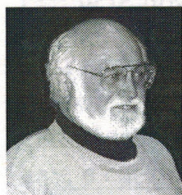
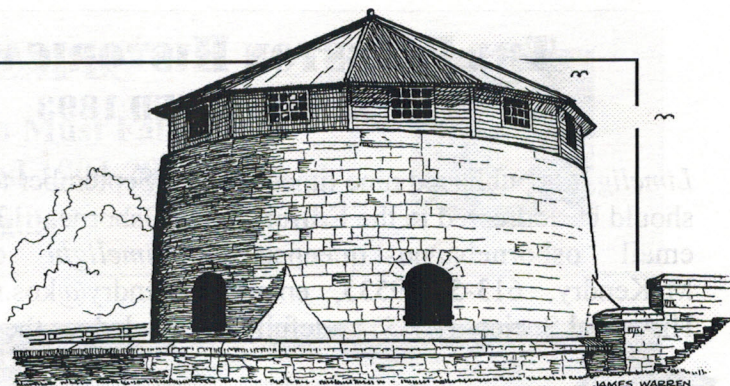


# LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the  
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 6 no 7 October 2004 ISSN 1488-5565



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**D**o mark Saturday, **6 November** in your calendar. Bill Fitts and I recently met with Orland French - a specialist in the field of local and community histories - of Wallbridge House Publishing and Friesens Publishing. Some of you may remember Orland from his days with the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, *Ottawa Citizen*, and *Globe and Mail*. KHS will be hosting on that day a workshop organized by him to help people interested in preparing their own history books for publication. (For more details, please see page 2.)

Also, note the **CHANGE OF VENUE** for the October KHS meeting. Some of you might recall Bill Fitts's several columns on Tom "T.C." Cummings, the Pittsburgh boy who achieved fame as artist, writer, and community leader in North Bay. Well, "T.C." is coming home. Look out for the announcement of the opening of the "Tom Cummings (T.C.) Centenary Exhibition: the Man, the Teacher, the

Poet, and the Artist" at the St Lawrence College Gallery, Friday, **15 October** (4.00-7.00 p.m.) The exhibition will feature diaries, poetry, prose and paintings to reflect the breadth of Dr Cummings' career. It includes homestead life in Pittsburgh Township, tours of Europe, WWII military service, teaching at the Banff School of Art, trips to the Canadian North, life in Mattawa Valley and the Caribbean, success as a published author, beloved school teacher, and accomplished visual artist. Then, on the following Wednesday, **20 October**, KHS will be the guests of SLC President Principal Volker Thomsen. Members will have an opportunity to view the "T.C." Cumming's exhibition and Doug Petty and I will present a paper on his remarkable odyssey and career. Invitations have been extended to Pittsburgh and Gananoque historical societies to make it a truly joint meeting. Please join us.

*Brian S. Osborne*

### THIS MONTH'S MEETING:

**WEDNESDAY, 20 OCTOBER at 7:30PM**

**Douglas Petty and Brian Osborne**

**"Thomas Clarence Cummings, 1904-1996:  
T.C.'s Kingston-Pittsburgh-Gananoque Connection."**

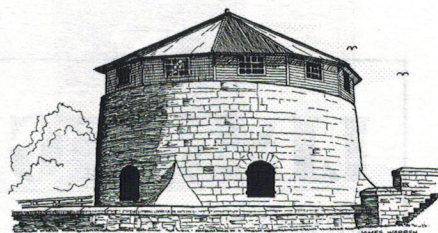
in the Main Lecture Theatre, St Lawrence College,  
Portsmouth Avenue at King West  
**LOOK FOR THE SIGNS!**

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# THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## ESTABLISHED 1893



Murney Tower by James Warren

*Limelight* is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the **Editor**, Brian Osborne, 613-533-6042, email [osborneb@post.queensu.ca](mailto:osborneb@post.queensu.ca). *Limelight* designer, Jennifer McKendry, 613-544-9535, email [mckendry@kos.net](mailto:mckendry@kos.net). The Kingston Historical Society (KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of *Limelight*'s sponsors.



KHS holds monthly talks or events, usually at 7:30 PM on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, usually in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library on Johnson St at Bagot St. Special annual events include a dinner and talk honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald in January and a ceremony marking his death in June. **New members are welcome!** - individual \$35, family \$40, institutional \$40, student \$25; memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by KHS.

**Kingston Historical Society**  
Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

website [www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

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## Let's Make History

### KHS HOSTS WORKSHOP ON PUBLISHING

From 1PM to 4PM on Saturday, **6 NOVEMBER**, KHS will host a workshop for those interested in publishing community, family or individual history books. "Let's Make History" will be held in the Kingston Public Library's Wilson Room and will be led by **Orland French** (right).

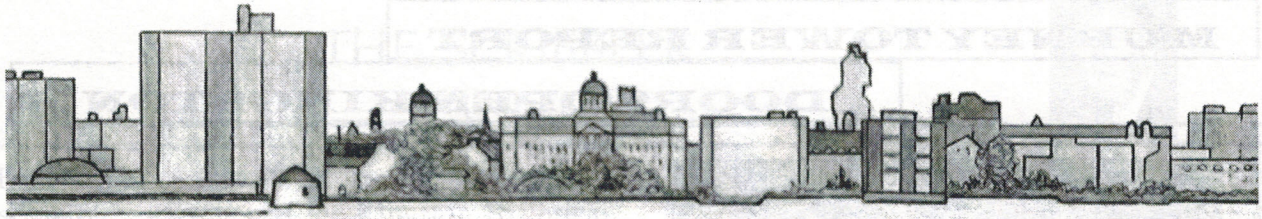
Orland is an experienced journalist and writer with an extensive background in newspapers, journalism schools, and community history book publication. He is also the Ontario representative for the community history book division of the well known publishing house,



Friesens. The workshop will provide advice on researching and writing histories, as well as the practicalities of pricing, marketing, and promotion of the final products. Other speakers will refer to their own experience in publishing and local resources for researchers.

There will be refreshments, door prizes, book-sales, and hand-outs related to the seminars. The registration fee is only \$10 and attendance will be limited to 40 persons. For more information and reservations, please contact Alan MacLachlan at 549-8841.





detail Kingston Skyline 1995 from RMC Gazebo, BSO Collection

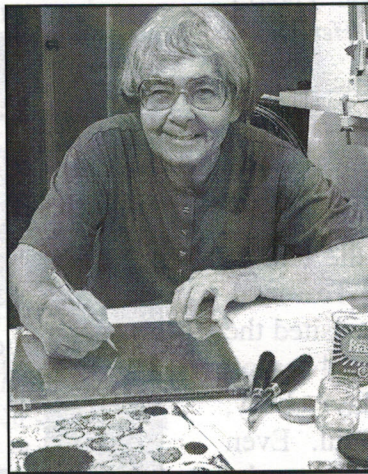
## UNDER MY SHELL: a Tribute to Nan Yeomans

by Margaret Moore O'Meara

Over 150 art lovers eagerly awaited the first screening of Valerie Westgate's documentary, *Under My Shell*, on the life and art of Nan Yeomans, on 3 June in the Kingston Public Library.

Members of the Kingston art community have long been aware that they had in their midst a very small lady with a very large talent, and who was also a person of extreme modesty - Nan Yeomans. It was felt that something should be done to celebrate that life and talent while Nan could still enjoy the recognition. Indeed, this was propitious timing as Nan died on 21 August at age 81.

Spearheaded by Natalie Mehra of the Kingston Artists' Association, a committee was set up with Marilyn Birmingham as chair. With the Nan Yeomans Project established, funds were raised and film maker Valerie Westgate was chosen to make the video. In *Under My Shell*, we learn of Nan's life as a small child in the country, her arrival in Kingston, her early talent in art, and her studies in various fields. This was a most exciting period of her life, as she discovered the possibilities of the world of art. She studied largely at the Queen's Summer Art School under the direction of such lights as Andre Bieler, Carl Schaefer, and Grant McDonald. Later, etching was introduced, and Nan learned 30 different techniques in that



Kingston Whig-Standard  
12 October 2002

medium. Despite these contributions, throughout her career, Nan managed to keep her own individual style and her work is immediately recognizable. Like most artists of her time, she had to support herself somehow and, for 35 years,

she did so as a book-keeper. She admitted there were disappointing times. At one period in her career, she had to wait for six years to gain access to printmaking equipment, but her natural cheerfulness and quiet tenacity sustained her.

Throughout the film, Nan emphasized the power of nature and her unique view of the world. She looked at it all with an innocence that allowed her to see beauty and wonder in the simplest things that most of us miss, but she was able to convey through her art. As an enthusiastic KHS member with an immense interest in, and knowledge of, the

region's history, her early paintings often portrayed a Kingston that no longer exists.

Valerie Westgate has done a superb job. She shows us Nan, the private person, padding around her apartment, making tea, playing with her pet turtle Tommy, a constant companion for 30 years. We also see Nan, the artist, practising her techniques, mostly in the Kingston School of Art, showing us the care and attention she gave to all that she produced. And then there are images of Nan shopping at the market, exploring the countryside, talking to friends.

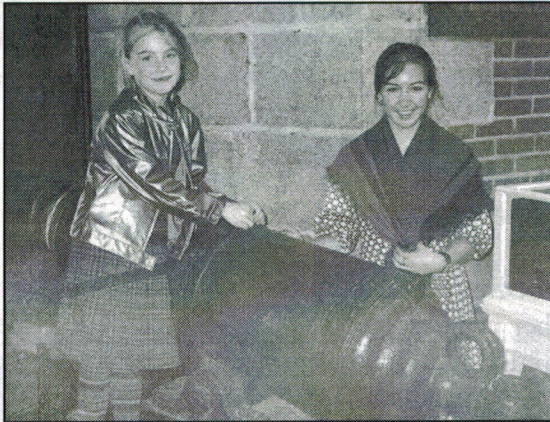
Nan was a gem, and so is this video.

*Under My Shell* is available in DVD or VHS for \$25 (tax included). Please phone 542-5834



## MURNEY TOWER REPORT

### DOORS OPEN KINGSTON



Ailsa Evans and Natalie Paquin in the Murney Tower during Doors Open. Photo Cy Chapman, courtesy *the Heritage* newspaper, 21 Sept. 2004

**D**oors Open Kingston 2004, held on 18 September, marked the end of this year's season at the Murney Tower. A fitting end it was too: 465 people visited the tower in a six-hour period. The 2004 season mirrored the Doors Open day: busy, exciting and financially successful. Even though many of Kingston's tourist attractions saw a downturn in attendance this summer, the tower had 7,454 paying visitors and exceeded last year's revenue. This success was largely due to the excellent leadership of our Chief Interpreter, **Matthew Wright**, and the hard work of our two new interpreters, **Rina Savage** and **Natalie Paquin**. Rina and Natalie who joined our team this summer, are very fine ambassadors for KHS.

Next year's season should be prove to be just as exciting. A grant from the City's Healthy Community Fund has enabled us to acquire two new exhibition cases to improve the presentation of our artifacts and to create new interpretive labels for the

displays. This is an opportunity to enhance greatly the museum's interpretive messages and add to the experience of our visitors. I strongly encourage all members of the Society to visit the Tower next season and to remember one of the privileges of being a member of the Society: free admission!

by Warren Everett



The Frontenac Heritage Foundation gave an award for the repair of the Murney Tower's roof on 26 September in the Kingston City Hall. **John Coleman** (left) accepted the Renovation and Restoration Award on behalf of Parks Canada. **Pieter Chung** (right) accepted a Certificate of Commendation, presented to Roof Tile Management. Photo by Jennifer McKendry



# THE SCRIBBLER

J.W. (Bill) Fittsell

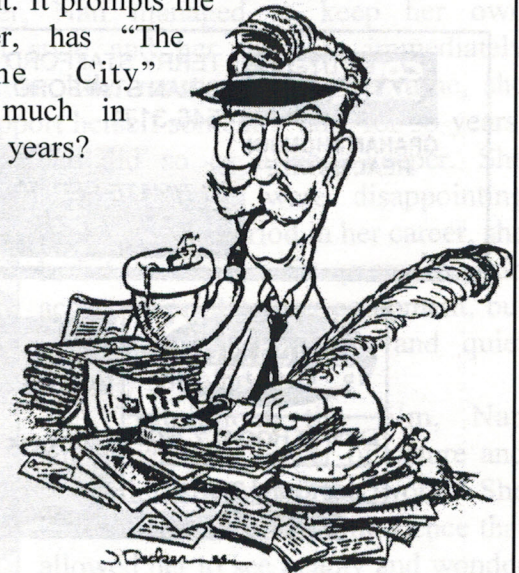


"Four kinds of history books are always with us," wrote a member of the Kingston Historical Society more than 30 years ago:

- ▣ the scholarly history tells us why and how, too late to be a lesson;
- ▣ the school history teaches a lesson, too early to tell youth why or how;
- ▣ historic fiction involves us in the great affairs of men;
- ▣ the summary of everyman's round, daily life and dispatches in the papers, kaleidoscoped in local histories can give the feeling there were people here — who did no glorious deeds and lived in some town, or city, or county, whose roads and hills and buildings we and others like us may still know.

These words of wisdom came from the pen of former Queen's University Librarian **Donald A. Redmond** who edited *Historic Kingston* for 13 years, (a "baker's dozen" — an appropriate number for a Sherlockian). He composed them in January 1973 for the introduction to Dr T.B. Atkins's (1839-1891) *History of Halifax City*, which was reprinted by the late Nick Mika of Belleville in that year.

Don Redmond followed his rating of history books with this gem: "Halifax, like Kingston, clings to history, giving up to modern times reluctantly, grudgingly, little by little, thinking old times almost better, no matter what they were; hiding behind old paint and sooted stone, blinking a bit in the light of new construction and new bustle in the streets." What an assessment. It prompts me to ponder, has "The Limestone City" changed much in the last 31 years?



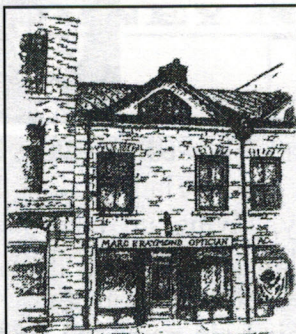
Don Redmond,  
courtesy of Thomas Stix Jr

## Skeleton Park and KHS

Residents studying the KHS display board with the proposed wording of a plaque summarizing the history of McBurney Park at the "Open Tent" on 18 September. Alternative designs for landscaping the park, affectionately known as "Skeleton Park," were presented by Bray Heritage with Individual Landscapes. Photo by Jennifer McKendry







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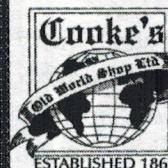
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## LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

### **"Into Every Life a Little Rain Must Fall": Kingston Monuments Limited 1904-2004**

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



A mixture of snow and rain was falling when I went to paint a picture of Kingston Monuments on a January day in 1989. I was there all day, and I could see people looking out of their window wondering what on earth I was doing! At one point in the day, a car drove up and a couple got out, sharing an umbrella on their way to the office. As I sketched them, I thought of the perfect title for the painting: "Into Every Life a Little Rain Must Fall."

I finished my painting and took it over to the office, where I met the Rigos family. They were thrilled with it and bought it on the spot. When I told them I was painting a pictorial history of Cataraqui Village and that I was looking for a place to hold the show, they offered me space in their offices. Without any hesitation at all, I accepted their kind offer. That was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Kingston Monuments was celebrating their 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary that year and they decided to hold an Open House and my show was to be part of it. The event was opened by Isobel Turner, the Reeve of Kingston Township, with Peggy Cohoe as Master of Ceremonies. The "Ghost" of Alfie Pierce 1874-1951 (played by Gordon Raymo) limped across the road from his grave. His friend Herb Hamilton ("Mr. Queens") was there to greet Alfie and tell us all about Alfie's illustrious life at Queen's University. There were two other important participants in this event: Marjorie Simmons put up a fantastic display of historical photographs of the village; and Gord Smithson presented a fascinating history of Cataraqui Village. With musical entertainment, work-shop demonstrations of the art of making tombstones,



delicious refreshments and organized walks around Cataraqui Cemetery, our goal was to purchase park benches for Cataraqui Cemetery. The event was a huge success with several hundred people attending and we raised enough money to order six granite park-benches. Not only did the Rigos supply these at cost, they also donated two more.

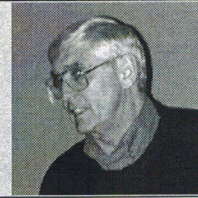
That year, because of the success of this event, Kingston Monuments won the North American Monument Builders Association "Archie Green Award" for Community Service. In 1998, NAMBA awarded them the "Aspire Award" for success in Public Relations and Marketing after they reset over 65 stones in Cataraqui Cemetery following the ice-storm.

The Rigos family are such caring and generous people and have helped many rural cemeteries after they were vandalized. They have been great friends to me and have donated a beautiful granite clock for a free draw at all my art shows. Kingston Monuments is now celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Congratulations to all the Rigos family and your great staff and best wishes for your next 100 years!

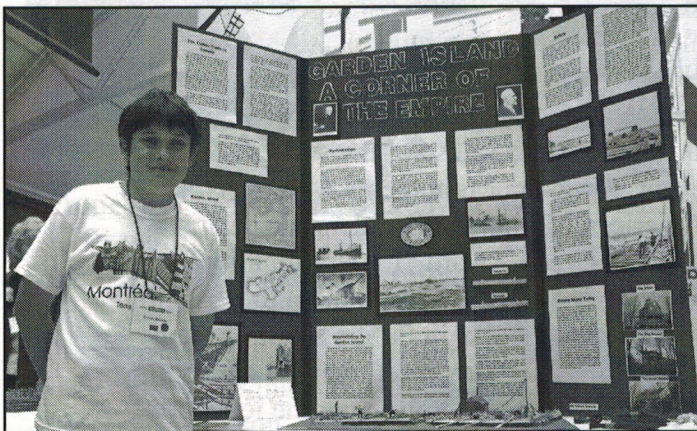


## SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Alan MacLachlan



Didn't it feel good to see those two young people, **Alene Parr**, Grade 6 from Newburgh Public School, and **Calvin Rubens**, Grade 8 from Calvin Park Public School present their prize winning Historica/Heritage Fair projects at our September meeting? Calvin barely referred to his notes as he presented his topic, "Garden Island: A Corner of the Empire." Clearly, the reason why Calvin was selected as a Best of Fair Winner in this summer's competition was that he accumulated excellent information, interpreted it, and converted it into knowledge. Alene Parr ("Boomtowns to Ghosttowns") and **Mallory Alcock** ("Kingston General Hospital"), Grade 5 from Welborne Avenue Public School, were winners of our KHS prize. Fortunately for us, Alene was able to present her excellent work to us but, sadly, Mallory's project was destroyed by the flooding of the family basement.



Calvin Ruben at the National Fair, courtesy of Alan Hesketh

Given these superb performances, John Fielding expressed the hope that student presentations of their Historica Fair projects will become a regular part of our September Meeting.



The main speaker of the evening was **Doug Pippin**, professor of archaeology at Oswego State College. His topic allowed him plenty of scope to develop the broad picture of the role of Carleton Island's Fort Haldimand in the overall British military strategy for the defence of the Great Lakes, as well as the details of daily life through rigorous archaeology. Doug was engaged in discussion with aficionados of "holes in the ground" for several hours after his presentation.



Digging at the barracks, courtesy Doug Pippin



The next KHS meeting will be at 7.30 p.m., Wednesday, 20 October, in the Main Lecture Theatre of **St Lawrence College** (NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE -- which has plenty of parking). Doug Petty and Brian Osborne will present a paper, "Thomas Clarence Cummings, 1904-1996: T.C.'s Kingston-Pittsburgh-Gananoque Connection." This will complement an exhibition of T.C. Cumming's art, which will be on view for KHS members.