

Remember the Cortman House

## Stoney Creek Historical Society

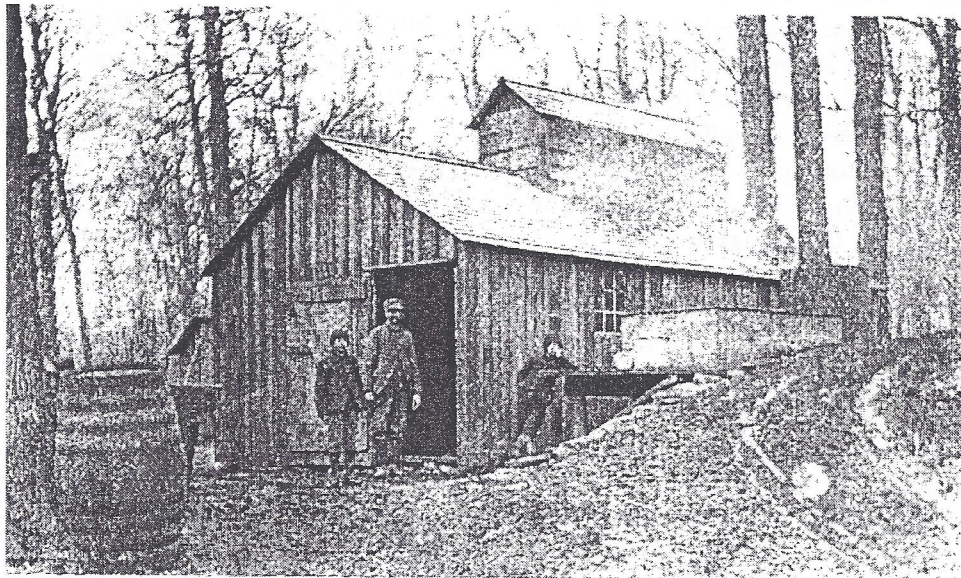
PO Box 66637, Stoney Creek, ON. L8G 5E6

# NEWSLETTER

February 2009 Edition #46 Circulation: 300 copies

### LEE SUGAR BUSH SHACK DAMAGED BY FIRE

*By Meaghan FitzGibbon*



*Lee Sugar Bush –early 20<sup>th</sup> century*

In the early morning hours of December 18, 2008, Stoney Creek lost a part of its history. The Lee maple syrup shack was victim to fire. It was often a place for late night parties and had been subject to vandalism recently. The Lymburner family are unsure if they will continue operations.

The sugar bush, at the corner of Powerline and Tapleystown Roads, was one of the oldest continuously operating maple syrup producers in Stoney Creek. Marcus Lee purchased concession 5, lot 17 and established Maple Ridge farm where the Stoney Creek crosses Tapleystown Road. In 1893, he began producing maple syrup. There were approximately 1,000 trees in the sugar bush.

"Lee's Own" Syrup was marketed for decades as a distinctively Stoney Creek product. Marcus Lee, Erland Lee's brother, operated the maple syrup business until 1917 when he retired. Marcus sold the operation to his cousin Hamilton Lee although Marcus himself continued to work in the bush. Hamilton, in turn, passed it on to his son Ira Lee. Ira discontinued the name "Lee's Own" in 1956 but continued operating the sugar bush until the 1970s. [Continued on p.3]

## The Presidents Corner

According to all the economists it sounds like 2009 is going to be a bad year for us all. As far as the Stoney Creek Historical Society is concerned, nothing could be farther from the truth. 2009 is shaping up to be one of the most active years we have had since I have been a member of the organization.

First on the list is the financial standing. Stoney Creek Historical Society is in excellent financial health as our treasurer Judy Green will testify. Having said that please remember that we are in a New Year and your dues are due. Please help us to keep S.C.H.S. financially strong and healthy.

For those of us who had the pleasure of a tour of the Nash-Jackson house last November, it is encouraging to know that this year will see us with a new library location in the restored home. Once again we will be able to provide our members with information to help them with family research. We will keep you informed as we go along with this project. We will need help with the moving and updating of books and documents, when the time comes to move the material from 99 King Street house. If you would like to volunteer for this project please contact either our archivist Cheryl Gemmell or myself. We anticipate, and look forward to holding meetings in the nicely decorated meeting hall.

Our programme coordinator Kathy Wakeman has lined up some very interesting speakers for the balance of this year, so do come out that first Monday of each month and enjoy the fellowship of other members, and enjoy the great speaker topics.

Our Vic-president Greg Armstrong is hard at work in setting up a web site for use by any person interested in family history or Stoney Creek historical information. This web site will have links to other historical organizations on the web. Greg is also working with Kathy Wakeman on recording, photographing and designating old Stoney Creek homes and buildings.

I would like on behalf of the S.C.H.S., executive to thank our recording secretary for her dedication and recording of the minutes at each executive meeting. Harriet McInnis will be moving from her home on Lake Ontario and going South to a place on Lake Erie, (Pt. Dover to be exact), Stoney Creeks loss is Port Dover's gain. We wish Harriet well and thanks for a job well done. The annual meeting saw a slight change in your executive with the addition of John Fraser, who will take on Harriet's job as recording secretary.

This past year we lost Anna Orr as corresponding secretary, and her input will be missed by S.C.H.S. This job has now been consigned to Dorothy Reed, who volunteered; we wish her well with this work.

For those members who missed the annual Christmas bus tour, the Spadina House was well worth the trip, in itself. This lovely old home and now a Toronto museum is packed full of artifacts from the family and for any one interest in antiques, this home is well worth a visit.

With a full speaker schedule, the summer pot luck picnic on the horizon, a move of artifacts from 99 King St., and all the work needed to set up the library looming, who says 2009 is going to be dull and all doom and gloom.

*Bill Mitchell, President*

**REMINDER** - The Stoney Creek Historical Society's Reference Library has moved. It is currently not open to the public while work proceeds at its future home, Grandview

**Visitors and New Members Welcome!**  
Meetings are held at old Stoney Creek City  
(Municipal Building)

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month  
Beginning at 7:30pm., September to June  
Coffee and Refreshments follow

**Info: 905-662-2248**

## Lee sugar bush continued.



*M Lee and Herbie Hoover, c.1930*

*Photo from R Furry*

The Lees were one of the first maple syrup producers in the Stoney Creek area to purchase and operate a mechanical evaporator to boil down sap. On July 24, 1893 Marcus gave this testimonial for Champion Maple Syrup Evaporators, "I used one of your Champion Evaporators and Arches last spring, and am well pleased with it. It is the best apparatus for making maple syrup I ever saw..." The evaporator was 14 feet long and 4 feet wide, and evaporated at a rate of four barrels per hour. The syrup was canned in one-gallon tins and in 1910, and it sold for \$1.35 a gallon wholesale and \$1.50 retail.

Wayne Lymburner, the current owner has been operating the business since the early 1970s. In 1975, Mr. Lymburner revived the name "Lee's Own" Maple Syrup connecting back to the early history of the sugar bush. Although the sugar shack is gone, the fire did not harm the sugar bush.



*Lee sugar bush label, 1975*

It remains to be seen if the bush will resume operations.

Would you prefer to help us save postage and have your newsletter delivered via email? Please send us your email address via **[judyag1@hotmail.com](mailto:judyag1@hotmail.com)** and you will receive the newsletter in PDF or MSWord.

### Upcoming Speakers

Mar 4th 2009: BOB WILLIAMSON  
"William Merritt's Ditch - A then-and-now look at the Welland Canal"

April 1, 2009: DONNA REID  
"Doors Open Hamilton 2009"

May 6, 2009: BILL MANSON  
"A Brief History of Transportation in Hamilton"

**Excerpts from Hamilton  
Wheelman's Guide 1897**

Safe Rules for Bicycling  
Earl S Bullock, M.D.

In purchasing a wheel take as much care to have it fit you as you would in purchasing a gown or suit of clothes.  
[...]

When riding use the same sense in drinking that you would in watering a horse. Also, like a horse, stick closely to water as a beverage.

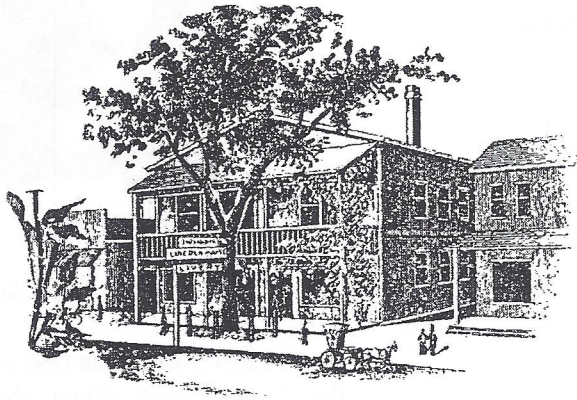
This is Hamilton Wheelmen's most favourite run. It certainly is one of the finest runs in this part of Canada. You leave Hamilton by way of Main, at Sherman Avenue you strike the Barton Toll Road which is a good gravel road all the way to Beamsville. On this run you travel along side the mountain and through the world-famous fruit district of the Niagara Peninsula, and when in foliage the scenery is unsurpassed. You travel alongside the H.G.& B. Railway as as Beamsville, and in case of an accident to your wheel you would not be put to much inconvenience, as you can wait and take the car back. There is but one hill of any account between Hamilton and Beamsville, that is the Red Hill, just below Bartonville but a good rider can easily mount it. [...]



**Run from Hamilton  
to Niagara Falls**

MILEAGE.	TOWNS.	POPULATION.	HOTELS.
	Hamilton .....	50,000 .....	{ American, Victoria Commercial Franklin
3	Bartonville .....	300 .....	
5	Stoney Creek .....	300 .....	Acacia.
10	Winona .....	400 .....	
18	Grimsby .....	1000 .....	Lincoln.
24	Beamsville .....	900 .....	Mrs. Couse.
31	Jordan .....	200 .....	Zimmerman.
33.5	St. Catharines .....	9000 .....	Grand Central.
34.10	Merritton .....	1850 .....	Mansion House.
40.10	Thorold .....	3300 .....	Welland.
43.10	Stamford (a) .....	325 .....	
45.10	Niagara Falls Town .....	3500 .....	American.
	Falls of Niagara .....		Parkside Inn.

# Lincoln House,



**J. W. VANDYKE**

PROPRIETOR

TERMS,

**\$1.50 and**

**\$1.00 per day**

GRIMSBY, ONT.

*Sketch of Lincoln House hotel, Grimsby, from the Wheelman's Guide 1897*

Reproduction copies of the entire 1897 Hamilton Wheelman's Guide can be purchased at Central Cycle, King Street E., Hamilton

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## Ptolemy House Under Threat

The Ptolemy House at 636 Tapleystown Road is facing demolition. The home, rented for many years, was recently purchased. The new owners have applied for a demolition permit.



The Ptolemy House, located at the corner of Tapleystown and Ridge Road, (Concession 4, Lot # 16) is a typical example of Gothic Revival architecture. It has a fine view over

the escarpment brow and is currently surrounded by pine trees.

The house was most likely built by John Ptolemy. John Ptolemy was postmaster and a general merchant in Tapleystown village in 1868-69

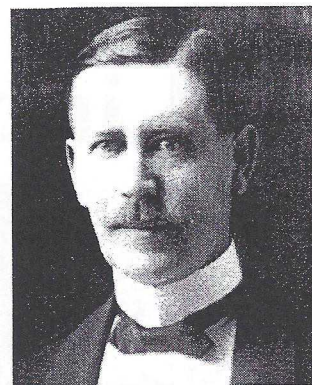
*(Sutherland's City of Hamilton and County Directory)*

The land on which the house stands was definitely in John Ptolemy's possession in 1859 so it stands to reason that the house came into existence during his ownership.

Based on the 1875 Wentworth County Atlas, by 1875 the house was owned by John Ptolemy's son, Robert Ptolemy (b. 1831). Robert was born in Scotland, son of William Ptolemy and Jane Hall. He married Mary Mitchell. Ptolemy helped in the construction of the Lee School on Tapleystown Road in 1874.

By 1903 Robert's son, William Hall Ptolemy (1866-1933) had inherited the house and property. William is best known for his role as a politician, having served as both a Saltfleet Township councillor and Reeve between 1896-1907.

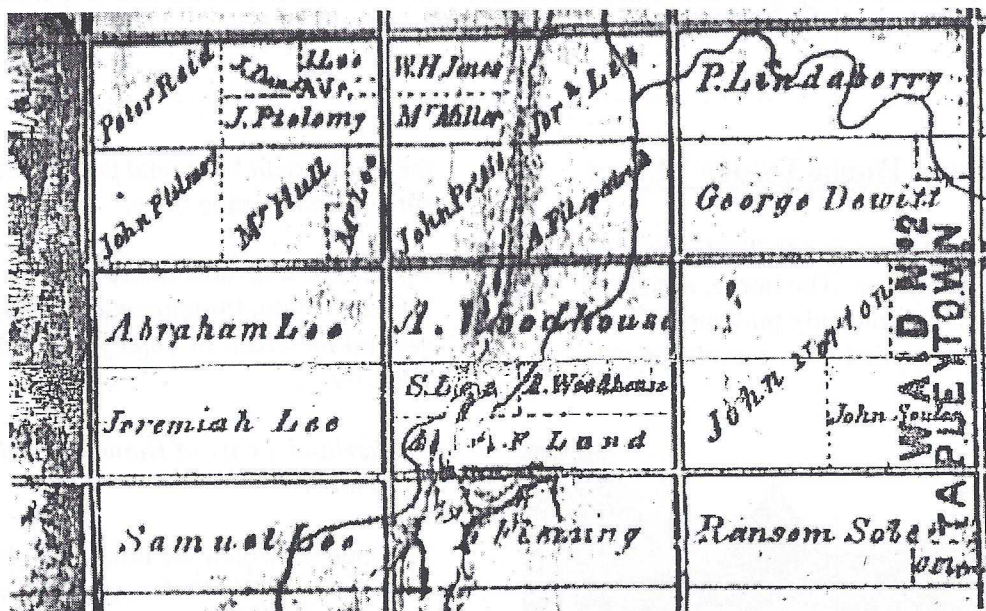
W.H. Ptolemy was master of the local Masonic Lodge in 1907. He was also active in the Wentworth Historical Society in 1908-1909. He was a Lieutenant Colonel in the 77<sup>th</sup> Wentworth militia regiment.



W.H. Ptolemy, 1907

*Photo courtesy of the Masonic Lodge*

In 1927 William was one of the signatories to the Stoney Creek village charter. It is not clear if at that time he had retired and was living in the village.



1859 Surtees map- Ptolemy house site is on far left

## Erland Lee Museum News

The Erland Lee Museum has concluded another eventful Christmas season. This year we offered a new event, our Candlelight Christmas Tours, three tours were held during Wednesday evenings in December. We also offered an encore presentation of the "Origins of Santa Claus" which included a special display on Coca Cola's famous depiction of our favourite North Pole resident. The exhibit is still on display in the Museum's drive House until January 31<sup>st</sup>. We would like to thank the Glanbrook Home Support for welcoming us as a stop on their Christmas House tour in November. The Erland Lee Museum would like to thank the Women's Institute volunteers, Krista's Kornhusk Kreations and local business Flowers by Dianne for their assistance in decorating the Lee. Their efforts helped bring our Victorian Christmas to life.

The Erland Lee Museum is looking forward to an exciting 2009. As part of Heritage Week, the Lee will be participating in the Grimsby Archives' First Niagara Heritage Book Fair. The Book Fair will take place on Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm at the Carnegie Library on Adelaide. All are welcome.

The Erland Lee Museum has a three workshops planned for **March Break**. A **Teddy Bear Making Workshop** on Wednesday March 18<sup>th</sup>, a new **Doll Making Workshop** on Thursday March 19<sup>th</sup> and a **Gadgets, Games, and Goo Workshop** on Friday March 20<sup>th</sup> Parental assistance/ participation recommended. Pre-registration required by 4pm Saturday March 14.

**On Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>** the Erland Lee Museum's will once again kick off the spring and celebrate maple syrup season with our annual Pancake **Breakfast**, which includes sausage, and all you can eat pancakes! The

price is \$8.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children and includes a tour of the Museum. Snow date will be April 4<sup>th</sup>.

For more information on all of our upcoming events please see our website: [www.erlandlee.com](http://www.erlandlee.com), or call 905-662-2691.

*Meaghan FitzGibbon*  
*Curator*

## Battlefield House Museum Events

### DRESSED TO THE NINES

Battlefield House Museum & Park  
Celebrate Heritage Week and join us for an interesting and informative evening presentation detailing early 19th century in Upper Canada. This lecture will be held at the Battlefield Administration building, Refreshments will be served.

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2009

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Ages: All. Cost: FREE

### A MONUMENTAL MARCH BREAK

Battlefield House Museum & Park  
Fun and exciting hands-on activities for the whole family as we bring the past to life!  
Date: Monday, March 16, 2009 to Friday, March 20, 2009. Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Ages: All

Cost: Regular admission rates apply to the museum.

### A TASTE OF SPRING

Battlefield House Museum & Park  
Come and enjoy the taste and aroma of herbal delicacies and see how they'll add zest to your table. Discover new ways to make familiar meals tempting and delicious. Complimentary recipes and samples will be available.

Date: Sunday, April 19, 2009 Time: 2:00 p.m.

Ages: All

Cost: Regular admission rates apply to the museum.

## New book of Hamilton Firsts

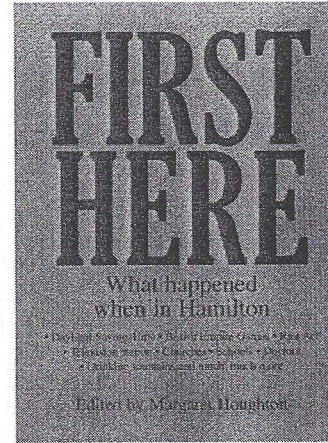
When Wentworth County was first settled in the latter part of the 18th century, the area was a wooded, unpopulated wilderness. It has been noted in early descriptions that in these very early years there were more snakes than people in the area.

Since nothing was here, everything had to be created fresh. The first settlers in each township built their houses and began to start families and cultivate the land.

There is always the first person to do any number of things starting with the first person who actually arrives at a new location and decides to stay.

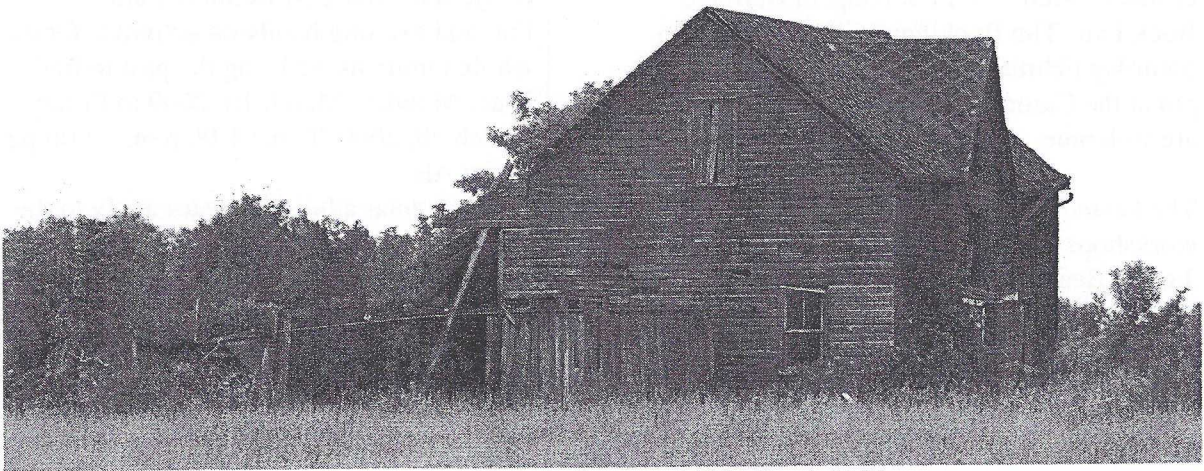
There have been many firsts in the history of Hamilton, some all but forgotten while others are well documented or living on only in our own memories. First Here tells the story of some of the well known as well as some of

the all but forgotten first things and events in Hamilton's history, including Stoney Creek.



It includes such firsts as the fact that Hamilton was the first city in Canada to implement Daylight Savings Time and the first Miss Canada contest was held in Hamilton. Edited by Margaret Houghton, the volume was launched in October 2008 and is now available at local bookstores.

## **A Blast from the Past:**



*NW corner of Barton Street and Fifty Road, 2007*

*Photo courtesy of Kevin Fairhurst*

### **Editor's notes:**

This barn, photographed in 2007 stood on the NW corner of Barton Street and Fifty Road. It was demolished in 2007. Because the nearby abandoned house (347 Fifty Road) is likely to be demolished in time, the editor is looking for information and/or photos about the farm(s) there, including anything on the Vance Cline farm or the James Harper farm.



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

## STONE CREEK NEWS

### Sponsor A Newsletter

Would you like to sponsor an edition of the newsletter? A \$30.00 donation helps with the expense of printing and mailing the Stoney Creek Historical Society Newsletter. A tax receipt for this donation will be issued. Please contact Judy Green at 905-662-4065 to help sponsor a newsletter edition.

### Historical Society Research Queries

Members may submit two free queries per year. Non-members will be charged a \$5.00 fee in advance per query.

Queries must be submitted in writing, not by phone. Queries will be accepted by snail mail and email. If submitting by snail mail, queries should be typed or printed clearly. Maximum 50 words. Please include return contact information.

Queries will be researched in the order they received as volunteers' time permits. Query responses may be published as part of the Society newsletter as space permits.

Stories, News, or Queries can be sent to:

Michael Gemmell

248 Summerhill Ave. Hamilton, ON. L8K 3N7

905-549-5949

[mgemmell@sympatico.ca](mailto:mgemmell@sympatico.ca)

Next Newsletter will be issued Wednesday, May 6, 2009.  
Deadline for Submissions is Friday, April 17, 2009.

### Stoney Creek Historical Society 2009 Executive

President	Bill Mitchell	905-664-4576
Past President	Bill O'Reilly	905-662-2248
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Greg Armstrong	905-662-6269
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Wendy Klassen	905-662-1524
Treasurer	Judy Green	905-662-4065
Recording Secretary	John Fraser	905-667-3688
Correspondence Secretary	Dorothy Reid	905-664-6355
Director	Mary Lewis	905-643-3665
Director	Mary Place	905-662-8856
Director	Kathy Wakeman	
Newsletter Editor	Michael Gemmell	905-549-5949
Archives	Cheryl Gemmell	905-549-5949

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL/DONATIONS

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual membership \$ 10.00 annually  
\_\_\_\_\_ Family membership \$18.00 annually  
\_\_\_\_\_ Business Membership \$25.00 annually

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Receive newsletter by email? Y/N

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Stoney Creek Historical Society  
PO Box 66637  
Stoney Creek, ON  
L8G 5E6

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

For information on Memberships,  
please call 905-662-4065

Please accept my additional donation of \_\_\_\_\_ to the (check one)  
 General Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
 Museum Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
 Publication/Education Fund \_\_\_\_\_

### Members Business/Institution Directory:

<b>Britannia Cleaners</b>	Ed Strecker	17 King Street East	(905) 662-4971
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	Dave Cage	21 Mountain Avenue South	(905) 664-4000
<b>Connection Key Travel</b>	John and Mary Fraser	889 Barton St., Unit 2	(905) 643-7444
<b>Dr. Keith Miller</b>		304-15 Mountain Ave S.	(905) 662-2312
<b>Erland Lee Museum</b>	Meaghan FitzGibbon	552 Ridge Road	(905) 662-2691
<b>Flowers by Dianne</b>	Dianne Black	9 King Street West	(905) 664- 6621
<b>Forsyth Hagar Accounting</b>	Anne Forsyth	42 King Street East, Unit #2	(905) 662-2848
<b>Queenston Stationery</b>	Thao Khac Phung	38 King Street East	(905) 664-3360
<b>Royal Canadian Legion</b>	Branch 622	12 King Street East	(905) 662-4171
<b>Simpson &amp; Watson LLP Barristers and Solicitors</b>		950 King St. W. Hamilton	(905) 527-1174
<b>Winona Gardens</b>	Georgina & Jeff Beattie	1381 Highway #8	(905) 643-2161