

Forging new bonds with the past

By DEBORAH QUAILE

Amidst the clang of blacksmiths' hammers, the whoosh of bellows and excited chatter of visitors, the Waldie Blacksmith Shop in downtown Milton reopened at a grand ceremony on September 28. The street was closed off to traffic while the crowd enjoyed a bright autumn day, listening to the Acton Citizens' Band and waiting for the opening speeches by the Milton Historical Society. There were historical displays, buggies and classic vehicles to ooh and ahh over, and the enticing smells of barbecued foods by the Junior Farmers.

Piper Jim Douglas Jr. welcomed the people with haunting notes to begin the ceremony, and Town Crier Ian Burkholder's commanding voice made way for the speeches. MHS President Mirella Marshall welcomed everyone to the long-awaited day

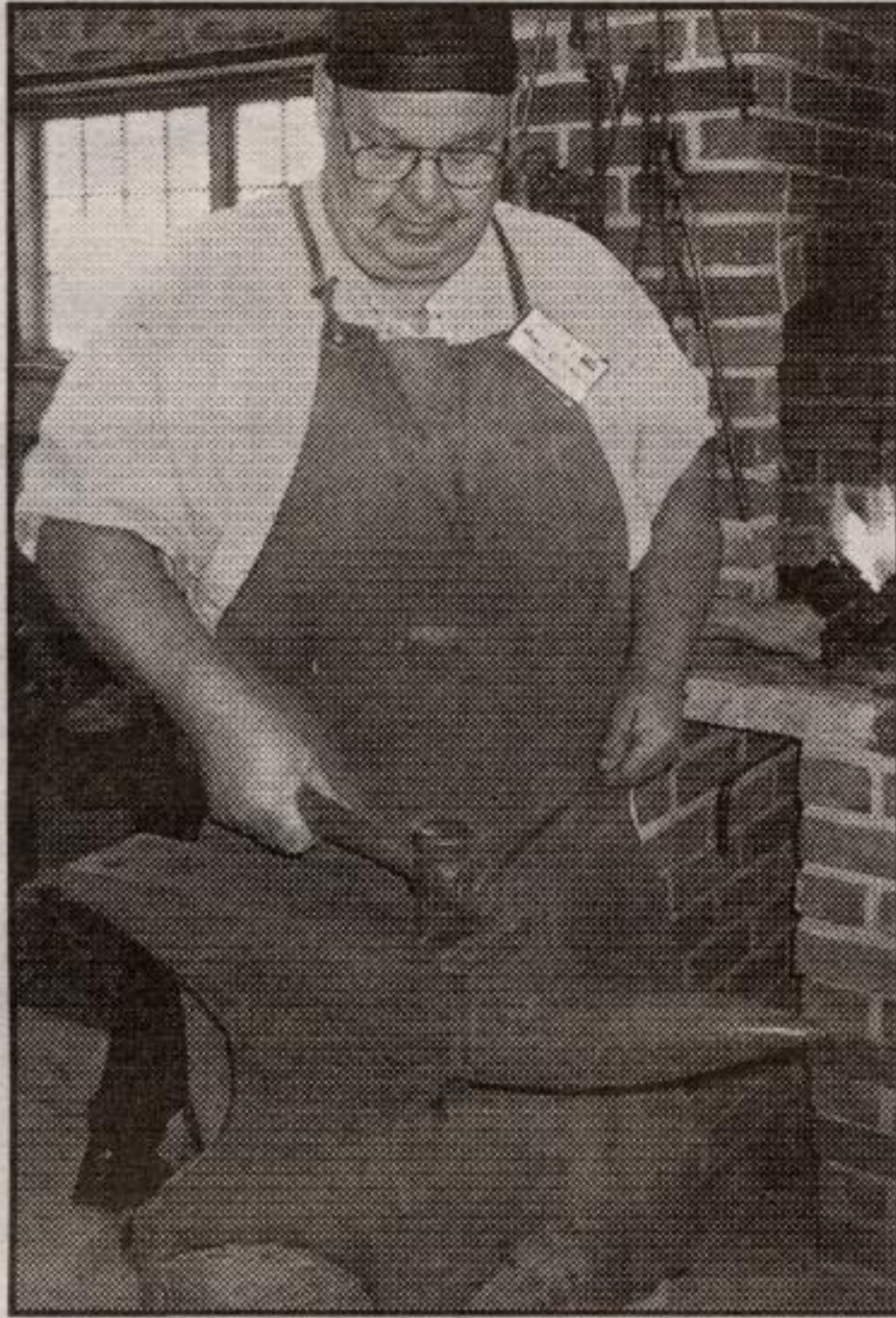


Photo by DEBORAH QUAILE

If I had a hammer... Murray Lowe, President of the Ontario Artist Blacksmith Association, provided visitors to the Waldie Blacksmith Shop with a demonstration on the trade.

when the 1865 building came to new life. The shop is a post and beam timber structure with rubble stone infill walls built by James Waldie Sr. It's rare that a shop like this still exists in its original urban location. The blacksmith shop will now be the home of the MHS and the Milton Archives, as well as opening for special events and meetings, local visitors, tourists and school tours. Ms. Marshall thanked everyone involved and added that the day was also to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the historical society, thereby providing an exciting double celebration.

Mayor Gord Krantz remembered his younger years when horses were "still pretty important in the Milton society," and the blacksmith shop was in operation. "The Waldie

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The Canadian 4-H Council has declared November 4 - 10 National 4-H Week. This is an opportunity to celebrate 30,000 young people and almost 10,000 volunteers involved in the program. This year is the start of a year-long celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the 4-H program in Canada. 4-H is dedicated to the personal development of young people.

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A Mill that doesn't cost the earth

By DEBORAH QUAILE

Several buildings that were designed by Eden Mills architect and planner Charles Simon were included on an early October National Tour of Solar Buildings organized by the American Solar Energy Society and the U.S. Department of Energy. This is the first year that the annual event was extended to southern Ontario.

"It is very cheering to be recognized in this way," Mr. Simon comments. "While Canada agonizes over signing the Kyoto Agreement and the States refuses to, individuals and groups in both countries are trying to advance the environmental agenda in their varied ways."

Mr. Simon, who notes that he has been called the "father of passive solar in Canada," designed the first engineered passive solar house in this country in Arkell in 1973-4.

Buildings on the tour that Mr. Simon designed are a 200 sq. m. (2,000 sq. ft.) passive solar greenhouse at Brock University built in 1984, and the pioneering Environmental Learning Centre for the Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA. So far three groups of buildings have been built there, including a 40-person residence that is completely off-grid. An assembly/conference building is largely heated and cooled by an attached passive solar greenhouse that also houses a biological sewage treatment system (Living Machine) where plants, snails, fishes and other biota clean even the toilet water to drinking quality.

A third set of buildings was opened this summer which are comprised of off-grid straw bale cabins that sleep 10 to 12 people year-round. As well, a straw bale house in Eden Mills built by Glen and Libby Little is also on the tour, for which Mr. Simon acted as a design consultant.

But the most satisfying aspect of his work is much closer to home. His recently completed second phase renovation of the old mill in Eden Mills, where he and his wife live, was also on the tour.

"I'm finally applying what I have been doing for others all these years to my own home/office. The south-facing greenhouse and windows to my office and my wife Anna's studio provide heating to the house, and fixed and moveable shades - as well as

vent stack in the greenhouse - eliminate the need for air conditioning."

A novel use of active solar collectors will soon be added inside the greenhouse with provision for the installation of photovoltaic panels that convert solar into electrical energy. Some generation from waterpower may also lie in the future. The rugged stone walls of their mill home

shelter a south facing courtyard that creates a balmy micro-climate as well as a delightful outdoor space.

The Simons' mill home had been destroyed by two fires years ago, but thanks to his far-ranging vision, Charles Simon has recycled a mill built for 19th century water power to provide 21st century solar power.



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