

WATERLOO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Reports
110TH (2021-2022) and 111TH (2022-2023)
Tuesday November 7th, 2023, 7:30 PM
Victoria Park Pavilion
80 Schneider Avenue, Kitchener, Ontario

Membership Report, Mary Anne Banks

We currently have 165 members and would like to welcome our new members and thank our returning members for their continued support. Our membership year runs from Oct 1 to Sept 30, and we are continuing to receive renewals for the year beginning Oct 1, 2023. Just a reminder to current members as well as those considering membership, Waterloo Historical Society membership entitles you to participate in all of the activities of the society; voting rights at the annual general meeting; 10% off the price of most used books from the book table at meetings; 25% off admission to the Waterloo Region Museum; access to our public meetings each year featuring guest speakers; a subscription to the society newsletter; a copy of the society's award winning annual volume; and a chance to network with like-minded local history enthusiasts. An adult membership is \$30, and a student membership is \$15.

Communications Committee Report, Lesley Webb

The Communications Committee promotes the Society and its activities. With the return of public meetings, news releases were sent out to local newspapers and meeting details were posted on community calendars resulting in well-attended meetings in April and July.

The Society's use of social media was reviewed this year, and a decision was made to discontinue our twitter and Instagram accounts and continue with Facebook where we have the most followers. Stay up to date on Waterloo Historical Society activities by becoming one of our over 1,500 followers on Facebook. Like us at <https://www.facebook.com/waterloohs>.

Ad Hoc Annual Volume On-Line Indexing Report, John Glass

I'd like to thank Lesley Webb for the work that she has done in driving this project over the past several years. Under her leadership, we have been able to get almost 95% of the current volumes (up to and including #103) indexed and put online. A year or so ago, Lesley stepped down from the chair of this committee, and I began to serve in this role as an Acting Chair. Since then, we have not accomplished a lot due to several reasons including lack of volunteer time availability, COVID and the continued issuance of new volumes.

At present, the largest tasks that lie ahead of us are:

- Consolidating the individual indices into a single index document. The biggest part of this is grouping and consolidating entries.
- Adding the additional volumes to the index (104 - 110).
- Determining a recurring cadence for adding new volumes - i.e.111 and onward.

- Establishing and maintaining financial budget for ongoing updates.
- Identifying the best place on which to host the merged document.
- Finding volunteers to help us with this task.

If you are interested in helping with this project, please speak with any of the board or council members and we will reach out to you.

Newsletter and Social Media Report, Marion Roes

The newsletter, web site and Facebook are some of our communication tools. The newsletter is usually distributed in January, March, June and September/October by postal mail, email and the web site. An advantage to receiving it via email is seeing photos and some text in colour. Content varies and I appreciate all who submit photos, articles, and give suggestions. Thank you to Karen Ball-Pyatt, Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt and Mary Anne Banks for their help.

Lesley Webb and I both post items on Facebook. They are meeting details, photos, our own and others' events and news, and anything else that I think may be of interest. It is public for anyone to see and comment, but not open for others to post. Except for meetings, the contents of Facebook and the newsletter are different. This year we cancelled our X/Twitter page because we felt it wasn't useful.

Our Facebook page currently has 1765 followers, compared to 942 in 2019. Like or follow or see what is on the page at www.facebook.com/waterloohs.

Programs Committee Report, John Glass

I would like to thank Eric Uhlmann for being the chair of the Programs committee for the past several years. Eric has recently stepped down from this role and has moved into a Councillor position with the board. I moved into an Acting Chair for this committee.

The main purpose of this committee is to come up with ideas for our public meetings and to find speakers. Programming is very much done by committee as we depend on board members, councillors and WHS members to come up with suggestions for speakers. We will continue to operate in this manner for the foreseeable future. If you have any ideas for speakers or fore topics, please reach out to me or to another board or council member.

In 2023 we were pleased to offer this AGM program and also speaker Peggy Plet at July's public meeting. In the coming year, WHS will try to get back to more meetings, including our popular History Under the Trees meeting. We have some ideas, but once again, we'd love to year your thoughts on this subject.

For the time being, we will be continuing with "live only" events. While we would like to offer the option of having hybrid public meetings (simultaneous in-person and virtual audiences), creating a satisfying hybrid meeting experience for all involved offers many challenges, especially when you are working from venues that are not set up and have

permanent equipment in place to facilitate great quality experience for in-person and virtual attendees.

Website Committee Report, John Glass

There has not been any major work done to the website in several years. Our hosting provider, Peaceworks, provides ongoing security updates monitors the site for malicious attempts to access our site. Given the priorities within WHS, the website is often ignored as we have very, very few issues with it. That being said, I realize that we need to update the content to attract new visitors and to bring current visitors back to the site time and time again. In calendar 2024, I'd like to re-visit our site and see if there are any updates or refreshes we can make to make the site more vital. As with most things at WHS, we could really use some help in keeping the site fresh and up to date. If you are interested in helping, I'd be happy to sit down with you and show you how to update things. Also, if you know someday who would like to volunteer, but isn't a member of WHS, perhaps we could engage them as well. Our site is based on the WordPress content management system. If you are familiar with developing documents or presentations using Adobe, Microsoft or Google tools, it won't take a lot of work to become proficient with WordPress.

Please let me know if you, or if someone you know, would be interested in helping support and help define the future of our website and other social media platforms.

Waterloo Historical Society Archives Report, Karen Ball-Pyatt

I am pleased to present this annual report on Waterloo Historical Society archives in the Grace Schmidt Room of Local History, at the Kitchener Public Library. It has continued to be a time of great change and challenge. Regardless, we support the mission of the WHS to educate and inform.

January 2023 saw the launch of the Ron Welker 2SLGBTQ+ digital collection on History in the Making. With the financial support of the Waterloo Region Community Foundation Edna Staebler Legacy Fund, the Library hired a Project Archivist who organized, arranged, digitized and uploaded the collection to the GSR digital platform. The launch of the collection was celebrated on 18 Jan 2023 with a presentation by the Project Archivist. Currently, we are preparing additional collections for upload including the WHS funeral card collection and additional archival collection finding aids.

As the WHS and Library collections continue to evolve and grow, staff are working to find storage efficiencies. Collections are being rehoused and reshelved to make better use of limited shelf space, in addition to being re-inventoried to facilitate better access.

I am happy to report that the Library's oral history collection has been digitized and uploaded to the History in the Making platform in early 2023. The collection was officially launched on 28 March 2023. I am eternally grateful for the support of the Library's Waterloo Region Heritage Foundation grant application extended to us by the WHS Board.

I'd like to thank Trevor, Lauren, Bridget, Ingrid and Valerie who support Grace Schmidt Room in so many ways. As the focus of my position has changed over time, they have

assumed the majority of reference services and research in the GSR. We are a small but mighty team that will continue to evolve and grow.

Among the many highlights of our donations during 2021-2023, there are the following:

- Perrin and Trussler Family Collection
- Riverside School Ledgers
- Bridgeport Women's Institute Collection

The annual call for inactive corporate records will be made at the upcoming Waterloo Historical Society Board meeting

Ad Hoc Newspaper Storage Committee Report, Karen Ball-Pyatt

The Committee, composed of myself, rych mills and Past President Lesley Webb, did not meet during 2021-2023. We continue to monitor developments and digital initiatives undertaken by area archives and libraries and welcome the opportunity to assist with digitization projects and programs.

Currently, the WHS collects the following newspapers in paper form: New Hamburg Independent (until late September 2023), Woolwich Observer and the Ayr News. All paper editions, with the exception of current year issues, are kept at the WHS off-site storage facility.

We will continue to explore options for the storage of the WHS newspaper collection and will keep the Board apprised of our findings.

Book Table Report, rych mills

I have also worked closely with Mary Anne Banks to improve our Book Table inventory and sales. At some point soon, a revised listing will be available on the website. At each WHS meeting we bring an assortment from our ever-growing collection, donated by members. Mary Anne and I have been assisted at meetings by Todd Bowman.

The Book Table is also open at outreach events such as the recent Genealogy Fair at Kitchener Public Library. We hope to announce in the new year an opportunity for members to come out to the storage unit and view the entire Book Table collection. Book Table receipts help support the annual volume costs and in 2023 well over a thousand dollars was taken in as we re-sold donated history books.

Publication Committee Report, rych mills

In 2023, the WHS publication Committee again produced the society's annual volume of local history articles ... it is the 110th published by WHS since the founding year of 1912. The committee consisted of Rosanne Atwater-Hallatt as *de-facto* assistant editor, Marj Kohli, Stephanie Walker and Susan Mavor, plus me as editor. Stephanie has moved to Ottawa and we thank her for her help over the years.

As we begin work on the next volume, #111, to be dated 2023, we welcome ex-Waterloo Region Record journalist Jon Fear to our committee.

The volume consists entirely of submissions by members and the public except for the odd long-ago essay or article from an obscure source. We encourage every member to consider submitting a paper on some aspect of the region's history ... everybody can be an author! The committee is especially grateful to the many donors who have made possible our outstanding publication: they are all listed at the front of the volume. We also appreciate ongoing assistance from the provincial government's Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture in the form of a grant. Also, the Ernest and Honor Hachborn Foundation has added its support to WHS for which we give deep thanks. Our publication job would not be possible without the co-operation and background work by the Kitchener Public Library's Grace Schmidt Room archivist Karen Ball-Pyatt.

Work has already begun on reading submissions for the next volume, which I hope we can deliver to you by the used-to-be-regular-date of May. The delay in 2023 was in part caused by my health issues and I apologize for making everyone wait so long: I do hope the volume makes up for that delay.

Storage Unit Report, rych mills

WHS maintains a large storage unit where many types of things are kept. Hundreds of bound volumes of 19th and 20th century newspapers are shelved there. The shelves also include boxes and boxes of back issues of the annual volume while other boxes contain 100s of extra copies of the Elizabeth Bloomfield Township book which WHS re-published in 2006. Numerous collections in the process of being catalogued are also on the shelves before they head to the Grace Schmidt Room. Our meeting display items take up space as well ... and the Book Table collection likewise fills many shelves.

Treasurer's Report, Jeff Shank

The financial statements have been prepared for the fiscal years ending September 30, 2022 and September 30, 2023. I would like to quickly review some of the major financial highlights during these two years.

- For the year ending Sept. 30, 2022, WHS had approximately \$25,000 in revenues. This was about \$1,000 less than the previous year, mainly in donations. Expenses were approximately \$25,000, which was about \$2,000 greater than the previous year, mainly in annual volume publishing costs. Net income was \$36 vs. \$2,733 in the previous year. WHS had approximately \$71,000 in cash and \$68,000 in equity at the end of the year.
- For the year ending Sept. 30, 2023, WHS had approximately \$22,000 in revenues. This was about \$3,000 less than the previous year, mainly due to reduced donations and fewer sales of annual volumes (sales in the previous year received a boost due to a popular article on Heidelberg). Expenses were \$24,000, which were about \$1,000 less than the previous year due to lower annual volume publishing costs, partly offset by higher donation expense (vs. none in the previous year), increased storage locker rent and increased insurance premiums. WHS incurred a net loss in

the year of \$2,350 vs. net income of \$36 in the previous year. WHS had approximately \$85,000 in cash (an increase of \$14,000 vs. the prior year as the Cober publishing invoice was not paid until after year end) and \$66,000 in equity.

- Over the last two years, WHS has continued to receive grants from the Ontario Government's Heritage Organization Development Grant (\$1,159 per year), but has not received grants from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation (previously WHS received \$5,000 per year), as the WRHF undertakes an internal strategic review of its grant program.
- WHS received donations from 58 annual volume patrons this year, the same number as the previous year.
- Other financial-related activities:
 - the annual charitable return was filed with Canada Revenue Agency before the deadline. This is necessary in order for WHS to be allowed to issue donation receipts.
 - the Ontario government's online business registry was updated.
 - charitable donation receipts were mailed out to donors in late January or early February.
 - the Ontario government's Heritage Organization Development Grant (HODG) application was submitted before the deadline.
 - semiannual HST rebate claims were submitted to Canada Revenue Agency.
 - an information form is sent to The Ontario Historical Society, annually. This is necessary in order to remain affiliated with OHS (which is required for the HODG and the director and officer insurance policy).

1. I would like to make a motion for the members of WHS to approve the financial statements for the years ending September 30, 2022 and September 30, 2023.

2. I would like to make a motion for the members of WHS to approve the use of a person with a financial background to be a second set of eyes looking at the financial procedures I use and the financial statements I produce.