

Arts and Cookery Bank nearly done

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

With the Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne nearing completion, a series of tours were provided over the last week for selected guests. When completed, the Bank aims to be a hub for the communities of West Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southwest Middlesex and Newbury, and showcase the histories of these areas through photographic collections, as well as culinary experiences. The finished Arts and Cookery Bank is made up of two buildings; a 1914 Bank of Montreal, and an 1883 timber-frame barn. The barn was donated by Mary Gillett, and it was taken from Shackleton Line Dutton, piece by piece so that it could be attached to the west end of the bank. Approximately \$526,000 has been spent on construction, with the total project coming to around \$843,000. The official grand opening will be sometime this summer.

"These old timber barns, there's less and less of them every year. This was a way to preserve one of these beautiful barns," said Arts and Cookery Bank board member Bill Denning. The "barn" part of the building includes a fully-functional kitchen to be used for hands-on cooking sessions, and the old stables have been converted into a photo lab. The "Bank" part of the building includes a large front hall, and computer screens mounted on many of the walls which display a digital photo archive showcasing the history of the surrounding municipalities from the late 1700's to the present.

Members of the public donated their old pictures to the Bank so they could be scanned and placed into the archives. The archive currently contains over 1,000 photos and is still growing. The collection includes a photo of the first motorized hearse, used in the 1930's by Dugald Walker, funeral director of Rodney from 1905-1950, and a picture of St. Henry's, the first Catholic Church in the Township of Aldborough.

"We want not only to celebrate the past, but the present, and moving on into the future," said Grace McGartland, Arts and Cookery bank Chair. "This is not your everyday barn.... Right from the get-go, this was a project with no legs, but a lot of heart."

Some pictures will be made into large, permanent wall murals that will decorate the building.

Jesse Cnockaert The Chronicle

What's cooking?

The Arts and Cookery Bank in West Lorne gave tours last week to give a preview of what the Bank will have to offer when it officially opens later this summer. Grace McGartland (L), Arts and Cookery Bank Chair, and Norma Schneckeburger (R) helped chef Kim Saunders prepare a meal of Lake Erie Yellow Perch, and a summer salad, made with local produce.



July 14, 2010 - St. Thomas/Elgin Weekly News

www.theweeklynnews.ca

Arts & Cookery Bank opens in West Lorne

Grand opening July 17

AFTER three years of careful planning and remarkable construction, it's done.

THE Arts & Cookery Bank, the newest tourism gem in Elgin County, will open its doors officially on Saturday July 17, during the Cactus Cattle and Cowboy celebration in West Lorne.

A&CB is a cultural destination designed to promote the lifestyle and tell the story of the cultural heritage of four municipalities - West Elgin, Newbury, Southwest Middlesex and Dutton-Dunwich. It gives visitors an authentic taste of the rural experience and it comes alive through food and photos with programming for all ages.

It's a story of courage and commitment from the beginning, says Grace McGart-

land, Chair of The Arts & Cookery Bank Board of Directors, "and we couldn't be more thrilled to see this day arrive. We want the entire community to join in the celebration of this incredible venue. We are so excited."

The Bank, a former Bank of Montreal building, now houses a photographic exhibition area. Attached to it is The Barn, an 1883 timber frame barn moved to the site. The hand-hewn barn timbers now frame retrofitted stainless steel and marble counters. It is a curious marriage of bricks and barn board interpreted through high-tech and country charm. It houses the Foto Stable - a digital photo lab for group photo classes - and The Cookery, a demonstration kitchen for interactive classes



an authentic taste of "the raw rural experience" brought alive through "food and fotos"

and events. The venue is also available for rental.

The region was once home to thriving lumber mills, cement, cheese, pickle and shoe factories, fisheries and tobacco farms, and included 43 villages

and dozens of hotels. Despite decreasing population and empty storefronts, this non-profit venture has taken the longer view. Their aim is to promote, encourage and sustain a rural lifestyle. With support from

Delivered to over 30,800 addresses - WEEKLY

all levels of government, including substantial grant funding and local fundraising, the group of 100 volunteers is a model of partnership and collaboration.

In October 2009, more than 60 people gathered at the site, ages ranging from five months to 95 years, and stood at what is now the Reception Area, shovels in hand, to break sod.

Throughout the entire building process, the project has employed local craftsmen and tradespeople and purchased materials locally. With careful attention to detail, the building has been slowly and steadily pieced together.

In one sense, "the A&CB is all about our stories," says Sharon Little, one of the members of the Advisory Council. "Stories are about the past, but not just 'the ol' days'. Stories happened last week, and also 'when I was a kid'. The Bank area is home to both rotating and permanent photo and image collections that tell stories about families,

livelihoods, buildings, events, groups that make up the community. To gather those memories, volunteers borrowed private collections of photos, postcards, posters and the like, to create a digital databank, displayed in slideshows.

"The materials combine 'old' history and recent history.

To mark the official opening, there will be three ribbon cuttings, one symbolizing each year of development. The Early Bird Ribbon Cutting will be held at 8:05am, on Monroe St. at the Reception entrance. The first five to arrive will have the honour of cutting the first ribbon. The Cookery and Foto Stable Ribbon Cutting takes place at 10:15am, on the Garden Deck at the entrance to The Cookery. The Final Ribbon Cutting, at 11:45am, will take place on Graham Rd on the steps of The Bank.

March 2011

My Favourite Things

Maalox and nose drops and needles for knittin',
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittin's,
Bundles of magazines tied up with string,
These are a few of my favourite things,

Cadillacs, cataracts, hearing aids, glasses,
Polident, Fixodent, false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.

When the pipes leak. When the bones creak.
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favourite things
And then I don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets, and corn pads for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heat pads and hot meals they bring,
These are a few of my favourite things.



Back pains, confused brains,
and no fear of sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures
and hair that is thinnin'.
And we won't mention our short
shrunken frames
When we remember our favourite
things.

When the joints ache, when the
hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
I simply remember
the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.

Scott Hilgendorff

West Lorne: – As the Arts and Cookery Bank nears completion and people have had a chance to better understand the scope of the project, Grace McGartland, chairperson of the committee that developed the heritage project said a lot of great ideas are coming forward as people realize how they can use the new facility.

“The building is completely transformed. This is a regional cultural destination,” said McGartland, “But people ask, ‘What the heck is that?’”

Using the old bank building on Graham Road in West Lorne, the project is aimed at preserving and promoting the cultural history and heritage of the region.

It will be devoted toward creating experiences built around local heritage. For example, people can book a weekend at a bed and breakfast during which they will tour local farms, see a play and take a cooking class on preparing a meal from local foods they picked or harvested themselves.

Now, McGartland said people are starting to get a better understanding of the \$750,000 project and lots of ideas are coming forward along with requests to use the centre.

“A lot of people have approached us for family events,” said McGartland, adding people are looking to use facilities more and more for larger family gatherings like reunions or at Christmas. “It’s great for people to use it but at the same time, they [will be] seeing our heritage, our culture, our legacy.”

Photographs and other displays make up a large part of the heritage component and serve to teach about

People ask, what the heck is that?



the area’s rich cultural and historical heritage. It’s the first part of the old bank building that people see in the facility that could be used for everything from hosting a prom dinner to a wedding reception, while at the same time being exposed to the history that has been built into the project.

“They aren’t just renting a room. That’s a great way to truly celebrate our community,” said McGartland. For the few who have had a closer look inside while working with the organizing committee, she said the most commonly heard word is, “Wow”.

From the entrance to the building in the heritage component, visitors then walk back into the reconstructed barn that has been attached to the rear of the building

where they are in for more surprises.

“The barn has gone through a complete transformation but it’s still a barn,” said McGartland. A barn was donated last year from Dutton/Dunwich and physically moved and restored while being attached to the rear of the bank building.

While all the timbers and beams are exposed and you can see you are inside a barn, McGartland said people then start to notice the new stainless steel and granite fixtures that make up the cooking aspect of the project.

Going further inside, some newly built barn doors inside the building can be rolled back to reveal the state-of-the-art digital darkroom that will

be used to teach digital photography that otherwise required 45-minute drives to area colleges.

The facility will be available for everything from cooking and digital photography classes to numerous community functions as well as available for private use. With a modern kitchen, McGartland said the facility could be used for education as well, able to provide resources not found in the local schools.

Idea gathering sessions have been held on an on-going basis with numerous ways for people to still get involved in the project. Another session is being planned in early June that people can attend by contacting the organizers.

Volunteers can get involved in four areas: through the idea gathering which can include being part of shorter or longer-term projects with the facility. “Shutterbug” volunteers that would like to help with the digital photography component, “Hot Pot” volunteers helping with the culinary side and “Helping Hands” will like to get involved with hundreds of different tasks, big and small, toward completing the project or helping with the operations.

McGartland said they are expecting to announce an opening date soon but want to be sure they have all the details completed before setting an official date.

To get involved, contact Tammy Oliveira at 519-768-9986. They are looking at a system of trading volunteer hours for classes in cooking or photography.

(Scott Hilgendorff has extensive experience in rural issues and economic development. He is a strong advocate for rural communities and is a member of Marketing Partners of Western Elgin Region).

Dutton gets banners to beautify downtown

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

Decorative banners are now hanging in Dutton as part of a beautification strategy.

The banner project was spearheaded by a partnership between the Dutton/Dunwich Chamber of Commerce and the Municipality of Dutton/Dunwich.

Each banner depicts the heritage of the Dutton area, with images such as Scottish Highland Dancers, as perceived by art students from West Elgin Secondary School (WESS).

"One of the priorities of the COC, and the municipality, is the beautification of the downtown," said Brian Girard, Chamber of Commerce President. "I think the cooperation and the work put into it is wonderful. This is what we need."

Cost of the banners was shared by the Municipality and the Dutton/Dunwich Chamber of Commerce, at \$54 per banner.

Banners were also designed by students of Dunwich/Dutton Public School, which have a theme of Christmas. Those banners will replace the WESS student banners when winter rolls around.



Jesse Cnockaert The Chronicle

Dutton banners.

Dutton/Dunwich mayor Cameron McWilliam points out one of the banners that have been hung around Dutton as part of a beautification strategy.

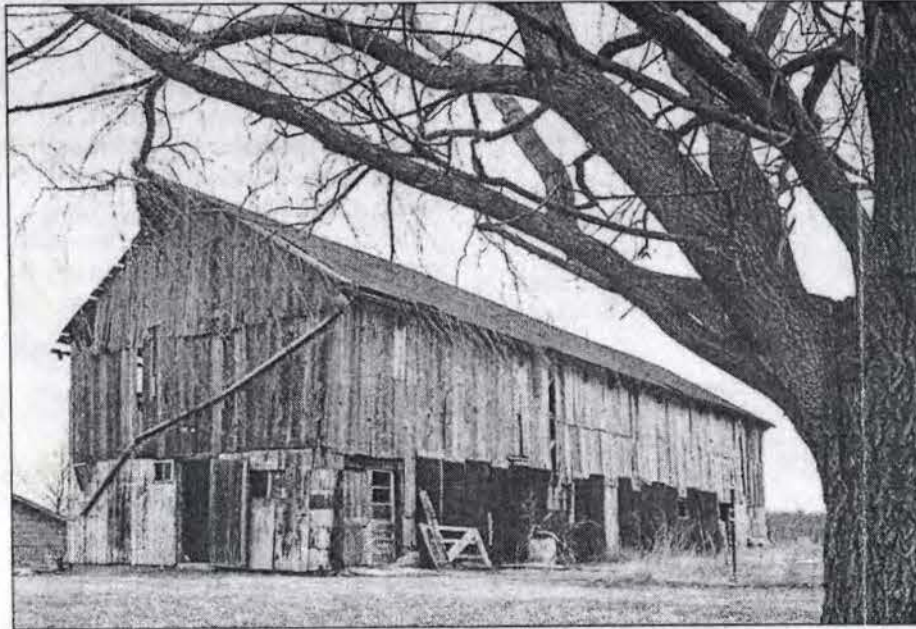
1883 barn moving downtown

Scott Hilgendorff

West Lorne: A barn built in 1883 is moving from its Shackleton Line home in Dutton/Dunwich to an unusual new home in downtown West Lorne. The barn, owned by Mary Gillett is part of the \$ 750,000 Arts and Cookery project being developed in West Lorne and was dismantled this month to be installed again later this spring in its urban home. "It's going to go back up exactly as it was," said McGartland, chairperson of the committee putting the project together.

The barn is being retrofitted to the back of the old Bank of Montreal Building on Graham Road. The complex will serve as the home to the Arts and Cookery Bank, a combination of a cultural and heritage centre that will appeal to both local residents and tourists with its wide range of programming.

Programming at the Arts and Cookery Banks will range from cooking lessons by local and guest chefs based on local fair as well as community cook-offs and photo-



graphic exhibits featuring local culture from the past to the future in addition to digital photography courses.

The barn portion of the building will house the project's demo kitchen and photo lab and the dismantling of the barn this past week in Dutton/Dunwich is just one more big step toward the completion of the project,

expected to open in early 2010.

It will be devoted toward creating experiences built around local heritage. For example, people can book a weekend at a bed and breakfast during which they will tour local farms, see a play and take a cooking class on preparing a meal from local foods they picked or harvested themselves.

All will be done in the state of the art kitchen going into the barn.

The barn will also house the photography lab where digital photo training can take place while seeing permanent displays on touch-screens archiving the area's rural way of life, while catching rotating exhibits that

Shackleton Line barn moving to West Lorne. Photo: John St. Pierre

feature aspects of the region as seen by amateur and professional photographers.

"What's really neat about this is one of the beams prominently displays '1883' etched on it and we'll be able to display it prominently," said McGartland.

The project includes partners in Dutton/Dunwich, West Elgin, Southwest Middlesex and Newbury and the concept of incorporating the use of a barn seemed like a natural idea toward promoting and preserving local heritage, she said.

Already more than \$500,000 has been committed to the project putting them well over the halfway mark toward their opening next year. McGartland said it's all coming together quickly and there is much local enthusiasm for the project.

It's hoped the project will bring in more than 5,000 visitors to the area by 2011 and as much as \$800,000 in direct investment in the region. It's one of several local projects in the past few years designed toward increasing tourism and exposure toward the region.

(Scott Hilgendorff has extensive experience in rural issues and economic development. He is a strong advocate for rural communities and is a member of Marketing Partners of Western Elgin Region).

Taken Aug 2010.



Extreme Makeover

Continued From Page 1

During the past eighteen months more than 1000 visitors have dropped in to the new facility. Thousands of volunteer hours have been donated since the project was begun in 2008. More than 1100 cups of coffee, and 120 dozen cookies, brownies, cakes and scones since January. Countless kilograms of nails and wood screws.

The heart of The Bank will be the stories that are being collected, through photographs and other images, along with audio and video recordings, from the four communities involved in the project — West Elgin, Dutton-Dunwich, Southwest Middlesex and Newbury. The Bank will make use of 21st century digital technology, which will be easy for everyone to use and enjoy.

The genius behind the Arts & Cookery Bank comes from Grace McGartland and her husband Duncan Morrison. Grace and Duncan returned to the area to retire to a local farm but a quiet retirement wasn't in the cards. Their dream and drive are the catalyst that has created the bricks & mortar and barn beams that have become a focal point in the western end of Elgin County.

Open House

At a recent media open house I toured the new facility just before the public opening. Actually I was late so the other media had left, which gave me an opportunity for a one-on-one tour through the new facility with Duncan Morrison. I asked Duncan where the idea for the project came from. "Grace and I bought this building more than three years ago" he said "and with a lot of input from friends and the community came up with the idea of creating a cultural heritage centre". Grace and Duncan then donated the property and the building to the Arts & Cookery Bank which was set up as a not-for-profit corporation and a registered charity.

Duncan started me off in the entrance that joins the two distinct buildings. "It's classical stick construction that marries the two original structures, the barn and the bank", said Duncan. "We are now entering the gallery, the bank area, through the original vault." "The bank went through a lot of uses after being closed as a bank including being a food market and a Laundromat" noted Duncan. Amongst the many details, Duncan noted that during the renovations two stained glass windows from the original bank building were discovered under the floor. "I think we have a great story to tell here," said Duncan, "going back to our roots with Scottish and German settlers."

I asked Duncan how they found the barn. "The barn came from a very gracious lady and friend Mary Gillett", he said "who had a barn that she wanted to sell. Our friend Wade Davey, a member of the Timber Frame Builders Guild of America was helping us with the design of a timber structure that we thought would work well on the site. Mary said she would donate her barn to the project and Wade married it to the original bank building". Duncan concluded his tour by saying "It's amazing what a group



Left: The entrance to the Arts & Cookery Bank. Below Left: Duncan Morrison Below Right: The Digital Photography lab in the former stable of a timber frame barn.

of volunteers can do when they get together with a community. It's wonderful". My tour lasted over an hour and was concluded with a delicious lunch created in the new Arts & Cookery Bank kitchen.

Opening Week

As a way of thanking their volunteers, builders, funders and friends, a series of evening events were held during the first week in August. More than 450 people toured the Bank. Chef Kim Saunders from the Windjammer in Port Stanley, cooked up some tasty appetizers to go along with Champagne and Chocolate, Chef John Mairleitner from Tall Tales Café in Wallacetown, served up Ribs to go along with St. Thomas microbrewery Iron Spike's beer samples. A delectable "Board's Banquet" filled the Heritage Hall accompanied by the Festivo Strings Duo, Jane Eady (violin) and Ben Gitter (cello).

Now open to the public for tours and fall cooking and photography classes the new facility, I'm sure, will become the centre of food and culture in the region that Grace and Duncan dreamed it could be.

For more information visit The Arts & Cookery Bank 242 Graham Road West Lorne, call 519-768-9986 or visit the web site www.theartsandcookerybank.com

Amish Hex barn sign goes up near Wallacetown

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

Jan 27th 2011

Jesse Cnockaert The Chronicle

In keeping with the region's Barn Quilt theme, Yvonne Brooks at Country Seat Upholstery Studio has installed an Amish Hex Barn Sign.

"When they were doing the barn signs over Wardsville way... I decided that I would do one more in keeping with my present life," said Brooks.

Last year, the Your Wardsville Community Association spearheaded a project to create 30 murals, called barn quilt blocks, to be painted and displayed across the area to celebrate their local history and act as a tourist draw. Brooks decided to follow suit with her own painted work, which is now mounted on her barn at 28143 Talbot Line, Wallacetown.

The Amish Hex barn sign is a painting of three tulips growing out of a heart, and surrounded by a blue ring.

Brooks said that she drew inspiration

Here, take a look

Yvonne Brooks of Wallacetown shows off the Amish Hex barn sign that she painted herself. Brooks said this barn decoration is in keeping with Wardsville's barn quilt project that covers the area.

from barn signs that she saw 30 years ago when she was honeymooning in Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

"Many years ago, going through Pennsylvania Dutch country, many, many of the farms have them on the barns," said Brooks. "You don't have to be an artist to do them, because the signs are very straight-forward."

Brooks said that each element in her folk art piece has its own meaning. The blue outer ring represents smooth sailing in life. The heart represents love, and the three tulips represent the trinity of faith, hope and charity.



Oct 2010

OLD BARN AND OLD PEOPLE

A stranger came by the other day with an offer that set me to thinking,
He wanted to buy the old barn that sits out by the highway.

I told him right off he was crazy.

He was a city type you could tell by his clothes, his car, his hands, and the way he talked.

He said he was driving by and saw that beautiful old barn sitting out in the tall grass and wanted to know if it was for sale.

I told him he had a funny idea of beauty. Sure it was a handsome building in its day.

But then, there's been a lot of winters pass with their snow and ice and howling wind. The summer sun beat down on that old barn till all the paint's gone, and the wood it's turned silver grey.

Now the old building leans a good deal, looking kind of tired Yet that fellow called it beautiful.

That set me to thinking. I walked out to the field, and just stood there, gazing at that old barn.

The stranger said he planned to use the lumber to line the walls of his den in a new country home he's building down the road.

He said you couldn't get paint that beautiful. Only years of standing in the weather, bearing the storms and scorching sun, only that can produce beautiful barn wood.

It came to me then, we're a lot like that you and I, only it's on the inside that the beauty grows with us. Sure we turn silver grey too - and lean a bit more than we did when we were young and full of sap.

But the good Lord knows what He's doing and as the years pass He's busy using the hard weather of our lives, the dry spells and the stormy season's to do a job of beautifying our souls that nothing else can produce. And, to think how often folks holler because they want life easy.

They took the old barn down today and hauled it away, to beautify a rich man's house.

I reckon someday you and I'll be hauled off to heaven to take on whatever chores the good Lord has for us on the great sky ranch.

And I suspect we'll be more beautiful then for the seasons we've been through here. And, just maybe even add a bit of beauty to our Father's house. May there be peace within you today, may you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. And, I do sincerely thank God for my wonderful family and friends who care about me even though I show signs of weathering!
Have a Blessed Day.

(Author Unknown)



The Barns of Elgin

From the Earth to the Earth

Photographs by Jan Row

September 11 to November 27, 2010



Elgin County Administration Building, 4th Floor,
450 Sunset Drive (Hwy 4), St. Thomas, Ontario
519.621.1460 ext. 160, www.elgin-county.on.ca

Jan Rowe, Lake Line, (detail)

IN MEMORY OF ALICE PATERSON

Alice Lenore Paterson

April 10th 2011

Long time Tyrconnell Heritage Society board member and volunteer, Alice Paterson, passed away on Thursday, January 20, 2011 in her 82nd year. A founding member of the Society, Alice was a tireless worker who donned many "hats" during her time at the Backus-Page House. Treasurer, secretary, historic interpreter and historian are just a few of the job titles she proudly wore. The Society was not the only organization to benefit from Alice's efforts as she also participated in other community activities, including the Rodney Agricultural Fair Board and the West Elgin Genealogical and Historical Society. One of her proudest, recent achievements occurred this past summer as she completed a book on the history of her parents, William and Lillie (Campbell) Dill. Alice's contribution to the Tyrconnell Heritage Society and the community was of immeasurable value and she will be sorely missed by all.



TYRCONNELL HERITAGE SOCIETY BOARD ELECTIONS 2011

The Tyrconnell Heritage Society Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday February 3rd. A new board was elected for our 2011 season. We still have one opening so if you'd like to volunteer, we'd be happy to have you!



Top row left to right,
Don Page, Mel Campbell, Don Clayton, Patrick Mooney. Jen Gow-Leitch, Steven McLarty-Payson
Bottom row left to right,
Johanna Schipper, Martha Foster, Bernice Keane, Norah Bennetto, Angela Forman-Bobier, Susan Chapman-Reinke

“I was quite surprised and delighted by the amount that’s around and the fact there are so many (general stores) standing.”

Mike Baker
Curator, Elgin County Museum



Talbotville General Store, 1953 (photo courtesy Elgin County Archives)

“We discovered there are quite a few nice shots of the small villages and crossroads and invariably, there’s a shot of the general store. And then people started saying, ‘that store is still around.’”

From there, the idea took off and after doing a little research, Baker and others discovered many are still intact. One venerable example, the 1875 Lindeman store in Eagle, is now a private home, while others, such as the Union General Store, still soldier on in their intended fashion.

“Some are quite original. They’re buried under alterations or a little bit of vinyl siding, or they’ve changed the windows, but there are a lot of 19th century general stores out there. And in some cases it’s the only thing left in some of these older crossroad communities.”

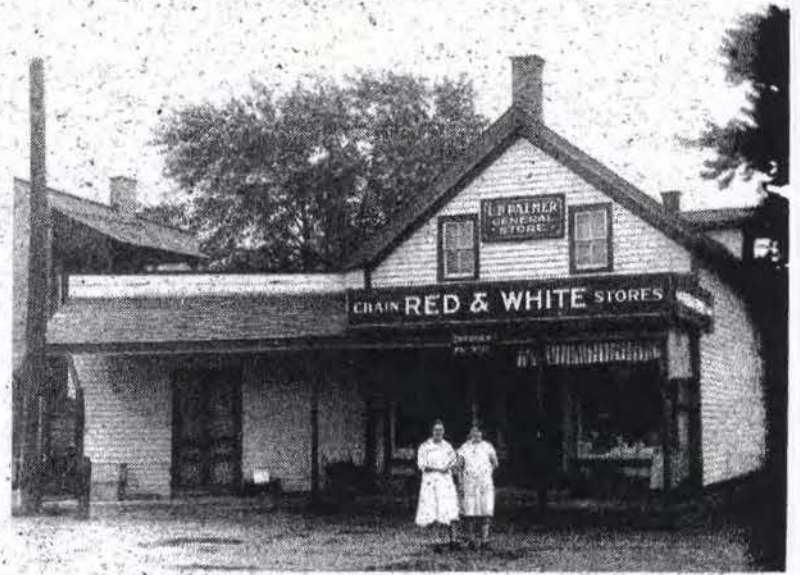
Indeed, the iconic Palmers General Store in Shedden served for 85 years before closing in 2008

Baker said the Palmer family took museum staff through the building and they were able to obtain some classic general store items, tin signs in particular.

The size of their exhibit space on the fourth floor of the Elgin County Administration Building is about the same size as a traditional general store, Baker noted. They’ll even have a store door set up that visitors will pass through and a classic post office wicket from McBride’s General Store in Iona.

Baker and others spent six months researching and preparing the exhibit, and discovered there were more general stores, and information, than at first glance.

“I was quite surprised and delighted by the amount that’s around and the fact that there are so many (general stores) standing. It makes



Mrs. L. D. Palmer, left, and Stella Schraeder (later Garrow) in front of Palmer's Red and White in Shedden, circa 1930. (Photo courtesy Jean and Ralph Palmer)

it a much more important pursuit to get some of this material together,” he noted.

“In the long run, we look forward to doing that because we do want to assemble a pretty good list of our heritage structures.”



Rural Retail: Elgin County's
General Stores:
March 13th to August 28th
2010



Col Talbot Desk.

localnews

■ **WALLACETOWN:** Exhibit highlights memories like 1960 visit by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker

Lin McCann, left, of the Wallacetown Fair Board shows Grace Campbell, a wheelbarrow display of historical items related to the Wallacetown Fair. An exhibit highlighting the Wallacetown Fair's 150th anniversary this year is on display at the Backus-Page House and Museum in Tyrconnell.



PATRICK BRENNAN Times-Journal

Wallacetown Fair celebrates 150 years

PATRICK BRENNAN
Times-Journal

WALLACETOWN — There are still a few people who remember the year Prime Minister John Diefenbaker visited the Wallacetown Fair. It was 1960 and Diefenbaker rode proudly through the fairgrounds in a convertible and led the fair parade. His visit is chronicled through

“There's something for everyone.”

Lin McCann,
Wallacetown Fair Board

newspaper photos and clippings that make up snapshots for a display promoting the Wallacetown Fall Fair's 150th anniversary this year.

The display was seen for the first time at the Backus-Page House and Museum at Tyrconnell Saturday.

The display, mounted in a second-floor bedroom, ties together a commemorative quilt that was sewn for the event, a collection of old programs and newspaper clippings recalling some highlights.

Grace Campbell sewed the special quilt, said Lin McCann of the Wallacetown Fair Board.

“Our theme this year is 150 Years of Memories,” she said.

Special guests at the fair this year will include former fair queens, ambassadors and past fair board presidents.

McCann said she has a lot of confidence most of them can be located to be informed of the special party. “Anna Tokarz keeps good records,” McCann said.

McCann is predicting the 150th fair will meet the same standard each one before it did.

“There's something for everyone,” she said.

This year's fair is Oct. 1-3.

■ **LOCAL HERITAGE:** Enormously significant small piece of the past

Col. Thomas Talbot painting 'of national importance'

ERIC BUNNELL
Times-Journal

Measuring just 17.5 cm high by 28 wide, it's a relatively small part of our past.

And as an artwork, it is a rather prosaic painting of an old man at his desk by a roaring fire in his den.

“It's more like documenting the room,” Mike Baker, Elgin County Museum curator, observes.

“It's not 'a work of art.'”

But significance of the circa 1850 water colour by Richard Airey of his uncle, Col. Thos. Talbot at home in his now-demolished log cabin at Port Talbot, is enormous.



Indeed, the painting has been certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board as being of “outstanding significance

and national importance” to the country — it being the only picture of the founder of the Talbot Settlement known to have been painted during his lifetime.

“It's the only verified contemporary portrait of Col. Talbot,” says Stephen Francom, Elgin County Archives manager.

“I consider it — as we all do — an important part of the cultural heritage of this area.”

The picture was donated this past spring to the county and is now part of the archives collection, and Francom recently announced the gift to county council.

Details, including name of the donor, are being kept secret until the International Plowing Match is out of the way and the gift can be fittingly celebrated with an event, probably in mid-October.

There are no plans, however, for ongoing exhibition.

As a military man of his day, Airey — remembered farther afield not as Talbot's heir but as the leader of the ill-fated Charge of the Light Brigade — would have been trained in landscape painting as a way of reconnaissance.

Baker says the literal nature of his water colour is what makes it so valuable as a record of Talbot's setting.

“I prefer it that way,” Baker says.

“The researcher, the muse-

ologist in me, says ‘Great — it's a record.’”

Indeed, in the middle of the room there's the very chair favourite armchair of the colonel that the museum now holds in its collection,

it's provenance further verified.

But the painting is not without evidence of humanity.

Talbot looks old and frail just a few years before his

death. But by his side, there's what appears to be a basket of eggs — evidence of a gentleman farmer's continuing interest in the country he adopted half a world away from his home.

Aug 18th 2010 T.J.

Hunting then and now

➤ A look at two hunting groups from 1940 and the present

Jesse Cnockaert
The Chronicle

Hunting methods and by-laws may have changed over the last century, but according to Norm Miller, the sense of camaraderie in the sport is still the same.

"Even though it's not a necessity, it's an activity that's enjoyed by young and old alike. There's a lot of camaraderie that goes with it," said Miller. "It's a tradition. It gives you a sense of where your roots come from. It reconnects you to the land"

After a successful deer hunt this past November during the first week of

muzzleloader season, a photo was taken of Miller and his hunting buddies. Miller also shared with The Chronicle a photo of his grandfather on his mother's side, Norman Ford, out with his hunting buddies in 1940. Seventy years apart, the two groups both hunted in this local area.

"There're quite a few families that are in that picture still in the area," said Miller.

Miller has been hunting for the last 32 years, but he never hunted with his grandfather, who passed away before he was born.

George Okolisan, one of Miller's hunting group, has been hunting with his group for the last four years. He said they get together at least once a year to go hunting and share the spoils.

"It's the joy of being out there and seeing nature," said Okolisan. "You've got to have good guys to hunt with. It's the camaraderie of being together."

Past and Present

These two photos show groups of hunters from the local area. One picture was taken in 1940, and the other was taken this past November, 2010. Norm Miller, in the 2010 photo, is the grandson of Norm Miller in the 1940 picture.



Hunting group 2010

(L-R) Ray Axford, Brian Roest, Richard Leatham, Andy Aldred, George Okolisan, Norm Miller, Whity Schachow. Absent: John Petuch, Mary Jane Miller, Copper Hartley, Bob Miller.

Hunting group 1940

(L-R) Frank Galbraith, Norman Ford, Cliff Waite, Norman McNicol, Joe Lyons, Cliff Graham, Gordon Havens, Bill Wilton, Cameron McNicol, Ivan Little, Kenneth Gray, Eddie Shoemaker, Jack Buchan.

