

Past



Present

Future



**Board of Directors**

- Bruce Christie
- Brad Clements
- Linda Hruska
- Bev Hughes
- Russ Kidd
- Liz Lambrick
- Wes Lane
- Carolyn McDonell
- Jan Mowbray
- Kellie Paquette
- Don Rickard
- Jan Robertson
- Maurice Rutherford
- Bruce Saunders
- Frank Tousaw
- Rick Upfold

**Staff**

- Jamie Reaume, CEO
- Mariette Haras, Wedding/Event
- Jo Valla, Wedding/Event
- Kimberlea Bell-Smith, Office Manager
- Terri Naccarato, Special Projects
- Lorraine Fiset, Education
- Doug Self, Accounts
- Wayne Canning, Operations
- Lorna Wilson - Volunteer Co-ordinator

**Country Heritage Park**

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**Fall/Winter 2016**  
Members' Quarterly Newsletter



As November descends upon us, it is important to note that things have not come to a conclusion here at Country Heritage Park – in fact, far from it. As you are reading this, the Ski Swap and Shop is either just finishing or beginning since it runs from November 4 to 6 in the Gambrel barn. It is an annual event that our neighbours to the west, Kelso, and their affiliated clubs gather together to do with great gusto. This same weekend features the Friends of John Deere Annual General Meeting, being held in the Conestoga Room on November 5.

Which brings us to our first discussion – yes, things are changing, buildings and rooms are being examined for potential tenant rental but it takes time to get everything prepared. Ironically, a large number of volunteers worked diligently to clear out the former gallery, only to have it still being worked on for ceiling, roof, and a large heating/AC unit that had to be replaced. That meant plans had to be put on hold because of the state of infrastructure situations that were found at the time – and limited resources to be able to adequately address all of the issues. It is the endless cycle that we are faced with here at CHP – which comes first; the chicken (getting something moving ahead) or the egg (realizing that there is going to be a glitch or two in the matrix)? If you need space somewhere for a club meeting, a corporate meeting, whatever kind of meeting – just ask CHP. We have the space – somewhere, somehow we will make it happen. Never assume that we can't accommodate your request. We can.

As well, in light of the movement of items from basements, abandoned rooms (they dot the property), attics, and even under buried brush, into safer locations on site, the board of directors has put in place an asset committee and has begun the long process of determining what, exactly, is on site? Every time a new venture is started, the first thing that it involves is finding out what is in the building that has long ago been forgotten and moving it to a secure location. The eventual goal is that these items will be moved into the buildings that are appropriate for educational purposes – either with our school programs and/or the general public. We managed to stumble across some long buried relics that have now gone into the church (they were in a box designated "garbage") and are on display.

We have been working with high school students and a core of volunteers who have enjoyed these new findings and have expressed both curiosity and shock at what we have recovered to date – and the process is on-going and endless. Every time we undertake a new area, there are new surprises – and this is welcome and we are endeavouring to get these items out, once we have figured out what they are. If you are interested in poking around relics from another era, then join us and enjoy what comes to light beyond those items that everyone sees through the seasons around the property.





**Parade of Lights  
November 19-20**  
Beginning at dark, ending at 9

This annual event is a huge draw because it means Santa Claus is Coming to Town – and Country Heritage Park helps make that a reality. Touring around on his specially crafted wagon, Santa gets up close and personal with the children in the Gambrel Barn for a visit that few will forget. It's more than a chance to wave at Jolly Ol' St. Nick – it is a chance to tell him what you want for Christmas for both young and old.

What makes this different is the decorated tractors that lead Santa to his eventual destination – in the Gambrel barn, following the outdoor parade through the grounds. Fun for all.

**On the Way to Bethlehem  
November 25, 26, 27**  
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

On the Way to Bethlehem is an outdoor Christmas nativity pageant open to all, with a 45 minute walk through the journey done by Mary and Joseph and featuring innkeepers, shepherds, magi, Roman soldiers, and an eventual happy ending.

Admission is \$5 for everyone over 13, children 6-12 are \$2; and under 5 are free ([www.onthewaytobethlehem.ca](http://www.onthewaytobethlehem.ca))

*Celebrate the Season  
in Your Own Way . . .*



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As you can see, it is Parade of Lights time at CHP – and this year, we are hoping to have a full park of people and decorated tractors and floats. We are planning a fun weekend for all – and looking forward to seeing as many of you out as possible. This year we have combined advertising with the Walk To Bethlehem the following weekend – since they are linked with celebrating the season properly.



Events

This was the introduction from CHP President Bev Hughes to the All Clubs Tractor Meeting that was held at Country Heritage Park on October 22. It is as relevant for the public as a whole as it is to the clubs who are all doing what they can to celebrate and honour a bygone era.

**Welcome to Country Heritage Park.** Although most of you are familiar with this site, many of you may not be aware of the many changes that have happened and continue to happen since the government turned it over to the Country Heritage Agricultural Society in 2006. The Park no longer receives government funding except through the application for grants. The cost of day-to-day operations must be covered by a number of revenue sources – admission charges, donations, and rentals. This is a huge challenge.

Like many of the shows we are representing here today, the population that is interested in paying to view historical items is shrinking. This is due to many factors, but the main one is the aging population of collectors. As the younger generations move away from farming as an occupation, the connection to the evolution of farming is of little or no interest to them. To them, food comes from the closest grocery store. Despite a variety of events held at the Park during the year to attract visitors, the annual income from admissions to weekend events is less than 10% of the Park's total revenue. To help offset this, the Park runs an educational program for approximately 12,000 students in the Milton area. This, together with summer camps and private tours brings in approximately another 20% of the total revenue. As a result, the unique and world-class collection of artifacts on display at the Park only generates approximately 30% of total revenue for the Park. This is not enough income to sustain the Park and its contents. Therefore, the bulk of income must be generated through donations and rentals.



Generating donations from the general public is a huge challenge, again as a result of the dis-connect today's society has with agriculture and its evolution. We are competing with hospitals, disease research and many other worthwhile charities, most of which tug at the heart strings of their donors. Donating money to house and display history is not normally on the top of the list of recipients for society's limited donation dollars. As a result, the Park has come to rely on rental of its facilities to cover the cost of keeping it open. We now have an average of 3 weddings a week, plus the use of the facilities for the Montessori school, movie-shoots, corporate meetings and workshops, and many other private events. We are even venturing into the realm of increasing the amount of space available for rental to other businesses.

However, in order to encourage renters, the property has to be kept presentable at all times. When this facility was owned by the government, there were approximately 55 full-time staff and probably as many or more part-time staff and summer students. Today the Park has a total of 3 full-time staff, 1 full-time contract staff, and 2 part-time contract staff. This past summer we were able to hire 3 students to help with grounds upkeep for the months of June, July and August. So instead of more than 100 paid employees to run this facility we have less than 10. That is all we can afford. With the ever rising costs of heat, hydro and other "basics", paying the bills to keep the place open is the greatest hurdle for us.

Most of you are or have been responsible for the upkeep of farm property. If you were to take 80 acres of your property and plant at least 40 acres of it to grass that must be cut weekly and plant approximately 20 acres to crops -- think of the man hours required to keep it presentable. Add to that 30 buildings, numerous roadways and gardens that you must maintain and keep available for use by the general public throughout the year, with only a few members of your family and a few neighbours to rely on for additional help. That is the challenge faced by Country Heritage Park.

Let me talk about the Park's collection. This Fall there was an auction sale scheduled to be held at the Park. This sale was to be a consignment sale, with items brought in from other sources, along with a few pieces from the Park's collection that were duplicates or of no use to the Park. Once the ads started to appear I began getting phone calls. Word was spreading quickly that the Park was selling all of its collection! Because of this confusion, and also the fact that there were very few consignment items from other sources, I decided to cancel the sale!

The Park will, over time, sell some items. Over the years the government purchased a large number of items at auction sales throughout Ontario. Many of these have been in storage for many years, and have never been seen by the public. For example, at this time we have over 700 walking plows at the Park. Many of these are duplicate items. The question has been asked, "Do we need sets of 7-10 identical plows?" They are taking up space that costs money to maintain, and could be used for better

purposes. Others items need to be assessed, to determine what costs would be involved to make them presentable to the public. This year the Board has formed an assessment committee to evaluate what should be kept and what should be sold. When it is decided to sell some of these items, we will sell them through auction and make every effort to notify the public so that everyone interested is given an opportunity to bid on them.

COUNTRY HERITAGE PARK  
is proud to present  
**Summer Fair & Farm Expo 2017**  
Featuring Fordson's 100 Year Anniversary  
As part of the All Colour Spectacle  
**July 14 – 16, 2017**

In 2017, Fordson - which is the trade name for tractors built by Ford - celebrates its 100th anniversary and CHP is making sure that it doesn't go away without a small party. But just because we are featuring Fordson (and Ford's) doesn't mean that All Colour is limited to grey. CHP is asking ALL COLOURS to feel like this is their time too - and let everyone see what it means to honour our past.

Past Present Future

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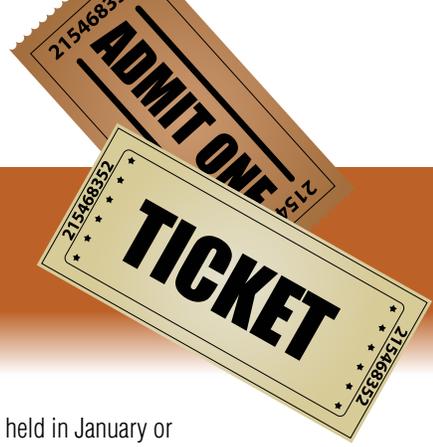
## What the Park needs is more volunteers –

on a regular basis, and more financial donations to help us hire more staff to help maintain the Park and its collections. We need more “spreading the word” that the Park exists, and what it has to offer. This is where you, the Tractor Collector Clubs of Ontario, can help. If the Park is to be responsible for keeping this world-renowned collection of antique tractors and equipment in presentable condition for the public, we need help. We want the various clubs to think about what they can do to support the Park. Would your club members consider “adopting” some pieces of equipment at the Park, giving them regular maintenance, cleaning and needed repairs paid for by the club. Would your club consider making an annual donation to the Park, to help offset the expenses of maintaining the property and its buildings? If, like me, you want to see this collection continue for future generations to see, then we all have to step up to make it happen. It is not just the Park’s responsibility to continue this legacy, it is the responsibility of all collectors in Ontario.

As many of you may have seen, I was recently interviewed about the Park by Glenn Powell, for an article he was doing for the Ontario Farmer magazine. I spent over an hour on the phone with him, telling about the wonderful things going on at the Park, and our goals for its future. I explained about the financial struggles we face, but I also emphasized the extensive educational program that we provide to over 12,000 students to teach them about the evolution of agriculture. I also explained how it is only through the dedication of volunteers that we are able to function. Jamie took several hours of his day to tour Glenn through the facilities, showing the wide array of things we have to offer to the general public, if only we can get them through the gate at the more than 25 public events held throughout the year. When the article came out, Glenn explained the situation at the Park, and its goal to “turn the corner” from its past situation of near closure. However, despite explanations from both myself and Jamie about the financial challenges we face, and our inability to hire more staff, Glenn included the following paragraph in his article: “Currently the Park is not open to the public on a daily basis except for pre-arranged tours and special events”. In conversation with us, this seemed to be his focal point – having the Park open to the public every day, as it had been when the government owned it. He failed to make mention of the thousands of school children who visit every year, or the visitors to the weekend events who tour the entire facility while here.

How do we manage to keep this facility running with our limited resources? We rely on volunteers. However, as all of you have witnessed, volunteer-ism is becoming the biggest obstacle to keeping clubs, organizations and facilities alive. The large base of volunteers from 20 or 30 years ago is now 20 years older. I would estimate that the average age of volunteers to historical-based organizations is around 75, and as we all know, a 75-year old is not able to do the work of a 20 or 30 year-old! Thankfully the Park has a solid base of a dozen or so “full-time” volunteers, who come to the Park day in and day out to help do whatever needs doing. But most of them are retirees, and face their own physical challenges that limit what they can physically do in a day. Maintaining this property and its buildings is 90% physical work!





## Gambrel Grand Ole' Opry Nite

The Grand Ole' Opry had a scheduling issue in November and will be held in January or February instead. Turns out that there is a Christmas country tour taking place at the same time as our original booking – and the entertainers used are members of both shows and are actually appearing in the Wellington and Halton county areas from November into mid-December. Once a date is confirmed, again, just juggling schedules with entertainers, it will be back on, this time for a Saturday in the Gambrel Barn.

**Sorry for the delay – but that's entertainment.**

And speaking of entertainment, the movie shoot for the two sequels for Anne of Green Gables are wrapping up by the second week of November. Once they have vacated the property, we will be putting a few things back into place, cleaning up where and how we can with the weather heading in, and issuing a big thank you to the film crew for allowing the odd visitor or two to intrude on such luminaries as Martin Sheen, Ella Ballentine, and the lovely Sara Botsford. As you can see, Russ Murray didn't want to be a stranger.



*We wish everyone the very best of the season,  
a very Merry Christmas,  
and an exceptional New Year.*

CHP would like to welcome Kimberlea Bell-Smith, who will be working the front desk, and Terri Naccarato, who will be working on special projects, media and communication. Be nice and drop by to say hello. It is hoped that these folks will continue to add to the changes at CHP in a positive fashion into 2017.

