

# ChampionCountry

## Wiarthon Willie logo and book created locally

*Logo recently used to help celebrate 50th anniversary of Wiarthon's Groundhog Festival*

**By Robin Downton-Poirier**  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

**W**ith many people considering him an expert on Wiarthon Willie, David Haley wrote a book (in 1999) and designed a logo about the weather-predicting rodent.

Haley, a Britannia Road resident, said the logo was used to commemorate the recent 50th Anniversary of Wiarthon's Groundhog Festival and to raise money for the Wiarthon Legion.

The logo was originally drawn by Haley in 2000 after he completed his book, 'The Life and Legend of Wiarthon Willie'. The picture, depicting Willie in a meadow, sat for years, with Haley unsure of what he'd like to use it for. An advertisement at the beginning of January about the 50th anniversary prompted him to finally put the logo to use.

"The logo had been sitting in my house since January 2000," said Haley. "When I noticed the anniversary flyer, I pulled the logo out and called the Town of Wiarthon to see if we could use it and they agreed."

Haley took the design to a friend who enhanced the image on her computer by adding a brilliant rainbow and titles for the '50th Anniversary' and 'The Legend'.

**Willie a Canadian icon**

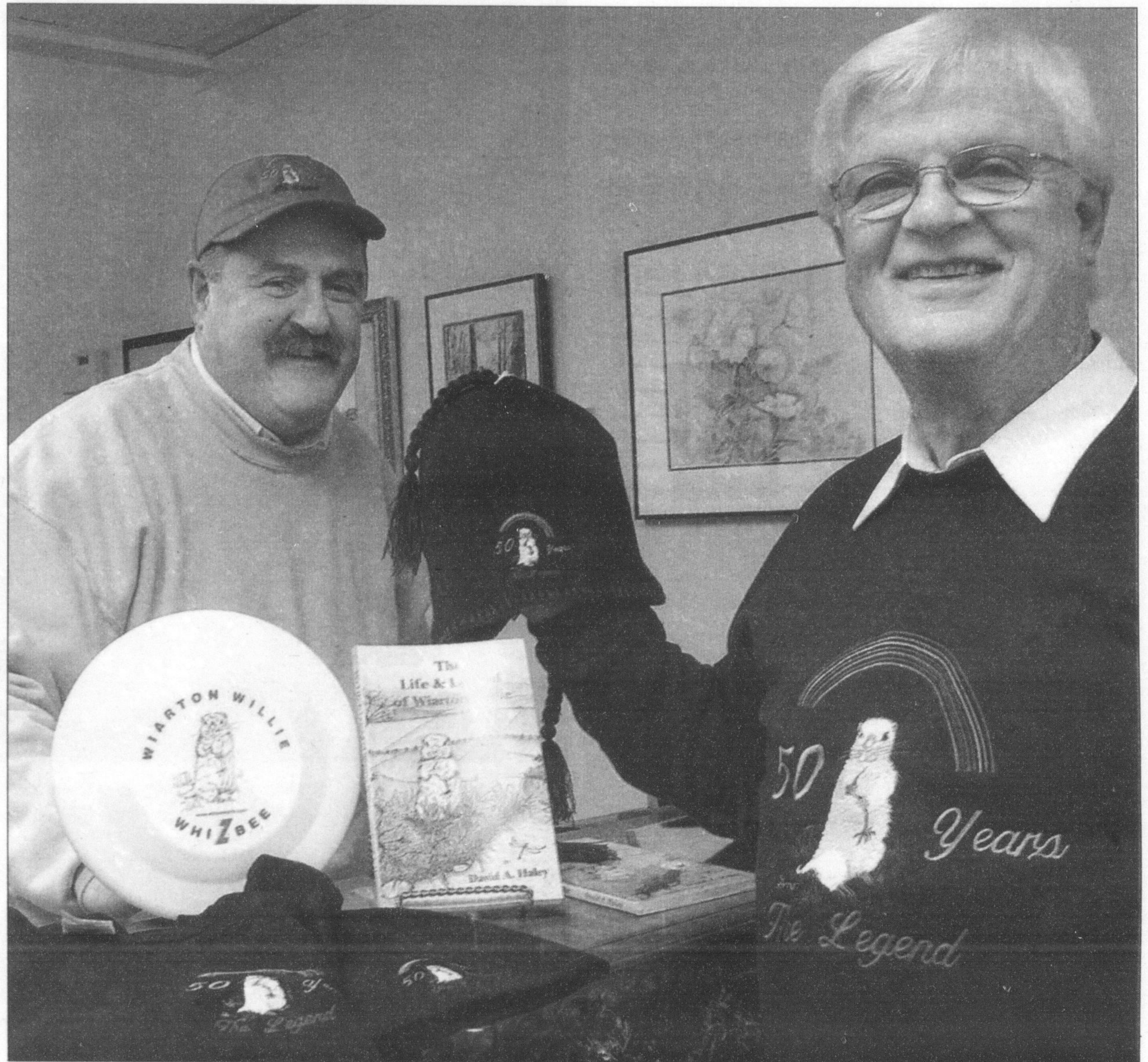
"Willie is (the) Canadian icon that everyone associates with Wiarthon's mid-winter festival. Because of this universal recognition, Willie is referred to simply as 'The Legend' (on the logo)," said Haley.

The logo was emblazoned on numerous items by the Village Gallery and Graphics in Waterdown, including sweatshirts, t-shirts, hats, and headbands, all being sold by order through Haley, at the Wiarthon Groundhog Festival, and at Spice O' Life in Milton.

Haley had received orders for more than \$7,000 in merchandise before the festival even began.

The logo has also been adopted by the Wiarthon Legion to help raise money for a new mural to be painted on the side of a building in Wiarthon to commemorate the Year of the Veteran. The cost of the mural is \$8,400, said Haley, and the Legion has raised over a quarter of that amount already with the logo.

Haley grew up in Flamborough and often 'hunted' groundhogs as a child. With his father as the official Wiarthon Willie archivist, he has been privy to a great deal of information about the rodent for years, helping him immeasurably when writing his book. 'The Life and Legend of Wiarthon



BRENDA JEFFERIES / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

**CREATIVE DUO:** Author and Wiarthon Willie expert David Haley (right) and Dave Cooper of Waterdown's Village Gallery and Graphics show some of the memorabilia created in honour of the 50th anniversary of Wiarthon's Groundhog Day Festival.

Willie', primarily written for children, is a biography of Wiarthon Willie's life, his ability to predict the weather, and how Wiarthon's mid-winter festival became dedicated to him. Although the timeline is slightly stretched to incorporate some of the town of Wiarthon's interesting details, the story is very factual and all the characters are real, said Haley.

"This is a historical novel wove around actual events and people, with fun brought in and adjusted for interest. It is very authentic," said Haley.

Haley said he has sold about 1,200 copies of the 'Life and Legend of Wiarthon Willie' since being published, but admits that sales tend to be centered around Groundhog Day and Wiarthon's Groundhog Festival.

The book is available at Harris Stationary in Milton and Different Drummer Books in Burlington.

To purchase merchandise or a copy of 'The Life and Legend of Wiarthon Willie', contact David Haley at (905) 335-2136.

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