

The Fire Mark

The Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum
PORT HOPE, ONTARIO, CANADA • DECEMBER 2019

Message from the Chairs

Dear Members:
We look back on 2019 with mixed feelings. We had a strong year of local fundraising events and are grateful our members and community support us. We received a fabulous gift from Ingenium (formerly the Science and Technology Museum, Ottawa) in the form of our Amoskeag Pumper. The Museum has had this item on its wish list for decades.

On the other hand, it is surprising that in spite of tenacious hunting, we have been unsuccessful in securing a Northumberland County home for the Museum. We placed our collection in storage under an agreement with the Municipality that expires this month. In November, Council extended their support as staff have been directed to negotiate modified terms and conditions for a new License Agreement with the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum. As wonderful as this reprieve is, it spells the dire need for a home. The board has agreed to seek out a temporary location, such as retail space, to enable a presence albeit with considerably modified displays. Stay tuned.

As you will note, in Fundraising Director, John Appleman's article, we are looking for volunteers to help with fundraising.

We are also seeking new Board members. We welcome back Kelly Morgan-Batten to more active roles



Many cities in the world have memorials to firefighters who have given their all in the line of duty. Recently, Chris Terry, Chair of the CFFM Collection Committee, took this image of this evocative memorial to members of the London Fire Service (comprised of many Canadian Firefighters) who died on active service during World War II. The statue is located on the south side of St Paul's Cathedral near the Millennium Bridge. This part of London was heavily damaged during the Blitz so the placement of the statue is highly symbolic.

and are pleased she is feeling stronger. Sadly, we recently accepted the resignation of Janet Waddington, our Collections Manager due to poor health. Her contributions have been significant.

We wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday and all the best in 2020.

Janet Waddington Retires from the CFFM Board

With much regret, we sadly announce that Janet Waddington has retired from the CFFM Board due to health reasons. During her association

with the Museum, she has generously provided CFFM with a wealth of her hugely valuable museum experience — her term as a director on the Board of CFFM was hands on! With family roots in Port Hope, Janet joined the CFFM after her retirement from the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

As CFFM Collections Manager, Janet took on the daunting task of trying to make sense out of 35 years worth of records of items in the CFFM collection. Those records could most charitably be described as “incomplete.” Objects had sometimes come into, and/or left, possession without any documentation. Other items had been moved many times,

without any record of those movements. This led to a situation where no one knew exactly what we had or where some pieces actually were.

Our move out of 95 Mill Street South and into several storage locations in Port Hope provided a very good opportunity to empty every item out of the old building and catalogue it properly — which was exactly what Janet did. She made meticulous records covering every piece that went into each storage location. At the same time she tried to identify unnecessary duplication within the collection, selecting the best example and proposing proper de-acquisition of the others. Although we were too pressed for time to make a complete job of this, we did, none-the-less, purge many unneeded duplicate items — especially those in less than the best condition.

All of this was huge task which Janet approached with genuine enthusiasm! Janet was also a key member of both the Governance Committee and the Collections Committee.

We wish Janet well and thank her for her considerable skills and passion.

Christmas Fire Safety in the Victorian Home

Did you ever wonder about the traditional stories and pictures of Christmas trees in the “olden days”?

Before electric Christmas tree lighting was invented around 1890, and likely later in homes that had not adopted the new electricity services, we are told people lit their trees with candles. Judith Flanders ⁽¹⁾ comments on this practice as follows: *“Fire was the great risk. For many, the Christmas tree’s raison d’être was the first magical view of the tree and its lit candles in single breathtaking Christmas Eve revelation. In daily life, candles and open hearths made fires more of a hazard than today. Candle-*



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lit trees increased that hazard greatly, as each candle was wired or tied to a drying tree branch, its weight altering and tilting as the candle burnt down and wax drippings piled up. A series of inventions and contrivances designed to hold each candle in place with greater stability appeared over the years, but a lit tree was never a safe tree. Many households lit their candles only once, on Christmas Eve, prudently keeping to hand water and a stick with a sponge on the end.”

Some of the wonder she describes is captured by the painting at right titled “The Christmas Tree”, by Albert Chevallier Taylor.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Flanders, Judith (2017), “Christmas, a Biography”, Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin’s Press, New York

⁽²⁾ (Image courtesy of Wiki Commons)

Albert Chevallier Taylor (1862-1925) was an English artist who had a long association with the Newlyn School of artists, a group of artists who lived and worked in and around Newlyn in Cornwall. He went on to become a member of the Royal Academy of artists, and is best known for his paintings of cricketers. This sweet painting of a family gathered around the candle-lit Christmas Tree, is not necessarily typical of his work, but it does show off his skillful use of subtle lighting, and has a genuinely happy feel about it.

Fundraising Report

Fundraising continues to be important to our future. We are persistently searching for idea sites to house the Museum and we need to be ready for the associated financing. At our recent Board meeting, we confirmed the importance of smaller scale local events and I am pleased to

announce the 2nd Annual CFFM Golf Tournament in September 2020.

How can you help? Buy tickets of course, but we are also seeking sponsors for various activities like, hole in one, closest to the pin, lunch and silent auction. Give me a call if you have any questions.

We will be returning to the rain barrel fundraising in 2021.

The board has also recognized that seeking financial support from a broader audience is key as we are a national organization. We are seeking partnerships in the GTA to co-host an event in 2020. If you know of an organization that shares our values and purpose (celebrating the importance of first responders and fire fighting in Canada) please let me know.

I am inviting volunteers to join a Fundraising Committee with a focus on capital fundraising as we broaden our fundraising horizon. Contact me: jappleman@yahoo.ca

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www.firemuseumcanada.com