

# PRESERVE

## More Than a Museum

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PORT COLBORNE HISTORICAL AND MARINE MUSEUM  
2020 ANNUAL REPORT





“Port Lighthouse” painting by Douglas Todd, which was generously donated by the artist for the museum’s fundraising auction.

Cover photo: Custodian Frank Habjan created a winter wonderland on the grounds with over 1000 feet of lights for the Christmas Light Display Contest in Port Colborne.

**“OUR MISSION IS TO SERVE  
PORT COLBORNE’S RESIDENTS AND  
VISITORS BY PRESERVING, EXHIBITING,  
AND INTERPRETING THE ARTIFACTS  
AND ARCHIVES OF PORT COLBORNE  
AND HUMBERSTONE.”**

PORT COLBORNE HISTORICAL AND MARINE MUSEUM MISSION STATEMENT



Archivist Michelle Vosburgh hands off a wreath-making kit to a happy customer in December.

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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Over the past year the world has experienced momentous change due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this exceptional time the Port Colborne Museum has made it a priority to maintain services, reach out to others, and stay connected. Thanks to the generous support of our community, we've been able to do just that.

Last year looked and felt different from previous years, and this inspired us and kept us on our toes. While reinventing ways to celebrate much-loved events such as Arabella's Pie Social & History Fair, Canal Days and the Grand Old Christmas Festival, we also introduced a new way to offer services with our "Book A Safe Service" (B.A.S.S.) program. The museum's 2020 exhibits showcased historical stories of perseverance in the face of great challenges. *A Village by the Canal* highlighted the tenacity of the citizens of Port Colborne as they turned a small settlement into a thriving village. Our *Judging* exhibit celebrated the determination of one woman—Helen Kinnear—as she broke down barriers to become the first woman appointed as county judge by the Government of Canada.

New technologies and creative pivoting helped us to serve our members in new and safe ways. The community support for our Welland Canal T-shirt sales was heartwarming, and by introducing a remote payment system all purchases and deliveries were made safely. The take-home wreath kits created as an alternative to our traditional Grand Old Christmas Festival were an enormous success, and one more example of how our community has come together to keep spirits high over the past year. This connection and enthusiasm has continued to inspire the museum's staff and volunteers as they strive to preserve our heritage and serve the community during this unprecedented time.

While the museum was being propelled forward by community partners in 2020, in 2021 this will take on a more literal meaning after Algoma Central Marine installs a beautiful brass propeller in the museum's Marine Park. Plans are also underway to invigorate the Heritage Village with an exciting and unique exhibit currently in development for the Carriage House. Our work will continue to prioritize strong connections within our community as we educate, preserve, and celebrate the rich heritage of Port Colborne.

We're thankful to have shared this unforgettable year with all of you. Port Colborne is a community like no other, and we're honoured to be a part of it.

*Terry Huffman*

Chairman of the Board of Management  
Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum

## 2020 BY THE NUMBERS

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**1367**

TOTAL VISITORS

**21**

HARD-WORKING  
VOLUNTEERS

**441**

MUSEUM  
MEMBERS

**13**

MUSEUM SERVICES PROVIDED

**65**

COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
SERVED BY EDUCATIONAL  
PROGRAMS

**21072**

ARTIFACTS IN  
PERMANENT  
COLLECTION

**2**

ONLINE  
EXHIBITS

**12**

STRUCTURES  
*HERITAGE VILLAGE & MARINE PARK*

**16**

TYPES OF  
RESEARCH  
DOCUMENTS  
*AT THE HERITAGE  
RESEARCH ARCHIVES*

**18**

MARKETING  
TOOLS  
PRODUCED

**10**

EXHIBITS  
PRESENTED

**29**

NEWS MEDIA  
MENTIONS

**13**

**DEDICATED STAFF**

*2 FULL TIME*

*6 PART TIME*

*5 SUMMER STUDENT STAFF*

**3883**

**UNIQUE PAGEVIEWS  
TO WEBSITE**

**1353**

**INSTAGRAM  
FOLLOWERS**

**433**

**PARTICIPANTS IN SPECIAL EVENTS**

**667**

**TWITTER FOLLOWERS**

**724**

**ARTIFACTS  
DONATED  
BY**

**10**

**GENEROUS  
DONORS**

**1201**

**ARTIFACTS  
ON DISPLAY**

**17**

**MUSEUM  
PUBLICATIONS  
FOR  
RESEARCH  
AND  
SALE**

**2**

**EXHIBITS  
IN MAIN MUSEUM GALLERY**

**4**

**TELEVISION  
INTERVIEWS**

**15**

**PHOTO SHOOTS**

**2695**

**FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS**

# 2020 FINANCIALS

## MUSEUM-RAISED REVENUE

### ADMISSIONS

#### All Tours Sponsored by Lower Lakes Towing

Museum/Heritage Village Tours: 5030

**TOTAL ADMISSIONS: 5030**

Memberships: 562

Fundraising (*Welland Canal T-Shirts,  
Take-Home Kits*): 9666

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Pie Social: 0

Canal Days: 0

Christmas Festival: 0

Museums Assistance Program (MAP)  
grant for revenue loss from events/  
public access: 36525

**Total Special Events: 36525**

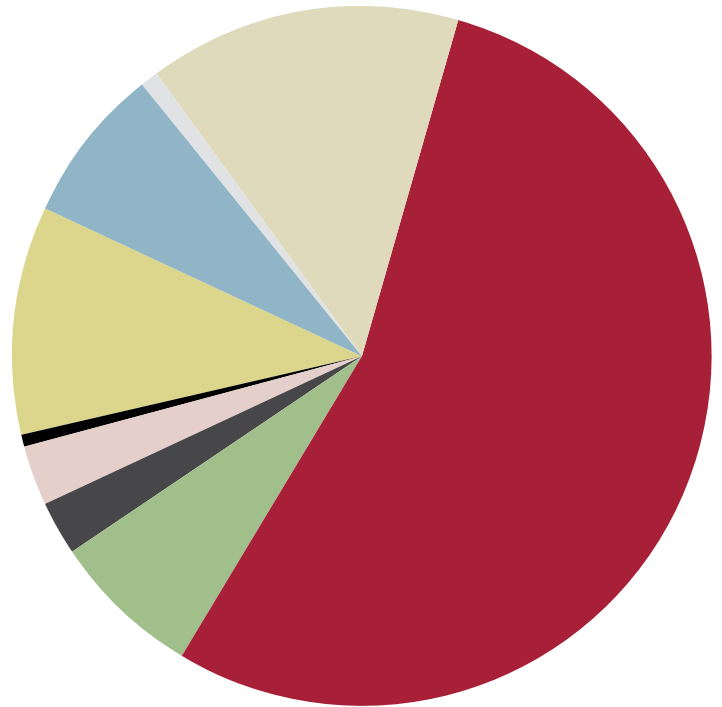
Donations (*Corporate/Individual*): 4658

Rent (*Archives Rental Hall*): 1616

Gift Shop Sales: 1889

Photocopies/Photos/Research  
(*Archives*): 420

Auxiliary Donations: 7000



### GRANTS

Community Operating Grant  
(*Pay Equity Included*): **24093**

Young Canada Works (Museum): 6208

Canada Summer Jobs: 8469

Summer Experience Grant: 3658

Young Canada Works (Archives): 6003

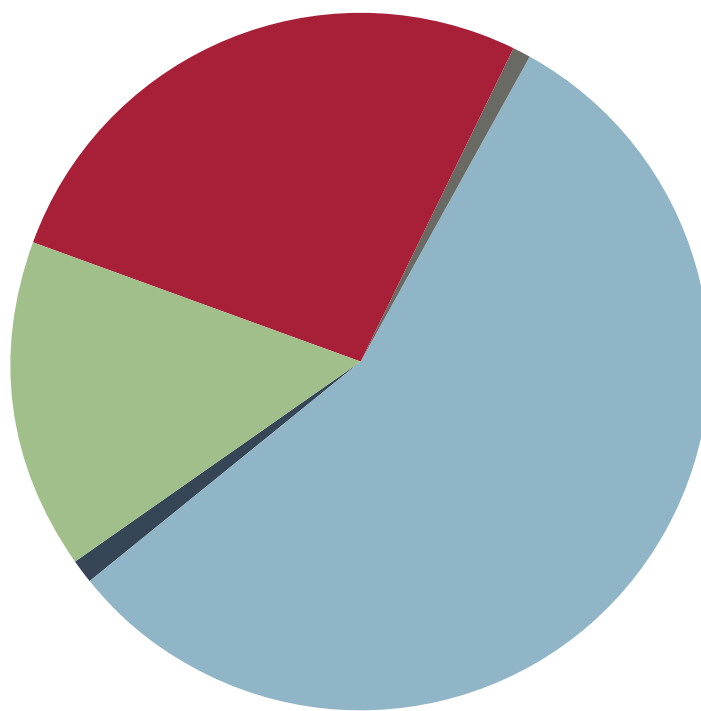
**TOTAL Grant Revenue: 48431**

# 2020 FAMILY

## MUSEUM VISITORS

Daily Museum:	213
Tea Room:	0
Heritage Research Archives:	367
School Tours (1):	9
Group/Bus Tours:	0
Education and Outreach*:	772
Weddings/Photography Bookings:	15
<b>TOTAL Visitors</b>	<b>1367</b>

*\*Walking Tours (10), Port Colborne Sailing Club (40), Member's Recognition Ginkgo Card (281), Arabella's Pie Social On The Road (42), Canal Days Postcard Project (302), Grand Old Christmas Festival (97)*



## MUSEUM MEMBERS

Year 2020 Members:	101
Life Members:	292
Corporate Sustaining:	48
<b>TOTAL Members:</b>	<b>441</b>

## VOLUNTEERS

Board Member Volunteers:	12
Grounds and Gardens Volunteers:	5
Research and Collections Volunteers:	4
<b>Total Volunteers:</b>	<b>21</b>



Volunteer Pam Kaufman hard at work tending to the heritage garden.

# STAFF

## FULL TIME:

Director/Curator: Stephanie Powell Baswick

Assistant Curator: Michelle Mason

Education Programmer: Abbey Stansfield

Receptionist: Sherry Spark

Registrar: Michelle Vosburgh/Meghan Chamberlain

## PART TIME:

Archivist: Michelle Vosburgh

Archives Assistant: Abbey Stansfield/Kyla Harrietha

Custodian/Maintenance: Frank Habjan

Administrative Assistant: Amanda Emery



Assistant Curator Michelle Mason enjoys the view from the general store in our "A Village by the Canal" exhibit.

## BOARD MEMBERS

### SUMMER STAFF:

Collections Assistant: Dario Smagata-Bryan  
(*Young Canada Works in Heritage Institutions*)

Program Planner: Spencer Alder  
(*Canada Summer Jobs*)

Graphic Designer: Hanna Skala  
(*Canada Summer Jobs*)

Educational Programming Assistant: Meaghan Chamberlain  
(*Summer Experience Program*)

Public History Development Officer: Spencer Alder  
(*Young Canada Works Canadian Council of Archives*)

### 2019 CITIZEN APPOINTEES:

Bonnie Johnston (1981)

Marcia Turner, Finance Chair (1995)

Cheryl MacMillan, Auxiliary President (2001)

Brian Heaslip, Vice Chair (2009)

Terry Huffman, Chair (2009)

Pamela Koudijs (2013)

Margaret Tanaszi, Secretary (2015)

Alexander Fazzari (2015)

Donna Abbott (2017)

Claudia Brema (2018)

Bert Murphy (2018)

Jeff Piniak (2019)

### COUNCIL APPOINTEE:

Eric Beauregard (2019)

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:

Tom Lannan (2009)

John Maloney (2020)

Bina Patel (2020)



Summer student Hanna Skala designs visuals for volunteer appreciation week.



Tea time looked different in 2020, but the smiles stayed the same.

# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

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## EXHIBITS

### ON-SITE EXHIBITS:

#### A Village by the Canal:

Take a look back to 150 years ago when Port Colborne was incorporated as a village. This exhibit explores the remarkable history of daily life in the village, and the skills and trades which were characteristic of Port Colborne's inhabitants in the era of 1870-1917.

#### Judging:

Helen Kinnear was called to the bar 100 years ago, beginning a legal career during which she accomplished a number of firsts for women, including becoming the first federally-appointed female judge in Canada. Raised in Port Colborne, it was here she first practised law. This exhibit takes a journey through her remarkable legal career and accomplishments.

#### *Marine Exhibit Lighthouse*

#### Tugging Along: Tugboats on the Welland Canal

Narrow channels, small canal locks, and lots of ship traffic on the third Welland Canal meant plenty of business for the tugs and their crews. Peer into the Marine Exhibit Lighthouse to catch a glimpse of this vital part of the canal scene.

#### *Permanent*

#### The Welland Canal:

Using an interactive touchscreen display and dozens of archives and photographs, this new, permanent exhibit looks at the people who built the canal, the economic impact of the canal, and its role in shaping the community.

### TRAVELLING EXHIBITS FROM MUSEUM

### CITY HALL EXHIBITS

#### Misener Family's Shipping Businesses:

More than a century ago, Captain Scott Misener started investing in ships. This exhibit sails into the company's many transformations: Misener and McKellar, Sarnia Steamships Ltd., Colonial Steamships Ltd., and Misener Transportation Ltd.

#### Port Colborne: The Welland Canal:

The canal is a defining landmark that bisects the city of Port Colborne and continues to be an integral part of its economy and tourism. This retrospective exhibit looks at the changes from the first to the fourth Welland Canal.

### ON-LINE EXHIBITS:

#### The War of 1812 and the Sugarloaf Settlement:

From 1812 to 1815, the inhabitants of what was to become Canada fought side by side with the British forces and their First Nations allies to defend their lands against the Americans. The battles were waged on land and sea on both sides of the border, and the impact of the war was felt by all. This website is dedicated to making the surviving records and artifacts from this time period available to everyone.

#### The History of the Welland Canal in Port Colborne:

A selection of photographs from the museum's collections showing ships that have travelled through Port Colborne using the canal and locks to reach the Great Lakes. These photographs were released to the public in 2009 for the 50th Anniversary of the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation. They're a tribute to the Welland Canal, which has given so much to this community.



“I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE TOUR BEING SPONSORED BY LOWER LAKES BUT I AM HAPPY TO DONATE TO HELP YOU KEEP YOUR WORK GOING. I LOVED THE TOUR AND IT WAS SO GOOD TO BE ABLE TO LEARN ABOUT OUR LOCAL HISTORY.”

KERRY SINCLAIR



Displays from our two on-site exhibits, “Judging” and “A Village by the Canal”.

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

### ONTARIO HERITAGE WEEK 2020 | FEBRUARY 17 TO 23, 2020

During Ontario Heritage Week the L.R. Wilson Archives virtually shared many artifacts from the Fred Addis Sports Collection. This was also in honour of the City of Port Colborne wrapping up SportsFest 2020.

### VIRTUAL TOP HAT PRESENTATION | MARCH 24, 2020

The 2020 Top Hat Ceremony—marking the opening of the Southern terminus of the Welland Canal—was cancelled this year. Instead, the Port Colborne Museum virtually presented the beaver fur top hat to the first captain. The M.V. CSL Tadoussac spent the winter tied up in Port Colborne and was the first downbound vessel at 4:15am.

### TEA TIME WITH ARABELLA | APRIL 3, 2020

Museum education programmer Abbey Stansfield created an educational video to encourage those at home to enjoy afternoon tea. It featured Arabella Williams providing tea tips and sharing a historical biscuit recipe.

### ARCHIVES AWARENESS WEEK | APRIL 6 TO 12, 2020

The L.R. Wilson Archives celebrated this year's *Archives Online* theme by sharing a collection of archival documents related to the First World War from the Schooley Collection. These documents presented the journey of Karl Schooley, from his volunteering for service in 1916 to his return on the S.S. Melita after being wounded.

### ARABELLA'S PIE SOCIAL ON THE ROAD | MAY 31, 2020

Our annual Arabella's Pie Social and History Fair was cancelled this year. In its place, museum staff decided to give back by hand-delivering an afternoon treat to almost 40 Arabella's Tea Room volunteers.

### GREAT CANADIAN GIVING CHALLENGE | JUNE 2020

This June we participated in the *Great Canadian Giving Challenge* in support of charities registered with Canada Helps. We reached out to our online community and encouraged donations of any kind to help at this difficult time.

### YOUR OUTDOOR MUSEUM/PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH | JUNE 2020

In support of the City of Port Colborne's Recreation and Parks Month, we offered visitors a "virtual walking tour" of the museum grounds throughout the month of June by sharing daily photos on social media of our outdoor features and attractions.

### GRAND OLD CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL WREATH-MAKING KITS | DECEMBER 2020

As an alternative to our traditional festival, the museum put together affordable wreath-making kits to help our community members get creative for the holidays and safely celebrate the beauty of the season.

### THEN AND NOW: L.R. WILSON HERITAGE RESEARCH ARCHIVES | 2020

Due to the Archives being closed to the public for walk-in research, requests increased for the Archives' *Then and Now* Facebook posts, which showcase different archives in our possession and garner interest in local history. These posts were eagerly anticipated by our online community, and reached over 32,700 people.

“KUDOS TO THE PORT COLBORNE MUSEUM FOR SETTING UP TODAY’S SAFE ALTERNATIVE TO THE GRAND OLD CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL. THE WREATH MAKING KITS WERE SO MUCH FUN TO DO! EVERYTHING WAS PROVIDED AND PICK UP WAS ORGANIZED AND SAFE. THANKFUL FOR THIS ALTERNATIVE OPTION. WELL DONE. #PORTICIPATE.”

KATIE SNEAK (INSTAGRAM)



“I AM ALWAYS AMAZED BY THE WAY THE MUSEUM USES CREATIVITY TO CONNECT TO THE COMMUNITY.”

VIRGINIA ANGER



Director/Curator Stephanie Powell Baswick on the road as Arabella to deliver a tea time treat to our Tea Room volunteers.

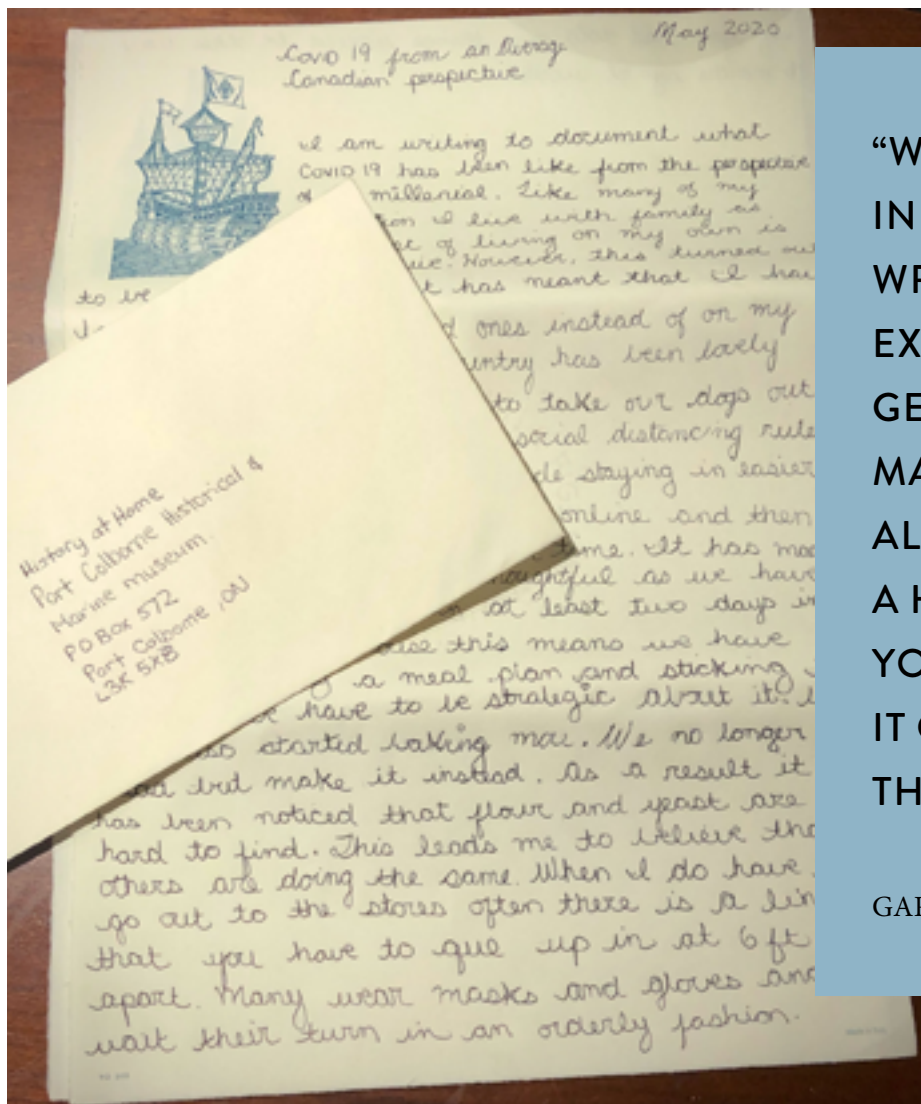
## 2020 ACTIVITIES

### HERITAGE CLOTHING COLLECTION:

In the early months of 2020, Education Programmer Abbey Stansfield undertook the project of creating a catalogue of heritage clothing. Donations of heritage clothing had been received from the museum's beginnings, but these had never been catalogued. During this intensive process, clothing and accessories were photographed, assessed for condition and time period representation and then placed in proper storage vessels. In total over 200 items were catalogued, and an accurate account of the reproduction costumes available for museum programming was created.

### HISTORY FROM HOME:

During the early stages of the province-wide COVID shutdown, the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum asked the community to help capture *History from Home*. The public was called on to help document this extraordinary time within history. We asked for handwritten letters of people's personal experiences, requesting they share with us thoughts, feelings, drawings, photographs, and/or daily activities at home. Everyone—of any age—was welcome to participate. If they did not have the supplies to mail us a letter, participants were able to request a kit (paper, stamp, and envelope) to be mailed to them. In addition, at the letter-writer's request museum staff would send a reply. These letters were compiled in our Heritage Resource Centre and Archives, and may one day be a part of the collection for future generations to read.



“WHEN I SAW YOUR INITIATIVE ABOUT PEOPLE WRITING ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS...YOU ARE MAKING HISTORY COME ALIVE! WE ARE LIVING IN A HISTORIC MOMENT AND YOU ARE MAKING SURE IT GETS DOCUMENTED SO THAT IS IMPRESSIVE. “

GARY BRUNO (COUNCILLOR)

One of the many amazing letters we received documenting local experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic for future generations.

## NEWSLETTER ENGAGEMENT:

In our newsletters and through City Hall News we worked to engage the community via activities that could be done at home. One popular activity was a crossword puzzle created by Collections Assistant Dario Smagata-Bryan. The community responded very favourably, and we received many requests for copies of the puzzle as its popularity spread throughout the community.

We also shared heritage recipes through our newsletters in 2020. Education Programmer Abbey Stansfield provided a wartime shortbread cookie recipe, along with the history of the cookie. We had bakers in our community reporting back with their opinions of the recipe.

## INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT:

Over the course of 2020 museum staff engaged the community on Instagram with daily behind-the-scenes updates. This provided an opportunity for the public to see artifacts that were not on display at the time, and offered a look at museum work that generally goes unseen.

## BOOK A SAFE SERVICE:

In a new initiative, museum staff invited the community to “Book A Safe Service” (B.A.S.S.), allowing our visitors to safely see our newest exhibits (*A Village by the Canal*, and *Judging*), shop in our gift shop or do research at the archives. Through B.A.S.S, we booked 45-minute appointments of no more than 4 guests from the same party, ensuring sanitization was taking place in between each appointment. The safe services offered included guided tours, heritage research, gift shop browsing, donations to collection and memorial donations.

## GUIDED TOURS:

A longtime supporter of the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum, Lower Lakes Towing Ltd. sponsored the cost of all guided tours for the 2020 season. Lower Lakes Towing Ltd. grew from its infancy in 1994 as a small tug and barge operator to become one of the largest marine transportation service providers operating on the Great Lakes today. Over the last few decades they have recognized the value of marine history in the community, and with their support visitors could book a free guided tour at the Museum.



Collections Assistant and summer student Dario Smagata-Bryan puzzling over the creation of our popular newsletter crossword.

# SERVICES & FACILITIES

## MUSEUM SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Free admission to museum, exhibits, heritage village and marine park
- Guided group tours
- Public programming/speaking engagements
- Research room
- Museum gift shop
- Covered pavilion
- Picnic tables, benches, gardens and pathways
- 7 washrooms (4 accessible)
- Free parking

## RESEARCH ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED FOR:

- Heritage consultants
- Environmental and industrial researchers
- Genealogical researchers, students and general researchers
- City staff
- Archaeologists
- Journalists and reporters
- Authors

## RESEARCH FACILITIES PROVIDED:

Fully accessible Heritage Research Archives providing documentary history of Port Colborne, Humberstone and the Welland Canal:

- Historic maps
- Historic photographs
- Indexed deeds and property records
- Directories (business and telephone)
- Microfilm
- Census records
- Cemetery records
- Welland Canal files and marine documents
- Ship files
- Family history files
- Local history books
- Microfilmed historic business ledgers
- Assessment and collector rolls
- Land registry records
- Historic newspapers
- Florence Neff Young collection



Staff members decorating for the Port Colborne's "Light Up the City" challenge.

# PROJECTS & PUBLICATIONS

## BUILDING & PROPERTY PROJECTS:

- Heritage Clothing Index and Storage Project
- Painting of Yvon Dupre Jr. and Marine Exhibit Lighthouse
- Walls repaired in heritage buildings
- Arabella's Tea Room asbestos remediation
- Interior painting: offices, tea room, archives and storage
- Security cameras installed throughout the grounds
- Rolled textile storage built
- New picnic tables
- New fire suppression systems
- Heritage vegetable and flower gardens
- New site plan created for outdoor information board

## PUBLICATIONS PRODUCED:

- 3 museum newsletters: *Spring, Summer & Fall*
- Museum event and exhibit flyer: "*Navigator*"
- Membership *Ginkgo* card gift
- Arabella's *Pie Social on the Road* tag
- Canal Days postcard
- Book a Safe Service (B.A.S.S.) poster
- COVID-19 policy and volunteer binder
- Christmas cards for members and volunteers

## MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH & SALE

- Golden Age of Humberstone Village
- A-Z Documentary History of Humberstone Village
- Port Colborne: Tales from the Age of Sail
- Coming Home—The 1901 Neff Steam Buggy
- Humberstone Township—The First Fifty Years
- Welland Canals at Port Colborne
- Memoirs of Pat MacDonald
- Scruples of Conscience—The War of 1812 in the Sugarloaf Settlement
- David Sherk and Descendants
- Caspar Sherk and Descendants
- Sherk-Troup House
- Kendricks: Port Colborne Lighthouse Keepers
- The Locktender's House
- Port People—Builders and Shapers of our Culture and Community
- Port Colborne and The Fenian Invasion of Canada June 1866
- Port People—Along the Lakeshore-Builders and Shapers of our Community in Port Colborne and Wainfleet

# JOIN US IN 2021!

## 2021 EVENTS

January 19	Annual General Meeting
February 15-21	Heritage Week
February 26	One Hour in the Past podcast with the St. Catharines Museum ("Spices")
March 1	Bell Marine sponsored membership for all Port Colborne and Wainfleet residents
March 15	Book A Safe Service opens and Archaeology of the Great Lakes lecture
March 17	A Canal and its People lecture
April 8	Resilient Community: Epidemics in Port Colborne's Past lecture
April 12-18	Cabin Fever tours for spring break
May 18	International Museum Day
May 30	Celebration to mark Arabelle's Pie Social
July 30 - August 1	Celebration to mark Canal Days
September	Virtual museum classroom
Fall 2021	Lecture Series
November	Outdoor Remembrance Day exhibit
December 2021	Celebration to mark the Grand Old Christmas Festival

## MEMBERSHIP

Thanks to the generous sponsorship from Bell Marine, all residents of Port Colborne and Wainfleet who wish to become museum members can do so for free in 2021. Bell Marine, the oldest Chandler on the Great Lakes, has contributed the cost of membership fees so citizens can join the museum at no personal cost.

Memberships can be obtained by filling out a membership card and dropping it into the mailbox or by visiting the City website and purchasing [online](#). Life Patron membership is available for \$100. Members who donate to the museum with their membership are eligible for an income tax receipt (for donations over \$20.)

## TOURS

The museum and archives offer a number of different tours, including various Urban History Walking Tours in the city of Port Colborne, Cemetery Tours, a step-on bus tour, and tours of the museum's own heritage village. These tours offer residents and visitors an entertaining and informative glimpse into our community's past, sharing the stories of the people and places which give Port Colborne such a rich cultural heritage.

Please call for rates and schedules, or follow us on [Facebook](#).

## L.R. WILSON HERITAGE RESEARCH ARCHIVES

The archives is open by appointment using B.A.S.S. (Book a Safe Service) for heritage research specializing in genealogy, heritage home research, local history and marine heritage.

The McDonald Conference Hall at the L.R. Wilson Heritage Research Archives is available for rent, and large enough to accommodate groups with diverse purposes. Hall rental includes 8 tables, 52 stacking chairs and access to a kitchenette which includes a small fridge, microwave, coffee maker and kettle.

### Rental Fees:

4 Hour rental: \$75.00 | 8 Hour rental: \$120.00

*Note: A \$20.00 deposit is required when booking the Conference Hall. Prices do not include HST.*

Rentals will resume when Ontario COVID-19 response framework declares Niagara in the yellow "protect" zone.



Poppies in bloom on the museum grounds.



Port Colborne Historical & Marine  
**MUSEUM**  
*...more than a museum!*

**PORT COLBORNE HISTORICAL & MARINE MUSEUM**

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 PortColborneHistoricalMarineMuseum

 ArabellasTeaRoom

 WilsonArchives

 @PortMuseum

 @portcolbornemuseum

 @arabellastearoom

 Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum

 Museums Ontario: Port Colborne Historical & Marine Museum



Artist Douglas Todd kindly donated his painting "Two Tugs" to raise funds for the museum at our November auction.