

The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common
Vol. 1, No.2, June 19, 1996.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Board of Directors will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 27 in Committee Room 6 at Toronto City Hall. Committee Room 6 is on the second floor in "Council Member Alley".

Geordie Beal will discuss the business plan process being followed to develop the Fort York Business Plan. The Garrison Common Committee and Lynda Macdonald of City Planning will discuss their plans for the Community Workshop.

All members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.

FRIENDS OF FORT YORK TAKE PART IN THE "200 YEARS YONGE" PROGRAMME

One June 8th, Peter Twist organized a dozen re-enactment troops in 1812 uniforms including a small Fife and Drum group, who started their day at Number One Yonge Street where they took part in the opening ceremony for the 200th Anniversary of the founding of Yonge Street. Musket drills were performed for the attending spectators.

After this ceremony, they were driven to the Queen Street entrance to the Toronto Eaton Centre. They marched up the mall, led by the Fife and Drum group, to the South entrance of the Eaton store (Trinity Way).

After a brief introduction by MC Peter Twist, who explained that the parade is part of the celebration of the anniversary, he mentioned that it is only a teaser for what they would see at the Fort York Festival of '97. He introduced Her Worship Mayor Barbara Hall who gave a brief speech about the celebration of the "200 Years Yonge" programme.

Peter Twist thanked the Mayor and the troops performed a brief musket drill. They marched back down the Centre to Queen Street where they dispersed to be driven back to Black Creek Pioneer Village where they assembled.

We hope that this exercise added to the excitement at the Toronto Eaton Centre and as a result, that it generated media coverage.

MEMBERSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

John Barclay reports that the following members have agreed to serve on the Membership and Fundraising Committee:

Richard Dodds
Joe Gill
Mina Kapches

Bronwyn Krog
Murray Philp
George Waters

The Committee has prepared a membership application form. Attached to the newsletter are three copies of the application form to encourage you to seek out your friends who would like to join us in our efforts on behalf of Fort York.

Tentative plans to date include breakfast at the Fort to get acquainted and refresh our memories of some of the elements. Participants would then walk around the Fort to the Armouries where facilities will be available for the all day sessions. A Meeting's Navigator to steer us out of the shoals and the doldrums and keep us in clear water with a fair breeze will be chosen shortly.

The results of the Workshop will be published immediately upon the conclusion of the Workshop.

Staff are presently assembling a list of invited professionals, interest groups, agencies, and committed individuals to seek their participation. All of the Friends of Fort York will be invited to attend.

THE SUMMER GUARD

As was the case last year, we have obtained approval from the Federal government for a grant to pay summer students hired as guards. However, the amount of our grant this year has been cut back to 6 students instead of 10.

This is a disappointment since it inhibits our ability to mount a guard at Fort York throughout the periods when the gates are open.

We are attempting to obtain dispensation toward at least 10 students. Failing that, or some other source of funds, we shall do our best with six.

What has become clear is that we may not be able to rely on government financing for this project in future years. The Membership and Fundraising Committee will be looking at an alternate fund raising programme to make sure we can maintain and expand this important programme.

WHO ARE THE DIRECTORS OF THE FRIENDS?

In our first issue, we indicated that we would provide brief background articles of the members of our Board. Here are the first two:

Don Gibson, Chair, Friends of Fort York

Don is a retired business executive whose career, hobbies and interests cover a wide range. Born in Windsor Ontario, he received his early education there and at the University of Western Ontario Business School. Much of his career was spent in the corporate sector in Toronto where he began in the marketing field and moved eventually to senior management. He held positions of C.E.O. and sat on a number of corporate boards. During that time he was active in professional associations.

While his business career centred in Toronto, Don, his wife Jill and their two children lived in the country east of Toronto. There he was involved with community activities serving as Chair of the Pickering Township Public School Board, as founding vice president of the Pickering Historical Society, on the township's industrial commission and was active in municipal, provincial and federal politics.

Don and his son operated a farm where for many years they raised Angus cattle and grew feed corn as a cash crop. Prior to retiring in 1992 Don and Jill moved to Toronto and also purchased a cotrest of the year.tage on an island in northern Georgian Bay. When not engrossed in the affairs of The Friends of Fort York, during the summer at the cottage, Don indulges other hobbies - carpentry and photography. Its a busy life. He says he may have to go back to work again - the pace of retirement is too hectic.

THE GARRISON COMMON COMMITTEE

Mr. Ian Keith, Chairman of the Garrison Common Committee has reported to the Fife & Drum that 8 members of the Friends of Fort York have all agreed to sit on this Committee. The members are:

Carl Benn
Ian Keith
Cathy Nasmith
Martin Silva

Mike Filey
Rollo Myers
Steve Otto
John Wasteneys

The area of responsibility of the Committee will be developments in the areas surrounding Fort York that are so crucial to the future of the Fort itself. The first project is the "Ideas Workshop" centering on Fort York but dealing also with the land use relationships supporting the Fort in the Bathurst/Strachan area. The Workshop is scheduled for the fall (possibly, September 28) and will be an all-day session. This will be an important day in the life of the Fort so be ready to mark your calendar when the date is confirmed. We don't think there will be any need to bring your "jammies".

FORT YORK FESTIVAL '97 - PROGRAMME SUGGESTIONS

At a recent meeting of the Executive of the Friends of Fort York, a number of ideas for next year's Festival programme were submitted for consideration. Beside the re-enactment, a military band concert/tattoo, musket drills, sword and pistol duels were considered a must.

Other suggestions, over and above the regular Fort Tours, were a display of what life was like for children at the Fort, modeling of military uniforms over the years, clowns in period costume, step dancers, suttlers, a fiddlers' contest, a mouth harp contest, a mouth organ contest, an itinerant preacher, and a balloon man making balloon animals for children.

Demonstrations of candy making, a ferrier (blacksmith), millinery for women's bonnets of the period, a dressmaker, wool spinning, a cobbler/shoemaker with period equipment, and printing in the 1800s were also raised as possible activities.

Suggestions for food and drink included a pancake breakfast and a salmon barbecue, a steer roast, a beer tent, a fund raising dinner, free hot dogs for the children.

Other ideas to add to the event would be a native pow wow with dancing, a naval 10 pounder cannon race, a Friends info-tent, fireworks, other cultural groups i.e. Georgetown Highland Games etc. try to develop a naval presence, a Canadian Legionnaire parade (to get the attention of this large group), asking the ROM to evolve a liaison, military and historical displays, and a display diorama of the Fort in the future with commentary.

We feel there are many more good ideas to help make the Festival '97 a huge success. If anyone can contribute them, they would be very welcome.

THE FORT YORK CHARETTE OR COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The idea of a Workshop was born out of discussions with the City Planners, the Historical Board staff and the Friends of Fort York. As reported earlier there are some great plans occurring around the Fort. The Workshop represents a golden opportunity to synthesize the many diverse interests in this planning district. The Friends represent a substantial body of information and ideas which can contribute positively to the evolution of Fort York.

Joe Gill, Vice-Chair

Joe retired two years ago from Ernst & Young (formerly Clarkson Gordon) where he was a partner specializing in income tax. Prior to becoming a chartered accountant Joe attended U.T.S. and later U of T and the University of Guelph. His career with Clarkson Gordon/Ernst & Young lasted 33 years and included periods in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto. Joe served as a special advisor on income taxes to the Alberta Government and later as a special advisor on tax reform to the Minister of Finance in Ottawa.

Joe's interest in history started early in life (perhaps because his father taught history - as did Don Gibson's father) and so he knew that his retirement would focus in some way on history, particularly the history of Upper Canada. It did not take him long to recognize that the Friends of Fort York was the place for him to be.

Joe's other main interest is the north country and a cottage at Bolger Lake north of Parry Sound. Joe and Jane together with Joe's three children Andrew, Sara and Tania and Jane's son Shane seek out as much canoeing, fishing and snowmobiling as possible. That, along with the building projects that are always part of cottage life, fills much of the summer and a number of weeks the rest of the year.