

Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and
District Historical Society

November 2012 — Issue 254

Trivia Night

For a change of pace, as well as a change of venue, CDHS will have our first-ever trivia night on Friday, November 30 at 7:30pm at the Cobourg Yacht Club at 100 Third Street. There will be a party atmosphere as members, guests and anyone else who loves history will gather for this evening of fun and competition. There will be prizes, a 50-50 draw, free nibbles and a cash bar.

Our Recent Meetings



On Tuesday, September 25, Julie Oakes and John Edmonds presented an abbreviated version of The Pickering Museum Village's moving and award-winning production of *A Spirit Walk—Call to Rebellion*. The play

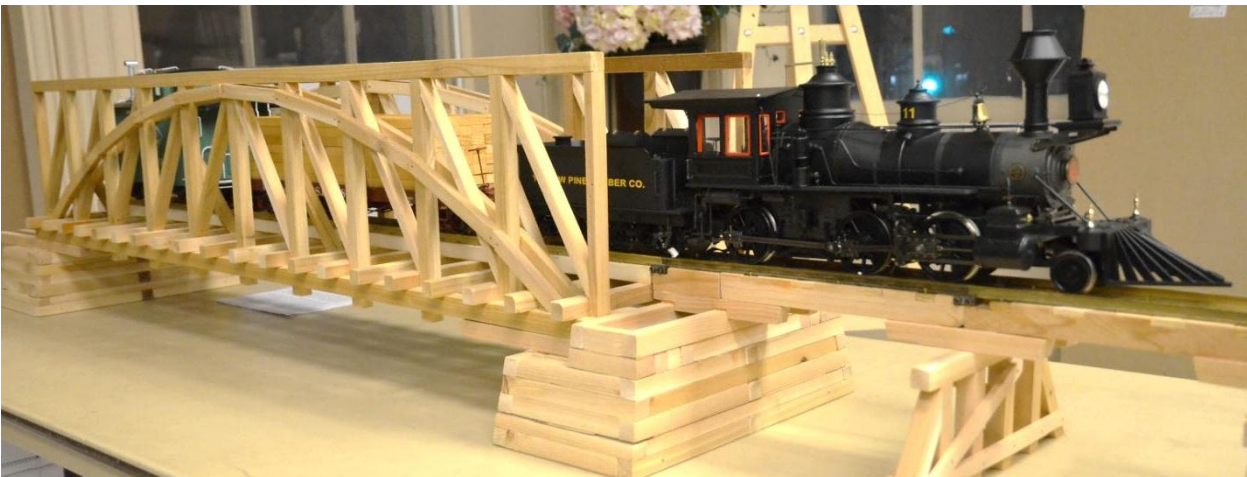


is based on the part Pickering farmers played in the Rebellion of 1837. Julie, in period costume, plays the role of the widowed Hannah, wife of Peter Matthews, who was hanged for his part in the skirmish after a pardon from Queen Victoria arrived too late.





George Parker presented fascinating details of the railway bridge across Rice Lake on Tuesday, October 23. Using a variety of sources and an engineer's viewpoint, George made a compelling case that the only extant description of the bridge was rife with inaccuracies and omissions. The report, previously considered definitive, was produced by civil engineer T.C. Clarke. Clarke wrote his report, *On the Action of the Ice upon*



the Bridge at Rice Lake in April of 1855. Aided by a scale model of the bridge together with numerous drawings, maps, photographs and anecdotal information he demonstrated that the



spans were six feet longer than previously reported. In addition, there was almost certainly no rotating section in the middle of the crossing. The rotating section was planned to allow the passage of larger ships.

A Railway Hike

To help Cobourg celebrate its 175th anniversary the Pine Ridge Hiking Club organized a historical walk along part of the old Cobourg and Peterborough Railway line. Very little remains of the line although there are a few sections left including some of the original ties. Two CDHS members, Peter Delanty and Ken Strauss provided commentary on the history of the railroad and its significance to the development of Cobourg.

Membership Matters

Meeting Changes

Meeting attendees will have noticed a number of changes. Most obviously, the meetings start 30 minutes earlier than previously – the doors open at 7:00pm and the meetings start at 7:30pm. To the delight of many there is decaffeinated coffee and muffins/cookies before the meeting. To help to get everyone acquainted there are name tags. Please leave your tag in the box as you leave the meeting.

New Members

I would like to welcome Marjorie Heaton, Robert Hunter, George Parker, Brian Rogers, Pamela Rogers and Mary-Louise Tufford as new members of CDHS.

Transportation to Meetings

We are trying to determine which members would appreciate a ride to our meetings. We have two volunteer drivers and I'm sure there are others who would be willing to drive. Anyone who would like a ride or is willing to drive others should call Judith Goulin at 905 372 7684 who is coordinating this transportation initiative.

Congratulations!

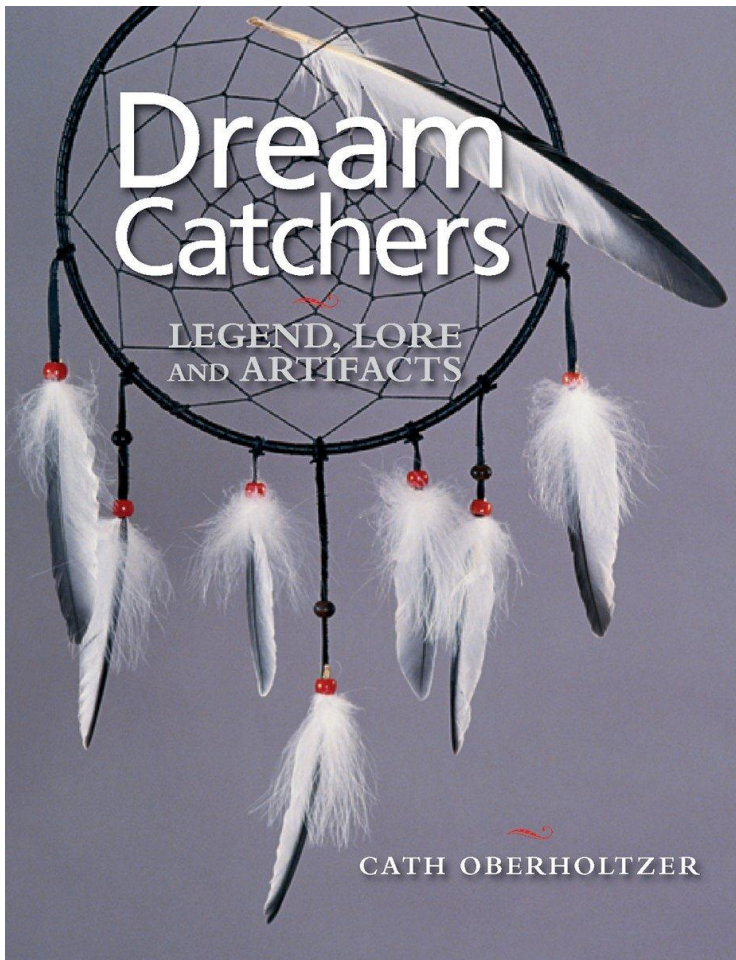
Marion Hagan celebrated her 90th birthday this year and is still a leading cultural force in Cobourg. She is a well-respected Member of the Board of the Society for the Preservation of Victoria Hall, the first President of Victoria Hall Volunteers which has raised over \$300,000 for the maintenance and enhancement of the National Historic Monument and is one of the founding members of the Cobourg and District Historical Society. Another institution in Cobourg that

owes its beginnings to Ms. Hagen is The Art Gallery of Northumberland. Ms. Hagen was a Charter Member of the Art Gallery and worked diligently to see it grow from its original location to its current home in Victoria Hall. Ms. Hagen has provided leadership, inspiration, knowledge and many volunteer hours to the cultural development and heritage preservation of the Town of Cobourg. Congratulations Marian! (This item is based on an article by Cecilia Naismith in *Northumberland Today* for September 13, 2012.)

A Winner

John Draper was the lucky winner of the raffle for a copy of Cath Oberholtzer's *Dream Catchers*. Copies are available from The Avid Reader on Division Street and from Amazon.





Review of *Dream Catchers* Judith Goulin

In her book, *Dream Catchers*, the late Dr. C. Oberholtzer, (the Cath we all knew and loved) wants us to understand the significance of dream catchers. So Cath, the anthropologist, strives to enlighten us about their origin, especially because this cultural icon of the Ojibwa First Nation people has devolved into a ubiquitous souvenir novelty.

Dream catchers have become part of the tradition of other North American First Nation groups as well, symbolizing their identity and spirituality. Originally, dream catchers were tiny, round, hand-crafted charms that were used on cradle boards. Bad dreams would be caught in the net, while good dreams would slip through to the

dreamer. Think of a dream catcher as a beautiful mobile for a baby, with a higher purpose than simply an object that entertains.

This book contains exquisite photos of traditional-looking dream catchers made with real materials like bone, sinew, antlers and feathers — not the ones made with synthetic feathers, plastic beads and other assorted junk components sold in souvenir stores.

The photograph of a baby nestled in a cradle board and staring intently at a dream catcher is unforgettable. It may have been Cath's favourite. No doubt the one she liked the least is the photo of a huge sign featuring the "World's Largest Dream Catcher" because it is blatantly touristy and trivializes the real thing.

The book is divided into three parts: Legend and Distribution, Net Charms and Scale. Each section is an entertaining read and a feast for the eyes. This lovely book graces my coffee table and is a daily reminder of a well-loved friend and much-respected CDHS member, Cath Oberholtzer.

Notes and Notices

Our Host

Our host for the Alderville visit, David Mowat, received a Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal. The medal was presented by Rick Norlock, MP for Northumberland-Quinte West, along with Mayor Hector Macmillan, Municipality of Trent Hills; Mayor Dalton McDonald, Township of Alnwick-Haldimand; and Chief James Marsden, Alderville First Nation.



"We congratulate Dave for all his hard work and studies on our history of Alderville and the Treaties we are involved in," said Chief James Marsden. "Alderville First Nation is very fortunate to have three of our members receive the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal."

CDHS Executive for 2012 – 2013

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