

JOYCE DELVES: CHAIR: FOMM
Comments for Bradley 50th. Anniversary Celebration.

It is my honour to speak to you on the 50th anniversary of the opening of Bradley Museum, about FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUMS OF MISSISSAUGA.

FOMM is a volunteer group of dedicated people whose mission statement “is to engage volunteers to enhance community awareness through promotion and fund-raising: and to ensure the integrity of the Museums in these activities.”

I first joined the Advisory Board of the Bradley Museum in 1996 when a friend asked if I would be interested in becoming a member. As an acknowledged history buff and always interested in local historical matters, I couldn't resist. At that time Bradley was already well into its first 50 years but in the last 20 years, I have been there for many significant changes.

Volunteerism has always been a major component of the Museum's success. The very foundation of the Museum began when those early volunteering visionaries, with the help of The Toronto Township Historic Society, arranged to move an abandoned, decrepit building in to this glorious location and over time gave it new life as a 19th century pioneer farmhouse. The Bradley family would have been proud of the results of their dedication. In 1978, The Anchorage, home of the Skinner family, joined the Bradley family at this location and by the time the Bradley Advisory Board was formed in 1988 the vision of what the Museums could become was beginning to take shape.

Until this time the Museums were nurtured by a steady stream of active volunteers who were responsible for the fund-raising and renovation work. Then in 1996 the Museums of Mississauga came under the auspices of the Heritage Department in the City of Mississauga and that is where my story begins.

At that time the Board's volunteering activities was basically to help out with events where needed and to raise some funds if possible for the purchase of suggested artifacts through our annual Strawberry Social. By 2000, under the direction of then Chair Wendy Davies, we took on a whole new challenge of major fund-raising. The annual Startlight and Candlelight Gala was born. Guests enjoyed an elegant dinner catered for many years by Michael's Backdoor and served by Museum Staff, in period costume also volunteering their time. The Anchorage was the perfect backdrop for 52 delighted guests. Elegant is not too elevated a term, everyone dressed to the nines, with candlelight, crisp linens, flowers and fine wines. Downton Abbey would have been impressed. A Silent Auction was the source of major fund-raising. This formula continued for the next 15 years - in the last two years we expanded our ambitions, enlarging the Gala to over 100 guests, we moved to the Harding estate, extended the Silent Auction and under the expert management of then Chair of the Gala, Barbara Smith raised our fund-raising activities for that event to over \$25,000.

For most of the “Starlight years”, our funds were directed to one major endeavour. THE LOG CABIN. In 2002 a group of neighbours and families involved with the 4th Port Credit Scouts which met in an old cabin situated in Port Credit, gathered together to draw attention to the fact that the cabin was slated for demolition. There being no other viable location in Port Credit to accommodate it, the idea evolved of moving to this site. The Neighbourhood Group made a presentation to Bradley Advisory Board in the fall of 2002 which endorsed the project. Ron Lenyk, of the Mississauga News came on board as Chair of the Fundraising Campaign, and the project, approved by City Council in June 2003 with the understanding that all of the money for this major project would be raised in and by the community. It was a daunting task, an estimated \$350,000, but an amazing campaign resulted – grassroots support ranged from ice cream sales at Green Glade School, through to Pancake Sales during Maple Magic, photos with Santa in the Log Cabin and of course our highly successful Starlight and Candlelight Gala plus extensive financial assistance from significant local corporations including:

St. Lawrence Cement , Petro Canada Lubricants, FRAM Building Group, Pendle Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga and Ron Lenyk & Anita Albanese of the Mississauga News.

Moving the Log Cabin, log by carefully labelled log, rebuilding, enlarging and bringing it up to the building code requirements to allow for its use as a Learning and Teaching Centre, as a meeting place, a display space and as a rental location for small groups was a massive task. With the help of experts in the field, our Board members were actively involved organizing, encouraging, advising and providing willing hands in this intensive work. We are immensely proud of the structure we have today which is filled almost every weekend with overnight guests for guide and scout groups and the rest of the time is home to an amazing variety of museum related activities.

Since that time the Museums of Mississauga, have continued to evolve. In 2005, The Advisory Boards of Benares Historic House and Bradley Museum were combined to form Friends of the Museums of Mississauga, FOMM is a more efficient and workable model which benefits both Advisory Boards and Museum Staff. One of our major initiatives for our fund raising events has been to acquire necessary artifacts to add to the already rich collection used in the permanent displays in the ever changing exhibits. Recently, major funds have been expended on new furniture in preparations for this anniversary. We felt, that after many years of toiling under adverse conditions the Bradleys deserved a few home improvements and a more elegant place to entertain when the minister came to call - or even on occasion more affluent neighbours like the Skinners from the Anchorage or even Captain and Mrs. Harris from Benares.

Museum Events continue to expand and grow and the numbers of people visiting our sites grows annually. There is an extensive education programme administered by Museum staff to bring the history of our heritage alive to the younger generation. To aid in that endeavour, in 2004, under the guidance of former Chair Becky Ryder FRIENDS began a series of summer concerts at Benares, aptly named On the Verandah featuring local musicians. This has become very popular and last year we raised enough money

to hire 40 busses to bring Peel students to the site for Museum programmes. We hope these visits will bring a new generation of frequent visitors.

Although our historic houses portray the history of our pioneer settlers, we do not forget the important role played in the development of our country by the indigineous people who cultivated and hunted in these regions for centuries prior to the advent of the Europeans, nor the importance of the subsequent waves of immigrants from around the world.

This year we were proud to install in our beautiful grounds the first First Nations Sweat Lodge in Ontario in over a hundred years. Traditional Sweats led by First Nations elders are held here on a regular basis. Participants have found this to be a moving Spiritual experience and a unique opportunity to learn more about the beliefs and past history of our First Nations brothers

The Museums of Mississauga continue to devise programmes and events with wide cultural appeal to reflect the changing face of Mississauga in an endeavour to attract Canadians of every ethnic background. By understanding each others culture we may better embrace our diversity. Friends of the Museums of Mississauga completely support this vision and will continue our beneficial association with the Museums as it moves forward to its next 50 years. Happy Birthday Bradley Museum and Happy Birthday Canada.