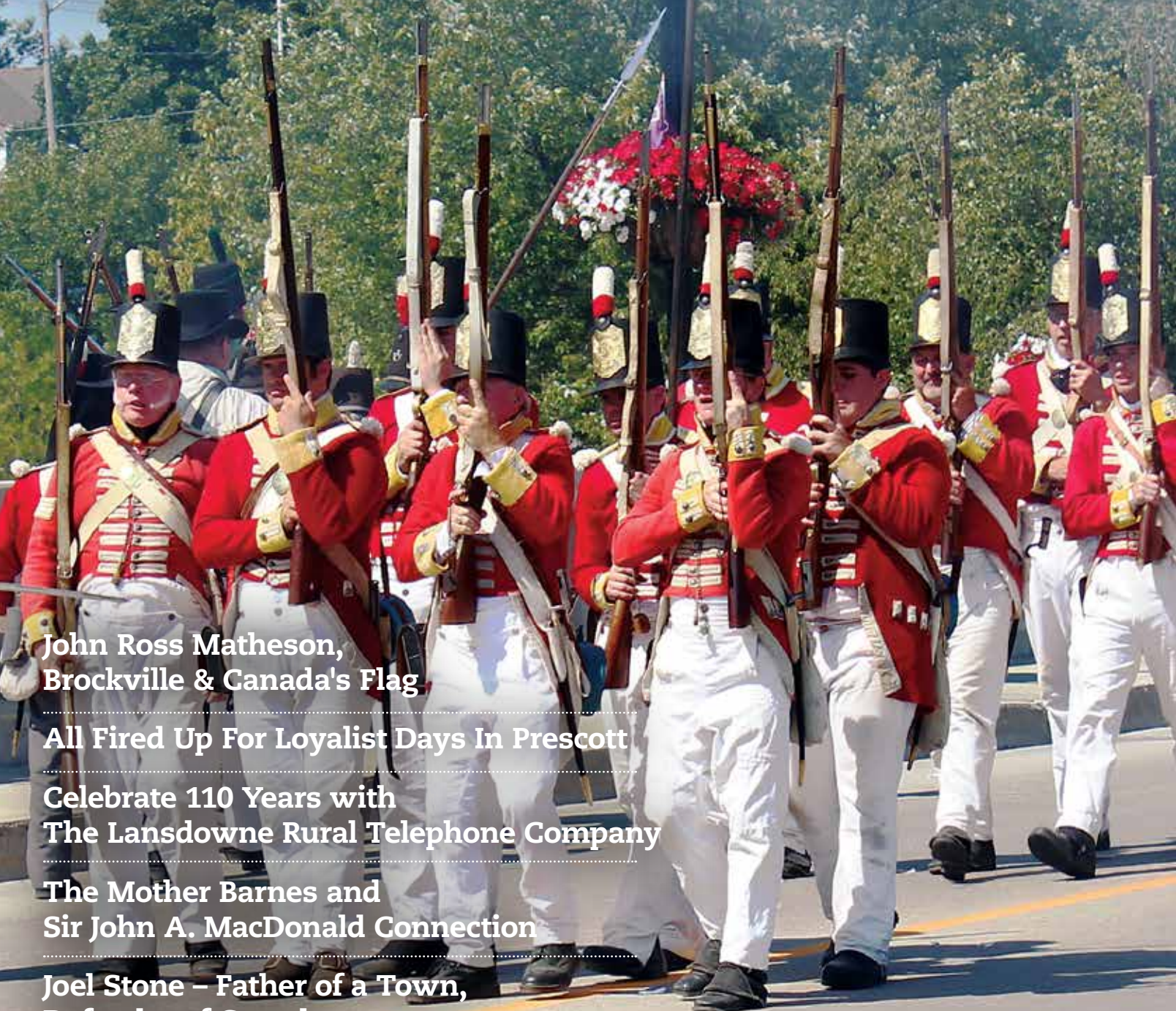


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June | July 2017



**John Ross Matheson,
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**Celebrate 110 Years with
The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company**

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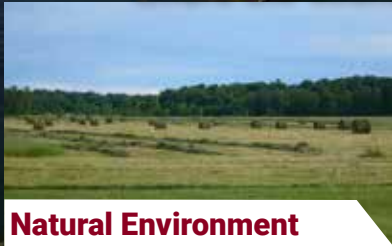
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June/July 2017



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Lorraine Payette

Living Here

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Left: The Flag-mobile promotes our mission to educate people across the country about the history of the Canadian Red & White Maple Leaf Flag, its origin, its birthplace and it's father. Middle: Bob Harper and John Ross Matheson -Bob putting the order of Canada Medal on Mr. Matheson as he was preparing for a special event that day. Mr. Harper felt an honour and privilege to be able to put the medal around Mr. Matheson as he prepared for the event. Right: Bob Harper and John Matheson lifelong friends

JOHN ROSS MATHESON, Brockville & Canada's Flag

By Russ Disotell

In 2011 Robert Harper made John Ross Matheson a promise. As Robert's wife, Sue, nods in agreement, he explains that he didn't make this promise lightly and he still considers it a very serious commitment. The promise, elicited over dinner, was to tell the complete and true story of the birth of Canada's red maple leaf flag. It's a promise he continues to fulfil today.

In May of 1961 Bob, who was 7 at the time, met John Ross Matheson for the first time. "He came walking up our driveway on Amie St." John Ross said he had known Bob's father, who had passed away in 1957, and he was running for the Liberal Party in the Federal by-election. He was there to ask Bob's mother for her vote.

Matheson won the by-election and was soon front and centre in the search for a distinctive Canadian flag. He was an expert in heraldry and was asked by Lester B. Pearson to lead the effort for the creation of the flag. Bob, having met the Leeds MP, followed the flag debate closely and was fascinated by the entire process. As he grew older he continued to see Matheson at special occasions and

celebrations. One such event was to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Rideau Canal in 1982. Bob was the manager of the Westport Arena at the time. Matheson and Governor-General Ed Schreyer were in attendance and Bob tried to find a Canadian flag for them to sign. Matheson insisted he would sign, only if the flag was Canadian made. The last-minute search proved futile and it was decades before Harper was able to get Matheson's signature on a flag at a St. John's Ambulance dinner. They chatted about the story of the flag's genesis.

In 2008 Bob started phoning John Ross and talking about the flag's story. In 2010 Bob and Sue moved back to Brockville and shortly thereafter, at dinner with John and his wife Edith, the promise was elicited. Thus, began the journey. He set about forming the 50 Years of Our Flag Committee that same year. He points out, "We set out with six projects and we finished all six of them." Amongst them was the Official Flag Ceremony painting by local artist Phil Chadwick, that hangs at the Brockville Public Library. It includes the names of 42 persons, all supplied from memory by Matheson.

Another project was to recognize Matheson's role in the birth of the flag by naming a street after him. There was some urgency as "John was getting older and his health wasn't great and we wanted to get it done while John was alive." After some initial problems and delays with the City of Brockville, Bob approached the United Counties of Leeds & Grenville and two weeks later Jail St. South was designated John Ross Matheson Way. On May 13, 2013 Matheson, then 95, and family attended the official ceremony. "It's a perfect spot, all within walking distance of many of the milestones of his life. He was very excited," Harper says, pointing out Matheson's law office was located on Court House Avenue.

Bob continues to honour his promise and feels the work isn't finished yet. "This has involved intensive research," Harper offers, "And there are all sorts of things I didn't know." At one point two PhD's were hired to help with the research. The information uncovered is fascinating to Harper and astonishing to an average citizen. Amongst them are the facts that Matheson created the City of Brockville flag and coat of arms, was instrumental in the establishment of the Order of Canada and the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada.

The research has led Harper to the conclusion that "John Ross Matheson is the father of the Canadian Flag and Brockville is the birthplace." He realizes it has met with spirited opposition, but maintains, "That's what the facts say."

Anyone interested in learning more about John Ross Matheson, the Canadian flag's origins and Bob and Sue Harper's continuing work should go to www.canadianflageducationcentre.ca. Bob is especially proud of the video on the site. "It's the best condensed version of how things were done and has been embedded on the Canadian Encyclopedia website. [LH](#)



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THOUSAND ISLANDS PLAYHOUSE

Romancing the River

By Lorraine Payette

What could possibly be better than to step out of your cottage onto the island, and get into the boat for a fantastic night on the town?

Temperatures are perfect as you glide over the river to tie up at the L-shaped dock at the Thousand Islands Playhouse in Gananoque. The sun glints off the water as you laugh and chat in anticipation of the perfect night out. Maybe you've come for the dazzling Moonlit Night, where glitz and glamour reign supreme, or for the annual Fish Fry Fundraiser (a chance to feast on some of the best fish in the Thousand Islands).

Think about a chance to show off that exquisite new gown and strut in your best suit, or maybe, something more casual like cut-off shorts, tees and sandals. If you prefer dinner elsewhere, there are several fine dining establishments within easy walking distance who would be happy to see you before you indulge in an evening of excellent live professional theatre. When the show is over, you slip back down to the boat and sail home, humming the songs, replaying your favourite lines in your head, and watching the moon on the nearly still and glassy surface.

"The dock provides such a unique experience for our audience, both before and after the show and during

intermission," says TI Playhouse Artistic Director Ashlie Corcoran. "We feel lucky to be creating high quality professional work in such a beautiful location."

Long a cultural hub for Gananoque, the Gananoque Canoe Club was originally built in 1909 before becoming TI Playhouse's Springer Theatre in 1985. For years it was the area's dance hall and then became Canada's Dockside Theatre. A heritage, one of a kind venue, the theatre and its renowned L-shaped dock inspire all kinds of visitors from far and wide to come into Gananoque and see all the glories it has to offer. The dock itself also provides public access to the river and seasonal docking for local boaters. Nowhere else in Canada is there anything like this.

But this beautiful dock was almost lost recently, when the town of Gananoque decided that it had to go. Ownership of the water-lot lease was overlooked when the 2014 Capital Facilities Agreement was signed between the Playhouse and the Town. A grey area developed over exactly who owned it and who was responsible for what. Since repairs and maintenance would cost from \$3-\$4 thousand, the Town felt removal was the best option.

However, the Playhouse refused to allow this to happen. Instead, they rose up to take on the job themselves. They set up a special account allowing all fees charged

for the season's slip rental to go toward repairs and maintenance, saving a feature that is beyond compare. Being a theatre with its own dock access is extremely unique and is not something you would find in a city like Toronto or anywhere else.

"The outpouring of support from the community has been overwhelming," says TIP's General Manager Brett Christopher. "Clearly, the dock is much more than a place to tie up a boat. It is a symbol of the Town's deep history and connection with the river."

Now that the summer season is upon us, get out and indulge. The Playhouse and its wonderful dock will be delighted to accommodate you. **LH**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *There is a great summer schedule to delight all lovers of the arts at the Playhouse.*

Visit their website: www.1000islandsplayhouse.com/2017-season/ for list of shows, and dates, or stop by the box office at Firehall Theatre 185 South Street Gananoque, ON or call 613-382-7020 for upcoming shows and times. It is a true experience and delight to visit the Playhouse and its wonderful surroundings of the 1000 Islands. Make it a point during this special Canada 150 year to do so. LH



Loyalist Days Parade in 2010. The soldiers taking aim and gun salute.

ALL FIRED UP FOR LOYALIST DAYS IN PRESCOTT

By Joan Rupert-Barkley

After a short hiatus, Prescott Loyalist Days is back.

Every great event takes an enormous amount of planning and the Loyalist Days Committee have been working hard for almost a year to make sure their event is right on target.

The event will take place at Fort Wellington National Historical Park from

Thursday, August 17 to Sunday, August 20 to coincide with Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation. The event is supported by the municipal council, as well as funding from the Ontario 150 Community Celebration Program, Celebrate Ontario 2017 and the Great Waterway Partnership program.

Re-enactors from far and wide will be coming to Prescott to participate in the battles at Fort Wellington. The hosting unit of the festival will be the King's Royal Regiment of New York which is an infantry unit of the British Brigade.

The four-day festival will see lots of other activities throughout the town for everyone. Children young and old are certain to find some activity that will peak their interest. Family fun night, an adult dance at the Leo Boivin Community Centre, daytime activities for kids and seniors and an outdoor inter-denominational church service are just some of the events planned this year. No event would be complete without a parade and Loyalist Days is no exception. A Military March will make its way from Kelly's Beach to Fort Wellington through RiverWalk District on Saturday morning. Granting of land lots at Kelly's Beach in Centennial Park will be re-enacted before the parade. The main fireworks will take place on Friday evening. There will be an evening cannonade on Saturday.

Loyalist Days began as a 1-day military pageant in 1969 and by the 1990's had grown to a 10-day event with the military pageant being the flagship of the event. In 1993, Prescott Loyalist Days celebrated twenty-five years. Admission to most

Re-enactment soldiers with Cannon on Fort Wellington grounds (date unknown)

of the events was a \$2.00 Loyalist Days button. These buttons were sold at various locations throughout Prescott. Another big attraction was the antique car show. Back in 1993 over 200 cars were on display on the Fort Wellington grounds. There was a variety of entertainment at the Leo Boivin Community Centre every night during the festival.

This event attracted thousands of people to Prescott every year. It was an annual mid-summer event that focussed around Fort Wellington and the re-enactment of the battle of 1812. Many re-enactors from all over would come to help recreate the battle between the Loyalist Canadian Troops and the United States of America military. These battles took place at the waterfront and they used cavalry and artillery to perform in the mock battles. During this event, the public also got a chance to interact with the re-enactors and see what their temporary living arrangement in the camp areas were really like. Weapons and artifacts were displayed in tents and there were also rifle demonstrations. Historical artisans such as hatters, shoemakers, and blacksmiths demonstrated and discussed their skills from the past. Spectators would bring their lawn chairs and blankets and position themselves on the hill of the Fort Wellington to enjoy the battle.

Re-enactors would journey down main street where the store owners would have historical displays in their windows. Guided tours of Prescott by horse and buggy also took place.

Loyalist Days ran until the mid-1990's. However in 2008, the festival came back to life. This new Loyalist Days saw local businesses and organizations playing a bigger role in the festival. Groups such as the Business Improvement Association, the Royal Canadian Legion, the Rotary Club, the Prescott Youth Centre and the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival all got involved with the hosting and sponsoring of the events. Although it was only 3-days long, the festival was filled with numerous activities. Besides the re-enactments there was a dance, pancake breakfast, a barbeque, church service, as well as sonnets performed by the St. Lawrence Shakespeare Festival. A fireworks display sponsored by Hands Fireworks



Town Crier at a Loyalist Days Parade in 2010.

at the waterfront at dusk capped off the community event.

Over the years, the organizers have tried to come up with new ideas for the festival. The 1812 Barracks Dinner was a new event that was introduced in 2011. This dinner that was located inside the walls of Fort Wellington recreated not only the atmosphere, but also the menu from 1812. Guests were encouraged to dress in period costumes. The event was very well received.

The Moonlight Movies were introduced in 2010. This event was also inside the walls of the fort underneath the stars and was enjoyed by young and young at heart. The movie was shown on a 40' tall inflatable movie screen.

Whether you remember the battles, the sidewalk sales, casino nights, the Loyalist Queen and mini miss contest, or the fireworks, there is one thing for sure, the event brings people in the community together. New acquaintances are made, old friendships are renewed and everyone who attends learns a little bit more about the town's history. **LH**

If you would like more information on Loyalist Days or if you would like to volunteer, contact info@prescott.ca or telephone the Town of Prescott @ 613-925-2812. www.prescott.ca



Local Lansdowne Landmark, where original Fredenburg Store was located. - Same building to-day; (updated). Photo courtesy Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society



Local Lansdowne Landmark Store-Fredenburg's store 1907 where first switch board was installed. Photo courtesy Leeds and 1000 Islands Historical Society



Collection of telephones and equipment used by the Phone Company

CELEBRATE 110 YEARS WITH THE LANSDOWNE RURAL TELEPHONE COMPANY

By Tanya Hammond

In honour of the 150th anniversary of Confederation, it is important to celebrate the businesses and organizations in our community that have endured the test of time and remained an integral part of our community.

One such business that deserves recognition is the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company Ltd., proudly serving Lansdowne and the surrounding area since 1907. Set to celebrate 110 years in business this summer is no small feat for the local company. One of only a

few independent telephone companies left in this part of Ontario; the Lansdowne Telephone Company has much reason to be proud!

Privileged to have spent some time recently with Bill Grier, long time General Manager and Bill Boulton, local Historian and member of the Board of Directors, I was provided with stories surrounding the humble beginnings of the company which, as I understand, grew from necessity. Although, Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876 and made it possible to transmit speech, it would take another 30 years for a group of rural residents in Lansdowne to pool their resources and start The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company. The need came mostly from area farmers who wanted a better way to communicate with their suppliers and customers. Up to that point, communication was limited to letter writing and commuting to discuss matters in person. Now, with cell phones and instant messaging, we find it impossible to imagine waiting weeks for a response from a letter as our ancestors did.

Starting with small switches and quickly moving to their first 100-line switchboard, housed in a men's clothing store on the main street of Lansdowne, the telephone company had Shareholders who ran it from the beginning. The initial Shareholders paid \$50 a share, which equated to paying just \$10 a year for a period of 5 years. Those involved were clearly committed to continued growth for the benefit of their community and embraced the advancements in technology every step of the way.

When other local telephone providers such as those in Elgin, Delta, and Mallorytown fell by the wayside in the 60's, because they were unable to afford the necessary upgrades in keeping with modernization, the Lansdowne Telephone Company remained a viable business that was capable

of taking the next step. They installed a battery switchboard with a dial system service giving them the capacity to handle 640 customers.

This forward thinking allowed the telephone company to expand their reach by continuing to add equipment, erecting a new building, all while providing exemplary customer service as their client base climbed. The area covered by the company also includes parts of Hill Island, even servicing Canada Customs at the International Bridge and numerous islands in the St. Lawrence. Interestingly, this requires the telephone company to have boats for maintenance services, including a pontoon boat for use when working with underwater cable.

The company has faced a number of challenges, including the unpredictable forces of Mother Nature, which caused severe damage during the ice storm of 98. Locals witnessed the telephone company's commitment to customer service as employees worked 21 days straight in order to restore services. Bill Grier, who has been with the company for 50 years, spoke with pride while reminiscing about those trying times and the dedication the employees have for the company and the community they live in. Strong supporters of community events such as, Lansdowne Fair and LAFR, the telephone company has also provided a bursary in connection with St. Lawrence College for the past 15 yrs. given to a deserving student in the technology field. Recognizing the importance of family within the community, the company also hosts an open house each December with fun activities and entertainment for the kids, including a visit from Santa himself.

Community involvement and consistent, caring service, clearly sets this company apart. Bill Boulton made quick mention that he often hears from others that they are "always impressed with the customer service," noting "when you call you always get to talk to a person!" Bill Grier chimed in that "Kathy and Trish in the office are often able to trouble shoot right over the phone and resolve issues immediately." Mr. Grier also pointed out that his service men, some have been with the company upward of 40 years, are able to complete all aspects of a job when sent out on a maintenance or install call. For any of you who must deal with the bigger companies you know that this is not common practice and often multiple visits by varying technicians are required before an issue is resolved. Both men agree that the Board's decisions over the years to stay competitive and on trend



for instance, choosing to get into the internet business 18 years ago by starting 1000island.net has kept them on the path to success and given them the competitive edge they needed.

When asked what the biggest competition for them is, Mr. Grier pointed to the cell phone hiding in his pocket. At first, I was caught off guard because my assumption was that Bell Canada would have been the obvious answer. However, after a brief pause I realized that a number of people have given up their landline for sole use of their cell phone. Unfortunately, with that decision people are forgoing the benefits that come with the landline, such as inclusion in the phone book and more importantly the 911 capabilities that provide instant location information direct to emergency responders.

The progression of the company is an interesting one. As you look at the equipment used in the early days with cranks required to turn for ringing the bells on the phones to the modern cordless phones that exist now. They have experienced transitions from what now looks archaic from dial tone and touch-tone, from dial up internet to high speed, with fibre optic

the next phase. The Lansdowne Telephone Company's ability to evolve and embrace an ever-changing technology has permitted it to remain strong in an industry dominated by giant corporations. Mr. Grier is proud of the company's success and all those who have had a hand in allowing them to remain independent over the years, even in the face of rising costs that are out of their control. I am sure the citizens that formed this company so many years ago would be equally proud of all those that have come after and committed to continually growing it forward and simultaneously providing excellent service within their community. **LH**

EDITOR'S NOTE: We at Living Here ask you to take a moment and appreciate the accomplishment that this company has made to reach such a milestone and join them as they celebrate 110 years in our community with a giant Customer Appreciation Day on Friday July 14th, 2017 at their location on 42 King St., Lansdowne. A fun filled day for family, customers and the community with a BBQ, Prizes, and lots more!

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Lansdowne Telephone Company 110th Anniversary Celebration!

The Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company was founded in 1906. The first switchboard was installed in Fredenburg's store in 1907, (formerly) Lansdowne Hardware.

In 1912 they built an office and house for the manager on this corner lot.

When the system was converted to dial service in 1967, it was necessary to build a new building to the east of the original.

In 1988 when another addition was needed, the original office was demolished and new facilities were added.

The company is one of less than 30 independents still operating. It offers all modern facilities including internet service.

(Brief History by LEEDS & 1000 ISLANDS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY) www.ltihistoricalsociety.org

A LETTER OF THANKS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow! I can't believe it's been 110 years since the Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company was formed.


The Company known today as Lansdowne Rural Telephone Company (LRTC) was incorporated in 1907. Today Lansdowne remains unique in that it is home to one of the few remaining independent telephone companies in the Province in which I am honored to be a part of. This Company has combined local tradition, adapted to modern technology and are flexible enough to thrive in the modern era of telecommunications. The success of this Company has been built by identifying the changing market, loyalty of our many customers, our shareholders, friends and our employees for their faith and loyalty in helping the Company grow to what it is today.

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old switchboard

On behalf of the Board of Directors, please join us on July 14th between the hours of 10:00am thru 3:00pm. There will be tours of the Company, food, refreshments, music, balloon artist, face painting, draws and giveaways throughout the day. Your attendance will be appreciated.

Wayne Shields, President



L-R: Bill Grier (general manager), Kathy Fernetich, Trish Simpson & Bill Boulton (local historian & board member)

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Right: Annie Francois - Organizer of The 7th Annual Straw-Bear-y Festival at Hardy Park in Brockville

Far Left: One of the many vendors that participate in the event

STRAW-BEAR-y-FESTIVAL

“Ursus Theodorus” Event at Hardy Park

By Russ Disotell

It may be the largest gathering of bears in the area, but there's really no cause for alarm. The annual migration of furry creatures to Brockville's Hardy Park is made up of all manner of “Ursus Theodorus”, otherwise known as the ubiquitous teddy bear. This year's Straw-BEAR-y-Festival takes place, as usual, on July 1st and is the seventh annual festival that began life as The Teddy Bear Picnic. “People still refer to it as The Teddy Bear Picnic, which is fine, old habits are hard to break. The new name is an effort to broaden out the festival and provide even more fun”, says event organizer Annie Francois. “The beginning of July is strawberry season and they are available locally, so it seemed a natural.”

Throughout the event's history, there has been one constant and it was the original reason Francois started the festival. “I wanted to have a free event that anyone could attend. Everything else seemed to have an admission fee and that can be hard for some families. This is an event to celebrate community and it's free to everyone.” The first year there were about 100 people who attended and it has grown exponentially every year since.

One of the features from that first year still remains a favourite among attendees. The teddy bear hospital and teddy bear adoption were hits with the younger set from day one and continue to be the anchor events for the festival. The furry

friends can receive some tender loving care from “bear care” professionals for any sort of ailment. Adoption certificates are always popular as the “legal status” of the teddies is formalized. “This is still one of the most enjoyable parts of the festival. Lots of smiles,” Francois points out, with a smile of her own.

This being Canada's 150th birthday, there are a number of special features planned. “We'll have a special photo booth that has a 150th theme.” As well, everyone attending is encouraged to come in costume. “Last year, the theme was the Disney movie Frozen and it was great. This year we're encouraging Canada Day themed costumes, superheroes, rock stars, fairies, whatever people can think up. It will all add to the atmosphere,” says Francois.

There are activities throughout the day beginning at 10 am and ending at 10 pm. While these are spread throughout the park there is a theme, so to speak. The south end of Hardy Park will be geared towards children's activities, such as face painting, crafts, buskers, dancers, and carnival style games. This is where the teddy bear activities and photo booth will be located. The north end will house the vendor's village. “All of the vendors are local small businesses with handcrafted, unique items. This was important to us,” says Francois. Water Street between Kincaid and Home Streets will be closed for local musicians

and a street dance from 7 pm until 10 pm, featuring Bourne to Rock.

Annie's happy to welcome some new additions to her list of usual volunteers. Centennial Road Church will be running all of the carnival style games this year. Brockville's Youth Volunteer Crew are also pitching in to help where needed. “Volunteers make a festival,” says Francois. “So, do sponsors” and she is grateful for all the local supporters. State Farm Insurance and Beattie Dodge have been on board since the beginning.

Another tradition is that funds are raised for a worthy cause, through a silent auction with all items donated by local businesses, groups and individuals. Over the years causes such as, the local branches of the Canadian Kidney Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society and Brockville's Making Play Possible, have all received support. This year funds are going to help pre-selected local families, dealing with autism, to purchase special needs items that will add to their children's quality of life.

“There is something for everyone, all age groups, a real family oriented event.” enthuses Francois. “Bring a picnic lunch if you want or enjoy the fare from the food vendors. Don't forget your Teddy Bear, and don't forget a lawn chair. Because at the end of the day, this is the perfect spot to watch the Canada Day fireworks.” **LH**

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ARE YOU AN INTERN OR AN ARCHITECT?

By Shelli Warren

When you are just starting out on your leadership journey it's worthwhile to take a moment and ask yourself: is my purpose here to learn, trial, get noticed, and contribute? Or is my purpose here to be innovative, stay out front, and be a leader worth following?

Often the excitement of a new role, launching a new business or product, or leading a new team can overtake the need to STOP and consider which role is more important to play; the Intern or the Architect? Understanding your desires and checking to see if they cohesively match the expectations of your role will ensure you will be motivated and delivering during that critical first 90 days.

Interns are brought in to provide a fresh set of eyes, ask key questions to learn about processes, and take on work that others cannot or do not want to do. Often Interns are also brought in for breakthrough work and special projects that require a concentrated effort for a short period of time to reach a particular goal or metric. If you can easily make the connection of WHY and HOW your role fits into the overall process you will make smarter decisions and ask insightful questions. Your level of ownership for the outcome will also increase leading to brand loyalty and enthusiasm for the work.

A lot can be said for organizations who embrace the leadership philosophy of "the people closest to the business should be making decisions about the business." But, are you ready to make an impact? This broadening assignment can provide real life work experience that can lead to confirmation or re-direction of the chosen career path. Your contribution and results

can also confirm or deny a long-term job offer or promotion.

Embrace that Intern role, regardless of your age or experience. Take the opportunity to shine, collaborate, absorb, offer insight, and grind out the work. Your character, work ethic, and flexibility won't go unnoticed. There have been many a successful leader who looks upon their Intern assignments as those where they first earned their chops, made a name for themselves, and became known for way more than being "just an Intern."

Architects are people who attract followers and support through their creativity and their ability to set the course for the future. Just as the Intern decided to show up on day one as an asset, so should you. Your ability to spot trends and incorporate them into an existing business, product, or process when it makes sense, will inject new enthusiasm and create momentum for those around you. Your ability to see what's coming around the corner and through agility, shift direction, will instill confidence in those you serve.

People like to follow leaders who are consistent, aware, approachable, and who have mastered the art of collecting the right tools and resources required to get the job done. Selecting team members, metrics to focus on, milestones to hit, and knowing when to course correct (including

streamlining the team) speak volumes for your ability to lead.

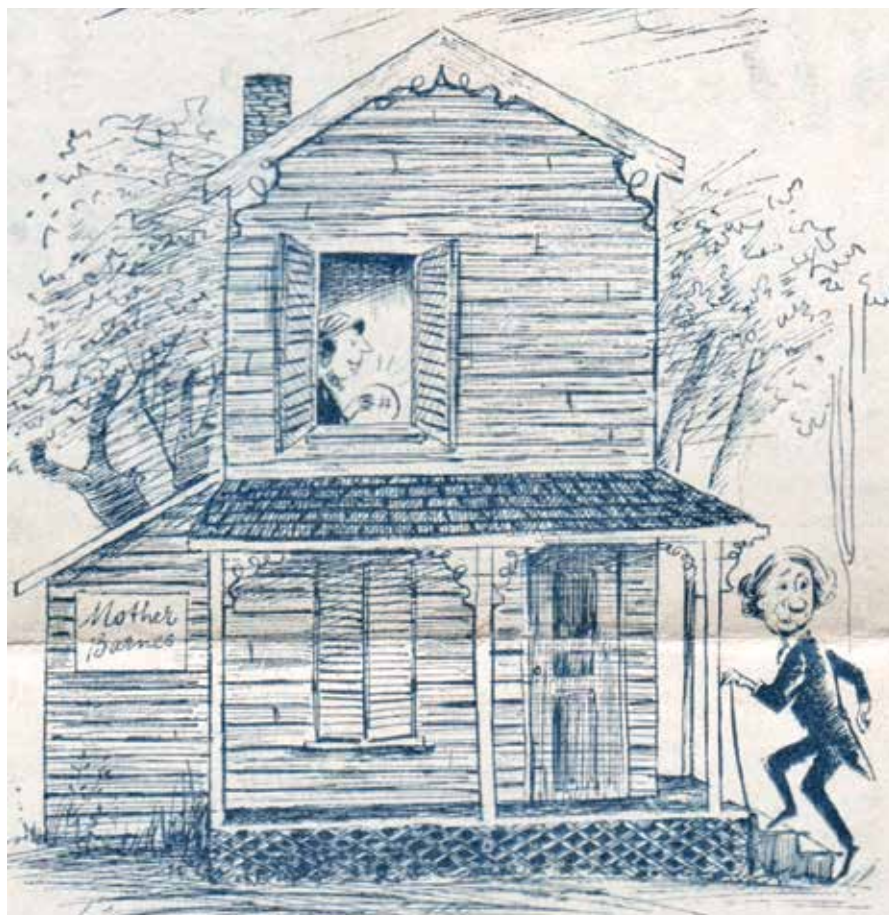
The Architect can build something that will stand the test of time by focusing on using every chance available to share a message of continual improvement. Improvement for the business, products, customer experience and of course, focusing on how best to incorporate ideas directly shared by the teams who execute and produce.

Both the Intern and the Architect add value. Both roles can be held by anyone, at any age, at any point in their career. Each role offers the opportunity to stretch as a leader, contribute at a high level, and show up ready to disrupt the status quo.

Shelli is a Biz*Career*Leadership Coach serving ambitious entrepreneurs and organizations throughout the 1000 Islands Region and beyond. Visit www.SheConnex.com for more info.



Shelli Warren of SheConnex



This appears to be an early political cartoon that depicts Sir John A. MacDonald nervously arriving at Mother Barnes' cabin for that fabled visit. (Courtesy of the Athens Heritage Society.)

THE MOTHER BARNES & SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD CONNECTION

By Sally Smid

As Canada celebrates 150 years of Confederation, it's especially exciting to consider some of our local history connections. That could include the reported stories that link Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, to local legend, "Mother Barnes." Jane Elizabeth Marten was believed to have been of Irish origin, but was often inconsistent in reporting some of the details of her life. The small swarthy

woman was born to an aristocratic family in 1794. At age 20 she eloped with her "true love", army sergeant Robert Harrison, to avoid an arranged marriage. The two travelled to North America. She was left a widow at a young age and later married cobbler, David Barnes. He eventually moved to Smiths Falls and left her to care for 7 children in a small cabin near Lake Elvida, north of Athens.

She had always entertained guests by reading tea leaves, which was quite common at that time. The need to support her large family is perhaps why she started to accept \$.25 cents by using this talent. She was reported to have told farmers where to find missing cattle, helped authorities solve crimes, including the location of a murder victim and much more. Her granddaughter revealed that her predictions often came true and that they aided others. Barnes felt that her gift was a divine calling from God. Her success resulted in hundreds of visitors who reportedly came from near and far to receive advice and insight. Many carved their names on her doorposts and walls. At some point she was named "The Witch of Plum Hollow," perhaps by a reporter or by historian Thaddeus Leavitt who wrote a novel with that title. The book actually included only a few pages about her. As for Barnes, it seemed that perhaps she appreciated the mystery and fame which surrounded her.

Elaine Farley, local historian and Mother Barnes re-enactor, points out in her presentations that the 19th century definition of witches, included that they often lived in rural areas on their own "without male supervision," were of the lower class, cured illness, acted as mid-wives, and were independent. "Using this list, Barnes could easily be labelled as a witch," she surmises. However, most seem to agree that her motherly nature exemplified in the loving and generous care for her family and neighbours was the truest essence of who Mother Barnes was and it is the way her family wants her to be remembered.

One of the often told stories is reported to have taken place before the Confederation of Canada, when the choice of a final capital was uncertain. John A. MacDonald, then attorney general for Upper Canada, was said to be tired of waiting for Queen Victoria to decide on where it would be situated. Stories are told about him seeking Mother Barnes' advice in the matter. While not substantiated, it may have been that he just sent representatives to consult with her. The story is told that she said that the Queen would pick the city on the south side of a river. That city was Bytown, now known as Ottawa. It was also reported



Mother Barnes Re-enactor Elaine Farley as she appeared several years ago at Mother Barnes' reconstructed cabin.



Mother Barnes, photo courtesy of the Athens Heritage Society

that she predicted that Sir John A. would be successful in acquiring another term as Prime Minister. Due to a political scandal, he was very concerned about his campaign being successful and received a certain peace of mind when she indicated that he would win "by a gross" which did come to pass. Could it even have been that the stories of him consulting this famed mystic were used by his political opponents in attempts to discredit or poke fun at him? An Ottawa reporter once asked Mother Barnes about the rumoured visits and her only reply was, "I can't say." When that reporter pressured her further to admit if Sir John A. had visited her cabin, she looked him in the eyes, he reported, and gave him a wink in the mysterious and illusive manner which was so typical of her life.

It is interesting to note that Mother Barnes passed away 4 months before MacDonald's death on June 6 1891, both achieving fame in their own ways. Barnes had planned her own funeral which took place in the Athens Methodist (now United) Church and a monument is erected in her honour in



Sheldon cemetery. In addition to her own children, she also raised three orphaned children. When she died, she left 68 direct living descendants, 47 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. Her cabin on Mother Barnes Road has been restored and the property is currently for sale.

The Athens Museum is pleased to have her pine table in its collection which was reportedly where the tea cups were placed as she used her mystic powers. It is interesting to consider that perhaps

Canada's first Prime Minister sat at that table 150 years ago in her upstairs loft. The Medical History Interpretive Sign across from the Museum includes Mother Barnes as well. She served her sickly neighbours, provided herbal medicines and served as a midwife. The sign also proclaims her to be "Canada's most famous clairvoyant". Her supposed connection with Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, is an important part of the Museum's Canada 150 displays this year, as well as a fascinating part of Canadian history. [LH](#)

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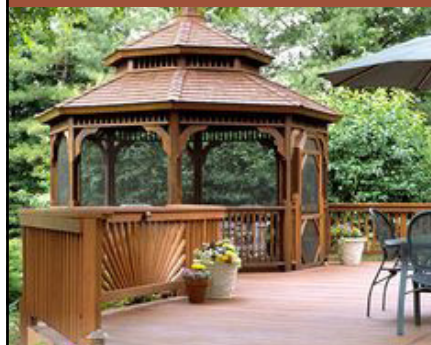
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Healing Circle Labyrinth, Johnstown,
labyrinth overview



Garden of Hope, Maitland,
Maitland Chairs

BALM FOR THE SOUL, Garden Experiences for the Canada 150

By Lisa Crandall

The gardens of the 1000 Islands and Rideau Canal Garden Trail are included among the designated Canada 150 garden experiences in Ontario. Launched in 2015, the trail is made up of more than a dozen carefully selected garden experiences. Many of them associated with private homes, scattered throughout the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. Two of these lovely garden experiences are; the Maitland Garden of Hope and the Healing Circle Labyrinth of Johnstown. For a map pinpointing all the garden locations see the Leeds Grenville Things To Do webpage. (www.leedsgrenville.com)

Maitland Garden of Hope

This 1.5 acre garden is situated on the property of Colleen O'Connell and David Cybulski, who are also among the founding members of the 1000 Islands and Rideau Canal Garden Trail. Created by O'Connell and Cybulski themselves, this meandering walk is guaranteed to calm frazzled nerves and lower your blood pressure. Featuring more than 20 themed garden spots, including a woodland walk, a wildflower garden, a butterfly garden, a collection of native grasses and a touching garden. New this year will be a self-seeding pollinator garden. There are quiet benches and

resting places scattered amongst the greenery, where you are welcome to linger and savour the serenity.

In this garden the plants have all been carefully chosen to provide the longest possible season of food and shelter for the birds and insects who visit. A leisurely walk through the garden generally takes an hour to an hour and a half and the wide range of plant life creates a constantly changing vista. Visitors have the option of enjoying a guided tour (only available in the morning) or doing a self-guided tour.

From June 06 until September 01 the garden is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 AM until 4 PM, but visits are by appointment only. There is no cost, but donations are accepted. as the garden is a fundraiser for "Our Kenyan Kids", a Brockville based charity. Located in Maitland on 1 Jones Court, the garden is south of the 401 and north of County Road 2. Call (613) 348-3125 to book your appointment.

This year's annual open house is scheduled for July 29 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, with July 30 as the alternate rain date. The lilies will be at their best and there will be free refreshments, as well as unique Kenyan handicrafts for sale as a fundraiser for "Our Kenyan Kids."

The Healing Circle Labyrinth (Johnstown)

Created by hand in 2008, the healing labyrinth was a labour of love by home owner Liz Daly and volunteers from her family. Originally intended to be a private space, Daly found it so important to her own healing journey that she decided to share it with the public. Last year there were over 800 visitors to the site.

Set in the shelter of a mature evergreen woodland, lined with more than 300 flower plants selected to represent the seven colors of the chakras, the winding path is 46 feet in length.

Patterned after the famous labyrinth of Chartes Cathedral in Paris, this smaller walk is designed as a relaxing meditative experience. Special events such as, full moon candle-lit walks and drumming workshops are also held here. Details are posted on their website.

Located at 2424 County Road 2 Johnstown, On. between Prescott and Cardinal, the garden is open daily by appointment, depending on the weather, between the months of May and November. Admission is by free will donation. Call (613) 925-1278 to book your visit. **LH**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Check out the map and listings of all the gardens on the 1000 Island and Rideau Canal Garden Tour.

leedsgrenville.com/en/visit/thingstodo/Garden-Trail.asp

Call ahead to book your time in the gardens.

Maitland Garden of Hope
www.maitlandgardenofhope.ca

Healing Circle Labyrinth
www.healingcirclelabyrinth.ca



JOEL STONE

Father of a Town, Defender of Canada

By Lorraine Payette

Joel Stone, entrepreneur loyal to King and country, was well on his way to establishing himself in the world when war broke out and everything changed.

"During the American Revolutionary War, which started in 1776, he was a Loyalist and remained staunchly supportive of Britain and King George," said Paul Scott, local Historian. "His loyalty cost him dearly. His home, businesses and personal property in Connecticut were all confiscated. He was arrested for high treason, escaped from jail, and found safety in New York City."

Moving north in 1786, he found opportunities to the west of New Johnstown (Cornwall) in the area of the "Lake of a

Thousand Isles", and moved to what would become Gananoque.

Hiring men he knew in Connecticut and New Johnstown, he cleared land on what was described as 'the peninsula' (south of the King St. bridge between the Gananoque River and Bay Rd.) By 1793, he had a schooner built, and by 1795 added a large saw and grist mill.

Business was booming, and the town grew up around it. He was appointed Collector of Customs, Postmaster, Justice of the Peace, Magistrate and Commissioner of Roads, receiving a commission as Colonel and commanding officer of the 2nd Regiment Leeds Militia in 1809.

Clockwise: Joel Stone; Re-enactors with cannon in Joel Stone Heritage Park; Early Gananoque; Firing of the cannon in Joel Stone Heritage Park during the 1812 re-enactments

The Americans declared war on Britain on June 18, 1812, raiding Gananoque in September.

"It was on September 21, 1812 that Captain Benjamin Forsyth and his American Riflemen landed at Sheriff's Point a couple of miles west of Gananoque....," said Scott. "The Leeds militia gathered at the south end of the bridge in an open area, likely close to International Square, and picked up the muskets, lead shot and powder that was available. They drew up in battle order and proceeded to meet Forsyth and his men, head on..."

"This was indeed a humiliation for Colonel Stone," said Scott. "At age 63 he was unsuccessful in defending his home and his military post. The Americans burnt the government stores, destroyed the bridge, ransacked Colonel Stone's home and shot Mrs. Stone in the hip. She recovered but walked with a limp for the rest of her life."

This attack by Americans in the 1000 Islands frontier showed British commanders in Kingston that the river crossing at Gananoque was vulnerable.

"If the enemy captured Gananoque and cut the vital land communications link between Prescott and Kingston, a thriving Upper Canada would be just a memory," he said.

In 1813, Gananoque became a British garrison with a blockhouse and accommodations for 200 highly trained fighting men. Cannons were brought in, and they were never again attacked during the War of 1812.

After the war, the Stones took great interest in their community.

"He was known to be an upright and faithful magistrate whose word was his bond," said Scott. "He was a loyal subject; esteemed and respected by those who knew him and a generous benefactor." Of Mrs. Stone, Historian Agnes Machar related, "She would mount her horse and ride through the forest for miles to nurse the sick or comfort the dying. Her natural medical instinct and simple medicine chest made her the closest thing there was to a doctor within a forty mile radius."

Together, they did all they could to help their community for the rest of their lives, with Joel passing on in 1833 at the age of 84, and Abigail in 1843 at 94. Their graves can be found in the Willowbank Cemetery on Highway 2. **LH**

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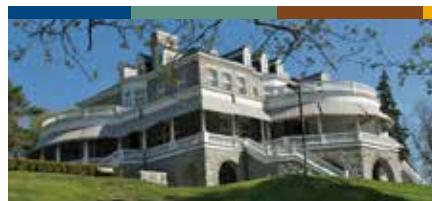
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May 20 - Sept 22	Gananoque Boat Line Special Event Cruises
May 24 - Oct 15	Thousand Islands Playhouse 2017 Season
May 27	9th Annual Chalk the Walk
May 27	Gananoque Community Discovery Day
June 1 - Sept 28	Gananoque Farmer's Market
June 3 - June 4	Nickel Cup Regatta
June 3	Lion's Annual Car Show
June 17	Summer Read on Day
June 30 - July 2	1000 Islands Family Ribfest
July - August	Music in Town Park
July 1	Canada Day
July 1 & 2	Rotary Craft Fair
July 1	Huck Finn Fishing Derby
July 2	Lions Shore Breakfast
July 7 - Sept 15	Reading in the Park
July 8 & July 9	The Big Bass Challenge
July 8	Bark Bash
July 13	Summer Evening in the Islands
July 14 - Sept	Waterfront Concert Series
July 15	Boat Parade/Show
July 29	Heritage Fair
Aug 19 & 20	Pirate Invasion
Sept 12 - Oct 31	Threadworks "Flashback" Exhibit
Sept 30	Pump-Gan-Fest



Fulford Place - 287 King Street East, Brockville, 613-498-3003



Homewood Museum - Highway 2 between Maitland and Prescott, locator #1372, 613-348-1246

Fulford Place

June 21: Raising Royalty – talk and afternoon tea
July (Wednesdays, 12-1 p.m.): Music Series (Free)

Homewood Museum

June 24: Tools Through Time youth program and Antique Wheels in Motion demonstrations (Free)
July 22 (5-8 p.m.): Community BBQ and concert

For details on all events:
613-498-3003
fulford@heritagetrust.on.ca
www.heritagetrust.on.ca



#MyOntario



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*Exhibits, Turbine Demonstrations,
Riverside Park Handmade crafts
& goods in Barnard's Emporium
Regency Clothing Rentals,
Music at the Mill and more.*