

Stoney Creek Historical Society

PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6

NEWSLETTER

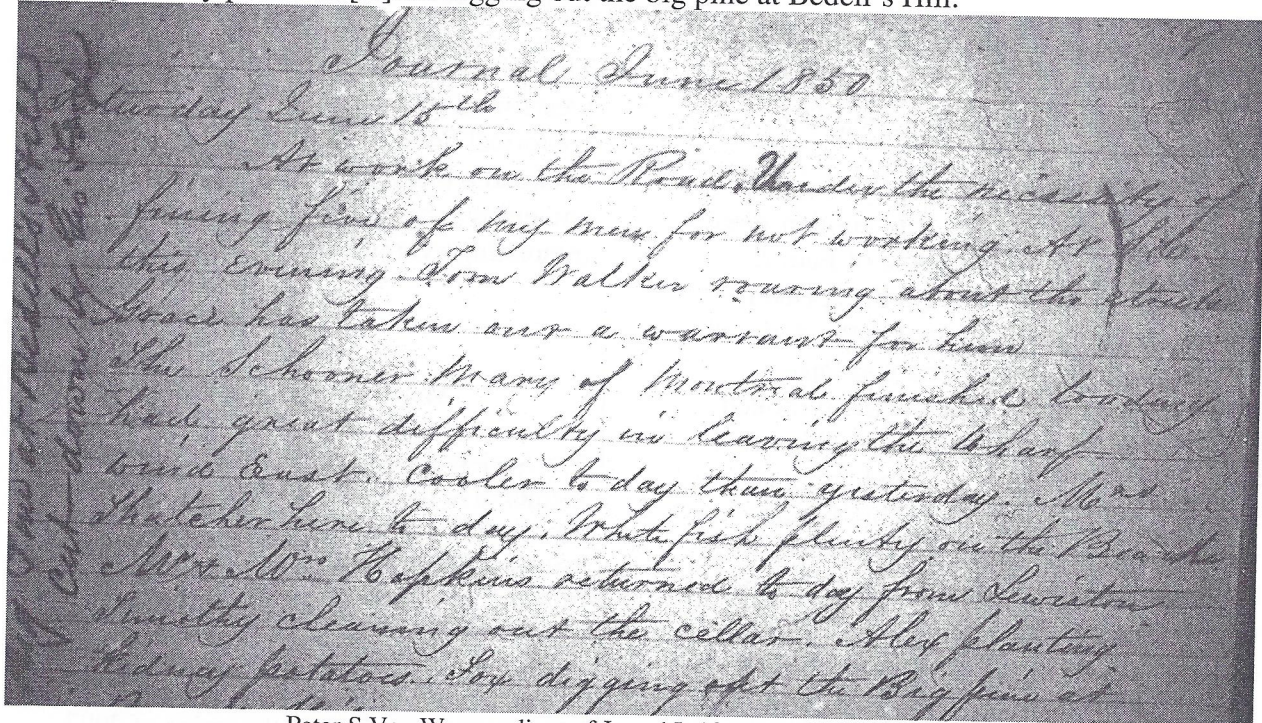
February 2007 Edition #40 Circulation: 300 copies

EXCERPTS FROM THE PETER VAN WAGNER DIARIES- PT 2.

Transcribed by Michael Gemmell and Kristen Kerr

Saturday, June 15, 1850

At work on the road. Under the necessity of fining five of my men for not working. At S.C. this evening. Tom Walker roaming about the states. Grace has taken out a warrant for him. The schooner Mary of Montreal finished loading. Had great difficulty in leaving the wharf. Wind east. Cooler today than yesterday. Mrs Thatcher home today. Whitefish plenty on the Beach. Mr & Mrs. W. Hopkins returned today from Lewiston. Timothy cleaning out the cellar. Alex planting kidney potatoes. [A]fox digging out the big pine at Bedell's Hill.



Peter S Van Wagner diary of June 15, 1850 (original document)

Continued on Page 3.

Financial assistance for the printing of this newsletter has been provided by

STONEY CREEK NEWS

This newsletter issue has been sponsored by:
Audrey Guthro

President's Message

At this start of a New Year may I wish all our members Happiness and Good Health for the coming year.

After some years as your Vice President, the membership has seen fit to send me upstairs to the job of President. I will do my best to fill the shoes of those who went before me.

Greg Armstrong has been assigned to my old job, and has done a marvelous job with the walking tour, and will no doubt do equally well as your new 1st VP.

The balance of your executive, will remain the same, which is a blessing for me, as this group has worked extremely well in the past.

A special thanks to our Past President, Bill, for his 4 years of leadership, and I will be leaning on Bill for guidance this year.

2006 had its good moments with another successful Christmas bus trip, another great Potluck gathering at the home of Paul & Sheila Gallea, and as always the speakers were a pleasure to listen to. On the dark side we lost our long time friend and Past President Ron Place. For a while it looked like we would never again have a historian as dedicated to preserving the history of Stoney Creek, as was Ron. This January our speaker was Michael Gemmell, and it appears that Mike has taken up the challenge of carrying on with Ron's legacy, as his documentation "On The Banks of Stoney Creek" was a masterpiece of facts and pictures of homes from the past, and how they related to our community.

I would also like to thank our refreshment conveners, Mike & Betty Petis, for seeing that our members enjoy treats and good fellowship after each meeting. Mike and

Betty will continue in this labour of love for the coming year. Thanks also go to Malcolm Hughes, for getting us such wonderful speakers and also to Mary Place and her group of phone conveners. By the way if you are not on one of the phone conveners lists and would like to be reminded of meetings, and who the speaker will be, please contact Mary.

2007 will see your executive press ahead with the memorial for Ron Place, and we will keep all of our members, advised on the progress of this project. Another project that has been in the mill for some time is the publication of our 3rd, book, and hopefully we will see progress in this department. Cheryl Gemmell will continue to head up the Archive committee, and the pursuit of Stoney Creek artifacts.

This year is shaping up to be another busy year for all of us in the Stoney Creek Historical Society, and if you have not attended a meeting I encourage you to come and enjoy what may well be the most interesting evening you will have all year.

Bill Mitchell, President

Memorial for Ron Place

The Society has committed to erect a suitable memorial to the late Ron Place, past President of the Historical Society. Because Ron was a fixture in Stoney Creek, a site at the Olde Towne Square, at the intersection of King Street and Jones Street has been selected for the planting of a commemorative tree and a memorial plaque. We will be raising money this winter for a planting and unveiling in the spring of 2007.

If you are interested in contributing to the Ron Place memorial please send donations to:
Stoney Creek Historical Society
Ron Place Memorial Fund
PO Box 66637
Stoney Creek, ON, L8G 5E6

Historical Society News

Important: Attached to this issue is your income tax receipt. Please save this slip for your records.

Reminder- Annual Membership Fees (Jan 1- Dec31, 2007) are now due.

Annual General Meeting report

The Annual General Meeting of the society was held on January 3, 2007.

Outgoing President Bill O'Reilly welcomed approximately 40 members and guests.

Treasurer Judy Green read the annual financial report.

As of Jan 1, 2007, Stoney Creek Historical Society had the following assets:

General Fund: \$1318.50

(including \$822.00 in the
Ron Place Memorial Fund)

Museum Fund: \$9985.19

Publishing and Education Fund: \$21 651.00

Total assets: \$32 954.69

Vice President Michael Gemmell announced the nominated slate of officers for 2007 and called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he called for election of the slate of officers as presented. The slate was passed.

Incoming President Bill Mitchell said a few words of greeting.

With the business portion of the meeting concluded, Vice President Greg Armstrong introduced the evening's speaker.

Upcoming Society Speakers

FEB

March 2007: Karen Richardson
"A Woman's Work is Never Done"

APR
April 2007: Brian Henley
"Early Hamilton Harbour and Coote's Paradise"

May 2007: Karen Richardson
"Queen Victoria"

June 2007: no speaker- annual Society picnic

P.S. Van Wagner Diaries Continued.

Introduction:

Peter Spohn Van Wagner (1818-1906 writes about his neighbours all along the old Stoney Creek lakefront. His diaries (1850-1906) are now in the Archives of Ontario.

Sunday June 16, 1850

At E.P.s today. James Hill and Sally there.



Editor's notes: James Hill (photo c1880) lived along the lakefront on Lot 16 (east side of modern day Dewitt Road)

They spoke of William Biggar who hanged himself a few days ago on the mountain (Cause not exactly understood). Townsend and John here this morning. John Bucow (?) and Suir Dagget (?) took a ducking

PS Van Wagner diaries continued.

out of John's canoe. Wind east with some sea on. Meadow thin and short owing to the dry weather in the first part of the season. A Miss Cline from Slabtown has been teaching school in the new School House at E.P.s about a week. I and JW visited Ian Finton this afternoon. Finton away to Wellington again.

Editor's notes: "Slabtown" was the original name for Bartonville. The name "Slabtown" may have come from the outer scrap cut of the lumber called slabs. Instead of framework of 2 x 4s, the boards were 12-and 14-inches wide. Another possibility is limestone. Limestone cut from the escarpment in this area comes off in slabs.

Monday June 17, 1850

At E.P.s thrashing barley and oats. Ian (?) and Mrs P. went on a visit to James Hill's. Williamson's schooner loading oats and lumber at the wharf. Robert Pew's horses are in the stable tonight. He is away fishing I believe. Wind mostly east the day cool.

Tuesday, June 18, 1850

Very warm, making fence on the hill in front of the house. Mr and Mrs E.P. went to Hamilton today. Holland Smith from Binbrook along. Timothy harrowing fallow. Mosquitoes plenty. Townsend and John here in the afternoon. Caroline sick (Wind west) Saw the Gray Clyde yesterday. Small for one of the breed, crooked hind legs. Toes out and trots like a bull. These are the principal defects I observed.

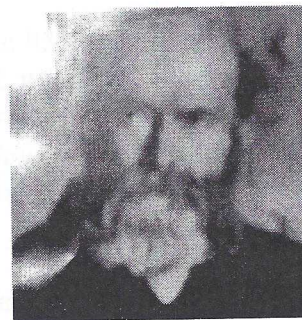
"Mr. and Mrs. E.P." were Van Wagner's in-laws, Elias and Abigail Petit. They lived on the east side of what is today Millen Road, close to the lake (Lot 15, BF Con and Con 1).

Wednesday June 19, 1850

Very warm. Timothy went to the Lower Place to plough fallow. John Dalis (?) here piling manure. Townsend at work on the boat in the afternoon. Francis Willson took tea here. He and I talked a long time on different mechanical subjects. I think he is naturally ingenious. He had come of his Patent Fan Mills with him. Wood here this evening. Hired him to work on the road at 3/9 per diem. Alex hauling corn. Wind south west.

Thursday June 20, 1850

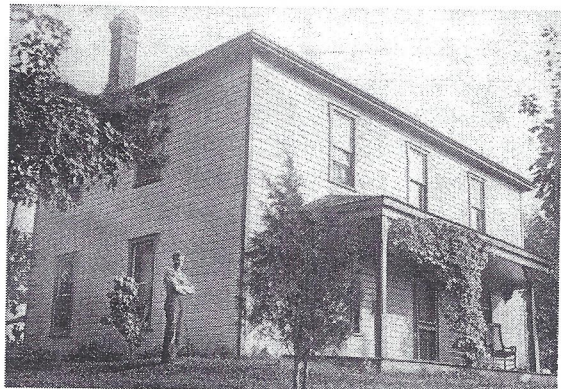
Phillip Spaun here this morning. Drove the mare that was stolen. Found her near Toronto. Paid him sixteen dollars for Asburry for thrashing done a year and a half ago. Heard this evening that Sammy Nash was dead. Died some time last night. He will be remembered some time for his rough manners and strong sayings. At work on the Barn, twice at the old place today besides tending to Wood who is at work on the Road. Very Warm. Wind variable what there was of it. John Dalis and Horace Combs piling manure and an immense pile there is too. The manure is so heated that an egg was cooked in it by placing it a little below the surface. John Dalis ate the egg.



Editor's notes- Horace A Combs (b.1836-1910?) was a carpenter living in the village of Stoney Creek. He was Master of the Wentworth Masonic Lodge in 1884 when this photo was taken.

A History Mystery- UPDATE!

Re: "JP Van Wagner house", Issue #39



Thanks to information provided by several descendants, the location of the John Picton Van Wagner home has been identified as roughly at the intersection of Delawana Ave and Lake Avenue, approximately where the Lake Avenue school is today.

The man is still not positively identified, but he may be Walter Denne (1876-1956) who was married to Edith Van Wagner.

Heritage Day 2007

Hamilton City Hall

Sat. Feb 17th

10 am – 3pm

“Heritage Comes Home”

The Stoney Creek Historical Society will be represented at the annual Hamilton Heritage fair and marketplace. This free event features historical displays from across the Wentworth region, items for sale from 20+ local heritage groups, music and dance entertainment, vintage film footage, and food.

At noon on Sat Feb 17th, the annual Hamilton Heritage Volunteer Awards are presented by the Mayor and the Hamilton-Wentworth Heritage Association. This year, Stoney Creek Historical Society has nominated Mike and Betty Petis for citations.

The citation reads: “Mike and Betty are dedicated volunteers serving cheerfully in many capacities, including the last two years as social conveners for the Society’s monthly meetings. They also hosted the 2005 annual Society picnic.”

Please extend your thanks to Bett and Mike for all their hard work on behalf of the Society.

A Georgia Clay-Eater

Story from the Maysville (Georgia) correspondent for the Atlanta Constitution, 1897

Maysville: A remarkable instance of dirt eating came to light here a day or two ago. Liza Wellington, a Negro woman about 36 years of age, entered a doctor’s office and called for “medicine to make her quit eating dirt.” The physician asked a few questions and found that the woman was in the habit of eating a wash basin full of dirt daily. The woman declared that the dirt gave her more satisfaction than a first class meal at the hotel, and that she had taken so much dirt from the back of a chimney of Mr. Brazelton’s farm and used it as an article of diet that the chimney was in danger of falling.

The doctor says that the woman’s health is not seriously impaired. She has an ashy appearance, but is active and strong enough.

Saltfleet High School's War Dead

By Jim Leavens

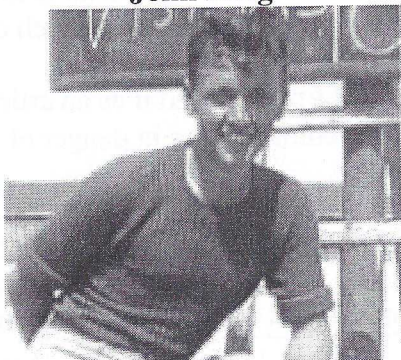
Editor's notes: Saltfleet High School recently produced a play for Remembrance Day 2006. The play commemorated the lives and WW II service of students from the school and was performed by the drama class. Excerpts from Jim Leaven's research follow:

Richard Sims



Richard Sims was the son of Thomas and Elsie Sims. He lived on the north side of Queenston Road, between Lake Ave and Highway 20 (around modern day Riverdale Drive). He attended Saltfleet High School in 1937-38 and his best subjects were art, mathematics, writing, and spelling. Nicknamed "Blondie", Richard was versatile in many sports. He worked at Lawrence Brothers Cement Company on Lake Ave (modern day site of Bertram and Barry Insurance) and enlisted in 1942. He was a private in the Algonquin Regiment, killed Sept 14, 1944 in Holland. His body was never identified. He was 21. Richard Sims is remembered on Panel 11 of the Groesbeek Memorial in Gelderland, Holland.

John King

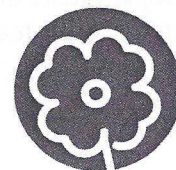


John King was the son of Hugh and Agnes King, and he attended Saltfleet High School for two years from 1935-37. He entered high school early and did well in Form I. His favourite subjects were geography, French and British history, algebra, and arithmetic. John lived at Stop 69 (present day Millen Road). He joined the RCAF and became a Pilot Officer in 112th Squadron. John died Jan 29, 1944, and like many airmen his body was never found. He was 22. Pilot Officer John King is remembered on Panel 251 at the Runnymede Memorial in Sussex, England.

Leonard Hill



Leonard Hill was the son of Herbert and Ella Nora Hill, growing up on Barton Street between Gray's Road and Green Road. His best subjects at Saltfleet High School (1928-29) were agriculture, French, geography, and art. He worked for the Cudney Canning Factory on Lake Ave and National Steel Car Company in Hamilton. He bought a farm at the corner of Highway 20 and Tapleystown Rd around 1939 (where Stogey's/ the Redwood Inn is today). Len enlisted in the RCAF in 1942 and was a Flying Officer in 426th Squadron. His plane went down on a bombing run to Fterkrade, Germany, and his body was found on a Dutch beach on July 17, 1944. He was 30 years old. Len is buried in Plot 69, Row A of the Amsterdam New Eastern Cemetery in Holland.



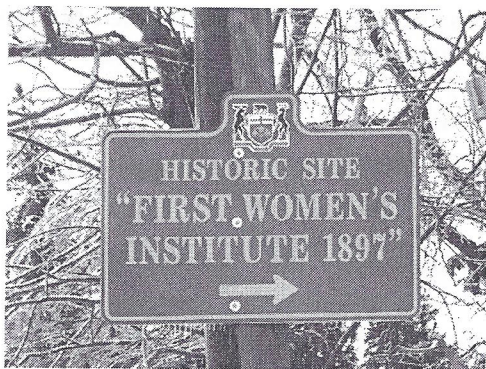
Erland Lee Museum Report

By Michael Gemmell

A big thank you goes out to the Winona Men's Club for financial support that enabled the museum to pay for a replacement blue and gold historic site road sign. These signs used to be paid for by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. In recent years however, the new Ontario Heritage Trust has stopped funding these blue and gold signs. Winona Men's Club helped provide enough money that the museum could afford to order a replacement sign.



Old sign



New sign

Volunteers from the Stoney Creek Optimist club helped paint the washroom building this fall. Stoney Creek Horticultural Society donated plants for the gardens and Sims Locks Women's Institute donated a sitting bench for under the trees. Thank you to these groups for their support and to Saltfleet High School student, Mat Smith, who just completed a Coop work term placement at the museum.

Upcoming Events at Erland Lee Museum:

February 24: Heritage Week Talk

"Famous Hamilton Women"
in the museum, 2:00 pm

Curator Michael Gemmell explores the story of five famous Hamilton women, and showcases artefacts from these ladies.

March 24: **Pancakes at the Lee**

Our annual maple syrup event
8 am – noon

April 14 : a new **Murder Mystery dinner** at the museum- Time/Date to be confirmed

May 5-6: **Doors Open Hamilton,**
5th anniversary

Welcome New Historical Society Members!

We extend a warm welcome to:

Marilyn Hardsand
BD Green

Historical Society Reference Library

1247 Highway #8, Winona
in Steel Market (rear of plaza building).
M-F, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Thank you to K. & P. Orr for providing space
for the society's reference library.

Anna Orr, Bill Mitchell, and Cheryl Gemmell all
have lists of what is in the library and can tell
you if there is a book or document that could
help with your research.

Note: Photocopying is NOT available.

Report from Battlefield House Museum

By Marnie Maslin

Happy New Year to you and your family from the staff at Battlefield House Museum! With a very busy holiday season at Battlefield House over once again, the new year brings with it new changes, challenges and excitement. An investigation this month into the evolution of construction and use of the two upper westerly rooms in the Museum is reinforcing our knowledge that the 200 year-old history of the building that is Battlefield House has many, many layers and is as much of a puzzle as it has ever been. The stories of the many people, beginning with the Gage family, who have inhabited or passed through the rooms of this house, can literally be found in the fabric of this building. In an article featured in the Stoney Creek News on August 15, 1973, Milton Watson writes about a previous investigation and restoration of Battlefield House. Watson's experience reveals one such brief glimpse into the life of someone who passed through the walls of this historic house.

“On a later visit to the house one of the workmen took me up into the attic where he had discovered some writing on the plaster of the west chimney. Some time about 1920 repairs had been made and while the plaster was still wet the plasterer or someone with him had written these words:

CORP'L F.W. AMBROSE,
ENLISTED WITH THE 76TH BAT.
AUG. 10 1915, SERVED WITH
THE 4TH BAT. C.E.F., WOUNDED
AT THE SOMME FRONT OCT. 8TH
1916.”

-from *The Stoney Creek News*,
August 15, 1973

Watson did not, and nor do we, know who this person was or what became of him. It is a

mystery which further inspires us to find out as much as we can about the evolution of Battlefield House as we share the stories of the people who made this house their home. Whether it's for a guided tour or at a special event, we hope that you and your family will take the time to visit the Museum this winter and spring so we can share the stories of Battlefield House with you.

Heritage Week Lecture – Canadians in the War of 1812

Speaker: Jim Hill, Superintendent of Culture Services, Niagara Parks Commission

Date: Thursday, February 22, 2007

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Cost: FREE

A Monumental March Break

Fun and exciting hands-on activities for the whole family as we bring the past to life!

Dates: Tuesday, March 13, 2007 to Friday, March 16, 2007

Time: 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Cost: Regular admission rates apply.

So That's What That Means!

An entertaining lecture on the origins of everyday expressions as you tour the Museum.

Date: Sunday, April 15, 2007

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Cost: FREE

Historical Genealogical Inquires

Members may submit 2 free genealogical queries per year. Queries should be typed or printed clearly on separate pages 8 ½" x 11", 50 word limit. Non-Members must remit a fee of \$3.00 per query, which will be dated when received and printed in the order received as time and space allow. Please include Name, Address, Postal Code and phone number. Send to: **PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6** or via email to erlandlee@interlynx.net

Would you prefer to help us save postage and have your newsletter delivered via email?

Please send us your email address via erlandlee@interlynx.net and you will receive the newsletter as a PDF or Word file.

A Blast from the Past:



Gray 8 Shell, Autobody Shop, and Lunch Bar, 1959
SE corner of Queenston Road and Gray's Road

Editor's notes: Sam and Kay Palmer and their children Tom, Robert, Stella, and Jean, built the Shell gas station, auto body shop, and Gray's 8 restaurant in 1951. The building was made from cement blocks, later covered in plaster. Palmer's restaurant was a quintessential 1950s truck stop, with 10 stools, 4 tables, and a Wurlitzer jukebox. Kay Palmer sold coffee for 5 cents a cup, about half of the going rate of the day (10 cents). Kay was also clear that despite the fact that the restaurant was popular with the local police force, they never received free coffee!

Additional sections were added to the building between 1950 and 1959 to create a single front. The family also added a small building behind, which became John Provost' barber shop (right side of photo). In 1962, the original one story restaurant was torn down and the modern form of the building (two stories, with a basement under part of the structure) was built. It was occupied in the 1970s by the Royal Bank of Canada and the Silver Cue Billiard Hall. In 2006 it houses Cash Money Cheque Cashing company.

Stoney Creek Historical Society Executive 2007

<i>President: Bill Mitchell</i>		<i>1st VP: Greg Armstrong</i>	<i>2nd VP/ Newsletter Michael Gemmell</i>
<i>Correspondence Secretary: Anna Orr</i>		<i>Past President: Bill O'Reilly</i>	<i>Treasurer: Judy Green</i>
<i>Director: Mary Place</i>		<i>Director: Jim Reid</i>	<i>Director: Mary Lewis</i>
<i>Program: Malcolm Hughes</i>	<i>Archives: Cheryl Gemmell</i>	<i>Social Convenors: Betty and Mike Petis</i>	<i>Recording Secretary: Harriet McInnis</i>

YES! I would like to acquire/renew membership in the Stoney Creek Historical Society.

_____ Individual membership \$ 10.00 annually

_____ Family membership \$18.00 annually

_____ Business Membership \$25.00 annually

Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Phone Number : _____

Email: _____

Send to: **PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6** or call **905-662-4065** for more information.

Visitors and New Members Welcome!

Meetings are held at Stoney Creek City Hall,
Saltfleet Room

1st Wednesday of each month
beginning at 7:00pm.
September to June

Coffee and Refreshments follow
Info: 905-662-2248

www.stoneycreekhistoricalsociety.701.com

Sponsors of individual Newsletter editions
(\$30.00 donation) receive a charitable income
tax receipt. Call 905-662-4065 for info.

Members Business/Institution Directory:

Appraiser/Quiltmaker/Lecturer	Judy Lyons	1231 Hammond St. Burl.	(905) 639-2441
Britannia Cleaners	Ed Strecker	17 King Street East	(905) 662-4971
Chamber of Commerce	Dave Cage	21 Mountain Avenue South	(905) 664-4000
Watercolours by Doug Mays	Doug & Angela Mays	3 MacDui Drive	(905) 643-4541
Erland Lee Museum	Michael Gemmell	552 Ridge Road	(905) 662-2691
Evans Flower Shop	Karen Evans	5 King Street East	(905) 664-3712
Flowers by Dianne	Dianne Black	9 King Street West	(905) 664- 6621
Forsyth Hagar Accounting	Anne Forsyth	42 King Street East, Unit #2	(905) 662-2848
Picture Palace	Joanne Wynhofen	19 King Street East	(905) 662-4014
Queenston Stationery		38 King Street East	(905) 664-3360
Royal Canadian Legion	Branch 622	12 King Street East	(905) 662-4171
Winona Garden Shoppe	Georgina & Jeff Beattie	1381 Highway #8	(905) 643-2161

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