

The ATTIC

CARE FOR A POT OF TEA?

By: Selin Kahramanoğlu, Programming & Outreach Coordinator

You may have noticed that the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) is hosting more afternoon teas this year! Whether you attended our *Mother's Day Afternoon Tea*, or are planning on coming to one of the summer tea events, it is an experience to be remembered. Dressing up in your best clothes and enjoying delicious scones on a historic property is entertaining but also meaningful. Did you know that there is a long history of high teas in Aurora which served a greater purpose?

Thinking back to World War I, high teas were organized in an effort to fundraise for the war effort. Since most ladies remained in the community at that time, they used what resources they had available to help raise funds for soldiers overseas. What do you say we make a bunch of finger sandwiches, add little cakes to the tray, a large pot of tea, and ask the guests for donations when they arrive to visit? Of course, we know that these events took a lot more work and planning, but the concept was a simple and hopeful one. Additional focuses of these teas included supporting the families left behind during the war and spreading the word about peacekeeping. So much

influence for positive change was in the hands of women holding their dainty teacups. With afternoon teas, the power of conversation, deep pockets, and genuine kindness went a long way.

Across from The Manor (Hillary House's name), Joseph Fleury's notable property, Inglehurst, was a frequent spot for afternoon teas. When his son, Herbert Fleury, came to live in the home with his family, he supported the war effort by hosting massive tea parties to raise money for the Girls' Red Cross Auxiliary.

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SUMMER OPEN HOURS



Come for a tour, see the new exhibitions, enjoy the beautiful gardens, or find that perfect item in the Gift Shop. There's something here for everyone!

This issue of The Attic is generously sponsored by

DELMANOR

Aurora

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By: Geoffrey Dawe & Alan Lambert

Well, we are now firmly into spring and inching our way to summer. And, with any luck the weather will start to even out! Although the amount of rain that we have had has been very kind to the Hillary House grounds!

First, we wish to thank everyone who attended the Special Members Meeting held at the end of February. The purpose of that meeting was to consider the future of Hillary House, and the following motion was passed:

"THAT the Membership of the Aurora Historical Society authorize the Board of Directors to enter into discussions with the Town of Aurora to explore options with respect to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Hillary House, and to report back to the Membership."

We then got in touch with the Town to advise them of the outcome, and subsequently, Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services, prepared a report for Council, seeking direction on opening those discussions. This report was presented at the Council meeting on June 4th at Town Hall, and we also delegated at that meeting in support of her report. We will, of course, report back on the outcome of that meeting.

In other news, we hosted a very successful *Mother's Day Afternoon Tea*. Actually, four of them! Two sessions on Saturday and two on Sunday. All four were sold out, and as a side benefit, our Staff and Volunteers got more than their share of steps in over the weekend, going up and down stairs! (We do our best to promote a healthy work environment!)



Co-Presidents, Geoff & Al.

Claire finished cataloguing the Godfrey Collection and a full report will be available later this year. Shannon also completed her internship assisting Selin with programming and events. A big thanks to Claire and Shannon for a great job!

We had a booth at the Aurora Chamber Home & Living Show with a good number of visitors signing up as volunteers, and a very successful Spring Clean-up Day! Under the watchful eyes of Kathleen Vahey, John and Margorie Bare, and Donna Lewis, we filled two bins, which were generously supplied by the Town of Aurora.

We have a busy summer schedule and encourage you to review and drop by!

Last, but certainly not least, a big thank you to our Staff and Volunteers for your hard work and dedication. We couldn't do this without you!

Al & Geoff

Thank you to all our Staff, Volunteers, AHS Members, and Sponsors for their continued support!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HILLARY HOUSE

Have a look at some past events and programs run by the AHS since January! Did you attend any of them?



Speaker Series program “Living by the Medicine Wheel” with Asha Frost.



Photo from the Heritage Craft Workshop, Basics of Crochet.



Speaker Series program “Lost Archival Representations of Shell Shock” with Cameron Telch.



Programming & Outreach Coordinator, Selin, teaches the Art of Letter Writing Workshop at the Aurora Public Library.



Speaker Series program “Spirits & Stories of Hillary House” with two members of The Paranormal Seekers.



Volunteers Shriya and Board Member Michelle, posing at the Aurora Home & Living Show.



Participants enthusiastically complete their masterpieces at Paint Night, in partnership with Royal Rose Art Gallery & Gifts.



A family enjoying the Mother’s Day Afternoon Tea event inside the Ballroom at Hillary House.

Want to be involved at the AHS? Contact us to be a volunteer, intern, or to join our Board of Directors! [\(Click here\)](#)

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Even people from outside of Aurora were drawn into Herbert's tea events, aiding tremendously with wartime contributions. The ladies of the Hillary family were often at these Red Cross teas, helping with organizing, socializing, and increasing attendance.

Originally, afternoon high tea did not have such a noble cause. Quite simply, teatime served to carry over hunger between lunch and dinner. In the early Victorian period, Anne, the seventh Duchess of Bedford, would be feeling snackish at around 4pm and would thus request some tea, bread and butter.¹



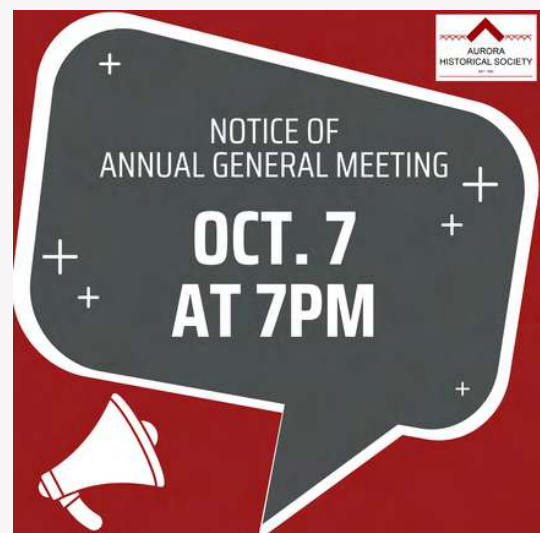
Photo HA2008.1167 from the Hillary House Archival Collection, hand-labelled in the bottom-right as "Red Cross Tea Grounds, Inglehurst, Aurora, Ontario."

Duchess Anne eventually decided to have some company join her, making the snacks more elaborate, and of course, guests would arrive beautifully dressed to be presentable in her presence. Afternoon tea started trending, serving as an opportunity to socialize, show off the quality and variety of your wardrobe, and enjoy lavish snacks. Today, it is not much different. Afternoon tea is now realized as going to a beautiful space to have delicious food, meet with trusted (and fashionable)

friends, maybe to exchange gossip or divulge secrets, and leaving the mini party feeling your best.

You may be starting to understand why the AHS has planned for more afternoon teas this year. Over the past few years, we have developed a smooth system of operations for our afternoon teas, picking up interest and momentum in the community. We have also perfected a lot of the event details thanks to attendee feedback. In addition to the annual *Mother's Day Tea* in May and *Victorian Harvest Tea* in September, we now have a *Victorian Garden Party* in July (with live music and activities), as well as our *Children's Teddy Bear Tea* returning for a second year in a row this August.

Profits from events like these go to preserving our beautiful National Historic Site for future generations, and helps the AHS continue to provide entertaining and educational programming. How can we not use this lovely place for a good cause, just like before? Whether it is outdoors in our wonderfully tended gardens, or inside our stunning historic rooms, Hillary House continues to be a welcoming place for guests to visit. We hope that you join us for a pot of tea this season!



UPCOMING EVENTS

The warm weather is bringing even more sunshine and good times to Hillary House!
Click on the images and be directed to the event ticketing pages for more information.

AHS Speaker Series
"Residents of Hillary House"
with Kathleen Vahey

Wednesday,
June 26th

7:00pm to
8:30pm

Hybrid
Program



Speaker Series: "Residents of Hillary House"
with Kathleen Vahey
Wednesday, June 26th at 7:00pm, Hybrid

AHS Speaker Series
"Chinese-Canadian Game
Changers" with Arlene Chan

Wednesday,
July 31st

7:00pm to
8:30pm

Hybrid
Program



**Speaker Series: "Chinese-Canadian Game
Changers" with Arlene Chan**
Wednesday, July 31st at 7:00pm, Hybrid

Heritage Craft Workshop
Intro to Historical Fiction
Writing

Saturday, July 6th
1:00pm to 3:00pm
Materials provided.



**Heritage Craft Workshop: "Intro to Historical Fiction
Writing" with Guest Instructor, Serena Ypelaar**
Saturday, July 6th at 1:00pm, In-Person

Paint Night
In partnership with
Royal Rose Art Gallery

Saturday, August 10th
7:00pm to 9:00pm
Materials provided.



Paint Night
In partnership with Royal Rose Art Gallery & Gifts
Saturday, August 10th at 7:00pm, In-Person

Victorian Garden Party

Featuring:

Mini High Tea Service
Optional Activity Stations
Access to the Grounds
Plenty of Photo Spots

Sunday, July 14th

12:00pm to 3:00pm

In-Person (Rain Date Selected)



Victorian Garden Party

Featuring tea service, live music, activity stations,
photo opportunities, and more.

Sunday, July 14th at 12:00pm, In-Person

Children's Teddy Bear Tea

Featuring tea service and activity stations for kids!



Saturday, August 24th

12:00pm to 2:00pm

In-Person

Children's Teddy Bear Tea

Featuring tea service and activity stations for kids.

Saturday, August 24th at 12:00pm, In-Person

Save the Date

Victorian Harvest Tea

Saturday, September 14th

In-Person Program

Speaker Series: Ted Barris

Wednesday, September 31st

Hybrid Program

Make note of these events in your calendar!

Ticket pages will be available on our website soon.

We are social! Follow us for more updates through our social media. Click the logos below.



AURORA THROUGH THE ARCHIVES

By: Kathleen Vahey, Curator / Manager

Do you remember the Aurora Horse Show at Town Park, or maybe when it was in Machell Park? What about the Aurora Public Library when it was on Victoria Street, or swimming in the George Street Pool? If you are looking for a trip down memory lane or you are interested in seeing what it was like as a child in Aurora over the last 100 years, visit our new exhibition *Aurora Through the Archives: Growing Up Aurora* and *Through the Hillary Lens*, on display at Hillary House National Historic Site from May 6th to June 29th.



Aurora Through the Archives: Growing Up Aurora

Growing Up Aurora showcases photographs and stories from the 1940s to the 2000s from people who live or lived in Aurora. Bound to bring back memories from your own childhood, this display shows that although there have been many changes to Aurora over the years, you'll be surprised by what has stayed the same. *Through the Hillary Lens* is a carefully curated compilation of archival photographs from the Hillary House collection. It provides a glimpse into the life of the Hillary children from the 1880s to the 1920s. This display evokes familiarity and exemplifies the universality of the childhood experience.

The displays at Hillary House are part of the larger *Aurora Through the Archives* exhibition which is a collaboration between the AHS, Aurora Museum and Archives, Niagara College - Aurora Armoury, and Royal Rose Art Gallery & Gifts. There are additional displays at Royal Rose Art Gallery and the Armoury which use archival images from the Aurora Museum & Archives.

These displays were curated by Amanda Jenkins, Sophie Langille, and Maddison Dearlove-Marshall, Master of Museum Studies students from the University of Toronto. The exhibition is part of the 2024 CONTACT Photography Festival, an annual festival based in Toronto that has grown since 1997 to become one of the world's largest photography festivals.



Aurora Through the Archives: Through the Hillary Lens

Thank you to the Aurora Museum & Archives and all of the partners for helping this exhibition come to life.

Bound to bring back memories from your own childhood, this display shows that although there have been many changes to Aurora over the years, you'll be surprised by what has stayed the same.

AHS UPDATES

Learn more about what's new with the AHS in our latest updates below.

THANK YOU DR. LESLIE OLIVER

In early 2024, we received a generous offer from Dr. Leslie Oliver in the form of a \$10,000 legacy donation.

Dr. Oliver, a third generation Auroran, founded the AHS back in 1963 as an advocacy body for local heritage. He was also an important figure in preserving some of Aurora's treasures including Church Street School and the Grand Trunk Railway station, now used by GO Transit.

The Oliver family are generous supporters of the AHS and the Aurora Museum & Archives, even donating a large collection of archival material to the Museum & Archives in 2021.

We thank the Dr. Oliver and his wife Mary Jeanne for their generosity and continuous commitment to Aurora's heritage preservation.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



In late May, Hillary House was buzzing with activity as local film maker, Sean Cisterna, transformed our museum into the set of his latest horror film, *The Rug*. Starring Canadian icon Jayne Eastwood, the story follows her character dealing with a new rug that has an appetite for humans. The museum was also the backdrop of a concurrent documentary showcasing Cisterna's efforts to get local seniors involved in the film industry. We will provide more updates in the next issue.

GIFT SHOP DONATIONS

Summer starts June 20th, so there is still time to do your Spring cleaning and drop off items for the AHS to sell in the Gift Shop. We accept jewellery, crystal, teacups, gently-used small household items in excellent condition. Unfortunately, we do not accept books or textiles. You can call in advance to arrange a drop off, or alternatively put the items in the Drop Off Cabinet by the south door. Your donations to the Gift Shop are greatly appreciated as it not only rehomes loved items, but the funds help to maintain the AHS's operations.



Some highlight items for sale in our Gift Shop, but the shelves have space for more!

Looking for something new? Items continue to come in regularly, so you never know what you might find! Items currently available include local honey, Aurora maps, crystal and many other unique pieces. Need a summer read? Purchase a book about the local history of Aurora or a novel, all available in our Gift Shop.

I.T. SUPPORT NEEDED

The AHS is looking for someone with I.T. knowledge and experience to assist with various technology related projects. Reach out to community@aurorahs.com if you're interested.



(L-R) Selin & Kathleen join Garden Volunteer Donna, dressed as Super Pollinator, and Garden Aurora's Cindy, at Town Hall where Donna received the Town of Aurora Green Award.

CONGRATULATIONS DONNA

On Monday, May 27th, the Town of Aurora's Community Recognition Awards ceremony took place at Town Hall. Our very own Garden Volunteer, Donna Lewis, received the Green Award! This recognition is awarded to an individual that supports the protection, preservation, sustainability, or conservation of our natural environment. Together with Garden Aurora, with supporting letters from Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario, Aurora Community Arboretum, and Aurora Royal Canadian Legion Branch 385, the AHS was pleased to contribute in nominating Donna for the award.

Donna is not only spearheading the Hillary House landscaping plan, she is also an advocate and protector of Trumpeter Swans, and focuses on the removal of invasive species, among many other initiatives.

Congratulations Donna!

THANK YOU BRENDA

Brenda Snape has been a dedicated AHS volunteer for over 15 years! Working diligently on laying out our newsletter, accepting Staff's last-minute changes, working with the AHS to communicate happenings to the public, Brenda has been an exceptional contributor to our team. At this point, she has decided to step back from the AHS to focus on new creative projects with other organizations. We remain grateful for her long-time support and wish her all the best.

AHS Staff are now taking on the layout and design of *The Attic*. As we work through the new look of the newsletter, please be patient with our team during this exciting new challenge.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THESE GENEROUS PEOPLE!

Donna Lewis and the Spring Clean-Up volunteer crew for their efforts in prepping the grounds for Summer.

Town of Aurora for the yard bins and our lovely hanging baskets.

John and Marjorie Bare for looking after our lawns, gardens, and for keeping the grass tennis court in shape.

AHS Collections volunteer team for their hard work with the Godfrey Collection and other digitization projects.

Everyone who helped in both big and small ways at the Mother's Day Afternoon Tea events, and the Home Show.

Our wonderful partner organizations, including Aurora Public Library, Aurora Cultural Centre, Aurora Museum & Archives, and Royal Rose Art Gallery & Gifts.



VOLUNTEER

WITH THE AHS!



Contact us for an Application Form, or click the image above.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Board of Directors | Gardens & Grounds |
| Collections & Exhibitions | Facilities & Maintenance |
| Gift Shop | Administrative |
| Tour Guides & Programs | Special Projects |
| | Special Events |

Have a different opportunity in mind? Let us know!

FENCE UPDATE

If you have been past Hillary House in the last couple of weeks, you will have noticed that three sections of the fence closest to the driveway are damaged. On the night of May 23rd, an incident resulted in a vehicle hitting the fence.



Damage to our heritage fence occurred afterhours on Thursday, May 23rd, 2024.

We have been in contact with Parks Canada who completed the restoration of the fence in May 2023, as well as several contractors to arrange for repairs. We expect the fence to be repaired by the end of the summer.

A NEW CHAPTER

The AHS was fortunate to have the assistance of two interns this year.

Claire joined the AHS in August 2023 to assist with inventorying the Godfrey Collection. By the end of her contract, she had inventoried 21,268 items in 151 boxes. Claire has now accepted the position of Exhibitions Assistant with the King Heritage and Cultural Centre.

In January 2024, the AHS welcomed Shannon to assist with Programming and Events. She developed a new Girl Guides program, created social media posts, lead tours of Hillary House and supported Selin with numerous AHS events. She has now accepted the position of Programs Assistant with Heritage Toronto.

We thank them for their hard work with the AHS and wish them all the best in the future.

PROMOTE OUR COMMUNITY

Have you seen these? The AHS wishes to highlight some great initiatives.

DOWNTOWN AURORA FRESH FOOD MARKET



DATES:
Wednesdays
June 12
July 10
Aug 14

TIME:
4:00pm-
5:30pm

Drop by and enjoy this affordable fresh fruit and vegetable market by Welcoming Arms!

Space is open to all and designed to make it easier to access fresh produce.

PLACE: Welcoming Arms
44 Metcalfe Street, Aurora

CONTACT: For market related questions, please contact YRFN at: SophieS@yrfn.ca or (905) 841-3101 ext 211



Click [here](#) to learn about these markets.

Want to be featured in the AHS newsletter? We have limited space, but welcome additions from our community on a first-come-first-serve basis.



From June 1st – 30th, every \$1 donated to the AHS via CanadaHelps gives you a chance to win one of two \$10,000* donations.

*Additional terms and conditions apply. Read contest rules on the CanadaHelps website.

You could WIN \$10,000 for your charity!*

Click [here](#) to donate.



AHS Volunteer Kathryn O'Dwyer wrote her debut children's novel, *Ella and Allora and the Secret Drain!* Available in the AHS Gift Shop, or purchase the book online.

Click [here](#) to visit the author's website and get more details.

The Aurora Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of



Canadian Heritage

Patrimoine canadien



KEEP IN TOUCH

Get to know our organization and spend time on our heritage property.

RENTALS

Book your upcoming wedding photos, parties, or meetings at Hillary House. We are ready to host your special events. Please contact the office for rental rates and packages available year-round.



Photo courtesy of Sandra Saad.

AURORA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2024

Board of Directors

Co-President	Alan Lambert
Co-President	Geoffrey Dawe
Co-Treasurer	Geoffrey Dawe
Co-Treasurer	Dan McGeown
Secretary	John Green
Director	Michelle Primeau

Committees

Grounds Maintenance	Alan Lambert
ToA Heritage Advisory Committee Rep	John Green

Staff

Curator / Manager	Kathleen Vahey
Programming & Outreach Coordinator	Selin Kahramano lu
Administrative Assistant	Julie Preston

Newsletter Team

Production	Julie Preston
Editor	Kathleen Vahey
Review	Christine McLure
Layout & Design	Selin Kahramano lu

We invite members to submit suggestions for inclusion in the newsletter. Please email community@aurorahs.com

MEMBERSHIPS

Did you renew your membership? When you become a Member of the Aurora Historical Society, your contribution aids in the preservation, maintenance, and operation of Hillary House National Historic Site and its grounds. We depend on donor support to provide relevant heritage programming to all ages.

MEMBER REWARDS

- Invitations to Members-only exhibit previews
- Members rates on rental of the Ballroom, grounds, and other areas
- Discounts on ticketed events
- Regular updates on upcoming events
- Voting rights* at Member meetings, such as the Annual General Meeting

*Individual and Family memberships only

Click for the Membership Form or contact our office.

VISIT US

The Aurora Historical Society is an independent, volunteer-led, non-profit organization dedicated to heritage education for all ages. Stop by to see us!



Hillary House National Historic Site
15372 Yonge Street, Aurora, Ontario, L4G 1N8

905.727.8991

community@aurorahs.com

www.aurorahs.com

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10AM to 4PM