packed boxes and books waiting to be packed.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Museum School is looking for volunteers of all ages to help with different projects. Some of the opportunities include:

- Board Member
- Program Helper—education outreach and school groups
- Fundraising Projects
- Grant Search and Applications
- Artefact Data Entry
- **And our newest activities, artefact packing and box moving!**

Come and join our team as we prepare for our big adventure! We need strong arms for box moving, but we can teach you to handle and pack artefacts. You can learn a new skill at any age! If you are interested, please call

519.424.9964 for details.

News from the Donor Card Chair

As Donor Card Chair, I would like to thank the donors who have continued to contribute to The Friends in spite of some of the press reports indicating we are closing. The Friends are adamant in our effort to keep the collection intact, as it is just too valuable to have it lost to other museums or collectors.

A few more donors are locking into the regular giving program offered by the CanadaHelps.org group who do year-end receipting for those on a monthly donation cycle. Yes, there is a service charge that cuts into the donation that we receive for this service, but it is a sign of the times for this method of donation. You still get a full receipt for the amount donated. Check out the link to CanadaHelps.org on our website.

With the edition of this newsletter, some of you will find another donor card inserted as a reminder that we have yet to receive your donation for the 2010/2011 cycle. A return envelope was not inserted to keep postage costs to a minimum which permits us to produce a newsletter of six pages so we could share all the exciting news about our move.

As the Treasurer, I would like to report that we are sitting at sixty-one (61%) per cent of budget of the donor revenue stream with about four months left in that 2010-2011 cycle. Our liability insurance cost (\$1,300) will remain about the same. Our Financial Review climbed to \$2,800.00. We will incur additional over-budget costs due to our move to Ingersoll. It is our intent to hire professional movers for the larger furniture pieces such as the showcases, storage shelving, and the classroom desks. We would also like to move the cairn. Any top-up of donation would certainly be appreciated!

We have had to cash in our invested funds in order to allow us to protect our cash flow. It would be great to be able to replenish those funds at a future time. We've done our best to protect those funds from being used for everyday operations and have them for a rainy day. Unfortunately, the rainy day came in the form of a tsunami!

Our revenue stream is very different this year due to not having a grant from the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) to offset our wages for our curator. We value the work that Jennifer provides us and we are doing our best to keep her at three-days-a-week schedule. She is prepared to cut back to two days to keep our budget balanced if necessary, recognizing that this does reduce our opportunity to provide programs for visiting schools. It is most likely that all schools will now be charged for their visit, deviating from the 'no charge' offered the TVDSB schools.

As a Board member and Friend of the Oxford County Museum School, I think the Ingersoll plan is a great fit for us. As one door slammed shut, another one has opened with a welcoming and appreciative crowd on the other side. They value what we have done, and what we continue to do – maintain and promote a unique collection of artefacts that reflect the history of education in Oxford County. Please join us in our efforts, by donating, volunteering, and visiting us in the upcoming years.

Ken Shrubsall



Canadiana Challenge Finals



The Canadiana Challenge Finals were held at the Thames Valley Museum School in Burgessville on May 4th. Students from the ten participating schools competed under the watchful eyes of parents, grandparents, and Museum School Board members, who organized the event.

The winner was Andrew Muchan, from Ryerson P.S. Tied for second was Andrew Nikolopoulos, Northridge, and Garrett Yungblut, East Oxford. Third place went to Travis Schiefele, West Nissouri. Barry Tate represented RTO and presented the winner with a cheque for \$100. Special thanks to John Hinchcliffe, Ken Fallowfield, Brenda Seaton, Jennifer Beauchamp, and Marge McKinnon for helping with all of the finer details. Our Committee Chair, Doug McKinnon, organized this event, and included some pre-contest tune-ups for the participants, which were enjoyed by all!

Mary-Margaret Braund



Thames Valley Museum School

Preserving Ontario's Educational Heritage

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Continued from page 1.....

We will miss our friends in Norwich Township. At this point, I would like to thank Don Doan and his councilors on the Norwich Town Council who have supported us and left no stone unturned in efforts to help us stay in Burgessville. I personally have been so grateful for the manner in which they have demonstrated support and offered assistance to help us avoid what has proven to be the inevitable.

In June we will exit the building with all our artifacts, our collections, our furniture, our cairn, and memories that will help us re-establish ourselves in Ingersoll. The artifacts will be housed in the basement of the town hall where Jennifer will have office space from which to run the Museum School. We will be setting up an old school house in the building previously used as the Sports Hall of Fame.

We look forward to your much needed financial support to help with the move and to keep us functional. The Town of Ingersoll and our board has all but finalized leases for the park building and the part of the basement we will be using. We anxiously await the opportunity to begin to work closely with our new friends in Ingersoll and to continue to keep the doors of the Oxford County Museum School open for many years to come.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I want to thank Jennifer, our curator, who has been a constant driving force to buoy us up when things looked most bleak and who has extended herself so far beyond to make sure that everything gets done. She is a whirlwind of energy and full of ideas. Jennifer, we are so lucky to have you. Thank you so much!

Thank you for your interest and support of our struggles. Look for further information about grant application successes, renovation news, and reopening celebrations in the next newsletter.

See you all in May.

Marilynn Smith, Co-Chair

WHAT THE HECK IS IT?

'Bravo' if you said it is an old book. 'Bravissimo' if you recognized this as a school text book from the 1800's. Pictured on page 1, this copy of Lovell's ***National Arithmetic in Theory and Practice; Designed for the use of Canadian Schools*** was published in 1866 in Toronto. Up to 1884, most school text books came from either Ireland or the United States. Neither was satisfactory, as both showed the lack of connection to the realities of life in Ontario. Those from Ireland reflected the significantly different geography and history, and the American books often mentioned Canada only briefly - often with negative remarks about Britain. They also promoted republican politics and ideology. The ***Lovell's Series of School Books*** was a popular choice in early Upper Canada, due to the Canadian content and publishing.

The reform of school textbooks was ongoing in the early to mid 1800's but received its greatest success when it became one of the major focuses in the career of Rev. Egerton Ryerson, the assistant superintendent of education in 1844. Under his influence, the use of "unsuitable and improper books" was discouraged in schools.

GO GREEN

GET THE MUSEUM SCHOOL'S E-NEWSLETTER

Send an email to info@museumschool.ca to receive your newsletter by email.

Not only will you save paper, but you will receive the photographs in colour!