

# The Fire Mark

The Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum  
P O R T H O P E , O N T A R I O , C A N A D A • A P R I L 2 0 1 8

## OUR APOLOGIES!

**There was no winter edition newsletter. As you will find out by reading further, our resources were severely stretched to the limit in the packing and moving of the entire collection into storage—in a very cold building.**

## Report from the Chair:

**W**ell it is finally done. The Museum in Port Hope is all packed up and placed into “temporary” storage.

We were able to make arrangements for two years at three municipal locations: the water treatment plant, 5 Mill Street, and the Canton municipal building, plus two private locations. Using all five spots, we were able to store everything away—everything, that is, except for items we declared surplus and sold off.

The board felt it made no sense to store things like office furniture, refrigerator, freezer, cleaning supplies, special event supplies and the like, because they would take up substantial space and could be easily replaced when we find a new location.

We also did a “winnowing” of the collection itself and selected certain artifacts that were either in poor condition, or were duplicates. These items were added to our recent on-line clearance auction held through MaxSold.com. I’m pleased to report that the results were excellent. Our goal was to divest of a lot of stuff we didn’t want or need and attempt to break even on the



*Above:* Just a small part of the immense sorting, cataloging and packing task of thousands of Museum items for temporary storage. All this done in below freezing conditions and against an unforgiving deadline.

deal. As it turned out, we made a healthy profit on the auction and avoided having to haul a lot of stuff off to landfill.

Since December, a hardy core group of board members and volunteers worked steadily at breaking down the exhibits and emptying the Museum’s storage areas. We had accumulated far more in storage than we could ever have imagined and everything had to be assessed, recorded and packed for transport to whichever of our five storage locations made the most sense.

The list of items ranged from tiny things like individual uniform buttons and patches to large aerial ladder trucks, and everything in between. As we got closer to our deadline of March 31st, it became evident that we might not get done in time, so the hours and effort being put in had to be dramatically

increased. Over the final month we had at least a handful of workers at the unheated Museum almost every day.

While the job has been completed, we now find ourselves with a group who are both emotionally and physically spent.

I would like to offer particular thanks to Marielle, Kathy, John, Janet, Dennis and Jack for their extraordinary efforts and long hours. You all went well above and beyond the call of duty. It is going to take some time to rebuild our energy levels so that we can tackle the next important issue, which is to locate a new home for the Museum.

On that issue of finding a new home, you may have noticed a serious uptick in the amount of press the CFFM received over the past month. We were fortunate enough to have interviews on air with CBC radio, be featured on-line by CBC

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news, have a good story reported on the CBC Toronto evening news, another story featured on CHEX evening news and receive both print, radio and online attention from our own local media outlets.

All of this had a positive effect and produced a number of leads on new locations for the Museum. Since the story broke we have had contact from Peterborough, Stouffville, and Welland. These locations can now be added to a list of places under active consideration which includes Colborne, Wesleyville, and Cobourg.

Some less likely possibilities would include Chatham, Blythe, Toronto and even Halifax NS. Suffice to say there are many irons in the fire and more are constantly being added.

What has yet to materialize is a good opportunity in our home community of Port Hope, though we remain hopeful something may come up. Perhaps there is yet some supportive individual or company out there that has a parcel of land or a building that could prove suitable and affordable. Time will tell and in the interim we will investigate everything that has been suggested to us and try to determine what may be the best fit.

*Will Lambert, Chair*

## Gone, but NOT Entirely!

**A**lthough the collections and exhibits are all packed and in storage, you can still tour the Museum as it was!

Thanks to the brilliant work of Museum volunteer, Dennis Wadington, we have a permanent record of the Museum in the form of a “virtual tour”.

Visitors to the Museum web site at: [www.firemuseumcanada.com](http://www.firemuseumcanada.com), can start at the Museum’s front door and “walk” all through the exhibits and truck bays.

Dennis did a great job in creating a versatile tour that lets the viewer look all around the Museum.



Above: Two fire towers and a large storage container stored on site at the old Canadian Tire Building on Robertson Street courtesy of Walter Hilman, Trade Tech Industries.

Since the virtual tour went online in January, there have been hundreds of virtual visitors. Take a tour and see for yourself! The link is on the home page.

## Durham College Pre-Fire Service Training

**O**n Monday, October 2, 2017, Marielle Lambert and I had the pleasure to speak to the class of Pre-Fire Service Firefighter Program at Durham College. The class of approximately 80 young women and men under the leadership of Randy Reinert, B.A. C.E.T., were in their first semester of a one year program. They range in age and entry to the program, from being directly out of grade 12 at the high school level, to having experienced other educational and employment pursuits for 10 years before coming to the program.

We provided a powerpoint presentation about the CFFM, which

highlighted the various types of firefighting featured at the Museum — marine, forest, industrial/commercial, municipal, and national defence, with photos including: leather and metal water buckets used to fight fires in the 1800s; hand and horse drawn trucks as well as our beautifully maintained red fire engines of the 20th century.

The children’s section of the Museum was also shown, with our old “horse and engine ride”, the “silver suit” and other safety related items.

Additional notable topics that were mentioned about the Museum included the fact that people from all over the world have visited; we were consulted by the Canadian Mint to ensure the authenticity of the fire apparatus depicted when designing the 2016 Coin commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the 1916 fire on Parliament Hill in Ottawa; and that we housed a display in Queen’s Park, Toronto, August to November 2016.

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All present were suitably impressed by the artifacts we brought, including the “Speaking Trumpet” (which is still symbolized on the buttons of firefighter dress uniforms), and the “Batronic Resuscitator” from the 1960s which is a very antiquated piece of apparatus compared to today’s technologically advanced resuscitators.

Marielle also told some stories about insurance companies / “fire chasers”; “jumping pits” and WWII Canadian reservists who were sent to England to put out fires during the Blitz. But the anecdote that caught the most attention was about how our “41 GMC” was used during the filming of Stephen King’s “It” in Port Hope AND that the place that was voted “best burger in Canada” was just down the street from our modest Museum.

We acknowledged our audience



Above: Steven King’s “It” was partly shot in Port Hope. One scene, a U.S. Fourth of July Parade, featured our GMC as a “Derry, Maine” fire truck.

of Fire Fighter trainees that they were entering a highly respected and honourable profession, one to be proud of and its roots maintained, therefore illiciting and encouraging support for the Museum. Many of

them signed up to volunteer with the Museum, taking literature about it with the intent of a visit before the season closed or in its new home to be, in the not too distant future.

*Kathy Kobelski, Public Education*



Above: Will and Marielle Lambert (centre) accept the award from ( LtoR) Michael Neely, Vice Chair; Kevin Connolly, Chief Marketing Officer; John Mach, CEO; Jeffrey Stubbs, Board Chair, all of Comtech Fire Credit Union.

## Will And Marielle Lambert Receive a Prestigious Award

**O**n a Wednesday evening in March, Will and Marielle Lambert, were pleasantly surprised to receive a dual award at the Comtech Fire Credit Union Annual General Meeting in Toronto.

In front of about 300 attendees, Kevin Connolly, Chief Marketing Officer of Comtech Fire Credit Union, a big supporter of the Museum, announced that the 2018 John Ryder Award, an award that recognizes the efforts and contributions of an Ontario firefighter to their community, and the

highest award that the Credit Union has presented over the years, would go to the Lamberts.

Referring to them as “the first couple of firefighting” Connolly presented them each with a personally engraved glass plaque and a cheque for \$500. for the Museum

Said Connolly, “This couple has been diligently working to build a museum to honour the history and service of firefighters in Canada — they’ve made it their passion. Comtech Fire Credit Union is pleased to honour their efforts in this way — we’re an enthusiastic sponsor of this work.”

According to Marielle Lambert, “I was totally surprised to receive an award! As members of the Credit Union, we normally try to attend the annual general meetings, but this year, I had a suspicion something was up — I thought Will was to receive an award!”

Adds Will Lambert, “I knew beforehand but had to keep my lips sealed not to spoil the surprise for Marielle, it’s really Marielle that deserves this award the most!”

The award is named for John Ryder, a Toronto firefighter, and former Credit Union general manager, who himself made outstanding contributions to the credit union and its members, and to the broader fire service community in the Toronto area. It has been awarded 26 times since its inception.

Comtech Fire Credit Union is a financial institution, with roots going back to the 1940’s, formed to serve the needs of Ontario firefighters. They are a major supporter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum.

## PLEASE NOTE:

### Watch for your membership renewal notice.

**A**lthough the Museum is closed for this season and next, it's important for members and all who care about the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum to keep the faith! Please be sure to renew your membership! We value and need our members.

Elen Rainey, Membership Chair, reports that she is working on a renewal letter to send to current members. It is important for people to keep up their memberships so they will receive newsletters, etc. about what the Board is doing to look for a new location. Also to ensure they are able to participate in the events which will be happening to keep the Museum in the public's eye. This is a transitional and even exciting time for the Museum and we want our members to be aware of everything that's happening.

## Fundraising Update –

**2018** will be the most important fundraising year ever for the Museum EVER. Our future home will only be possible with a comprehensive fundraising campaign and shorter term, there are costs related to the storage of our collection.

There are currently two fundraising events to report:

We partnered with MaxSold.com to dispose of duplicate and international collection pieces. With 127 registered bidders, we realized \$4620.93 in total sales with over \$3000 coming to the Museum's coffers after fees and expenses.

It was gratifying to meet with the collectors and learn why they were interested in our 'stuff'. Some were firefighting buffs, others were in the resale trade and many were charitable or private buyers who needed chairs, shelving etc. A cash donation box

was quickly produced when it became apparent folks wanted to contribute even more on pickup day.

The Rain Barrel sale is ongoing and will close April 28th. Partnering with RainBarrel.ca, CFFM will raise \$10 for each barrel sold. Largely a social media campaign, volunteers have also delivered flyers door to door and met with local businesses to promote via flyers and outreach to employees. We are grateful to those who assisted in our campaign.

Once again, we will have a cash donation box during the flyer outreach as citizens of Port Hope continue to give.

Media news coverage highlighted our dilemma and resulted in donations from individuals in Port Hope and beyond.

The next campaign will be targeted to the future site of CFFM. We need to build a dynamic fundraising team NOW.

**If you are interested in sitting on a fundraising committee or helping out please contact Michelle Haney-Kileeg or John Appleman at 905-885-2146.**



*You just have to wonder! Seen above, Ken Burgin and Marielle Lambert “wrestle” a wonderful, human-sized, “Elmer the Safety Elephant” (inset) costume into its protective bag. This was discovered in a remote corner of the storage area while we were packing. It turned out to be the highest priced item sold in the maxsold.com auction. You just never know!*

## This Just In!

**T**here are always new things to learn about the history of firefighting in Canada. On our final day Bob Cranley showed up from Port Hope Fire Department with a cigar box full of goodies he discovered while renovating Fire Hall #1. There were about 30 funeral ribbons, in at least four different printings, and most exciting for us was the leather “E” and “H” on a moth-eaten felt background. These would be from an antique Port Hope Fire Brigade parade uniform. Worn on the chest they stood for “Extinguisher Hose” company.

Thanks Bob, for bringing these by for us to look at and share with our followers. Even though the Museum has lost it's physical site for the time being, we will maintain a strong on-line presence and continue to tell the important story of Canadian firefighting.

*Photos on another page following.*

## Collections Report

**A**s of March 31 all the CFFM collections have been sorted, examined, and are safely housed in a variety of temporary storage venues including three spaces generously provided by the Municipality and several spaces donated by individual friends of the CFFM. We have a lot of stuff, and it is big!

A few pieces of horse-drawn or hand-drawn apparatus, which had been on loan to the Museum for display, were repatriated to their owners with the hope that we will borrow them again when we are open in a new facility.

One of our trucks, which is currently out on loan, will stay with its borrower for now, where it can be seen and appreciated.

Seven trucks and other large wheeled apparatus are now housed in part of the large warehouse at the waste water treatment plant, no mean feat as all but one had to be towed. Most of the trucks are doing double duty as rolling storage units; they were loaded with ladders, pike poles, large hose nozzles, and assorted other large firefighting

paraphernalia – long things that are hard to pack and belong on a truck anyway.

Literally thousands of items have been boxed or wrapped and now reside in a basement room at the Canton Municipal Building. Ironically this room, designed for file storage, was most recently used to store turnout gear for some of Port Hope's firefighters while the administrative offices were housed at Canton; it is now completely filled with CFFM papers, books, files, photographs, vintage turnout gear, cases of breathing gear, and other apparatus.

A corner of the municipal works warehouse at 5 Mill Street South has also been put to good use to store office furniture, showcases, fire alarm systems, and other oversize items.

We are grateful to Walter Hillman of Trade Tech Industries, who not only gave us space at 10 Robertson Street (old Canadian Tire site) to store our two fire lookout towers and a 20 foot shipping container, but also provided the manpower and equipment to move the towers and several extremely heavy fire pumps and other apparatus to the

site for us.

Items stored at two other private facilities include over fifty hydrants, numerous and varied fire extinguishers, safety nets, and five firetruck doors.

In the process of sorting and packing we inevitably came across items that were either in too poor condition to keep or were duplicate or otherwise not relevant to our mandate. These were either discarded outright or sold, and the funds will go toward the support of the collection.

Dedicated volunteers and board members spent countless hours over several months sorting, packing, labelling, and moving. Comprehensive packing lists mean we have a pretty good idea now of what we have and where things are. In the process some really interesting objects surfaced, many of which were uncatalogued or incompletely catalogued. When the time comes to unpack and properly label and arrange the collection we should have a much better idea of how best to plan and arrange our new displays and storage space.

*Janet Waddington,  
Collections Manager*



Above: The Canadian Fire Fighter Museum's fleet of vintage fire trucks securely stored at the Municipality of Port Hope waterworks building.



Above and Left: As noted on previous page, these ribbons and uniform "initials" were found by a Port Hope Firefighter when the local fire hall was being renovated. They are from the "Extinguisher Hose Co." a former name of the Port Hope Fire Department. The letters are likely from a parade uniform and the ribbons are "Funeral Ribbons" traditionally worn by firefighters attending a colleague's funeral.



Above: Our collection of Fire Call Boxes tagged and sitting on a wooden skid ready for storage. Left: A forklift operator from Trade Tech Industries lifts the huge, and very heavy, Ahrens Fox pump display to take it to storage at Trade Tech's storage facility. Walter Hilman, owner of Trade Tech, has been extremely helpful in moving many of our largest items. Thank You.



Above: A 1940's "JOX" aerial ladder truck is towed to the storage site at the waterworks.

The Fire Mark is the Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum.  
 Port Hope, Ontario  
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