

Thornhill and District News

"The Liberal" is always pleased to publish items of interest contributed by its readers in the Thornhill area. Please call Miss Margaret Govan, 14 Deanbank Drive, 889-5372

Socially Speaking In Thornhill

Recreation Committee
The Thornhill Area Recreation Committee has circulated the names of this year's executive: Chairman Glen Rae, Vice-Chairman Byron Ring, Secretary Miss Pat Guppy, Finance Chairman Leonard Ehrlich, Pool Leonard Ehrlich and Byron Ring, Baseball Douglas McMillan, Tennis and Badminton Stanley Finch, Publicity Aric Van Velzen, Public Relations Pete Rossi; Football John Gardner and representing the Lions Tom Jackson.

One person who will be sorely missed is Eric Cole, who died early in January. He was a most public spirited citizen, and from the time he moved to Thornhill, took a very active part. He was a trustee for the Village of Thornhill for five years. For four of those years he had a direct responsibility for the area recreation committee, and served as chairman for one year. He infused enthusiasm and activity in the committee and its work advanced steadily. He originated a pamphlet which gave all the recreational facilities and activities, and the names of persons involved, which was distributed to all households. This was a great source of information, and must have stimulated the activities.

He was also a hard worker on the "old houses" during the Centennial year. Each house in Thornhill which could trace its history for 100 years or more, was entitled to a plaque which named the resident at the time of building, and the date. The house and history was accredited by the trustees. It is most interesting to walk along the older streets in the village, and read these plaques and think about the original owners. So today's residents are very much indebted to Mr. Cole for all his efforts and achievements.

Swimming Pool
The Thornhill Swimming Pool is almost ready for total action. On Thursday of last week during the heat wave, it looked very inviting, although Sheena Ashworth and Lorraine Cole, this year's assistant managers, assured me that the temperature was still only 65 and that I wouldn't enjoy it. The small pool, three feet deep at its deepest, had big cartoon figures in bright colors, painted on the bottom. Paul Moore, a first year college of art student and one of the pool instructors had sketched the outlines and supervised their painting. No child could resist a pool like that.

Officially the pool will be open June 5. From June 7-21 the grades 3 in Thornhill are (both Markham and Vaughan) Jack Manning, followed at some distance by Mrs. Marion Jarvis, Doris and Murray Smith, and Mrs. Anne Kilham.

Fine prize-winning exhibits were also entered by Dorothy and Bruce Stewart, Mrs. Millie Whatley, Mrs. Margaret Riley, Elsie and John King, Mrs. Vera Hairs, Mrs. Kay Qually, Mrs. Phyllis Bishop, Mrs. Claire Ward, Irene and Rezin Steele and William Cocker.

In the decorative design section, colorful, imaginative and unusual arrangements were a delight. The winners for each theme, were, in order: Tenderly—twelve pansies—Elsie and John King, Mrs. Doris Butterworth, Mrs. Millie Whatley. Over The Rainbow—featuring tulips—Mrs. Anne Kilham, Mrs. Millie Whatley, Mrs. Mabel Mizen. We Three—a miniature—Elsie and John King, Dorothy and Bruce Stewart, Mrs. Anne Kilham, Dorothy and Bruce Stewart, Mrs. Kay Qually, Black Forest—using stone, wood etc.—Doris and Murray Smith, Mrs. Doris Butterworth, Mrs. Vera Hairs.

The vegetable section had fewer entries than usual being confined largely to asparagus, rhubarb, and green onions. The winners here were Norm Lightfoot, Murray Smith, the Stewart, and Ralph Whatley. A new senior exhibitor was welcomed in the person of Beth Kilham who won first prize for her interpretation of "Mary Poppins", using spring flowers in a basket.

The speaker of the evening was Robert Fleming who is in charge of the research institute at Vineland. His subject was "Nut Trees as Ornamentals." He mentioned a number of nut trees such as black walnut, butternut, pecan, hazel and hickory which have some defects as ornamentals for the average homeowner. He was quite enthusiastic, however, about a hybrid sweet chestnut which is being developed at Vineland. This is the result of a cross between our native sweet chestnut and foreign strains, which appears to be resistant to the blight which killed off practically all our native trees. It is a good grower, not too tall, and a good producer of high quality nuts. Some slides of high trees were shown, and a number of trees in pots were distributed to members for trial. The thanks of the society were expressed by Rezin Steele.

If there is a demand. Lessons for local children are \$7.50 for a series, with a dollar reduction for each additional child in the family. Non-locals pay slightly more.

There will also be clubs: water polo, speed swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and adult lessons. Scuba diving has been added for the first time. During the summer the pool will be open from 2:30-6 pm, and 7-9 pm on weekdays, longer on Sundays. Season and family tickets are available. The pool has an interesting personnel policy. As children grow up and learn to swim at the pool, they can apply for jobs; these jobs follow a definite order. First the new employee must work as dressing room attendants. This year's will be: Lynn Walker, Lisha Vanleuven, Cam Gourlay, and Sean Hinds. Maintenance men are Jeff Gourlay, Paul Woolnough, and Glen Chapman. Pam Whitehead will work at the tuck shop. If the work has been satisfactory and the young people have the required swimming and first aid tests, they may become instructors and life guards. This summer there will be Paul Moore, Jim Davis, Sheila Moore, Ann Moore, Bev Smith, Lisa Tribner, Linda Harris, Tim Bean, Pam Fox, and Claire Tucker as assistant instructors. Sheena Ashworth (who works at another pool during the winter months), and Lorraine Cole have come to their positions by this route. Everybody knows everyone else and their capabilities. Frank Tucker, the manager, has known them all through the years. A great organization.

Last year the attendance showed a large increase on the previous year; this year the same is expected, more children than ever. So everybody is looking forward to a busy and satisfying experience for the summer months.

Horticultural Society
The May Flower and Vegetable Show of the horticultural society turned out to be almost an exact duplicate of last year's show. Both followed two days of about 80 degree heat; both saw the daffodils all but over; both saw tulips suffering somewhat from the brilliant sun; and both had almost the same number of entries. With the exception of a real scarcity of narcissi and daffodils, the quantity and quality of bloom in other classes was very good.

Mrs. Anne Kilham won the prize for the best specimen in the show and also the prize for best arrangement. Queen of the floral specimens section top points were won by Mrs. Manning, followed at some distance by Mrs. Marion Jarvis, Doris and Murray Smith, and Mrs. Anne Kilham.

There were two social luncheon meetings. At the first the speaker, the assistant librarian of the beautiful Halifax library, recounted historical tales of Nova Scotia. She said she had been asked to give a complete history of the province in 25 minutes, but thought this would be a better choice. It proved to be an excellent one. Rev. Father David Hartny of the Anglican Cathedral, president of the association, gave stories of some of his experiences; he is a marvelous humorist.

Halifax itself, in spite of it being the wrong time of year from a climate-wise point of view, is a wonderful city for meetings. You step back into a part of Canada that is more than twice as old historically, as Thornhill! The citadel looms over the city, the old houses and the parliament buildings and churches are fascinating. There are new buildings too, amongst them the new museum, a delightful place, and although the powers that be are still in the process of putting up the exhibits, a visit there was most worthwhile.

And the ocean of course! The nearest we got to it was a seven minute ferry trip across to Dartmouth and back again. Also the eating of some of its products! Such good eating places, full of atmosphere, Miss Govan managed a night at the Neptune Theatre. It's called the Neptune in honor of the first pageant in Canada at which King Neptune officiated—and saw the Fantastics produced by Allan Lund. It was exceptionally good theatre. Gordon Lightfoot was in town too. Delegates also worked, very hard, she reports.

ed the society's appreciation for all the hard work ably done. Mrs. Moore gave Mrs. Shields two delightful, enamelled pins of butterflies.

Before Dr. Howden called for the nominations, he spoke of the team work that went on within the church, and of the efforts of the ACW. Their work was a demonstration of the shared ministry.

Mrs. Moore presented the slate of officers for the committee. (Mrs. Howden was chairman of the nominating committee). Honorary President is Mrs. Howden, Past President Mrs. Pat Shields, President Mrs. Helen Robinson (It is worth mentioning that the Robinson family have lived in this area and been members of Holy Trinity Church for more than a century).

1st Vice-President in abeyance for the time being, 2nd Vice-President Mrs. Vivian Whyte, Secretary Mrs. Betty Richardson, Treasurer Mrs. Louise Davie, Hospitality Mrs. Beryl Turner, Mrs. Mable Harley, Ways and Means Mrs. Margaret Bellerser, Housekeeping Mrs. Olive St. John, Publicity Mrs. Marge Slaucenwhite.

A dignified and inspirational installation followed the election of these people, with Canon Howden officiating. There was a motion of thanks tendered to the past executive. Mrs. Robinson took the chair, and made a delightful little speech.

Coffee and dessert was served, and the ladies settled down again to be entertained and informed by Mrs. Gail Bailey of the Pot Pourri (two stores in the Sherway and Fairview Malls). The goods on sale are the latest in kitchen gadgets and equipment. Mrs. Bailey and her sister had brought along a great supply of knives, specialized tools from pineapple corers, cherry pitters, to a complete set of tools, as well as other needs. There were bowls, pots, and a Chinese frying pan, an egg codder, ad infinitum. There were demonstrations, a great many practical cooking ideas, and suggestions for exotic and highly professional looking party fare. This was all done in an informal and easy manner.

Kitchens will be colorful, and quite as well equipped as a carpenter's tool room. There will be no more make do's for the women of today. It was great fun.

Public Library
The library would like to remind artists (crafts included) in this neighborhood, that application forms for those wishing to exhibit in the library are now available. You may pick one up, fill it out and return it to the library. The citizens of Thornhill find these showings very interesting. Book lists have been prepared on books on the occult and gardening. The former is a Thornhill list; the other is books in the Markham area libraries, and a code explains where each book is available. The lists are in sufficient numbers for everybody to obtain one.

A number of books in extra large print have been added to the shelves. These new books are not extra large as some of the former have been; just the usual size and much more convenient for handling.

Church News
The inaugural meeting of the women of the church at Christ the King Lutheran took place on the evening of May 18. Mrs. Gisela Neitzert was in the chair on this occasion. The first business was the elections. The executive is as follows: President Mrs. Kathy Weigle, Vice-President Mrs. Jean Zurovski, Treasurer Mrs. Grace Nikolaus, Secretary Mrs. Linda Atkinson, Program Mrs. Neitzert, Projects Mrs. Prisca Kenel, and Social Convener Mrs. Ruth Ketter.

The installation is scheduled for the next meeting, to be held in September. The sum of \$395 was presented to the church for the purchase of a piano. There was a general discussion of the goals, and the women's responsibility towards their community.

Refreshments were served by Mrs. Mary Pavlik. The meeting broke up in time for people to hurry home for the final minutes of the Stanley Cup game! The annual meeting of the Anglican Church Women of Holy Trinity Church was held May 18. There was an excellent attendance in spite of other meetings, etc. Mrs. Pat Shields presided. Canon Reginald Howden led in prayer. Treasurer Mrs. Louise Davie reported that the sum (total of the monies raised by the various groups was \$4843 during the calendar year. She also listed the bequests.

Canon Howden was called upon to preside over the elections. First he asked Mrs. Claire Moore and Mrs. June Hunter to make a presentation to Mrs. Shields. Mrs. Hunter read an amusing poem which, in spite of being so lighthearted, conveyed

the society's appreciation for all the hard work ably done. Mrs. Moore gave Mrs. Shields two delightful, enamelled pins of butterflies.

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(Photo by Stuart's Studio)

Hidden behind the Willowdale Post Office on Yonge Street south of Finch Avenue, the 120-year-old house of pioneer surveyors and Rebel David Gibson, will be officially opened as a museum on June 6.

The house will be open to visitors daily after the official ceremonies, and approval has been given by the North York Council for the addition of a display wing. A Metro firm, Simms Construction Company Limited, has been awarded the \$50,700 contract.

Pioneer Museum In Willowdale Ready For June Opening

BY MARGARET LADE

North York's first museum, the historic Gibson House on Yonge Street, will be officially opened June 6, a moment of victory for the North York Historical Society and hundreds of others who have been struggling for years to achieve this end.

The spacious old house, which stands directly behind the Willowdale Post Office at 5172 Yonge Street, between Finch and Sheppard Avenues, was built of timbers hewn on the 105-acre farm of pioneer surveyor David Gibson, and bricks fired in a nearby kiln following the return in 1849 of the Gibson family from exile in the United States.

The house was completed in 1851 and housed the Gibsons and their seven children, Elizabeth, James, William, Peter, Margaret, George and Mary, as well as apprentices training to be surveyors, two hired men and a constant flow of visitors. In the past eight years it has been restored and furnished as it would have been in 1851, and costumed hosts and hostesses will be on hand to welcome visitors and demonstrate crafts and skills as they were performed by members of the Gibson household and their neighbors.

The official opening will be at 3 pm June 6, and the house will be open until 7 pm. Regular hours will be observed from then on: 9:30 am to 5 pm weekdays and noon to 5 pm Sundays, with admission charge 50c for adults and 25c for children. Although only the house itself will be ready next month, at a meeting May 10, North York Council approved the addition of a display wing where other historic artifacts will be shown. The addition will also house meeting rooms and washrooms, and cost is estimated at about \$50,700.

REBELLION ERUPTS
The story of the Gibson family is as fascinating as the house itself. David Gibson was born in 1804 in Forfarshire, Scotland, and died suddenly while on a business trip to Quebec City in 1864. He came to Canada in 1825.

Lights Keep Going On In Vaughan Council Debentures For \$150,000
Vaughan Town will issue \$150,000 in debentures for a portion of its \$600,000 hydro purposes this year. The money will go toward construction of extensions and improvements to the electrical distribution (poles, lines, etc.) and street lighting systems in the municipality. These will consist of planned construction of a hydro substation in the Woodbridge area, overhead distribution lines, underground distribution lines, transformers, meters, water heaters, sentinel lights and equipment. Vaughan had previously provided for the issuing of \$150,000 in debentures in its five year forecast for 1971 for hydro purposes. The provincial commission was advised and approved the decision. The debenture will be repayable over a term not exceeding 10 years and be handled through York Regional Council.

Vaughan Hydro Manager Stan Greenwood said that some \$19,000 of the \$600,000 was allocated for the placing or replacement of street lights in the old Township of Vaughan area as well as the Thornhill, Kleinburg and Nashville regions. An additional \$8,000 had been slated for completion of lighting systems in that portion of old Vaughan which is now Richmond Hill lying north of Oxford Street.

and lived for a year in Quebec, but did not like it there. So he travelled by foot and by stage to his uncle's home at Milne's Mills in Markham Township.

In 1829 he bought 105 acres in North York for 400 pounds, and from 1834 to 36 representation of North York in the Parliament of Upper Canada.

He was a close friend of Liberal Reformer William Lyon Mackenzie. In April 1835 Gibson was appointed chairman of a select committee of the House of Assembly which petitioned for payment of the balance of expenses for Mr. Mackenzie's fruitless mission to London, England, as agent for 24,500 petitioners to the crown who were at odds with the Tory establishment, known as the "Family Compact".

During the uprising of 1837, David Gibson was in charge of prisoners at Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street, north of Eglinton Avenue. The prisoners were released when Tory forces serving under Sir Francis Bond Head set fire to the inn.

FAMILY SURVIVE
On the same night Mr. Gibson's frame house was set afire by Tory sympathizers and his wife and four children were given shelter in the nearest house—residence of the local minister. In escaping the fire, Mrs. Gibson threw one of her four children and a valued clock over a fence. The clock still survives. Mr. Gibson fled to friends in Oshawa and hid in a haystack for about five weeks before crossing in an open boat to New York State.

Many of his colleagues were imprisoned and David was indicted for high treason with a price of 500 pounds on his head, but his reputation as an engineer and surveyor followed him across the border, and he was employed in the building of the Erie Canal. Mrs. Gibson and his family joined him and they lived in Lockport, New York for a time, then moved to a farm at Hickory Corners in the same state.

EXILES RETURN
Although he was pardoned in 1843, David continued to live and work in the United States until 1849, when he commissioned his friend and neighbor, Jacob Cummer, to build the new house. In 1963 North York Council bought the house for \$1 million from Cadillac Development Corporation as part of the deal when land to the north of the house was rezoned for the Park Willow high-rise apartments. The understanding was that the house and surrounding property, directly behind Willowdale Post Office, would become a township museum and park. The township had made the deal with Cadillac on the advice of Thornhill Architect Napier Simpson Jr., an authority on historical buildings. The receipt of the day, Norman Goodhead, said Mr. Simpson in an interview with "The Liberal", wanted to preserve a place for museum purposes. Mr. Simpson could find only two houses in the township that were large enough and of national as well as local historical significance: The Gibson House, and the home of former Premier George Henry at Oriole. He

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RESTORATION BEGINS
The North York Historical Society threw its full support behind the project and under Mr. Simpson's guidance \$6,000 was spent in stripping the interior of the house, restoring fireplaces and installing concealed wiring and heating. On May 1, 1967, the historical rooms and meeting rooms.

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