

**ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY OF ONTARIO
NORTH WATERLOO REGION BRANCH
NEWSLETTER
FALL 2006**

The Executive for 2006 - 2007

Herb Whitney – President, 519 884-1302	John Arndt – Secretary; Newsletter
Gordon Nelson – Vice-President	Joyce Arndt – Membership/Treasurer
Patty Clarke – Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation representative	Brian Dietrich – Publicity Coordinator
Elizabeth Gallaher – Member-at-large	Ted Ray – Member-at-large
	Marjorie Bender – Member-at-large

UPCOMING PROGRAMS, SPEAKERS, TOURS
Please mark these events on your calendar!

GOING, GOING, GONE? – not quite!
The Disassembly of the Hallman House – now, Beechwood Plaza
With Bob Rowell and Karl Kessler
Thursday November 2, 2006
Erb Street Mennonite Church,
131 Erb St. West, Waterloo
7:30 pm

Bob Rowell took over 50 slides of the step by step process of dismantling the Hallman House, which was once located at the corner of Erb Street and Fisher-Hallman Road in Waterloo. Bob will describe this process as only he can. **Karl Kessler** will provide us with the historical context of the original 19th century owners and their contribution to the community and church – Erb Street Mennonite. There is a happy ending to this story, although not for our area. The house was reassembled, and now is proudly situated north of Orangeville.

Bob and Marg are founding members of our Branch, and each recently received an Award of Excellence from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation, and a special ACORN Award from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario for outstanding involvement in ACO at the branch and provincial levels. Karl is the historian of Erb Street Mennonite Church, active in the Mennonite Historical Society; he and his wife, Jane Snyder, have been the coordinators for *Doors Open* over the last few years. Their business is called *Photographic Memory*. Karl has a vast knowledge of local Mennonite history and culture.

Refreshments – Invite a Friend

Our traditional holiday get-together.

As of press time we are in the planning stages for this event.

- ❖ IN THE NEW YEAR, our branch is planning on holding a workshop (or series of workshops) on the preserving, maintaining and repairing heritage houses. These programs will be of interest to those living in designated heritage districts and in older homes.
- ❖ FEBRUARY – participation in Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation's Heritage Showcase.
- ❖ SPRING – a tour of a Wilmot homestead built in 1842 which is being systematically restored.
- ❖ MAY or JUNE - Annual General Meeting: suggestions for any interesting location, are welcome.
- ❖ There has been an expression of interest for a day tour of St. Thomas sometime in 2007.

WATERLOO REGIONAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION – AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Congratulations are extended to Bertha Thompson for receiving an Award of Excellence from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation in June. This Award recognizes outstanding contributions by individuals, institutions and organizations for heritage in the Waterloo Region. Bertha and John are longtime active members of our Branch. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Waterloo Historical Society as President and WHS representative to the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation. At present, she is a Councilor on the WHS Board. She has written several articles for the WHS Annual Volume. She worked with Dr. Elizabeth Bloomfield on the publication of *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries*. As a member of the Woolwich Heritage Committee she worked successfully for the restoration of the Elmira Bandstand. No doubt Bertha's work has just begun!

President's Comments: Herb Whitney

I hope your summer was good and that you enjoyed places of architectural and natural beauty. Congratulations are extended to Bertha Thompson for receiving the Award of Excellence from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation. As I write this, we are finalizing plans for our fall program and Christmas get-together. We're also planning some meetings on two new ideas suggested by members: 1) practical advice on conserving one's own house, and 2) sharing with other members one's own favourite places/details of architectural and/or natural beauty which we'd really hate having destroyed (within Waterloo Region). So dig out old photos or trip out for new ones. Also, as I write this, the Record headlines Edna Staebler's death and mentions her contacts with Canada's luminaries -- which raises a question: should we push to have her Sunfish Lake home conserved as a cultural heritage site?

Although ACO is not a political organization, nevertheless, with municipal elections taking place this fall, I cannot help but be aware of our politicians' insufficient concern and awareness of heritage and environmental issues. In Kitchener, they are fast-tracking some long deferred repairs and some major downtown planning designs. Fast tracking, of course, stifles reasoned discussion of opposing views. Is there a current official mindset that does not take pride in Kitchener as Kitchener? Downtown Kitchener does not look like downtown Galt, or Guelph, or Stratford. Kitchener is unique and still maintains and proudly shows its Busy Berlin roots. But the newer approach to urban development, which many officials have ignored or missed, is that people (even newcomers) need and like having roots and that the built environment is an asset, not a liability. Kitchener appears to be heading towards becoming a Generic Modern City equally locatable in Atlantic or Pacific Canada or the Southern States. Environmentally, city officials seem oblivious to air quality especially in downtown Kitchener. They exalt everything that draws more vehicles to the core of the city. Don't Council members and the Mayor breathe air. Do get out and vote! Enough. See you at our next meeting, and send in any ideas you have to any Executive member listed above.

From your Treasurer – It's time to renew your membership!

Your Membership offers you the following benefits:

- heritage advocacy and partnering with other heritage groups
- speaker programs and walking & driving tours
- Branch newsletters
- representation on the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation (WRHF)
- participation in Heritage Showcase, an annual event sponsored by WRHF
- receiving the provincial ACORN journal
- promoting ACO's Preservation Works! and H.A.L.P. programmes

Renewed Memberships for 2007 received from October to December 31, 2006 will be receipted in January 2007 and mailed to you. The electronic format of the receipt will state that the Membership is valid to December 31, 2007 as well as the amount paid, applicable to Tax Year 2007.

The Provincial Office portion - \$14 per membership - will also be forwarded in January to ensure timely arrival of your copies of ACORN through 2007.



MR. JACOB Y. SHANTZ.



Photos (in the public domain) L to R from local & online archives: Jacob Yoch Shantz with wife Sara, with grandchildren, studio portrait, and the Shantz Button factory.



Canada Block – 18-24 Ontario Street, Kitchener
Elizabeth Gallaher - photographer

Elizabeth is a member executive member of our Branch and on Heritage Kitchener. She photographed the Canadian Block structures seen here. Her blog [‘Shirt Tales - an electronic revival of the original Forsyth Factory newsletter’](#) is recommended to you. www.forsythkitchener.blogspot.com

JACOB YOST SHANTZ: A MAN’S WORK AND HIS TIMES LIVE ON? By Elizabeth Gallaher.

The Canadian Block at the corner of King and Ontario Streets is Kitchener's oldest commercial building. This Georgian-styled 3 storey red structure was built by Jacob Yost Shantz (1822-1909) to replace the 1861 frame building which had burned down. About that time a by-law had been passed that henceforth, buildings on King Street were to be brick as a result of so many fires in the downtown previously. By 1875, the original corner building acquired the addition now addressed 18-24 Ontario Street which continued the Georgian style but now in red & buff brick. Both buildings reveal the prosperity of the owner with distinctive brick corbelling under the cornice and storefronts with large glass windows for display.

The parents of J. Y. Shantz emigrated from Montgomery County Pennsylvania to take up farming locally. After Mr. Shantz's first marriage, he took possession of his father's farm, still known as 'Jacob Shantz's place'. He resided there for about forty years, before he moved to Berlin. He was married three times and father of twelve children.

Shantz was an entrepreneur, civic leader and active church member (first of the Mennonite church, later of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ church). He is best known for his role in promoting the immigration of Mennonites from Russia to Manitoba in the 1870s. From 1873 to 1884 about 8,000 Mennonites migrated to Manitoba. Shantz advised the Canadian government with regard to Mennonite settlement in Manitoba. He scouted the land, negotiated with the Canadian government, and stirred up support from Mennonites in his area.

That task done, Shantz built workmen's homes and mercantile blocks cf. the Canadian Block above. Emil Vogelsang and his partner gave Shantz the contract to build a factory for the Pioneer Button Works, the first button factory in Canada. Eventually Shantz purchased a share in the business and entered into a seven year partnership agreement with Vogelsang. After that, Vogelsang built a new factory building at Queen/Courtland and Shantz continued on in the same location with the Shantz Button Company, later known as **the Dominion Button Works to 1964. He also built the first farmers' market in Kitchener.**

Regarding his experiences settling Mennonite immigrants into Manitoba, Jacob had this to say: "I knew they were honest and the country was good." Asked if he was not afraid to go among the [Metis] without a weapon for defence, Jacob's answer was: " No. When they see that I do not carry a rifle they know that my purpose is good and become my protectors. Therein lies my safety. I eat and sleep with them without fear." All in all, he approached this particular life task from his belief system: he had been called by God to this task.

Jacob Yost Shantz counts many descendants. The Georgian home he built at 5 Maurice Street, OHA part IV designated property, and the Canadian Block on King Street still remain. **However, until the Canadian Block is either listed or designated on the City's Heritage Register, possibly the oldest commercial structure in Kitchener remains at risk.**

THE MIKE WAGNER AWARDS

Through the Mike Wagner Heritage Awards, the

City of Kitchener encourages and rewards local businesses and residents who have made an important contribution to the conservation and improvement of the City's cultural heritage resources. Established in 1997, the awards program honours former City councillor Mike Wagner, who served on City Council from 1989 to 1997, was a strong advocate for heritage, culture and the arts and a member of our Branch.

Waterloo Region Catholic Education Centre/ City of Kitchener Downtown Community Centre: Outstanding Achievement Award The Waterloo Catholic District School Board located its Education Centre in the former St. Mary's High School, in partnership with the City of Kitchener's Downtown Community Centre. The high school's hall was retained and original architectural features - such as stained glass windows, original hardwood and terrazzo floors, balcony and woodwork - were restored. The new entrance to the education centre is enhanced with a memory wall that incorporates stone from the 1909 portion of the former St. Jerome's College/ high school building that was destroyed by fire in 1994.

Wilfrid Laurier University Lyle S. Hallman Faculty of Social Work: Outstanding Achievement Award The former St. Jerome's College/ High School building sat vacant for 14 years until Wilfrid Laurier acquired it for its Faculty of Social Work. Over the course of 12 months, the exterior of this landmark 1907 Neo-Classical building was meticulously restored. The brick and stone were cleaned, pressed metal cornices restored, and windows tastefully replaced.

Mill Club Clubhouse: Award of Merit This former farmhouse was retained and transformed into the Mill Club Clubhouse as part of a residential development. The addition respects the original farmhouse in scale, colour and material. Some features of the original house, such as the Doric columns and rubble stone foundation, were retained. The building is owned by Mr. Herb Kunsch.

Architecture Week in 2006 will take place September 30 to October 7.

Architecture Week, started in 1997, is an annual province wide event celebrated to raise public awareness and appreciation of architects and their work. The week is designed to celebrate the profession and the role of the architect as they

create the special places where we live, work and play. Societies and communities coordinate efforts during the week to create events that are both educational and enjoyable. Events include community based projects, student design competitions, tours of local sites, exhibits, and lectures. Museums, libraries, historical societies, and community groups across the province are also invited to participate. By supporting Architecture Week, you support good design and honour the architectural profession.

For further information on Architecture Week, contact Michelle Hamilton, Coordinator Societies and Outreach at: michelleh@oaa.on.ca

ACO Provincial News

Here is an extract from *Built Heritage News* that has been reprinted with permission.

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario Growing Fast, by Catherine Nasmith, May 10, 2006

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, founded in 1933 by architect Eric Arthur is Ontario's oldest built heritage organization, and helps communities to defend their heritage buildings. For many years it has been in a quiet steady state but has seen a recent surge in interest and activity. In 2006 three new branches of the ACO have been formed, increasing the number of branches by 25%. Peterborough, Guelph, and St. Catharines were welcomed at the AGM in June. And there are expressions of interest from St. Thomas and Brampton. It would be great to have an ACO branch wherever there is a local Municipal Heritage Committee.

In many communities people move back and forth between both roles of advisor and advocate, but they are distinct. Once the MHC has given advice their hands are more or less tied. MHC's are formed and disbanded with each term of Council. It is important to have another heritage body such as the ACO that does the advocacy, public education and provides long-term continuity on heritage matters.

Scott James, the former executive director of the Toronto Historical Board recently joined the staff as co-ordinator of ACO's **Preservation Works** program. ACO also operates **HALP**, a buildings-at-risk listing service.

For more information on the ACO go to <http://www.hips.com/ACO/>