



Some Figures and Facts:

Students attended the schoolhouse:

March 231
April 110

From the Chair

On May 19th, the “Friends” held a party for Eva Ardiel. The theme was Celebrating Eva. A sundial was erected on the north garden site. Eva was very surprised, as the secret was well kept by all.

Best Wishes to Ben Madill as he celebrated his 90th birthday, with an “open house” on Sunday the 29th.

We traveled to Lang Pioneer Village, Peterborough on April 25th for a SLATE (So let’s all talk education) Conference. It was decided we would all like to go back to the Village in the summer months.

The Strawberry Social is to be held on June 28th. Always a crowd pleaser, a great fundraising project for the Friends of The Schoolhouse

We will be at City Hall again this year for Canada Day, July 1st. See you in September, for Doors Open September 17th & 18th.

Lifelong Learning

Over the last few years many of you may have come to expect a certain type of article found in the newsletter and will notice some slight diversions in this one. There are articles from past days that may bring a smile to your lips and there is an article about the annual SLATE Conference. There is an article about the party held at the schoolhouse to honour Eva Ardiel’s long time commitment. There is also an article from one of the members of the executive, Brian Holstein, about part of his recent eighty-six day travel throughout the Pacific area. As time marches on our interests expand and we try to share them with you. The only regret is that there is not enough space to share all of the pictures that go with these articles. So please enjoy.

This newsletter is published by the *Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter and Spring, in an effort to inform its membership, and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of its activities and events.

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Children of the Hill Tribes

While we were in northern Thailand we made arrangements to make an out of the ordinary visit. We had climbed out of Chaing Mai in the comfort of a mini van – just the two of us along with Peter and the driver. At a hillside temple we changed vehicles for the rest of the trip: a bone-jarring, teeth-rattling and bum-bouncing trek by truck into the mountains. We were going to visit a hill tribe.

Preparations had been made for this trip. On the day prior we had shopped, with the help of Peter, for supplies of notebooks, pencils, erasers and pencil crayons. It was our intention to visit the school and present these materials to the teachers. Friends, former teachers, in Guelph had made a similar trip the year before and had been overwhelmed by the gratitude after these sorely needed materials were given. Similarly, we wanted to “help out”.

Approaching the village Peter nonchalantly informed us that there was no school today. Before our hearts sank too far he went on to explain that this was the monks’ New Year and we would be witness to a festival.

And what a festival that was! Instead of seeing normally clad students in their classrooms we were amongst these children, all dressed in the most glorious beaded hats and dresses, all playing simple and traditional games on the village playing field: simple tossing of a special ball from child to child; gentle games of catch, all the while being very attentive to the very young. No one was trying to be a winner. The games were being played for the fun of it.

The children were accustomed to tourists coming to their village, but we found that very few visitors had had the opportunity to see this magnificent display of traditional dress - clothes that jingled as the children walked or ran. We felt that we had stepped into the pages of a National Geographic as we wandered amongst them, as they showed us their costumes. We were part of a proud people, a people that have been convinced by their king that the growing of cabbage, carrots and radishes is far more honorable than the raising of their previous crops – opium.

And yes, we eventually found some of the teachers. Yes, they were extremely grateful for the extra materials, and yes, they immediately wrote the address of the school in case we decided to send more materials.

A few days later we were taken on an elephant for an hour’s trip further into the mountains. A further hour in a long-tail boat had us at another unbelievable site. We were at a village of the Karin: hill tribes from both sides of the Thai and Burmese borders, but gathered here to escape the fighting on the Burmese side. This was the village of the long-neck women. If we had thought earlier that we had stepped into a National

Geographic, then that thought was eclipsed as we wandered up the hill, past these women who invited us to take their photos and then buy their wares: mainly postcards but also scarves that they had woven. We found ourselves in a surreal environment: these people actually do exist, and we were amongst them.

The Karin school was a surprise. Open-sided classes were to be expected, given the climate. Yet there on one blackboard, in English, were arithmetic problems: *14 chickens for 7 families; 27 eggs for 3 farmers*, and so on. In another, the spelling words were interesting: *motor, chair, mouth, radio*. (Later, in a home, we found a chart titled “Infinitive, Past, Simple” with such examples as “*forgive, forgave, forgiven*”. Why this was in a home – why it was in the village – was a mystery).

We were approached by one young pupil who, in quite acceptable English, asked us where we were from. When we told him “Canada”, he immediately found an atlas – an English atlas – and found Canada, where, he told us, there is lots of snow and icebergs!

A few girls in the school were already wearing the neck rings. Only the few females born on the Wednesday of a new moon are offered this fashion. The first set of rings was, by comparison, small, but more are added with maturity until five kilograms of rings are in place. The rings, incidentally, do not stretch the neck. Rather they suppress the shoulder blades giving the appearance of elongation.

We encountered other children in Thailand, and at other stops along the way, but the children of those two villages stole our hearts. Untouched by much of the outside world, steeped in tradition, they were of a gentler time – a time that must not be violated by modern trappings.

We are going back to Thailand. Whenever we do we will be heading to the north, stashing greater quantities of school supplies and enduring whatever it takes to get to these tribes.

And we might even visit on their New Year.

Brian Holstein.



HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN! SCHOOLS OPEN NEXT TUESDAY

By Joan Reid

Yes boys and girls, that's the glad news. Your summer holidays are about to come to a close. Schools, both Public and High, will re-open next Tuesday. For many weeks now you have been running around half-clothed, enduring the terrible tortures of cool grass and warm earth on your bare feet. You have been suffering the agonies of a most irresponsible and very irregular life.

At lunch time you were probably down at the old swimmin' hole, still hungry because you couldn't get up in time for breakfast. And at dinner time you were probably trying to catch a fish with which to allay the pangs of hunger. Ah, holidays! Cruel holidays.

Heartless Holidays! You have taken our kids and tanned them brown as Indians, with

the merciless rays of the summer sun. You have worn the seat out of their breeches, and left the need of patches on elbows and knees. You have put a saucy sparkle in the eyes of our kids and you have demoralized the regular routine of their lives. Holidays, be-gone!

Yes kids, those hard times are over now, and next Tuesday the happy, care-free school days will be here again. What a joy 'twill be for you to gather together your well-beloved schoolbooks, your nice new scribblers, pencils and erasers, and hie yourselves away merrily to the bright, cheerful room of study, there to be joyfully greeted by your kind and loving teacher. So interested will you be that Christmas time will come all too soon!

Happy days are here again?

Editorial from The Port Credit News – August 26,

For Your Calendar:

June

28 Strawberry Social in the Atrium of the Board Offices from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm

July

1 Canada Day Display at Mississauga Square One

10 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

August

14 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

SLATE CONFERENCE 2005

By George Christian

A wet, rainy day did not inhibit eight members of the Friends of the Schoolhouse and schoolmistress, Melissa Jacobs, from attending the SLATE conference on Monday April 25. This year's event was capably hosted by the Lang Pioneer Village Museum (10 minutes east of Peterborough). This Year's theme was "Food for Thought Program Diversity" and was organized around three informative sessions, for three different groups.

One session was "Mixing It Up; Indirect Curriculum Links" and was presented by Sarah Ehmka, Lang's Education Program Coordinator. She talked about the social programs offered at Lang and strategies for developing new programs for a variety of grade levels. This was held in South Lake School – a one room 1886 Schoolhouse which contains 14 useable two-seater desks, slates, two blackboards, an abacus, and a hand held bell. There was a morning break with a variety of refreshments.

The second session involved Audrey Caryi, Lang's Exhibit Artist who discussed

"Leftovers: Reinventing Your Research". While in the Gallery, she told us how to reinterpret research into outreach and off-site programs aimed at adults and the general public. We also enjoyed a very delicious lunch served by a local caterer while we were in the Gallery.

The third session was "Our Daily Bread: From Mill to Meal" and was presented by Dorothy Duncan, author, lecturer, former Executive Director of The Ontario Historical Society, and 2003 Order of Ontario recipient. She discussed the importance of bread as food, medicine, and in folklore. This session also included a tour of their 1846 Grist Mill.

After these sessions, there was a guided tour of Lang Pioneer Village for all fifty delegates.

The day wrapped up with the SLATE annual meeting and plans for the next two conferences. In 2006, SLATE will be held at St. John's School in Wel-land and in 2007 in Amherst, New York. This annual conference gives an excellent opportunity for delegates to share their one room historic schools.



George Christian at the SLATE Conference at Lang Pioneer Village. George has been so handy lately what with freeing stuck windows that the motto around appears to be, if you need help, Let George do it!



Some of our members at the recent SLATE Conference



The Friends recently purchased a Penny Farthing Bicycle kit. Here we see Ben Madill who assembled it and also tested it!

*Need to speak to the
School?*



The Old Britannia Schoolhouse can be contacted directly, by dialing

905 890 1010, ext. 2911



Frances looks on as Eva cuts the cake at her recent celebration.

Heritage Mississauga

can be accessed on the internet at:

<http://www.city.mississauga.on.ca/heritage/>

*We are on the web at
www.britanniaschoolhouse.org*

The Friends of the Schoolhouse wish to thank the following for their support:

Kevin Doran
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Eva's Celebration

On Sunday afternoon May 15 the Friends of the Schoolhouse recognized Eva Ardiel's many contributions to the Friends and the Old Britannia Schoolhouse. Eighty friends and family gathered to thank Eva and to enjoy an afternoon of reminiscence and afternoon tea. Although Eva knew of the party in her honour there were still some surprises. An antique Rolls Royce Bentley that had once been owned by the Queen picked her up at her home and drove her to the schoolhouse. She commented that she wasn't sure she had "the wave" just right as she drove by her curious neighbours. More surprises awaited her when she arrived. There were friends she hadn't seen in a number of years. Eva had been wondering about some strange events in the past weeks, such as a backhoe arriving just before the May meeting of the Friends core group and proceeding to dig a hole near the Victorian garden. However it was apparent that the sundial presented to her was a complete surprise.

Several speakers paid tribute to Eva's contributions. Frances Kay, Chair of the Friends of the Schoolhouse, read a poem she had written about Eva. Beryl Ford, trustee for the Peel District School Board, remembered Eva's "relentless" advocating to have the school program reinstated following the closure caused by budget constraints. Beryl Ford commended Eva for her creative, positive suggestions for re-establishing the program. Henry Vander Griendt, Dennis Taylor and Ben

Madill recalled many other contributions Eva has made over the years. Ben reminded us of the importance of keeping the old traditions alive and had us all sing "School Days". Following the tributes everyone went outside to the area near the Teachers' Arbour and the Victorian Garden where Cathy Harper presented The Eva Ardiel Sundial to Eva. The formal part of the afternoon concluded in the schoolhouse with the presentation of Volume 2 of the Britannia Scrapbook prepared by Joan Reid and dedicated to Eva and the gift of a small personal Aquitaine pendant sundial for Eva to keep.

In her comments thanking everyone for the gifts and the wonderful celebration Eva assured us that she intends to keep up her efforts to support and promote the schoolhouse and its activities. We were all very relieved to hear that. It was the end to a perfect afternoon.



Inscription on the Eva Ardiel Sundial

Language Blunders

Submitted by Eva Ardiel

The following was a clipping found in an old schoolbook and was submitted because of the humour it evokes.

ON THE OTHER HAND these gems culled by the Edisto Citizen (Ga), and reprinted by the editor and publisher, and in turn by us, indicate how badly the language can be handled if you put your mind to it.

WANTED: A man to take care of horses who can speak German.

WANTED: A dog by a little boy with pointed ears.

WANTED: A nice young man to run a pool room out of town.

WANTED: A room for two young gentlemen about 30 feet long and 30 feet broad.

WANTED: A saleslady to work in cor-sets.

WANTED: A boy who can open oys-ters with a reference.

WANTED: A boy to work inside and partly outside the counter.

FOR SALE: A large, nice dog. Will eat anything. Very fond of children.

FOR SALE: A piano by a young lady with mahogany legs who is going abroad in a strong iron frame.

FOR SALE: A baby carriage. Reason for selling, am going out of business.



Some of the pictures at Eva's celebration. Note Eva arriving in style, certainly not Shank's Mare. Eva at the sundial and Ben Madill speaking at the celebration.