



Rear-view Mirror

Richardson Masonic Lodge Celebrates 150th Anniversary

By Maurice Smith

"Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again." These words have been used as a toast of friendship at the conclusion of meals and meetings for many of the 150 years that the Richardson Masonic Lodge has existed in the Stouffville area.

In the 1860s the intersection of pathways, now known as Elgin Mills (18th Ave) and Kennedy Rd., were known as Crosby Corners after John Crosby, the village's first store owner. Eventually the name was changed to Cashel when its post office and general store were opened in the Llandon Plains Hotel, located on the north-east corner of the intersection.

It was here on June 15, 1860, above the livery stable and barn, that the lodge, which was to become known as Richardson Masonic Lodge, held its first meeting. There a group of rural gentlemen joined an organization which today has become the oldest and largest world wide fraternity dedicated to the Brotherhood of Man.

The lodge was named after Right Worshipful Brother Francis Richardson, a past grand senior warden and grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Canada West. The keeper of the Inn became the first candidate admitted for membership. This newest lodge, which had been organized after members of the Richmond Lodge and Sharon Lodge, from Richmond Hill and Sharon respectively, petitioned the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, to allow them into the organization.

Horseback, horse and buggy or sleigh were the means of transportation in those days and for many it was a difficult trip out to Cashel, especially in winter. In 1866 the meeting place was changed to a building on Main St., Stouffville, across the road from where the post office is currently located. About 10 years later a fire destroyed the building and the lodge moved a little further west on Main St. opposite the clock tower. This meeting place was on the second floor of the location now occupied by Curves for Women.

These rented premises became the meeting place for the Richardson Masonic Lodge for the next 80 years. In 1955 they moved their meetings into the new lodge building constructed at the north-east corner of Ninth Line and Second St.

Many members, after working all day in their respective professions, would congregate at the construction site and, under the watchful eye of local barn builder Morley Symes, tackled the construction of these new premises. Ted Cadieux, Harry Schell and Ken Wagg used the Schell Lumber truck to haul concrete blocks to the site from a block making factory located in Pine Orchard (Vivian Rd. and Kennedy). Once the building was enclosed, other members volunteered their time

to finish the interior of the building.

The head of a lodge is known as the worshipful master. Since the first one, J. Bowman in 1860 through to the current master, William Bower, there have been, as you would expect, a number of special and unique people holding this position at the Richardson Lodge. One of these was a Mohawk Indian chief and physician scholar by the name of Oronhyatekha (pronounced Or-on-ya-tek-ha), an outstanding figure in British colonialism.

In 1861, when he was 20 years old, he was selected to give the welcoming address to the Prince of Wales during one of his visits to what was then Upper Canada. The Prince was sufficiently impressed that he had Oronhyatekha return with him to England and enrol at the University of Oxford.

Graduating from Oxford he returned to Canada, married, and completed his medical degrees at the University of Toronto. Eventually he was elected president of the Grand Council of Canadian Chiefs, the highest ranking native statesman in North America.

Doctor H. B. Freel, whose practice was in his home at the corner of what is now Freel Lane and Main St. and is today the location of the IDA Drug store, served as the master in 1930. Seven members of the different Wagg families, Dean Wagg being the oldest still living past master, have also held this office. Many other prominent Stouffville citizens, including doctors, business owners and politicians, have given generously of their time and talents to further the ideals of this organization.

So to all these gentlemen who have served our community, a toast on your 150th anniversary. May there be many more.

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A Musical Tapestry By Bach To Blues

Bach to Blues will present *A Musical Tapestry* on Sunday, June 6 at 2:30 p.m. at Christ Church Stouffville, 254 Sunset Blvd.

The 90-minute program will include a wide variety of musical styles including classics from Handel and Mendelssohn, swing tunes and contemporary choral arrangements. The choir will welcome guest artists Nicole Strawbridge, a talented young local singer who is studying voice and musical theatre in Toronto, and Spanish tenor Aldo Buzzolini, who will accompany himself on guitar.

Profits from the concert will go to the Mayor's Emergency Fund, which assists those in the Whitchurch-Stouffville community who are in need of financial support. The funds are managed by a committee, and distributed with complete confidentiality and respect

for the beneficiaries.

Advance tickets are \$10 and are available from any choir member. They can also be purchased at the door for \$15, or \$7 for children. Call 905-640-5999 or 905-649-2684 for details.

Christ Church is fully accessible.

"We promise to entertain you, and leave you with a smile on your face and a song in your heart," said choir member Luanne Griffin.



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Mennonite Central Committee website: ontario.mcc.org

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