

## FOCUS ON HERITAGE

Camera Club visits Museum

By Jill McWhinnie

On a very cold (minus 12) Saturday morning in January, the Stouffville Camera Club was given permission to photograph exhibits in three Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum buildings: the Bogartown Schoolhouse, the Brown House and the log cabin.

The outing was arranged by the club's Michael Brisbin and museum curator Stephanie Foley. The photographers took hundreds of pictures, while Stephanie provided expert commentary on the exhibits. The photos will be donated to the museum to enhance display options, as the museum hopes to expand the number of exhibitions taking place there.

The Bogartown Schoolhouse dates from 1857 and is the oldest red brick schoolhouse in Ontario, outside Toronto. Club members focused on elements that defined the one-room school: neat rows of wooden desks, quill pens, inkwells, writing slates and a pot-bellied woodstove.

When asked how today's 'wired' generation reacts to the schoolhouse, museum program coordinator Krista Rauchenstein noted, "Some tell us that they would have loved to have been an early settler, while others say they would never have wanted to have lived during that time. A child on a recent field trip felt that pioneers must have been really smart to do all that they did without the technology that we have today. I think this child's comments underline the importance of preserving these heritage resources for

future generations."

The Brown House, a Victorian farmhouse built in the 1850s, was donated to the museum in 1984 and has been restored to represent a prosperous farmhouse of the 1880s.

Club members captured the patterned oilcloths on the floors, the cozy parlour and elegant dining room furnishings, and the farmhouse kitchen with its massive black iron woodstove, whose pipe extended upwards to provide heat to the second storey of the house, and could be dangerously hot.

I asked Camera Club president Ken Jarvis to share tips for taking 'vintage' shots in historic locations. "I like to use a tripod if allowed and use a small aperture of at least F8 and above to keep everything in focus," he said.

"Natural light is usually the best for good results. Window light adds a lot to a vintage photograph when setting the proper exposure. This will sometimes require setting a manual exposure on the camera. I find most vintage photos should be converted to black and white or sepia to give them that aged appearance."

I asked Krista how local seniors, whose families may have donated artifacts to the museum, respond when doing a tour.

"The seniors who visit the site are pleased to see the local heritage being preserved," she said. "Many people coming here are surprised to see that simple objects from their youth have been preserved. It can spark memories that have been long forgotten."

Seniors connect in a different way than young people, added Stephanie. "The seniors, especially, if they're local, remember things from firsthand experiences. They remember when the Village of Stouffville and the Township of Whitchurch amalgamated. One of our volunteers is going through a set of scrapbooks related to Vandorf that a friend loaned him, and he and his wife are having a great time walking down memory lane."

Are new residents interested in local history? "The challenge for more recent residents is that communities are different now," she said.

"The internet expands boundaries and so connections to the physical place where you live are not necessarily as strong as for people that lived here earlier. Since the opening of the new building on site, the museum has been working to develop new programming - like our summer

Animal Tales preschool programming - to bring in new audiences to the facility and encourage new connections to heritage and their community."

This fall the museum will host a special dinner to honour the bicentennial of the birth of Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, she said, and the menu will be based on the food served at a benefit held for Sir John in 1881.

The club assembled for a group picture in the 16 by 20 foot log cabin. We all imagined how it would feel to spend this frigid winter day in the cabin with only a woodstove or fireplace for heat.

"They didn't go outside a lot in winter; hence the expression cabin fever," said Stephanie. She also pointed out a small tin box hung on the wall, where candles were stored at night. "Early candles were made from animal tallow and provided a tasty treat for the little critters that shared the cabin with the settlers."



This magnificent black iron woodstove in the Brown House kitchen was used for cooking, as well as to provide heat for the entire farmhouse. Ken Jarvis photo

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#### STOUFFVILLE SENIOR OF THE MONTH

JIM AND JOAN DOBLE

Age: Joan is 77 and Jim is 78

**NUMBER OF YEARS IN STOUFFVILLE AREA:**

Jim and Joan bought their property on the Aurora Subd West of McCowan Rd. in 1958, moving there in 1968.

**CAREER:** Jim was a tradesman with the Toronto

Board of Education for 35 years. Joan went to work for Bell Telephone in Toronto at age 16, staying there for 4 years before marrying Jim in 1957 and becoming a stay at home Mom.

**HOBBIES:** Joan, who was Whitchurch-Stouffville Citizen of the Year in 2010, has been involved with the WS Foodbank since it started 22 years ago. She is currently the group's treasurer in charge of stock control. She was the bookkeeper for Emmanuel International for 7 years, and she and Jim made numerous trips with the Stouffville missions organization to Africa. On one trip they helped lay 84 km of water pipeline by hand! Jim, who was a WS Councillor for 4 years in the 1970s, has always been actively involved in politics. He fought to bring OHIP to Ontario and was a campaign organizer for former Ontario NDP leader Stephen Lewis. The Dobles were named Citizens of Character for York Region in 2011.

**FAMILY:** Jim and Joan had 2 sons, Mark and Norman. Norman died 14 years ago. They sponsored two boys from Haiti in 1985, with the young men taking up permanent residence in Canada. Jim and Joan have 2 natural grand kids, with another 5 grand kids from their adopted sons.

**PET PEEVE:** Joan: "Unforgiveness in people"  
 Jim: "People who don't appreciate the struggle that went into Medicare"

**LIFE HI-LITE:** "Being together for 57 years!"

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON THE LOTTERY?** "Pay off our kids' mortgages, and give the rest to the charities we support. We would build a new food bank for Whitchurch-Stouffville."

**IF YOU KNOW A SENIOR THAT IS WORTHY OF SENIOR OF THE MONTH**  
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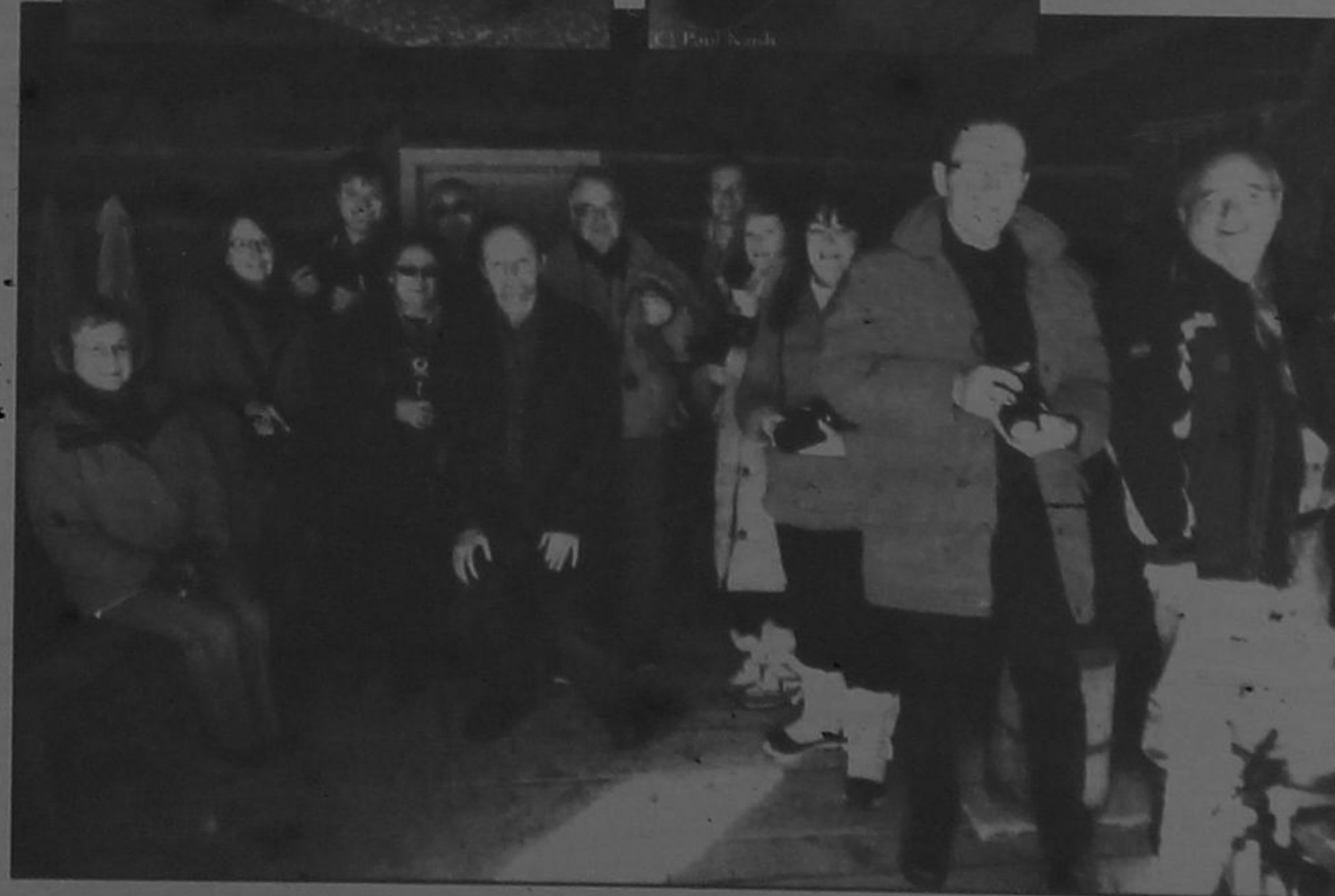
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The Brown House interior captures a prosperous farmhouse of the late 19th century. Helene Zafropoulos photo



A collection of artifacts at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum. Paul Naish photo



Members of the Stouffville Camera Club visited the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum on a bone-chilling day in January. Seen here (left to right): museum curator Stephanie Foley, Helene Zafropoulos, Jason Bedford, Denise Chong, Andrew Chong, Ken Jarvis, Kevin McWhinnie, Michael Brisbin, Kristine Marks, Jill McWhinnie, Jim Brett and Paul Naish. Ken Jarvis photo