

# The *Riverdalian*



News and Notes from the Riverdale Historical Society, Toronto, Canada

## What's Going on in Riverdale Park?

*The St. Matthew's Lawn Bowling Club is on the move - again! Here's the background, as told by Riverdale Historical Society President, Mr. Gerald Whyte*

A major interest of the Riverdale Historical Society over the last few years has been the preservation of the St. Matthew's Lawn Bowling Club clubhouse, a designated heritage structure.

The St. Matthew's Lawn Bowling Club was established on land south of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, 135 First Avenue, following the erection of the Church in 1890. To



*St. Matthew's Lawn Bowling Club*

allow for the construction of a parish hall, the club was relocated in 1906 to City of Toronto parkland just west of the Don Jail, where the clubhouse was built. It was designed by Robert McCallum, Toronto's first City Architect. A fine example of Toronto park architecture in the Arts and Crafts style, it has broad verandas from which spectators could view the lawn bowling. For over a hundred years bowlers, dressed in white, played their leisurely and ancient sport in the grim shadow of the Don Jail, reflecting two very different aspects of city life.

In 2009, after the Club was closed, the clubhouse was moved through Riverdale Park East to a new location opposite Langley Avenue. There it was placed on a new foundation and awaits renovation and restoration this year.

The move of the Clubhouse through the

park over several days was a major attraction for the Riverdale community. Most of us have not witnessed the skilled process of moving a structure over rather

difficult terrain to a new location. While a number of trees were lost because of the move, many of these have now been replaced. The foundation has been very carefully and

tastefully constructed of brick matching the age of the building. It is located close to Broadview Avenue where it will be under constant observation. The use of the clubhouse will be determined in consultation with the community this year.

We look forward to observing the restoration of this historic building and to the discussion of its expanded use as a public building in Riverdale Park East. It would certainly be useful as a headquarters for many park events, the verandas providing shelter from uncooperative weather. Let us welcome this venerable structure to our very diverse park life.

### A Word from Our President



*Portrait by Michael Sage*

Welcome to the first edition of The Riverdalian, an important new milestone in the ten year history of the Riverdale Historical Society. Since our founding in November 1999 we have held 105 events, unveiled ten heritage plaques, received two Heritage Toronto awards, contributed to the Heritage Toronto Walks program and have a full program ready for 2010. We look forward to our members and friends continued interest and support.

*Gerald Whyte, President*

## Historical Riverdale Plaque Unveiled

August 18 2009 marked the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Allen's Danforth Theatre, known today as the Danforth Music Hall. A bronze plaque, sponsored by the RHS and Heritage Toronto, was unveiled before an enthusiastic sold out crowd. On that opening day over 90 years ago, the crowd came to see a silent film starring Madge Kennedy. That film has been lost to the dust of time, however another of her films from that era, "Dollars and Sense", was transferred from its original 5 reels by the Smithsonian Film Institute, and shipped to Toronto for the evening's event. Accompanied live by pianist John Kruspe and members of his family, the crowd roared its approval with a heart felt standing ovation. Members of the Allen family, whose theatre chain once numbered over 50 venues across Canada, were present for this historical commemoration.



*Allen's Danforth, 1919*



# Upcoming RHS Events

## Queen of Empire Av.

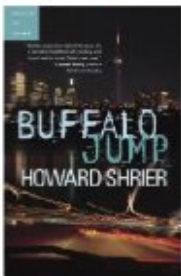


Tuesday January 26 at 6pm  
Riverdale Library [Broadview at Gerrard]

Hear **Olwen Anderson** [1919 – 2004] speak on her recollections of growing up in Riverdale during the earlier part of the twentieth century.

A 2002 filmed interview presented by **Cory Lemos**, Legacy Curator at Preservation House, Toronto

## Howard Shrier, author



Tuesday February 23 at 6pm  
Riverdale Library [Broadview at Gerrard]

Crime novelist, **Howard Shrier**, speaks on "*A Life of Crime: Reading and Writing Mysteries*".  
Book sale and signing.

## History on a Plate!

### Recipes from the Riverdale Almanac, 1908

With the cold winter season upon us the following may be of interest to our readers.

For the Sick

#### Oatmeal Gruel

Put four tablespoons of the best grits (oatmeal coarsely ground) into a pint of boiling water. Let it boil gently, and stir it often, till it becomes as thick as you wish it. Then strain and add to it while warm, butter, wine, nutmeg, or whatever is thought proper to flavour it. Salt to taste. If you make the gruel of fine oatmeal, sift it, mix it first to a thick batter with a little cold water, and then put it into a saucepan of boiling water. Stir it all the time it is boiling, lifting the spoon gently up and down, and letting the gruel fall slowly back again into the pan.

#### Excellent Cough Mixture

One cup of gum, one cup of honey, one cup of lemon juice, one ounce of glycerine, mix well, bottle and take one teaspoon when cough is troublesome.



**The Board of the Riverdale Historical Society at a Festive Reception, sponsored by Heritage Toronto at historic St. Lawrence Hall, December '09.**

*Back Row:* Cory Lemos, Anne Davison, Robert Schott, Bill Hubacheck, Gerald Whyte, Michael Sillers

*Front Row:* Ruthie Gilpin Beck, L.E. Wakelin, Susan Pilon

*Photo:* Victor Lemos

### BECOME A MEMBER!

Memberships are only \$10 a year. You can email us at: [riverdalehistoricalsociety@sympatico.ca](mailto:riverdalehistoricalsociety@sympatico.ca)

### KEEP UP TO DATE!

Visit our website at: [riverdalehistoricalsociety.com](http://riverdalehistoricalsociety.com)

Editor: Bill Hubacheck

## ? Did You Know ?



### Riverdale Library, 1910

The Riverdale Library was one of ten Toronto public libraries to open between 1907 and 1916 using funds from American business titan and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie. The Georgian Revival building, designed by Robert McCallum, City Architect, opened on October 19, 1910. Mr. Carnegie donated the money to build and equip, providing the city do its part by donating land and fund the library's ongoing operation and maintenance. Other Toronto Carnegie libraries still in use as such include the branches of Beaches, High Park, Annette Street, Wychwood, Yorkville and Weston.

### Opportunity!

Become a Friend of the Riverdale Historical Society

Benefits include opportunities to learn research methods and/or to participate in the organizing of events. For more information please contact:

[susanp@pathcom.com](mailto:susanp@pathcom.com) or  
Gerald Whyte at 416-466-2478.

### Book Club

Like to read? Like to discuss what you have read?

A local Book Club is being formed to discuss books on historic and non-historic topics.

For more information, contact [susanp@pathcom.com](mailto:susanp@pathcom.com)

*Our logo, the Riverdale Railway Station, DeGrassi St. near Queen, now lost.*

