

Orono Library refreshed and Millstone returned

By Julie Cashin-Oster

On Saturday the new renovations at the Orono Library were officially revealed to the community with a ceremonial ribbon cutting and the return of the Orono Millstone to the library lawn.

Library and Museums and Archives Board chair Steven Cook welcomed the community along with fellow board members, and staff. He read the land acknowledgment before introducing Monika Machacek, Chief Executive Officer, Clarington Library, Museums and Archives.

“We also want to acknowledge our special guests we have in attendance, Mayor Adrian Foster, Regional Councillor Anderson, Councillor Rang, Councillor Elhajjeh and Councillor Zwart. I also want to welcome Amy Zahn from Elmwood and Baker who styled the interior of the library. So, this renovation and millstone relocation has been in the works for over 12 months.”

“The accessibility renovation has ushered in a new universal washroom, new ramp, new automatic doors and a level floor throughout

the main floor of the library,” added Machacek. “We have also accented the antique and unique nature of a Victorian home that operates as a public library branch.”

Elmwood and Baker was selected to improve the interior of the branch through furniture, fixtures and colours to create a more appropriate antique atmosphere of the library. There still is a little work to be completed.

“We also have our hearts set on Tiffany style lamps and fixtures. So, if anybody knows anybody, please let us know we’d be happy to take those off your hands,” smiled Machacek.

Councillor Zwart also welcomed everyone and brought greetings from the municipality. Councillor Zwart was instrumental in returning the millstone.

“The return of the millstone to Orono was started by a conversation I had about a year ago outside the post office. I said hello to a fellow waiting in his truck while his wife went in to get their mail. The mostly one-sided conversation covered many of

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Photo By Julie Cashin-Oster

Three-year-old Carson tried very hard on Saturday to prove everyone wrong, who thought he couldn’t lift the Millstone. On Saturday the newly renovated Orono Branch of the Clarington Library, Museums and Archives was officially opened. The day also commemorated the return of the Orono Millstone to the library lawn. It had been moved to the Kirby Museum when the archives were moved from the second floor of the library to the museum.

Orono Town Hall set to last another 125 years

By Julie Cashin-Oster

“We are proud to continue the tradition of serving our community and we hope that we continue to do so for many years. There are discussions with the municipality regarding the future of the community hall, and we plan to be active in those discussions,” said Brad Smith, chair, Orono Town Hall board, as he welcomed and thanked community members for their ongoing support of the hall.

Brad introduced the Orono Town Hall Board members; Brad Smith, Susan Smith, Bev Donald, Perry Kirkbride, Lina Shetler, Sue De Costa, Debra Patrick, Connie Barrie, Geri Bailey, Fred Horvath and Judy Climenhage. “Special thanks to Fred Horvath for taking the lead and organizing this event.”

“Judy Climenhage has been a member of the board since 1988, and will be recognized by the Province of Ontario for outstanding contributions to our community on April 24,” said Smith. “Congratulations Judy, and thank you for your many years of service. On behalf of the board we’d like to present you with this thank you.”

The Honorable David Piccini, MPP of Peterborough-Northumberland South brought greetings from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Edith Dumont.

“Thank you very much. It’s an honour to be here with all of you this evening. Thank you, Fred, for all your work. I’ll just tell a brief story. We just passed some legislation and as many of you know, it has to be signed off by the

Lieutenant Governor. And so, she approached me on one of our labour bills and said I read all about you. And I said oh, workman’s legislation? And she said no, Orono Town Hall.”

“She sends her warm regards. On a personal note, I know she really wanted to be here and will visit soon. But regrettably she is out of the country. So, on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, it brings me great pleasure to extend warm greetings to all celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Orono Town Hall. ‘Over the past 125 years, the Orono Town Hall has been more than just a building. It has been a hub of community life, hosting a myriad of events such as concerts, school plays, and graduations. Once serving as the seat of local govern-

ment for Clarke Township, it is also a tangible link to our past. From its wood ceiling to its historical main level, it stands as a cherished symbol of our heritage. Historic sites such as the Orono Town Hall are vital to the fabric of our society. And I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of those who have worked tirelessly over the years to preserve this important place. On behalf of all Ontarians, I offer my sincerest congratulations on a significant occasion. May the Orono Town Hall continue to stand as a beacon of community spirit for generations to come’,” signed Edith Dumont.

“As your local member of provincial parliament, again, thank you to all of you for being here today, and board members past and present for giving this place life. It is

people that bring building like this to life. So, thank you very much for having me here this evening,” Honourable David Piccini, MPP.

Brad followed by introducing our Member of Parliament, Philip Lawrence to bring greetings from the House of Commons.

“There’s no place like home, right? It’s great to be here in Orono. It’s great to be here celebrating 125 years of the Orono Town Hall. It’s amazing to me that 125 years ago, the community would come together to build this beautiful and spectacular hub,” said MP Lawrence.

“Now we are here 125 years later. And this hall has helped build this community, whether it was weddings, whether it was reception, whether there

LIBRARY from FRONT

the things this resident felt was wrong with the village including the disappearance of the millstone that used to be on the library lawn,” said Councillor Zwart.

The millstone was described by Bill Arnett in the May 21, 1975 issue of the Canadian Statesman as looking like an enormous petrified donut and it was a stone age masterpiece. It was reclaimed from the Orono creek bed behind the business section in May 1975, where it was believed to have rested for the previous 113 years.

“In trying to locate said millstone I made a few inquiries, which included reaching out to Charles Taws former curator of the Clarington Museum, who led me back to Doris Falls, who informed me that when the Clarke Museum and Archives moved from this location to the Kirby Schoolhouse in 1988 the millstone was relocated to the Kirby Museum site. I then contacted Monica Machacek and asked if the millstone could be brought back to the village. Monica was on board with the project from the start, offered her assistance and made it happen. She enlisted the help of the municipal works department to lay the cement pad and move the stone from Kirby. You never know what chain of action is set into motion from a simple conversation with people

in your community. The resident who started this chain reaction was Wes Knapp. Thank you to everyone who helped bring this millstone back home to Orono.”

Clarington Library, Museums and Archives Board member and Orono resident Don McKenzie welcomed everyone and gave a brief history of the Orono branch.

Library Service was introduced in Orono with the establishment of a Mechanics Institute in December of 1888 AD. The library’s books, a scant 34 volumes, grew to 1500 books by 1909.

“One of the administrators at the institute loaned books only on Saturday afternoon. Over time the library migrated to various locations on Main Street, at times from the pharmacy, and later, from premises atop the fire hall,” said McKenzie.

With the passing of Ontario’s first Public Library Act in 1895, the Mechanics Institutes became the Association Libraries. In 1963 an appeal was made to the local Police Trustees group to restructure, in order to secure more substantial government funding. The Association Library was reorganized as a public library. The provincial library service arranged for the cataloguing of all library materials under the Dewey Decimal System for classification.

Over time, the Orono Li-

brary has benefited from the donations of library conscious villagers but the most outstanding benefactor was without question the late Lena Renwick.

“A registered nurse Lena practised in the army during the occupation in Europe after WWI, and subsequently in veterans’ hospitals in several American states. She retired to Redlands California, where she died in August 1965. She had maintained an interest in the Orono Library, paying a non-resident fee for a membership card and donating funds to enrich the collection. In her will she left the sum of \$18,916 to the Orono Public Library Board. A plaque honouring her memory hangs in the branch.”

It was with these funds the Township Library Board purchased the John Waddell home and grounds. The board undertook the extensive renovation and landscaping required as the property had been vacant for years. The official opening of the Orono Branch Library was held on September 17, 1970.

Over time, there have been a number of repairs to address leaking eavestroughs, warped front doors, frozen pipes and other targeted measures. This 2024 renovation represents the most significant remediation project in more than 50 years.

“The Library Board hopes

the community will make full use of the remodeled facility. To mark the occasion, I will ask fellow board members and Councillor Zwart, Mayor Foster and members of

council to join me in cutting the ribbon to mark officially the reopening of the branch,” added Mackenzie.



Photo by Julie Cashin-Oster

It was a beautiful day on Saturday to show off the new renos at the Orono Library. Joining in on the ceremonial ribbon cutting was (L to R) Ron Hooper; Don McKenzie, board member CMLA; Amy Zahn, Elmwood and Baker; Monika Machacek, Chief Executive Officer, CMLA; Councillor Elhajjeh; Regional Councillor Anderson; Mayor Foster; Councillor Rang; Steven Cook, chair CLMA; and Councillor Zwart.

A little over two weeks...



Photo by Julie Cashin-Oster

Tina Barrie is modelling some of the sample projects that are available to purchase. Barrie is retiring and closing her shop, Soper Creek Yarn. There are plenty of yarn deals and sample sales. The last day for visiting is April 27 which is ‘Local Yarn Shop Day’.

LOOKING BACK

GLEANED FROM PAST EDITIONS OF THE ORONO TIMES, BY DORIS FALLS

Unfortunately, our regular column of 25, 50 and 75 years ago will not be available this week and we are unsure exactly when it will resume. The newspaper archival site ‘vitacollections.com’ – where issues of the *Orono Weekly Times* dating back to 1937 are stored, resides on a City of Hamilton server. Due to a recent cyber security attack on the City of Hamilton access to the archived digital newspaper collection is currently unavailable. Print copies that are located in Bowmanville at the museum are not available either.

So, in a step back in time, I visited the library in Bowmanville and found microfilm of the Orono News for the 1930's. With your indulgence, we can explore life in the Orono area 90 years ago, in 1934, until our archived site is back up and running.

In 1934....

Tightening up of the Old

Age Pensions Act, by giving the pensions commissioners the power to prevent the transfer of property, by a pensioner prior to his death is the feature of an amendment, which was given second reading in the Legislature. Honourable W. G. Martin, Minister of Welfare, declared that when a pensioner died, the commission had the power to obtain a refund of the pension, plus 5% interest. But, in many cases the minister said, pensioners transfer their holdings to relatives or others without filing the transfer in the registry office. When the commissioner, upon the death of the pensioner, tried to get the refund, it was found that the pensioner had no assets. “This amendment will enable the commissioner to register a notice against the lands of a pensioner and no transfer of the property shall take place without the written sanction of the commission-

er,” said Mr. Martin.

The annual Children’s Musical Festival will be held in the Town Hall, Orono on Friday May 5th, commencing at 7:30 p.m. sharp. This year it will take the form of an elimination contest with 15 schools competing in unison and two-part choruses. The three leaders in each contest will be eligible to compete in the County Final. Admission is 20 cents. Total proceeds devoted to music in our schools.

“Mammy’s Lil’ Wild Rose”, a comedy drama of the Sunny South in three acts will be presented in the Newcastle Community Hall on Friday, April 7th under the auspices of the Women’s Association of the United Counties. Director: Mrs. Percy Brown. Between acts, a diversified entertainment of music, elocution and classical dancing will be provided. Admission: 35 cents and 25 cents. Curtain at 8:15.