

Cabbagetown Preservation Association Newsletter

April, 2000

Volume 11, Issue 4

Cabbagetown's Little-Known Bluebloods

Boston can brag about its bluebloods, but that's nothing. In Cabbagetown, even the farm animals are Heritage Breeds.

Talk about lineage? One rare breed, about to move into Riverdale Farm, has a lineage that goes back to 2000 B.C! And, friends in high places? This breed was sent to Canada by Winston Churchill to protect it from danger during World War II.

You may not know that Riverdale Farm's mandate is to operate as an authentic turn-of-the-century farm, complete with animals

of that era. Even the names are intriguing: the Barred Plymouth Rock chicken, the Black Tamworth Pig, the Ancient White Park Cow.

To find out more, be sure to attend the CPA's meeting this spring. Key-note speaker is Dan Price-Jones — a Life Member of Rare Breeds Canada, a working farmer and consultant to Riverdale Farm. Dan's talk and slide presentation will focus on the unusual Heritage Breeds at the Farm, and help us to see why Riverdale Farm itself is a Rare Breed of Farm.



These two ewes with lambs are some of the Heritage Breeds at Riverdale Farm. The one with the dreadlocks is a Cotswold, the other a Horned Dorset. Photo courtesy of Linda Sellers, Parks Supervisor at the Farm.

Forsythia Festival: Twenty-Eight Years Young

For the past 28 years, the Forsythia Festival has been a springtime tradition in Cabbagetown. Always held on the first Sunday in May, it's an exciting day for children in the area.

First, there's the Parade. About 12:30ish, youngsters in costumes gather at Riverdale Park to pick up their twirlers and get their faces painted. At 1 p.m. sharp, the parade departs, led by long-standing Parade Marshall Gerrard Jones. It winds through Cabbagetown to Wellesley Park, the site for afternoon Games.

In addition to the traditional 3-legged races, potato-sack hops and obstacle runs, youngsters will be able to hop aboard a fire truck or police cruiser, join in some singalongs, and perhaps participate in a "Name the Lamb" contest.

Organized by numerous volunteers over the years, this year's Chair Kym Morton and her team promise a few new surprises. With community events like this, it's no wonder Cabbagetown is ranked #1 in the downtown area for "quality of life". Don't miss it.

CPA Annual General Meeting

"The CabbAgenda"

June 1, 2000

Farm Meeting House

6:45 p.m. Munch & Mingle

Join friends and neighbors for coffee and "potluck" dessert

7:30 p.m. The Program

Presentation:

CPA Restoration Award

Guest Speakers

Randy Brown,

Member, Farm Advisory Committee

"The Farm's Unique Heritage"

Dan Price-Jones,

Life Member, Rare Breeds Canada

"The Farm's Heritage Breeds"

(Talk & Slide Presentation)

9:00 p.m. Annual Meeting

Directors' Reports

Election of Directors

All members of the community are invited to attend this event. CPA members are invited to remain for the Annual General Meeting following the program.

CPA News

Message from the President

Well, this is my final President's Report. I've been on the Board for twelve years and have been president for five of those years. It has been a lot of work but great fun. I think one of the most important jobs was the Metcalfe Area Heritage Conservation District. More than two dozen people worked on this project. The research work is now completed and it is in the hands of the Heritage Preservation Services, City of Toronto. Go to it, City, let's get this wrapped up.

The Boards that I've worked with over the years have been wonderful. They have formed committees to run the Forsythia Festival, worked on the Cabbagetown Festival, organized the Tour of Homes Tea, coordinated walking tours, judged streetscape restorations and garden competitions, interfaced with the BIA and the Police Liaison Committee, and produced and delivered our newsletter. Very hard working boards. I thank each and every one of them for a job well done!

As Chair of the Nomination Committee, I have been asked to announce the Slate for Nominations for the 2000-2001 Board year. To serve as officers, the Committee proposes Kathy Farrell as President, Sheila Schirmer as Vice-President, Kiely Gates as Treasurer, and John Court as Secretary.

For the six Directors at large, the Constitution states that three shall be committed to serving for two years, and the remaining three to serving for one year. Board members that still have one year left to serve on two-year terms are Ted Gzebb and June Rowlands; proposed for a second one-year term is Fran Walsh. Proposed to serve for two-year terms are Marijan Bayer, Ray Barton, and Alan Waterhouse.

If any member wishes to nominate someone for the Board, please submit the nomination by the deadline, one week before the Annual General Meeting. The nomination must

be signed by two CPA members and the nominee must agree in writing if she/he will not be present at the Annual General Meeting. The nomination may be faxed to 967-9728 or dropped off at 93 Winchester Street.

Once again, I would like to thank all those Board members and volunteers who have helped me over the years. While I look forward to continuing to sit on the Board as Past President, I am confident that the new Board proposed by the Nomination Committee will do an outstanding job.

Peggy Kurtin

56 Spruce: A Unique History

Recently, the house at 56 Spruce Street was put up for sale — a situation that caused some concern to the CPA. The house has an interesting history; yet, because it had been neglected in recent years, the CPA was concerned that it might be demolished rather than restored as a heritage house.

The house was built in 1872, and still has many of the original molding, stair banisters, and some interesting tin ceilings that were popular in that era. The original owner, David Cornell, lived there with his wife and children until 1896 when the Etwell family moved in.

From 1896 until last year — for more than a century — the house was continually occupied by the Etwell family. Last year, when the last member of the third generation of the Etwell family died, there was no will. Consequently, the property reverted to the Ontario Government who put it up for sale.

The CPA invited the Heritage Property Services to come and inspect the home in February. After inspection, they recommended that it be designated as a historic property to discourage demolition. The recommendation was approved by the Preservation Board. At the present time, a basement

is being placed under the house and the house is being leveled and stabilized. A building permit for renovation has not yet been granted.

Doors Open: Come On In

Heritage Toronto unveils a new event on the weekend of May 27th and 28th. *Doors Open* will give people an opportunity to see historic properties not normally open to the public.

Architectural gems such as the Flatiron Building, The Royal Canadian Military Institute, and John Street Roundhouse are on the tour. In our neighborhood, doors will be open at the Necropolis, St. James-the-Less Chapel, the Toronto Dance Theatre.

More than seventy buildings will be open throughout Toronto. While the idea comes from Europe where it has been held in some 40 countries, Toronto is the first North American city to launch such an event. The event is cost-free. Watch for more details in your newspaper.

Amelia Street Shines Bright

Not only did the National Post recently report that Amelia Street was one of the six most desirable streets to live in Toronto, an Amelia Street house took the prize for the best lit house during the *Cabbagetown Festival of Lights*.

The judges felt that the entire street should get the prize, but as that wasn't possible, it went to Bill and Sue Brereton at 94 Amelia. Sue said that she and her neighbors all encouraged and cajoled each other to make Amelia the most beautiful street in Cabbagetown.

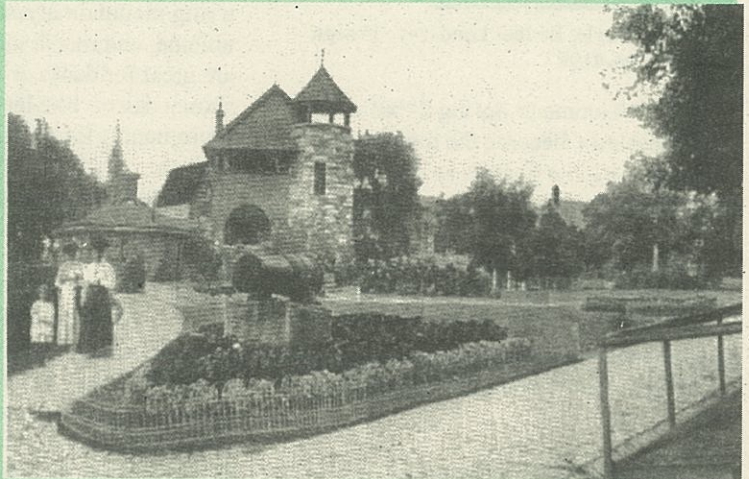
"Perhaps this will be the beginning of a friendly rivalry among the many streets of Cabbagetown for next year's Festival," commented Festival organizer Christopher Dew. The prize was dinner for two at The Town Grill, compliments of the *Festival of Lights* and The Town Grill.

From the Archives: Riverdale Zoo, Circa 1900

No one in Cabbagetown today would be old enough to recall this scene on the property of what is now Riverdale Farm.

The Zoo was a novel undertaking in its day. Daniel Lamb, the Alderman who lived at 156 Winchester Street, convinced friends and business acquaintances to make donations towards the project. In 1894, the Zoo opened with only two wolves and a few deer. By 1902, other Canadian and African animals were added. On the first weekend that the lion and elephants were on display, more than 20,000 people visited this unique site.

In 1978, after the zoo animals were transferred to the Metro Zoo, Riverdale Farm was opened to be a representation of a turn-of-the-century farm. For the past 18 years, Woolly — a Highland cow with prominent horns — has been a well-loved resident. But, alas, Woolly is not actually a Heritage Breed: Highland cattle did not arrive in Canada until the 1930s. Sadly, it is time for Woolly to move on.



On a brighter note, Riverdale Farm is planning to introduce more Heritage Breeds over the next year. To find out more about the Farm's unique Heritage and plans for future development, be sure to attend the CPA meeting at the Farm on June 1st.

A Harrowing Tale

A recent article in *Harrowsmith* will be a real eye-opener to people who own homes more than a century old, i.e. many people in Cabbagetown.

It makes a point that the CPA has been harping about for years. Many modern masons don't know how to properly repoint century-old homes. Worse, an improper repointing job can do irreparable harm to such heritage homes. According to the article, "Joints can split, bricks can spall and stones can crack. Ugly white stains can appear on the masonry."

Pointing, for those who don't know, is that stuff called mortar that holds the bricks or stones together. The article distinguishes between old-fashioned lime mortar and newer concrete mortar, emphasizing that lime mortar should be used to repair older homes originally built with traditional clay brick and lime mortar.

In classic *Harrowsmith* style, the article includes tips on how to assess your home's mortar, a detailed series of "how-to" steps for the do-it-yourselfer, a photo spread of various mason's tools, and even recipes for mortar!

For those of us who confine our recipes to the kitchen, there's another valuable tip. Algonquin College now has a Heritage Masonry program and will direct you to graduates of the program.

It's all in the April issue of *Harrowsmith*. It's worth buying a copy.

Volunteers Wanted

If you'd like to do some interesting volunteer work, there are opportunities galore in Cabbagetown.

The Cabbagetown Preservation Association always needs volunteers to help at events such as the Forsythia Festival and the Tour of Homes Tea during the Cabbagetown Cultural Festival. Right now, the CPA is looking for someone to help with the newsletter. Call 410-4259.

At the Farm, you could become an interpreter, host guided tours, dig a garden, sow some crops, or help out at special events. Call Ruth Armitage, Farm Recreation Coordinator, at 392-0046. Or, to find out more about the new "Friends of the Farm" Committee, call Randy Brown at 927-1719.

The Old Cabbagetown Tour of Homes is one of the most popular events of the Cabbagetown Cultural Festival in September. People who volunteer to work at the Tour receive a pass to attend it on the day they aren't working. A more immediate need is to find an interesting array of homes for the Tour. It's all for a good cause as the money raised is donated to local charities and not-for-profit groups. People who have volunteered their homes say it was an enjoyable experience. If you have any suggestions, or would like your home to be considered for this prestigious event, contact Chair Peggy Weir at 925-7780.

The CPA newsletter is edited by Kathy Farrell. Any story ideas or comments from readers are welcome (966-0493).

It is distributed to Cabbagetown homes by volunteers coordinated by Ray Barton (929-6388).

Dig This!

By Wendy Boyle, Be-leaf Landscape Design
Tel: 416-406-4198

Welcome to Spring 2000! Gardening has now become the number one hobby or, as I like to express it, "passion", in Canada.

When planning a garden, I always consider all four seasons, an approach that lends itself to developing seasonal themes. By planning carefully, you could have four themes, one for each season.

For example, for spring, you could choose a monochromatic theme — yellow, perhaps. Many spring flowers

Streetscapes In Bloom

For many years, the CPA has sponsored the "Streetscapes in Bloom" Award to recognize one of the many delightful front gardens in our community. Last year, more than a dozen gardens were nominated.

If you would like to nominate a garden — your own or someone else's — simply phone 967-6432. If you are shy about nominating your own, don't worry. You don't need to leave your name.

Judges will view the garden three times over the season. The panel of judges always includes last year's winners, who, in 1999, were the owners of 123 Winchester Street.

are naturally yellow — witch hazel, forsythia, daffodils and crocus are a few common varieties. I also suggest trying mountain alyssum, golden columbine, and marsh marigolds which are great for damp or wet areas. Or, showy daisies like leopard's bane (*doronicum*) for mid-spring bloom with parrot yellow tulips. The choices are endless but of course you need to consider the surrounding light and soil conditions.

Then, as spring bulbs and perennials fade, you could introduce a summer theme. For example, Fragrance and Healing gardens have become popular and can easily be introduced into the structure of your garden. The late spring blooming Dwarf Korean lilac may be the start of your fragrant summer garden, leading to a continuous array of sweet-scented flowering shrubs and perennials.

For fragrance, roses are a popular choice, with the hybrid tea varieties offering the most intense perfume. Cedars are often overlooked as a source of scent, but deserve a second thought because they can also provide structure and some winter interest. Maiden Pinks, lavender, carnations, rosemary, stock and thyme

are just a few plants to tingle your senses and sweeten our summer environment. My favorite is the hybrid Evening Nicotiana, a 3' high annual that's a definite show stopper! The white blossoms open up at night, giving a simple but elegant display of fragrant bliss.

In the fall, your garden theme can focus on the harvest and environmentally friendly activities. Fall leaves can be used as mulch or turned into compost for next year soil enhancement. Water features such as a pond or a bird bath will attract birds and establish a feeding ground for winter bird watching. A rain barrel saves our congested sewer systems and can water the garden right up to the end of November, providing the evergreens with an extra drink for their long winter ahead. The odd vegetable or herb that may have been tucked into the flower beds can now be harvested or dried.

This leads us into our winter theme of *The Cabbagetown Festival of Lights* — a full circle. With imagination and careful planning, your garden can become more than a Spring delight. It can become a Garden for All Seasons.

CPA Board of Directors

Peggy Kurtin, President	967-6432	Ray Barton, John Court,
Marijan Bayer, Vice-Pres.	360-5357	Ted Gzebb, June Rowlands,
Kiely Gates, Treasurer	928-7405	Sheila Schirmer, Fran Walsh.
Kathy Farrell, Secretary	966-0493	Chris Howard, Ex-Officio

CPA Office Phone: (416) 410-4259; Fax: (416) 967-9728

CPA Membership Application

Your support is critical to the health of the Cabbagetown Preservation Association. Your membership fee, along with revenue from sales of our books, t-shirts, mugs and other items, is our main source of funding. Please mail or drop off your support to Ted Gzebb at 292 Sackville Street, Toronto, Ontario M5A 3G2.

Date _____ Name _____
One Year \$10.00 _____ Address _____
Three Years \$30.00 _____
Five Years \$50.00 _____ Postal Code _____ Telephone _____
Single _____
Family _____ E-Mail _____