

## **Report from the Chair – February 2026**

We have had another great year with the Merrickville and District Historical Society. This has been year two of our partnership with the Village of Merrickville-Wolford and the Museum Services Board running the Museum at The Blockhouse. Things are running smoothly, close to 7000 visitors (close to pre-pandemic numbers) and the best year ever for donations. We all have been working co-operatively to have a smooth transition, and make the Museum, and the viewing of our Collection, the best experience it can be. Remember – while the Blockhouse Museum is closed for the next 6 months – over 15,000 artifacts and articles can be viewed virtually on our website [www.merrickvillehistory.org](http://www.merrickvillehistory.org).

We have submitted an application to Young Canada Works for a four month Intern grant – a post-secondary person in the Museum services industry who can help us improve the organization of our Archives and digitization. We should know by end of March. We are also taking over a little more space at the Burritts Rapids Archives, to have a better working area, and hopefully be able to invite the public to tour and have access the information stored there.

MDHS hosted a number of private tours for the people aboard the Kawartha as they passed through the Village, but due to low water levels the September/October some visits had to be cancelled. Other private tours included 50 Chinese Seniors from Ottawa, 40 ladies-who-shop from Montreal and 24 Curlers from Scotland.

There will be LOTS of changes at the Museum this year – a new visiting exhibit about the Rideau Canal and a complete refresh of the Museum in general. You will get more information on this from this year's guest speaker at the AGM – Claudette Martin. She and our Collection Committee are working on big things and especially some new changes for the upstairs displays.

The Speaker Series has started once again and we have a new Lecture coordinator, Tanya Prinsep. Speakers and topics will be announced in Phoenix, Website and Facebook. It will always be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the Month, 7:00pm at the Merrickville Legion. And we do mail out reminders to our members monthly.

Memberships are up for renewal as of January 1, 2026 ( unless you are a Lifer!) You can etransfer to the Treasurer ([treasurer@merrickvillehistory.org](mailto:treasurer@merrickvillehistory.org)) It is once again \$10 per person. We no longer have family memberships. You can also renew if you come to one of the Lectures.

A reminder – we are always looking for volunteers for working committees, membership and Blockhouse Museum activities.

On August 9<sup>th</sup> we had the unveiling of the HF Mclean Deeks Quarry replica Cairn and historical plaque. The 1000 Islands Chapter of Professional Engineers spend several years building this great structure – complete with a time capsule that will be opened in 50 years!. MDHS ( specifically Ann Martin ) spent many hours helping with the duplication of the original Bronze plaques. As Chair of MDHS it was my honour to help install the time capsule. I wonder what things will be like in 50 years!

We are still working with artist Laura Breetvelt Brown and an HF Mclean statue. Always a challenge to fund funding and we may downsize from the original plans – but it will happen.

June 2026 will mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society so be sure we will have some special events to celebrate. It is also the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of Canal construction -so lots to celebrate in 2026.

Finally, thank you to all who support the Merrickville and District Historical Society in whatever way that you do.

Jane Graham

Chair, MD HS