

# The Fire Mark

The Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum  
PORT HOPE, ONTARIO, CANADA • JULY 2016

## Report from the Chair:

**A**s we move into summer, the Museum is receiving steady visitor traffic which will only increase now that school is finished. We have three summer students on staff this year, taking a bit of the pressure off of Board members to manage the day to day operations. A number of exhibits have been updated and enhanced with the addition of artifacts we received from the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst ...and there are many more to come yet.

Work continues on the possible acquisition of the Canadian Tire site in Port Hope. Our architects have presented us with a first draft plan of how the interior could be laid out for our purposes. Various technical experts are investigating the building itself to judge its physical condition and come up with a list of renovations required. Discussions are continuing with the Ministry of the Environment about the property, its levels of historic industrial contamination and what, if anything, that could mean with respect to our intended usage of it. Assuming no deal-breakers are discovered, we should be sitting down to formally negotiate a purchase by late summer or very early fall, as soon as the feasibility study is completed.

Outreach and spreading the word about the CFFM continues with formal presentations having been made to Port Hope Council, Empire Crossing Retirement Home, Port Hope Rotary and the Sunrise Rotary Club. We were also at the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Trade Show in Toronto for three days, making



Above: Just a few of the almost 100 guests at our summer fundraiser garden party at the home of Peggy Bennett seen here on the right. Thanks Peggy! More news inside.

many valuable contacts.

Some local fundraising events have been held with good results and plans are coming together for a 2016 lottery which will feature the coins we consulted on with the Mint, as the prizes. Creating an enhanced Museum of this size is going to take quite a lot of money. To that end we are having discussions with expert fundraisers to help us craft a successful national campaign.

*Will Lambert,  
Chair*

## It' was the 2nd Annual Toy Fire Truck Day!

**M**arielle Lambert, our Event Coordinator (among other jobs) has announced that the 2nd Annual Toy Fire Truck Day held on

July 16th, 2016 from 11am to 3pm at the Museum was a great success!

Says Marielle, "Last year's event was a so successful, we just had to do it all again! It's great to see and hear about the wonderful and precious toys the kids bring in!"

Every child under 12 who brought a toy fire truck for show and tell received a free Matchbox Series fire truck.

We laid in a good stock of Matchbox trucks to hand out, and that was a good thing as over 130 people showed up! This is the first of a series of summer events at the Museum, now in its 32nd year in Port Hope. The next event will be Model Boat Day on August 13th.

See photo inside.



## Collections Report

**D**avid Moore, our Collections Manager reports that huge headway has been made in documenting and recording the Museum's collection using our professional museum inventory software. Each item is measured, and photographed and entered into the software files with descriptive information and a number.

Says Dave, "Even the recently acquired Ontario Fire College, Gravenhurst, donation is nearing completion.

Dave is currently taking some time off from the Museum. After 100's of hours during the winter on Gravenhurst and the website, and then after spending about one to three hours daily since we opened on the collection, it was time for a bit of a break "to get caught up on some things at home".

Says Dave, "The students and Janet all have their jobs to do, and they have been doing them well. They are concentrating on the Gravenhurst collection items in the north storage bay.

*David Moore, Collections*

### OMG! We've Got a Brand New Web Site!

**"I**t was just time" says Museum's web site/graphics guy and Past Chair, Ken Burgin. "One day I was looking through the web site and was just shocked at what was on there! I knew then we needed to do a complete overhaul."

With the help of Dave Moore, and Web site builder, Steve Smiley, a whole new site has been created featuring a lot of new information and photos. New galleries include extensive pages on the history of firefighting in Canada from pre-settlement times to present day; a page on the "steam era"; pages on helmets, extinguishers, hydrants and much more.

Says Ken, "This is more of what



Above: The new FireMuseumCanada.com home page incorporates a sliding image at top and a list of galleries inside. The design is "scalable" meaning it works well on any device—desktop or mobile.

a Museum, like we aspire to be, should have online. This is a site we can all be proud of."

In fact, this is the fourth edition of the Museum's web site, the first having gone online about 1992. "Every version has gotten better, and this one is best ever!"

Built on the highly versatile Wordpress platform, this site is "scalable" which means it can be viewed on all devices—it automatically restructures itself according to the device it's being viewed on.

In addition, the content management system allows for easy updates and additions to be made.

CFFM's web site has always received a lot of visits from all over the world. In 2015 alone, there were over 6,200 page views with a daily average of 18.

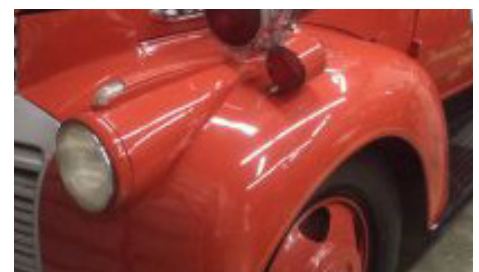
"We think the new site will easily surpass this." adds Ken. "We need to look like a *National Museum*."

### "Wounded" Fire Truck back on its feet ....err tires!

**W**e're happy to report that our trusty 1941 GMC Pumper, our flag bearer fire truck, has been beautifully repaired after suffering a bump to its left front fender and headlight assembly while parked after the Port Hope Santa Claus Parade.

Original 1941 GMC truck body parts were obtained and a professional restoration shop was able to restore the damaged areas such that the paint matches perfectly. Not a trace of damage remains.

The work was completed in time for the Port Hope and Cobourg Canada Day Parades.



## This Year's Summer Students

**W**e hit the jackpot this summer with three summer students! That's one more than we've had in other years.



**Maddy McHarg** is a student at Queen's University in Kingston. She started work with the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum early in June and is learning about how to accession/catalogue Museum items. She is enjoying her time at the Museum and learning a lot about Canadian history and the history of firefighting.

Some projects she's working on include:

- Attaching ID numbers to items
- Taking file photos of items
- Making signs for the Museum
- Researching the "Great 1904 Toronto Fire"



**Luke Churchill** lives in Port Hope and will be going into grade 12 at Trinity College School. He has many interests including rowing,

baseball and history. Since starting at the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum, he's developed a list of interesting artifacts on display and created descriptions about them. He's also researching the Halifax Explosion for a future display. Luke tells us he has learned a lot about the history of firefighting and is enjoying his experience working at the Museum.



**Aaron Leblanc** is studying Police Foundations at Sir Sandford Fleming College in Peterborough. He is learning to catalogue artifacts and is also researching the Fort McMurray wildfire with the help of a contact there. Aaron is interested in fishing, hockey and baseball.

Welcome to our summer students, we're glad to have your help!

### A Shiny New Artifact:

This recently acquired four gallon extinguisher pump didn't clean up too badly!



## "Past Into New" Items for Our Gift Shop

**T**here's some interesting new items in our shop this season—purses, bags, key fobs and pillows made from re-cycled bunker gear and hose.

Once gear can no longer pass safety tests, "Past Into New" collects it, cleans, strips it down and creates unique and usable items.

All of these items are one-of-a-kind. Although "Past Into New" tries to keep items looking the same it is impossible because each piece of gear they receive is unique.

These items are selling very well and we're proud to be a vendor of such creative products made from materials that would otherwise go to the landfill.



Above: Some of the many items available that are made from re-cycled bunker gear and fire hose.  
Below: Tote bags too!



**Next Summer Event:  
Model Boat Day, August 13th.  
Don't Miss It!**

## Annual Summer Fundraiser An Outstanding Success!

Sunday, July 17th was our annual fundraising garden party at Peggy Bennett's home, and it was a huge success thanks to the efforts made by our volunteers and Board to organize everything (plan, send out invitations, shop, prepare food, set-up, buy wine and beer, serve food, bartend and cleanup everything after the event).

The crew was organized by Marielle Lambert and Peggy herself, with assistance coming from Cathy Moore, Kathy Kobelski, Jane Stevenson, Claire Forward, Richard LaFond, David Pamerter and Helen and John Matthews.

It's a bit of an undertaking, but with over 200 invitations delivered we had about 100 guests attend for snacks, cocktails and a thorough update on what has been going on at the Museum lately.

Architect (Adam) brought large colour renderings of the plans for developing the CTC building and everyone was very interested in them.

Port Hope Deputy Mayor Greg Burns was there along with Port Hope Councillor, Jeff Lees, but unfortunately the Mayor could not attend.

The initial count from cheques donated at this event is just over \$7,000. There will be some expenses associated with this event, but they are minimal as all of the labour was donated.

We handed out a door prize at this event and Laural Anchor was presented with a Canada Mint, Firefighter Hero coin with a value of \$75. We now have just two coins left available for sale and they will probably go fast!

All in all, it was a great afternoon and thanks to Peggy for allowing us the use of her beautiful garden.

## Our 41 GMC Will Appear in Warner Bros. New Movie "IT"

The shooting of sequences in Port Hope for Warner Bros' remake of Steven King's "IT" has just wrapped. One scene, a U.S. Fourth of July Parade, featured our GMC as a "Derry, Maine" fire truck.



Above: Will Lambert poses with the 41 GMC on set of "IT"!

## CFFM Receives the Balance of the Fire College Artifact Donation.

In the Spring Newsletter we wrote about the generous donation of the collection from The Ontario Fire College. In April, we were able to bring most of the smaller items, a full van load, back to the Museum where we have been documenting them.

At that time we had to leave the transport of about six more items, some of which weigh more than a thousand pounds, to another time when we could recruit volunteers and a much larger truck.

That day came on July 13th when, with the generous financial support of the Comtech Fire Credit Union, Will Lambert and Aaron Leblanc drove to Gravenhurst and retrieved the rest!

This batch included a huge water pump formerly part of an early 20th Century, Ahrens-Fox pumper truck; a beautiful double tank "estate model" chemical cart; a cutaway demonstration pump used for training; several vintage ladders and much more!

With the hard work of Aaron, Luke, Ken, George, Will and Marielle, all items were safely unloaded and are now in storage and on display at the Museum.

Below: This Ahrens-Fox pump weighed over 1000 pounds. It's on display in the truck gallery now!



## All About Fire Hydrants

It is probably safe to say that everyone is familiar with fire hydrants—they're on every block in every city and large town in Canada, and rightly so—they save hundreds of lives and untold dollars in property value yearly. But it wasn't always this way—hydrants have only been in use for a little over 180 years.

Previous to the invention and installation of hydrants and water systems in towns and cities the “bucket brigade” was the chief method for getting water to a fire. Teams of firefighters and citizens would line up between a house fire and a water source, such as a pond, lake or river, and pass buckets of water up and down the line. Some fire brigades had tanks mounted on wagons that could be pulled to a fire. Both methods were less than totally effective as bucket brigades were slow, required many people and depended on a nearby water source. Tanks quickly ran out of water.

Tradition has it that first fire hydrant was invented by George Smith, a firefighter, about 1817, when he realized that Manhattan, where he lived, was running out of water for citizens to use—not just for fighting fires, but for every day uses as well. He reasoned that with the installation of water mains, Manhattan would have more water for drinking as water could be pumped to the city from outside its boundaries—and there would also be enough water readily available for fighting fires.

Early water mains in cities sometimes used logs that were drilled through the centre and laid end-to-end. When water was needed, a shallow pit was dug to expose a section of the wooden main and a hole was bored to access the water,



*Above:* A section of wooden water main believed to be from Quebec City. It would have been bound with metal bands at regular intervals.

which would then fill the pit where it could be pumped or scooped up in buckets. When firefighters were finished, the borehole was secured with a wooden “plug”, thus the name “fire plug” was coined. If a fire occurred later in the same area, the plug could be removed, thus eliminating the need to bore another hole. Cities that had water systems had a much better chance of putting out fires.



*Above:* A classic High Pressure Fire Hydrant from the City of Toronto circa 1926.

Early hydrants, as designed by Smith, resembled faucets and were at best suited for the bucket brigade method of firefighting as they could only draw water from the water mains in a crude manner. Later,



*Above:* A display of fire buckets at the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum.

valves were placed on the mains at intervals, much like today's fire hydrants. With industrial progress, cast iron would later replace the wooden water mains and over the decades to follow, continuous improvements in hydrants were made as new models were perfected. A number of iron foundries across Canada made numerous designs as represented in the Museum collection.

High pressure hydrants were installed in Toronto city centre after the Great Fire of 1904.

The Museum has a large collection of hydrants that were Canadian produced or used in Canada.



*Above:* An early model Canadian hydrant

For more information on Canadian Fire Hydrants, go to:  
<http://electrosiren.webs.com/index.htm>

## Toy Fire Truck Day Photos



Above: Not all the trucks were toys. Port Hope Fire Service brought over their 1953 Bickle Seagrave!  
Below: Kids have fun colouring and learning fire safety.



Below: Port Hope Fire Service also brought over their inflatable Fire Safety House and slide. Over 130 people visited on the day!



## Badges:

Below is a vintage “generic” cap badge we recently acquired. It has no department name, and although picked up in Ontario, could have come from anywhere in Canada or even the United States. It has two “bugles” or speaking trumpets, signifying the rank of Captain. It’s interesting that they appear upright and parallel, as they are usually crossed. A lieutenant would have a single bugle, a Fire Chief five (crossed), Deputy four, District or Platoon Chief three. The same system is generally used for the number of stripes on the uniform sleeve or shoulder boards. As a general rule Firefighters, Lieutenants and Captains wear Silver badges, uniform buttons and stripes. Chief officers wear Gold.



The Museum has a display of cap, helmet and uniform badges of all kinds.

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The Fire Mark is the Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum.  
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