

Stoney Creek Historical Society

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

NEWSLETTER

October 2006 Edition #39 Circulation: 300 copies

EXCERPTS FROM THE PETER S. VAN WAGNER DIARIES

Transcribed by Kristen Kerr

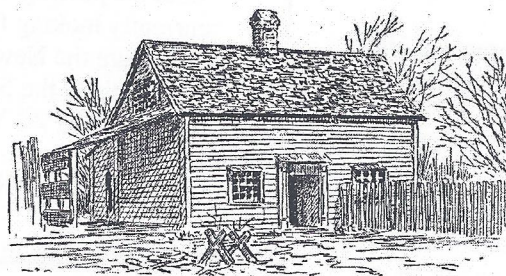
Introduction:

Peter Spohn Van Wagner (1818-1906) was the son of Henry Van Wagner, the first member of the family to settle in Stoney Creek around the time of Peter's birth. Van Wagner lived as a child on Lake Avenue very close to the modern day Warden Park site. At that time the area that today houses a baseball field was known as Van Wagner's Hollow. As an adult, Van Wagner moved to a lakefront property, the modern day Van Wagner's Beach Road. He was a well-known local figure in the late 1800s, writing and teaching. His diaries, which chronicle from 1850-1906, are now in the Archives of Ontario.

Friday June 21st 1850

Warm day. Wind East. Thunder last night. At work on the barn. Townsend and John fitting on the new jib. Timothy came home from Townsend's place at 3 o'clock. Finished ploughing fallow there, and commenced on the large field at home. Thomas Nalkes(?) has joined the Sons of Temperance and is about to leave Stoney Creek. Got in a row lately with Grace the blacksmith and threatened to kill him. Grace took out a warrant for him but he managed to settle it. This lead to his reformation.

Editor's notes: Charles "Townsend" Van Wagner (1825 - 1910) was Peter's brother. He inherited their father's original home on Lake Avenue. "John" was probably the other brother, John Lampman Van Wagner, who inherited a section of the farm east of the creek and up the hill where today Blueberry Drive is.



Henry Van Wagner homestead, 1897, sketch from "Wentworth Landmarks"

William & Juanita Mitchell 2006
2 Elm Dr.
Stoney Creek, On. L8G 3B4

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:
Robert Smith

President's Message

Summer passed quickly and we are already into October. Many of our members enjoyed our annual pot luck dinner in June, held at the charming home of Paul and Sheila Gallea. We very much appreciated their hospitality.

Our programme convenor, Malcom Hughes has a full lineup of interesting speakers for the coming months, so please try to attend our monthly meetings on the first Wednesday night of each month.

I hope many of you had an opportunity to visit historical sites or towns during your vacation. I spent ten days on Manitoulin Island, which has a rich and interesting history. On the island are many historical societies working to maintain and restore old light houses and rebuild some early sites. There is not too much municipal bureaucracy and this enables much of the work to be done by local craftsmen. Smaller municipalities have their benefits.

Have you noticed the improvements that were done this summer to Battlefield Park? I hope that this work will continue to the interior of the Nash-Jackson house in 2007.

Bill O'Reilly, President

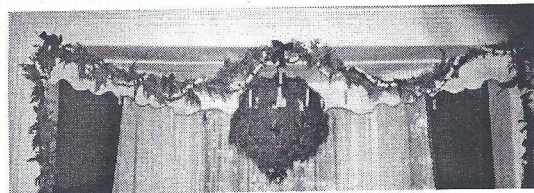
Memorial for Ron Place

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

Society News

CHRISTMAS BUS TRIP: The Society is running a new Christmas bus tour on Saturday, December 9, 2006. The 2006 trip will be an all-day trip, leaving from Stoney Creek in the morning and traveling to Rochester, New York for a visit to the East (Kodak) House, a steam train ride along the Erie Canal and a visit to a train museum. A light lunch and buffet dinner is included. The bus tour will conclude with a drive by of the Christmas lights of Niagara Falls on the return trip. All-inclusive price: \$78.00 per person. Call Vice President Bill Mitchell at 905-664-4576 to book your seat.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The Stoney Creek Historical Society's AGM will be held on January 3, 2006 instead of our regular monthly meeting. The activities of the past year will be reviewed prior to the speaker and elections held for offices on the Society Executive. Anyone wishing to serve on the Executive should contact Bill O'Reilly at 905-662-2248

EDITOR WANTED

With the passing of Ron Place, the Society is currently looking for a new Executive Member to prepare the Newsletter 3 times a year. At the present time, the Newsletter editorship has been taken over by 2nd VP Michael Gemmell, but anyone interested in assuming the reins is asked to contact Bill O'Reilly at 905-662-2248.

Upcoming Speakers

November 1, 2006 – Karen Richardson
Topic: *A Woman's Work is Never Done*

December – NO MEETING –
Christmas Bus Tour on December 9, 2006.

January 3, 2006 - Michael Gemmell
Topic: *By the Banks of the Olde Stoney Creek*

P.S. Van Wagner Diaries Continued.

Saturday June 22nd 1850

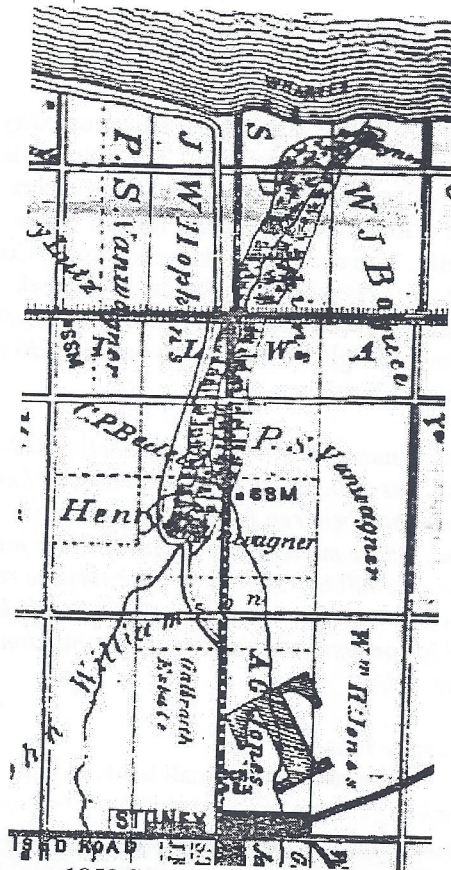
At work on the barn and boat. John here helping. Townsend came towards night with the jib and foresail. Rain this afternoon. Alex Rolls sick. Cool today. Paid Woods one dollar and three quarters for road work. He is a half white . . . a good worker and, I [believe], honest. People from the mountain running after fish. Some dirty dogs in Stoney Creek hung an effigy to the Telegraph wires near Williamson's Store and called it "R.R Waddell". This is "uncommonly mean" as R.R W. deserves nothing of the kind.

Editor's notes: "Williamson's store" probably refers to the grain storage house erected by local farmer, J.H. Williamson in 1850 to ship grain on Lake Ontario. A non-local competitor, R.R. Waddell of Hamilton, built a rival grain storage facility the same year. For a time, Stoney Creek's docks and commerce exceeded those of nearby Hamilton.

Sunday June 23rd 1850

At Sammy Nash's funeral. Alexander preached. Between two and three hundred persons attended. The day was warm with a shower about 1 o'clock. I went up on foot and passed over ground familiar to me nearly a quarter of a century ago when I was at school and Sammy Nash was in his fields (?) though 73 years old when he died. This day brings to my memory thoughts of former years when at school with my playfellows, very few of whom I saw to-day. They are scattered as the four winds of . . . as the saying is never to meet again in this world. Each seeking his own way with no time to think of us others. Sam was home today (the day 15 h ¼ long)

Editor's notes: "Sammy" was Samuel Nash (1779-1850), who built the Nash-Jackson House, today in Battlefield Park.. "Alexander" may be Reverend Alexander Gollan, a Presbyterian minister who lived in Stoney Creek in the 19th century.



1859 Surtees map, showing Van Wagner's farms and near by area

Monday June 24th 1850

Wood mowing in the swale. Cloves fit to eat. Townsend and John at work on the boat, Caroline and Mary too in the afternoon. The day cool. Williamson's schooner at the wharf. James Hill called in about 9 O'clock on his way after fish.

Tuesday June 25th 1850

Timothy cutting cloves in the field above the East end of the orchard. Mrs. E.P. gone to Hamilton. Townsend and John at work on the boat and launched her with her new rig which appears to answer well. Here too men with two carts on the road. Wind east Am [...]

Editor's notes: "Mrs. E.P." was probably Van Wagner's mother-in-law, Mrs. Elias (Abigail) Pettit.

Continued on Page 4...

P.S. Van Wagner Diaries continued...

Wednesday, June 26th 1850

Mrs. E.P. here today. Donation party for the benefit of Misters Bristol and Abbs (?) at Trinity Church. Paid Mil--- and three others £1.17.6 for work on the road, the hill below Bedell's. Tim and I at work in the clover. Cool wind east. The boat lying below Sty. Creek Bridge. Paid Wood 1/6 hay for cutting the swale. Spoke to Wright to shingle the barn for 2/6 pr wood and board.

Editor's notes: Charles Pettit Bedell (1819-1894) was living on the property west of Lake Avenue and between Peter and his father's farms, where modern day Delawana Ave joins Lake. The hill he refers to is probably the rise of the road, coming out of the hollow. Bedell later sold his property and moved to Washington State, USA.

Thursday June 27th 1850

Hauled in four small loads of hay. A sprinkling of rain in the afternoon. Threatening an East storm. Wind East. E.P. here to tea. Took Mrs. P. home. Made a bargain with Wood to cut the Negros lot for 3 dollars and cock it into the bargain. Birds carrying off English cherries. Jimmy Lee is doing nothing towards clearing off the lot of land he took to clear. He has the cord wood off ½ of it and was to have it cleared by this time. I think he will not stick to his bargain. John Lampman V.W. here this evening but I did not see him. I went on board the boat at Stoney Creek Bridge, and stowed the sail. Townsend had left them loose.

Friday June 28th 1850

Training day, Col. Gourlay absent. May S--- acting. Dull business as usual. Came home by Mrs. Harris, the amiable "old" creature gave me the most polite cursing among other sweet sayings she told me I had tortured her daughter to death and should not have George to torture too. And that she would keep him as long as she pleased and I should pay for his keeping, that it would be settled by the execut[ors] George Bradshaw, John and Peter Lee. I saw Esquire Williamson after who told me I was quite safe and required only to prove I had demanded the

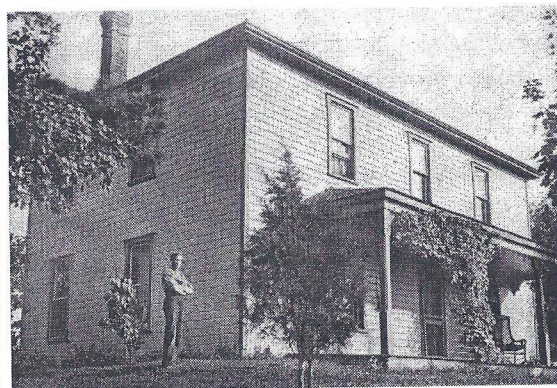
boy from her. Townsend and John rode up to the training with me. John staid [sic] and Townsend back with us and paid the twenty dollars on the buggy. Wind east, some rain, and I am rather sick (no patience to write)

Editor's notes: Like many settlers, Van Wagner served in the Canadian militia. Colonel William Gourlay was an officer of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers trained the Canadian militia, living at Barton Manor in Hamilton, where he died in 1867. 'Mrs Harris' is probably Bathsheba Harris, who lived near the corner of modern Barton St and Parkdale Ave (originally 'Harris Sideroad'). The disagreement referred to here is not understood by the editor at this time.

A History Mystery- "JP Van Wagner house"

Peter Van Wagner's brother was John Lampman (JL) Van Wagner, who lived in Van Wagner's Hollow (Lots 24 and 25, Con 2), east of the creek off Lake Avenue atop the modern Blueberry Drive rise. John L.'s son was John Picton (JP) Van Wagner (1866 - 1929).

This undated photo, donated by the Grimsby Archives, is identified as "JP Van Wagner House".



The photographer is unknown. The man in the photo is also unidentified.

If you have any information about this photo, please call 905-662-2691 or email erlandlee@interlvnx.net.

Erland Lee Museum Report

On Aug. 12th, the museum hosted a teddy bear workshop, including a special visit from the CHAM am mascot, 'Chammy' the bear. Thank you to everyone who came to the flea market at the Binbrook fairgrounds on Aug. 19th. We raised \$600. The museum also had a booth at both Winona Peach Festival and the Wiggle-Waggle Walkathon with a "What Is It" artefact guessing game. The museum added a new selection of Winona-related historical photos in the late summer to the From Saltfleet to Stoney Creek history database, which now has over 1200 entries. Visit www.erlandlee.com

Upcoming Events

Oct 14, 2006 – Women's Health Workshop
Drop-in open-house of informative displays. A variety of women's health topics, including breast cancer screening, bra sizing, nutrition, and breast feeding. Karen Richardson will also be delivering a lively presentation titled "From the Bottom Up: Fashions from 1800-2000". This event is come-and-go, from 10am - 4pm. \$5.00 at-the-door charge includes light refreshment. The event is part of the ROSE (Rural Ontario Sharing Education) program.

Oct 28, 2006 – Murder Mystery Dinner: "The Grapes of Frath"
Join our volunteer troupe for a repeat performance of a Winona murder mystery. Dinner is served at 6pm in the museum carriage house (which for one night is the dining room of the old Winona Park Hotel in the 1920s) whilst a murder is going on in the grand suite of the hotel. Guests will be tour the crime scene, with a suspect line-up over dessert. \$30.00 includes dinner and non-alcoholic beverages. A cash bar is available. Pre-payment for tickets is required (cash, cheque, or VISA). RSVP by October 25. Limit: 35 guests.

Nov 5- Dec 3, 2006:
14th Annual Local Art Show (and Sale)
SHOW OPENING: Sun. Nov. 5th 1-3 pm
A variety of original oils, watercolours, acrylics, pastels, sculptures, and photos from many local

artists, on display in the museum's 1873 carriage house. Pick up that unique Christmas gift! The art hangs for a whole month and must be offered for sale. This is a non-juried show. It is designed to help showcase local artistic talent.

Dec 1 - 24: Country Christmas

The Gothic Revival home is decorated for the season in late Victorian style, with natural foliage and traditional decor. \$5.00 - Tour includes tea/coffee and complimentary home baked goodies, made in the museum. Christmas crafts made by the Women's Institutes available for sale in the gift shop. Call 905-662-2691 or email erlandlee@interlynx.net for an after-hours candlelight tour.

Welcome New Historical Society Members!

We extend a warm welcome to:

Flowers by Dianne – business member

New SCHS Phone Team

SCHS phoners help remind everyone of upcoming events and meetings. Your phone team is:

Mary Place –convenor
Mary Brown
Barbara Green
Margaret Hughes
Irene Pergentile

Thank you to Juanita Mitchell, who is retiring.

Historical Society Reference Library

1247 Highway #8, Winona
in Steel Market (rear of plaza building).
M-F, 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

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

Note: Photocopying is NOT available.

OFF TO WORK

In 1881 there were 2833 occupations recorded in Saltfleet Township (modern Stoney Creek and East Hamilton):

1 Agent
1 Auctioneer
19 Blacksmiths
8 Butchers
23 Carpenters
2 Clergymen
1 Minister
1 Priest
7 Shoe Makers
4 Shoe Maker clerks
1 Shoe Dealer
1 Contractor
1 Dairyman
2 Physicians
1 Doctor
2 Medical students
3 Engineers
3 Firemen
11 Fishermen
1 Rope Maker
4 Sailors
5 Fruit Growers
27 Gardeners
1 Nurseryman
407 Farmers
70 Farmer' s sons
19 Farm Servants
1 Gentleman
6 Hotel Keepers
2 Lawyers
2 Law students
6 Masons
1 Mail Carrier
3 Molders
1 Painter
2 Seamstresses
3 Tailors
8 Teachers
1 Tin Smith
1 Toll Keeper
26 Servants
1 Stationmaster
5 Store Keepers
1 Merchant
3 Millers

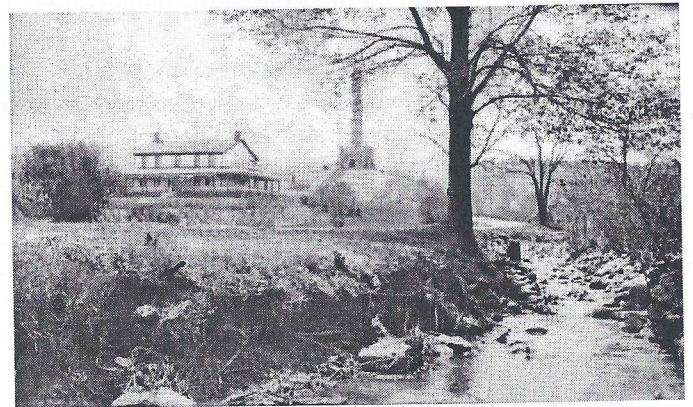
Compiled by Dorothy Reid

Battlefield House Report

By Marnie Maslin

This summer at Battlefield House Museum brought with it many changes to the site, both inside and out. Walkways outside the Nash-Jackson House were completed and even more noticeably, the main entrance to Battlefield Park was moved to the west side of Battlefield Creek. Inside the Museum, the east side addition, built around 1925 and known as the Caretaker's addition, underwent restoration. Original paint colours were re-instated, the kitchen pass-through was re-opened, and the woodwork and floors were refinished. The following is an interesting excerpt from the Hamilton Spectator from eighty years ago, with respect to the Caretaker's addition.

"Welcomed by...officers and members of the Women's Wentworth Historical Society, a large number of ladies from this city and vicinity paid a visit to the Battlefield house, Stoney Creek, yesterday afternoon, to inspect the improvements and additions to this historic center. The old house looked most attractive with its decorations of glowing autumnal foliage, and its tea table lighted with red candles. This pleasant social function was under the auspices of the committee in charge of the improvements; and a tour of inspection by the guests served to disclose much-needed work accomplished. Cosy (sic.) quarters for the caretaker have been added to the house; a new cloakroom for visitors provided and water and electric light installed in the new part of the building."
-from *The Hamilton Spectator*, October 26, 1926



Battlefield House and Monument, c.1915

Continued on page 7...

Battlefield House Report continued...

This restored space will soon be used for museum programming and interpretation and we plan to begin using the rooms for our upcoming fall and Christmas special events. We hope that you and your family can join us for one of these special days and help us celebrate our heritage.

TWILIGHT TALES LANTERN TOUR

Dare to walk the grounds where the Battle of Stoney Creek was fought almost two hundred years ago and where our past comes alive.

Date: Saturday, October 28, 2006

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$5.00 Adults, \$3.00 Children (recommended for ages 7 and up)

GINGERBREAD HOUSE WORKSHOP

Children will decorate their own pre-made, homemade gingerbread house to take home. Includes a visit from St. Nicholas.

Dates: Saturdays, December 2 and 9, 2006

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Cost: \$20.00 per child. Pre-registration is required.

THE SIMPLE JOYS OF CHRISTMAS

Take a break from holiday shopping and step back in time to experience an early 19th century Christmas.

Join us for music, period decorating tips, children's activities, and hearth-baked treats.

Dates: Sundays, December 3 and 10, 2006

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

Cost: Regular admission rates apply

WHO ARE YOU?



We are looking for names of these workers in this 1932 photo of the Stoney Creek Basket factory. The photo was taken where the Cherrywood Apartments are in 2006, standing by the creek, looking east towards the factory and the metal storage building (also a militia hall).

L-R

Back row: ____, ____, ____, ____, Harry Sackrider, x Nelson?, ____

Front row: ____, ____, x Broughton?, ____, ____, ____, ____, Hugh Hildreth

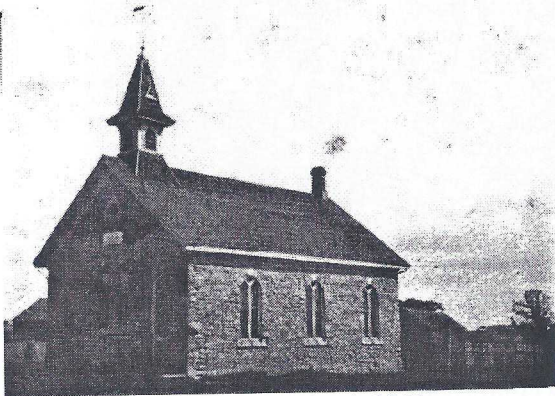
Tapleystown School celebrates 125th anniversary.

On September 30, 2006, students and staff from Tapleystown School welcomed back generations of former pupils for a 125th anniversary celebration.

Tapleystown School was built in 1881. The land where the old structure is was bought from William Gage, one acre of the land was from the Condon Estate and a half-acre was from the Hildreth estate. The original 1881 structure was built completely out of stone and originally 32 by 40 feet. The stones appeared to have come from the area.

One day in 1883 while school was still in session the northeast corner of the school collapsed luckily no children were injured. The teacher J.F Kennedy took the class across the road and held classes in the Methodist church until the school was repaired.

In 1887 the first school inspector of the Wentworth county began visiting schools the first inspector was Joseph H Smith. In the 1880 children would use double desks which changed to single desks in the 1920 and the tables and chairs fifty years later.



Tapleystown School, 1881

After the Second World War enrolment increased due to many immigrants arriving into the country the school building had to be

enlarged a few times to hold the number of students.

On January 22, 1948 a fire of unknown origin broke out and caused considerable damage to the interior of the building the quick arrival of the fireman saved the school from total destruction. In 1952 Saltfleet decided to add two classrooms a boiler room and washroom to the stone school a corridor was built along the back of the school with two classrooms. By 1954 a new office two more classrooms at the front on the east side and one on the southeast were built. In 1956 two more classrooms were added to the school. The children were able to get to school by bus from McLeod Motors. The bell from the old stone school now sits on a stone cairn near the front office. In 1966 the last edition was completed and consisted of two rooms on the north side and two rooms on the south side.

-Mathew Smith

Files from *Saltfleet Then and Now*

Editor's notes: This school is unique in Stoney Creek, being the oldest school still in use for its original function. While other schools in the area still exist (Lee School SS #7 or example or the Vinemount School SS#9), all the rest are no longer used as schools.

1896 Ontario School Statistics

Average cost per pupil for textbooks in Ontario:
19.4 cents

Number of public schools in Ontario: **5996**

Number of pupils in high schools: **24 567**

Number of pupils who left school for agricultural pursuits in 1896: **1139**

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Historical Genealogical Inquiries

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

A Blast from the Past: Acacia Hotel, Stoney Creek



Editor's notes: The Village Restaurant recently renovated and installed a series of historical pictures of the old Acacia Hotel (which was the original use of the building). Thanks to Waterdown Heritage Society for this photo of the old hotel, c.1910. The gentleman on the left is probably CJ Silbert, who is listed as the proprietor on the sign on the hotel roof. The woman is unknown.

Stoney Creek Historical Society Executive 2006

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

YES! I would like to become a member of the Stoney Creek Historical Society.

_____ Individual membership \$ 10.00

_____ Couple/Family membership \$18.00

_____ Business Membership \$25.00

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 Wynthofen	19 King Street East	(905) 662-4014
Queenston Stationery	Salam Zoghaib	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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