

HERITAGE ON THE HILL

Newsletter of the Richmond Hill Historical Society



December 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by *Jim Vollmershausen*

I am very pleased to be writing a President's message for our Society's Newsletter. Though I have been President since our AGM in January of 2020, this is only the second newsletter that I have contributed to – who would have guessed that the first meeting I presided over as your President in February of 2020, would be the last face-to-face meeting we would have for nearly two years.

We decided soon after the pandemic took hold to put the newsletter on hiatus in favor of more frequent email messages. Even though we couldn't get together face-to-face, we were anxious to stay in touch and keep our members informed about our Society's situation and any news that we felt needed to be shared. Getting the newsletter up and running again – thanks to our volunteer editor, Peter Wilson – is a sign that we're beginning to get back to "normal."

Thanks to Marj Andre, some degree of normalcy became possible when Zoom calls were introduced. Marj had the wherewithal, the interest and the energy to offer to set up and host Zoom calls for our Executive and regular meetings. Suddenly, we were able to at least see each other and have speakers join us – almost like we were in the same room. We could even record our speakers' presentations and share them more broadly. I know that Zoom calls weren't possible for many of our members, for a variety of reasons, but we always had 20 to 25 participants, and I feel that it was an important effort to keep the Society visible and active.

I don't think I need to bemoan the frustrations and angst associated with lockdowns, business closures, multitudes

of protocols and stay-at-home orders – we've all experienced them. I would rather focus on the opportunity that the amazingly quick development of vaccines has provided us to actually see that an end to pandemic rule might be in sight. My hope, of course, is that enough of us choose to be vaccinated (and boosted) so that we can put COVID-19 behind us and get back to "normalcy."

For the Historical Society, normalcy would mean, first and foremost, a return to regular face-to-face meetings. I've heard from many members who are anxious for the resumption of our normal activities. I've heard from others, though, who are still nervous about getting back together – we will clearly have to stay in touch with everyone to understand when face-to-face meetings are, in fact, the right thing to do.

In the meantime, we have been in touch with the Presbyterian Church about the availability of Wallace Hall, and have learned that they have their own unique problems. It seems that their long-time custodian has retired, and they are seeking a replacement – so the use

IN THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	1
FEATURES	3
Richmond Hill: Rose Capital of Canada	3
The Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837: Richmond Hill had a Ringside Seat.....	4
MEMBER'S CORNER.....	5
Tragic Passing of John Leonard.....	5
A Goodbye and Tribute to Madeline Johnston	5
Passing of Jack Rumney.....	6
2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.....	6
RICHMOND HILL 150TH ANNIVERSARY.....	7
OFF THE SHELF	8