

# Historic Masonic Scrolls On Display At Doors Open

By Jill McWhinnie

A section of the Dowling Scrolls, a treasured 130-year-old Masonic artifact, will be on rare public display June 7 at the Masonic Hall on the Ninth Line when the Richardson Masonic Lodge welcomes visitors attending Doors Open.

The scrolls, painted by Rev. James Dowling between 1871 and 1878, depict Old Testament Biblical locations. They are an impressive work of art, measuring six feet high and 400 feet long. During Doors Open, Masons will also share information about the history of lodge and the significance of the pictures, icons and symbols on display.

The Richardson Lodge was established in 1860 in Cashel (Kennedy Rd. and Elgin Mills), moving to Main St., Stouffville in 1866. In the days before street lighting and cars, lodges in rural areas such as Stouffville became known as "Moon Lodges" because they held meetings near the full moon so that members travelling by carriage, or on foot or horseback, would have their way lit by moonlight.

"My grandfather was initiated in 1906," said Ken Prentice, current master of the lodge and a third generation Mason. "He lived at Steeles and Kennedy and would come here to meetings by horse and buggy in summer and cutter in the winter. He would leave a brick by the woodstove during the meeting to warm his feet for the return trip."

Meetings enabled "men of all walks of life - farmers, doctors, lawyers, merchants - to meet and learn from each other," said lodge historian Bill Sanders. "It was like night school. It gave those with less formal education an opportunity to learn leadership skills, how to run meetings, to study business practices and become more well rounded. But whatever their occupation, members met on the level, an important concept in Masonry. Membership was about character, not position."

The lodge occupied two locations on Main St. before moving to the Ninth Line, where sod was turned for the new building in June 1954. Art Weldon, a past master of the lodge and downtown business owner, was a driving force in the building's construction.

Morley Symes, an active Mason and local builder, provided the plans. As he had constructed many area barns, this expertise was applied to the needs of the lodge for an open plan without pillars, to accommodate banquets on the main

floor and meetings on the second floor.

The building was constructed by "volunteer labour and perseverance," recalled Harry Schell who, along with fellow Masons Ted Cadieux and Ken Wagg, transported tons of cement block from the supplier in Pine Orchard. For several weeks after work, the three would take Harry's lumber truck to the supplier and return to the building site "hand bombing the block off the truck."

"Some nights we'd be drawing block back to town at midnight to be sure it would be ready for the next day," recalled Ted Cadieux. "My job was to mix the mortar and have the block ready to go for 7 a.m. I'd go to the site first thing in the morning, go home for a quick lunch, then come back and continue mixing mortar."

The Herculean task of installing the four huge steel beams which support the second floor was accomplished by sheer muscle power. Fifty men lifted the 42 foot beams up 10 feet, a foot or two at a time, aided by a ramp constructed by Morley Symes. "Nowadays that would be done by a crane," said Harry Schell.

The hall opened officially on June 2, 1955. Earl Thompson's father, Stan, was a Mason who had laid much of the cement block of the building. "My sister Kathleen's wedding reception in June 1955 was the first public function there," recalled Earl, also a Mason. "We have a picture of Kathleen and her husband walking on planks up to the front door."

The hall has been the site of many community functions since it opened and Bill Sanders noted that many non-Masons in Town participated in its construction. "It was a real community affair. Doors Open will give Masons in Stouffville a good chance to say 'this is who we are, this is what we do.' (It) will also be the kickoff of preparations for the Richardson Lodge's 150th anniversary, coming up in June 2010."

For more information visit [www.richardsonlodge.ca](http://www.richardsonlodge.ca).

## Donation Honours Tradition Of Inclusiveness

By Jill McWhinnie

On June 7 at 2 p.m. during Doors Open, the Goodman Foundation will present a donation to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, a charity supported by the Masonic Toronto York District, of which Richardson Lodge is a member.

The donation is in recognition of the warm welcome extended by the Lodge to members of the Jewish community during the 1930s, at a time when Canada was not as tolerant to all faiths and cultures as it is today. In 1936, a member of the area's Jewish community, Joseph Borinsky, served as Master of the Richardson Lodge. Mr. Borinsky, who later shortened the family surname to Borins, also operated the Stouffville Creamery.

"Masonry is non-denominational," said Ken Prentice. "All faiths are welcome here. When a man is initiated into the Lodge his own book of faith is used."



Ramblin' Ruth

By Ruth LeBlanc

Scattered is a term I will confess to being.

In my own unorganized way I am organized, if that makes any sense. Losing things and finding things has become a lifelong hobby and habit. Maybe it is the challenge of finding the impossible in a life filled with the impossible that makes the game even more appealing to me.

It could be worse. I could gamble or waste time and money on a multitude of sins, but I save my wild, repressed side for living on the edge, losing and then finding things.

Keys have always been a problem for me until I tied a red ribbon to the ring and now that issue has been resolved. The newest key problem is locking myself out of the house with the keys sitting on the coffee table in plain view of the front door as I stare red-faced, willing them into my empty hand.

The other day I was rushing out the door, late for an appointment, and as I slammed it shut I looked down and realized I had locked the keys to everything in my life inside the house. Not being the most mature of beings, I stomped my high heeled foot and with Buddha like coolness took a deep breath and told myself that where there's a will there's a way.

That said, I mumbled incoherently under my breath when I realized that every door and window giving access into the place was locked, bolted or totally inaccessible. I could have called a locksmith to come and open the front door, but I decided that I would save the cash along with my pride and find a way inside.

My little dog Hankie was barking frantically as I tried every window and door hoping for a bit of good luck. Naturally there was no way into the house and, as I felt my resolve leave me, I spotted a slight crack in the bedroom window.

This, I decided, would be the route to

victory and that set of keys in the living room. The next problem arose when I pulled a ladder across the lawn and stood it against the roof. Gingerly I put my first foot on the rung and started my climb up, never looking at the ground below.

Swinging my legs down I walked on the shingles to the window and began to figure out how to remove the screen. Not finding a solution, I did what came naturally as I used my fingernails to start tearing and pulling the mesh fabric until I had destroyed the whole screen, thereby creating my access route.

Heights are not one of my strong suits and as I looked from my jumping point on the roof to the bedroom floor it seemed very intimidating and a very long drop. Maneuvering into a sitting position on the window ledge, with my feet dangling inside the bedroom, I contemplated the situation.

Meanwhile, Hankie was now frantic while Floyd D. Cat awoke from his comfy spot on the bed only to stare wide-eyed and hissing as I sat in the window yelling at the dog to quiet down. Stretching my legs I tried to lift my butt and fling my body onto the bed from the windowsill. In mid-flight I realized this was not going to work, so I held onto the window frame and found my safety zone back on the sill.

Now you would think I was climbing Mount Everest, when in reality and hindsight the leap was not that monumental. Yet perched on that windowsill I felt miles up in the sky. High heels flung inside, I bravely jumped in myself and rolled on the floor, missing a stunned Hankie, who looked more perplexed than I felt.

With my mission accomplished, a certain smugness filled me as I collected my shoes and my keys and headed once again out the door. Life on the edge took on a new meaning that day and the flapping screen is a reminder that maybe another set of keys might not be a bad idea.

**THE Fickle Pickle**  
**RESTAURANT & DELI**  
**BACK RIB SPECIAL**  
 for the Month of June  
 Full Rack of Back Ribs **\$17.50**  
**FULLY LICENCED**  
 Open 7 Days a Week • Fast Take Out  
 6302 Main St. • 905-640-5707

PEPPERTREE KLASSICS WELCOMES

## New Summer Arrivals

Mention this ad to receive

**40% Off\* Regular Prices**

All Fashions, Footwear and Accessories

137 Main St., N. Markham

905-294-3882

[www.peppertree.ca](http://www.peppertree.ca)

OPEN 7 DAYS  
 A WEEK AND  
 HOLIDAYS

\*some exceptions may apply