

HERITAGE CORNER

Sombra Museum celebrates 60 years of heritage preservation

By Kailyn Shepley

The Sombra Historical Society formed in November 1957 with the purpose of beginning a museum in Sombra Township. Thanks to fundraising efforts, they were able to purchase the John Bury homestead in Sombra for \$3,000 in April 1958. The house was in bad shape; it had been left in disrepair after years of being used as a rental property.

Over the next year, repairs were made and donations of items such as chinaware, furniture, antique farming implements and more came in from the families of Sombra Township.

Opening day came on June 20, 1959, when local residents and dignitaries, including Sarnia-Lambton MPP and Ontario Minister of Travel and Publicity Bryan Cathcart, gathered to cut the ribbon on Lambton County's first museum.

Through the hard work of Historical Society volunteers, Sombra Township Museum operated and continued to grow every year. In 1972, two portable classrooms were attached to the Bury House, allowing for the addition of a marine room, agricultural room, archives and office. Over the following decades, the museum continued to evolve, introducing school and community programming, and hosting events such as Music on the Porch, Victorian Tea, and the Blueberry Social. It also provided summer jobs for local students.

In 1992, major work was done on the foundation and plaster in the Bury House. And in 2011, the long-awaited construction of the Sombra Museum Cultural Centre on

the adjacent street was done to house gallery space, an expanded marine room, an archival vault and a state-of-the-art meeting room.

Looking to the future, the next project is to replace the portable classrooms with a building to not only house the ever-growing collection, but also provide a workspace, more exhibit space and bring the 1820's-era Smith log cabin indoors.

This June, the museum is proudly celebrating 60 years of preserving and sharing the history and the story of Sombra and St. Clair Township. The kick off for this special year will happen on June 15 with a dinner and live auction at the Wilkesport Community Centre. It will also include entertainment, a 50/50 draw, giveaways, and more! Tickets are \$50 (includes \$20 tax receipt) and can be purchased at the Sombra Museum, the Moore Sports Complex, and the Riverview Restaurant in Sombra. Look for a full list of other locations around the township on our Facebook page. The proceeds from the fundraising efforts will go towards the new building project and community events throughout the year.

The celebration will continue throughout the summer and culminate with the Historical Village Ghost Tour on September 21. Please watch for more details over the summer.

Volunteers of all ages and abilities are urgently needed for the anniversary events and throughout the summer and fall. Please contact the museum 519-892-3982 or sombramuseum@hotmail.com for information or to volunteer!

Moore Museum membership allows many heritage opportunities

The Moore Museum offers memberships that can open the doors to many heritage opportunities throughout Lambton County.

Purchasing a membership offers you and your family discounted rates at other museums in the county. A membership of \$20 per single or \$30 per family, HST included, has many benefits, including:

- ◆ Free admission to Moore Museum (not including events or programs)
- ◆ Half-price admission to the Model Train event (July 14) as well as free admission to the Downriver Craft and Gift Sale (Sept.15)
- ◆ Free admission (not including events or programs) to other participating museums: Lambton Heritage Mu-

seum; Oil Museum of Canada; Lambton County Archives; Sombra Museum; Forest Museum; Plympton-Wyoming Museum; and Arkona Lions Museum.

- ◆ A copy of each issue of The Sampler newsletter that give you the latest information about what is happening at your community museums (by email or Canada Post if you wish).

Through your purchase of a membership, you are helping to preserve your community's past, supporting the development and provision of intriguing exhibits and programs that connect people to local heritage.

For more information, or to purchase a membership, please visit Moore Museum from Friday through Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., or call 519-867-2020, or obtain it through the Contact Us page at www.mooremuseum.ca

VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME AT YOUR COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

For more information about how to become a volunteer in the effort to preserve local heritage, call the Moore Museum at 519-867-2020 or Sombra Museum at 519-892-3982.

Attention Moore Museum

Downriver Craft Sale vendors

Vendor packages have been issued for the Downriver Craft Sale at the Moore Museum. Vendors who are on the mailing list and who have not received their packages are asked to call the Moore Museum at 519-867-2020.