



The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

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JOIN US

**FRIENDS OF FORT YORK
MEMBERS' RECEPTION
ROYAL CANADIAN MILITARY INSTITUTE
426 University Avenue
(West side - Just South of Dundas)**

6:00 - 8:00 P.M. - Thursday, November 23, 2000

EVERYONE INTERESTED IN FORT YORK IS WELCOME

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Two Citizen Boards Working Together for the Future of Fort York

The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common is an independent group of over 230 members and volunteers organized as a non-profit corporation and qualified as a charitable organization. The focus of its activities is the preservation and enhancement of Fort York for the benefit of the citizens of, and visitors to, Toronto.

The Fort York Management Board is a citizen board appointed by Toronto City Council and charged by its governing by-law with the management and direction of the operations of Fort York.

In the spirit of the cooperation existing between the two organizations, the Fife and Drum will serve as a newsletter for both.

Fort York Festival - 2000

On July 1, 2000, a fleet of five tall ships flying the American stars and stripes led a two-pronged attack on Toronto.

In the morning the tall ships bombarded Sunnyside Beach while an American land force marched on the beach from the west to engage a defending force of natives and British redcoats. Over three thousand spectators watched Councillor Chris Korwin Kuczynski lead the British forces in an attempt to hold back the invading Americans.

In the afternoon the American fleet set sail for Kew Beach from the Toronto Harbour with ten long boats in tow. At Kew Beach natives and British redcoats waited for the expected landing - along with over 15,000 spectators. It was a unique site to see the American vessels appear on the horizon and then anchor off the beach to proceed with the disembarking of the long boat crews and American infantry. Soon, ten loaded longboats rowed in formation towards shore. As natives fired on the long boats from cover on the beach, Councillor Tom Jakobek led his forces onto the beach and forced the natives to retreat. Meanwhile the naval bombardment from the tall ships continued. However, as the Americans commenced moving from their beachhead, the British force arrived and the Americans retreated. But not for long. The renewed naval bombardment was too much for the British and they in turn were forced to withdraw.

These were the key events of Fort York Festival 2000 and they will long be remembered. On Sunday July 2 all of the re-enactors gathered at their encampment at Fort York and in the afternoon re-enacted the final battle leading to the fall of Fort York.

The Friends of Fort York have presented four Festivals at Fort York including the 1999 Napoleonic Festival complete with cavalry and this year's naval extravaganza. The festivals have significantly added to the profile of Fort York and have established the credibility of the Friends of Fort York as a volunteer organization. Each year more than 100 volunteers worked to make the festivals a reality. Don Brydges and Murray Philp co-chaired the Festival Committee and Peter Twist took on the task of recruiting and coordinating the re-enactors. Their volunteer efforts can only be viewed as magnificent. But the team involved many others. Hank Young and Patrick McCrorey working with a loyal force of volunteers from the Queen Street Out-of-Cold organization and from the Niagara Community prepared early morning breakfasts for 200 to 300 re-enactors year after year, not to mention the famous roast beast dinners. Do you remember the barbecuing of an 850 lb. side of beef in 1997? Jane Kennedy took on the responsibility of organizing the preparation and serving of hamburgers, hot dogs and roast beast sandwiches to the thousands attending the festival over the years and worked with Hank Young to see that the roast beast dinners were served with a "heritage" flavour. Anne Beach and the Portuguese 55+ ladies worked hard to prepare our vegetables and salads. As a special tribute to the members of the Festival Committee, their families, year after year, energetically worked to ensure many slightly unrealistic dreams become a reality. Carol Philp organized our many volunteers and kept "all systems working". Our treasurers, Gerald Murray and later John Lowden, kept the cash in control. Gord Brace and company kept the beer tent, so generously sponsored by Molsons, alive and vital into the wee hours so that the re-enactors could dance energetically to the music of Ken Purvis's "Malarkey". There were some memorable nights and many memorable re-enactments on Garrison Common. Everyone involved with the festival has much reason to be proud.

Fort York Festivals - The Future

With some regret the Board of Directors has decided that the Fort York Festival cannot be continued as an annual event. While the regular presentation of the Festival has been of significant benefit to Fort York, the substantial effort and energy required to produce the event has meant that other, potentially more beneficial, projects have not received the attention they deserve. As well, the festivals have not been financially rewarding.

The Board recognizes the need to proceed energetically with a number of projects that will attract visitors to the fort throughout the year rather than on one weekend. For example, the effort to ensure that both the Fort York Drums and the Fort York Guard are aggressively supported and amply funded will be substantial. The presence of a full fife and drum corp and a larger Fort York Guard animating the fort on a daily basis is important to Fort York's future as a major tourist site. Furthermore, given the City's present financial restraints, this venture would be unlikely to proceed without the direct involvement of the Friends.

The Fort York Management Board has been working with Jo Ann Pynn and the staff at Fort York to start developing an expanded regular schedule of programming to take place throughout the year. This would involve events less ambitious than the Fort York Festival that would fill a number of weekends.

All of this does not preclude future Fort York Festivals on a periodic basis.

Fort York: Setting It Right

In July 2000, Fort York: Setting It Right, a 55 page publication setting out 15 fort-centered planning principles to guide planning in the Fort York area, was released.

The report resulted from the deliberations of a study group formed as a Committee of the Friends in June, 1999. It was published as a joint release of the Friends and the Fort York Management Board. The report reflects a consensus among Fort York's stakeholders on the appropriate guidelines and principles that should be followed in the development of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Fort York lands.

The study group included senior officials from the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism and from Urban Planning and Development Services of the City of Toronto. The City of Toronto supported the publication costs.

Fort York: Setting It Right has been distributed to all members of the Friends, to all Toronto Councillors and to other interested parties. If you have not received a copy or otherwise have need of a further copy, please call Joe Gill at 416-864-1300.

Archaeological Dig on Site of Upper Canada's First Parliament Buildings

The location of the province's first Parliament Buildings at the southeast corner of Front and Berkeley Streets has been long known, but until a few weeks ago no one could say if any part of these landmark structures survived. That was when a ten-day dig funded by the City and the two landowners affected came to an end and the archaeologists were able to say with some confidence they had found a floor dating to the site's parliamentary era, that is to 1797-1830. This is good news, not only for those interested in history generally, but also for those who are working to establish in the public mind the First Parliament Buildings and Fort York as Toronto's two "bookends," all that remain of a pair of great reserves that flanked the early town. They were connected by a thirty-acre strip of parkland along the south side of Front Street known as the "Walks and Gardens." Hats off to FOFY director Rollo Myers who had a big hand in making the dig happen and was on hand every day to explain what was going on to the more than 150 visitors who came by, including the Lieutenant Governor.

Comings and Goings

We welcome Jeannie Butler to the Board of Directors. Jeannie has had extensive experience on the boards of charitable organizations, particularly in the production of fundraising functions. Jeannie is a fan of our Georgian Dinner and will work on this project and others.

Jo Ann Pynn was appointed as Museum Administrator for Fort York. Jo Ann has been actively involved at the fort for a number of years as an architectural advisor with Heritage Toronto and has been actively involved with the Friends since its inception. Jo Ann was also a key member of the team that developed the Fort York Vision-centered Business Plan. Jo Ann's appointment has been enthusiastically welcomed by everyone.

Richard Haynes is the new Site Coordinator at the fort. Richard is well-known and liked by many members of the Friends and we welcome his appointment.

Carl Benn has been appointed Chief Curator of the City of Toronto Museum and Heritage Services. We congratulate Carl on his appointment and look forward to his continued involvement with Fort York. Carl will continue as Historical Advisor to the Friends of Fort York Board. Carl's office is now at 205 Yonge and he can be reached at 392-6827 Extension 254.

Will You Volunteer Your Time and Skills

The Friends of Fort York requires a volunteer editor for the Fife and Drums. Reasonable writing skills, access to word processing (and desk publishing?) facilities and the time to attend at least some of the events and meetings which provide the flavour of our organization, projects and evolving plans for Fort York are the requirements for this position.

We are also looking for individuals who would be interested in managing and updating our website. The person suitable for this volunteer role likely a young individual who has an interest in website design and enjoys such projects. We may be able to provide training for the right person.

Please call Joe Gill at 416-864-1300 if you have an interest in either activity.

Ghost Story Evening Program Offerings at the Fort - (Geordie Beal)

Ghost stories were the order of the evening on Friday, October 27 at Fort York. Four days before Halloween and in the dim light of candle lanterns, the staff of the Fort, decked in period costumes, thrilled (and chilled) visitors with stories of the 1800s related to the Fort. Woven around the stories were details of the Fort and the lives of its inhabitants. Children and their parents visited the Soldiers' Barracks, the period kitchen and the Officer's Mess to listen to the ghostly tales.

The evening was an initiative of the staff, who with the participation of the Fort York Management Board are adding new events and enhancing existing programs. Next year we will be seeking volunteers to help, as we build even greater vitality and breadth into our programs. Skills and tasks are being identified that will see three to six different volunteers needed for each

program. Participating in one program in the year will spread the opportunities across our membership and get each of us to know better the excellent staff at the Fort.

Congratulations to the staff. It was a great evening for all.

Third Annual Mess Dinner - Thursday, June 7, 2001

The Georgian Mess Dinner is our most important fundraising event. All of the proceeds go to support the Fort York Drums. To date \$22,000 has been raised for the Fort York Drums.

John Barclay's Mess Dinner Committee is already working with Jessup Foods and the staff at Fort York (in particular Fiona Lucas and Bridget Wranich) to make this year's dinner an even greater success than the very successful dinners of the last two years.

If you have not attended previous dinners, you may be interested to read the article in the Toronto Sun by Rita DeMontis on last year's dinner. The article is easily accessed on the Internet by searching for "rita demontis and fort york". In the meantime, if you plan to attend the dinner, mark June 7th on your calendar.

Fort York Drums

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Putnam as Director and Drum-major of the Fort York Drums and Andrea Bouma as Fife-major for the 2000-1 season. Michael has had extensive experience with both the Fort York Guard and as a drummer with the Fort Henry Guard. Andrea is an experienced music teacher, now studying music education at the University of Western Ontario, and has played the fife for two year in the Fort Henry Guard.

Our arrangement with Mike and Andrea calls for them to provide lessons to our recruits every second week over the winter and to work full time with the corps in the summer months. We presently have ten corps members registered for training and should have a small Fort York Drums unit ready to perform by the summer. We are working hard on providing uniforms for all members as soon as possible.

We are forming a Board of Management for the Fort York Drums. If you believe there is a role for you on the Board and you have an interest, please call Joe Gill at 416-864-1300 or Peter Twist at 519-942-3865.

Fort York Drums - Recruiting in Process

The Fort York Drums is a volunteer fife and drum corps. Recruits for the Fort York Drums would normally be in the 11-15 age range and have an interest in music (at least to the extent of fifes and drums) as well as some interest in military history (meaning they would be turned on by a chance to wear a fancy 1812 Canadian Fencible drummer's uniform and spend most of their summer at Fort York). Recruits should plan on spending their Saturday mornings at Fort York every second week over the winter and three days a week at Fort York in the summer.

If you know of a likely candidate for the Fort York Drums please contact Michael Putnam by leaving a message at 392-6907 Extension 555. This is a dedicated line for the Fort York Drums at Fort York and Michael will pick up messages regularly. He will contact you to answer questions and to send you the Fort York Drums newsletter.

City Acquires More Land along Fort York's Northern Edge

The City has completed the purchase from CN Railways of a 2.13 acre strip of land running from Bathurst Street midway to Strachan Avenue along the north side of the Fort York site. Now all that has to be done is to draw up the deeds and erect the fences. This parcel, taken with 1.33 acres adjacent to Bathurst Street acquired in 1997, gives the city all the land it needs to rebuild the northern ramparts in their original position, if it wishes, and to remedy a shortcoming of the restoration of the Fort in 1933-34. The Friends of Fort York enjoyed the support of Councillor Joe Pantalone in taking this matter forward and getting Council's approval. Thanks also to FOFY director Steve Otto.

Membership - A Growing Interest in Fort York

This year our membership has reached 232. It is interesting to reflect on the growth the Friends has experienced.

<u>Membership</u>			
1996	40	1999	184
1997	78	2000	232
1998	130		

Many of our members have also donated both their time and money to the benefit of Fort York. We thank you all.