



# Celebrating Windsor's Cultural Community



# Cultural Engines

*Celebrating*

*Windsor Public Library, Windsor Symphony Orchestra, and  
Art Gallery of Windsor.*



Cultural Engines: Celebrating Windsor Public Library, Windsor Symphony Orchestra  
and Art Gallery of Windsor.

by Rebecca Canty, Sarah M.J. Jarvis, and Dean Corriveau.

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# Introduction

*“Ultimately, there’s always been a link between all three [organizations]; ...you can generally appreciate the fabric that represents our entire diverse community. Ultimately, they showcase the identity of our region for residents and visitors alike.” Lionel Kernerman, October 5, 2012*

“Cultural Engines” is a unique local history project. It is a tribute to the three largest cultural organizations which have driven Windsor and Essex County’s cultural history. The Windsor Public Library, the Art Gallery of Windsor and Windsor Symphony Orchestra have joined together to make this project possible. Through two mediums: culturalengines.com and this e-book, you can explore a treasure trove of the creative results of Windsor’s cultural community, highlighting the organizations, champions and stars which sustain and maintain our community’s achievements in art, music and literature.

Did you know that the Windsor Public Library has been in the community since 1894? Or that the Art Gallery of Windsor’s first home was in Willistead Manor? Or that the Windsor Symphony Orchestra was the first orchestra to perform at the new CBC Glenn Gould Studio in 1993?

Over 250,000 people earn their living in Ontario’s culture sector, generating \$19.7 billion of Ontario’s Gross Domestic Product. In addition to the economic benefits of a strong cultural sector, arts and culture contribute numerous benefits to individuals and communities including playing a pervasive, socially integrating role in fostering community identity, creativity, cohesion, and vitality.

The bulk of the text and stories are here in this e-book, with some photographs. A full bibliography, or resource list, is included, and for the sake of space and accessibility to all readers, we have only cited direct quotations in our text. All of our primary and secondary resources are listed in the resource list, and we have attempted to acknowledge all sources. In addition, archives and notes are available at the Windsor Public Library Central Branch archives for those wishing to research further.

We encourage you to enjoy this e-book, bookmark and explore the website (culturalengines.com) with many more photographs, resources for teachers, children’s activities, and enjoy all that the Cultural Engines have to offer. Additionally, please visit often and contribute to our ever-changing and growing Cultural Engines blog at culturalengines.com.

# Windsor Public Library: The Beginnings

## *Beginnings – Mandate*

*“The Library has proved to be a very popular institution. This is evidenced by the great number of borrower’s cards issued during the year, and by the fact that new cards are still being issued every day to new customers. These are many families in the city in which each member above the age of twelve years possesses a borrower’s card.” [...] “It has been said that a public library is the people’s university. It is our wish that the people of Windsor may regard ours as such, and may take increasing interest in it and make the fullest use of it.” William Kay, WPL’s first librarian, 1896.*

The idea to open a free library in Windsor had been discussed in the community and in the local newspaper for many years. A Mechanics’ Institute, a precursor of public libraries in Ontario, was established in 1854 to “keep young men off the streets,” (Records of the Amalgamated and Branch Libraries, Municipal Archives) however the Institute, facing financial difficulties, closed around 1856.

In 1894, a citizen’s committee was organized in Windsor to develop a free library. The committee presented Windsor City Council with a petition with over 500 signatures requesting that the issue of a free library be put to a referendum. With majority support, the bylaw enabling the formation of a free public library was passed June 26, 1894, and the first public library was opened in Windsor in Lambie’s Hall on December 6, 1894.

The Windsor Public Library Board invited the Walkerville and Sandwich Councils to make library services available to their residents. Two years later, Walkerville Council agreed, paying \$175 for the year to allow its residents use of the WPL services. This arrangement continued until 1905 when the Walkerville library was opened. The library was in various locations in the Walkerville area until it moved into Willistead Manor in 1922.

After a year of service, the library had 5,254 books in circulation and 1,713 library members. By 1898, the library had outgrown its physical space and overcrowding was a problem. Andrew Braid, secretary of the Windsor St. Andrew’s Society and the WPL board, wrote to American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie (1835 – 1919) financed the construction of libraries across Ontario, Canada and the U.S., under the stipulation that local authorities provided the land and a budget for continued operation and maintenance.

In 1901, from the persistent determination of Andrew Braid, Carnegie agreed to fund the con-

struction of a library in Windsor. Once the site was selected and contracts were tendered, the new library was built on the corner of Victoria Avenue and Park Street.

## People

*“The reading room continues to be well customerized. Children of public school age are frequently to be found in the building during school hours. I would suggest that the truant officer be instructed to pay occasional visits to the reading room” (William Kay, Annual Report, 1899)*

## Pioneers

Andrew Braid, the secretary of the WPL Board, was the catalyst in securing funding for the construction of the Carnegie Library. It was Braid, who in 1900 began writing to Andrew Carnegie requesting funding to build a library. Through his persistence, and after over a year of correspondence, Braid convinced Carnegie to fund a library in Windsor. Braid served on the library board for 25 years.

In 1921, Alicia Mason, the principal of Cameron Avenue School was the first woman on the Windsor Public Library board. Since that time, women have served on the board in a variety of positions, notably Mrs. Gordon Kerr, who was a board member from 1936 – 1966, including serving six times as Chair of the Board.

## Library Staff

William Kay was the first librarian of the Windsor Public Library when the library and reading room opened in 1894. He took his job very seriously and reported to the board: “It has been said that a public library is the people’s university. It is our wish that the people of Windsor may regard ours as such and may take increasing interest in it and make the fullest use of it.” (William Kay, *WPL Annual Report*, 1894) A trained teacher, Kay preferred to work as a librarian and remained in the post until his death in 1902.

Marcelle Frebault was hired at Walkerville Library in 1918 and was succeeded by Anne Hume the following year. At the Windsor library that year, Miss Agnes Lancefield was appointed librarian, the first trained professional to hold the position. In 1924, Helen Langford successfully completed studies at the Ontario Library School, bringing the library’s number of professionally

trained librarians to two.

Angus Mowat, a veteran of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, was a Chief Librarian in Windsor from 1929 to 1932. Afterwards, he spent a short time as Head Librarian in Saskatoon, and was appointed Inspector of Public Libraries in Ontario in 1937. He was the author of two novels, but best known as the father of novelist Farley Mowat, who also began writing when the family lived in Windsor.

Anne Hume was appointed Chief Librarian of the new City of Windsor after amalgamation in 1937. She was a passionate supporter of the raising of professional standards for both women and librarians serving as executive on the Local Council of Women, the Canadian Association of Adult Education, as a councillor and president of the Ontario Library Association, a charter member of the Canadian Library Association and was an active member of the American Library Association.

At her gala retirement dinner, after 37 years of public service, colleagues heaped praise on Anne Hume's work, one even referring to her as the "mother of Essex County library services" (W.K. Sidey, quoted in *Windsor Daily Star*, April 29, 1957). Hume graduated from Queen's University in 1914 and earned her Library Science degree in 1919. As a fresh graduate, she joined the Walkerville library in 1920 and organized the first Arts and Letters Club, and was a founding member of the Windsor Art Association, and served on its executive. It was Hume who managed to persuade the National Gallery of Canada and the Royal Ontario Museum to share exhibits at the new Art Gallery section of the Walkerville library at Willistead.

Hume undertook academic research on top of her other duties, and compiled histories of Windsor libraries, the art movement in Windsor and often wrote articles for book trade and library professional periodicals. She later received an honorary doctor of laws from Queen's University for her contribution to the profession of librarian.

At Anne Hume's retirement in 1957, over 500 community leaders and librarians joined her at a dinner in her honour at the Prince Edward Hotel to recognize her work with the Windsor Public Library.

Angus Mowat paid tribute to Miss Hume, calling her, "a woman who is noted for the help she has given to libraries across Canada" (Mowat, *Windsor Daily Star*, April 26, 1957).

Gladys Shepley succeeded Anne Hume as Chief Librarian in 1957. Appointed assistant chief librarian in October, 1955, she was also the head of the Carnegie Branch. Shepley was born in Essex County, raised in Amherstburg and attended Windsor Collegiate, also known as Patterson Collegiate.

Shepley was another president of the Ontario Library Association and acted as the Ontario Library Association representative to the American Library Association and served on the executive of the Canadian Library Association. Shepley was a strong supporter of professional standards and frequently overcame severe staff shortages, praising her staff for their outreach

and standards as their, “service has extended into many areas of community life as well as contributing much to the field of professional librarianship” (Shepley, *WPL Annual Report*, 1959). In 1964, she praised the quick detective work of librarians H. Ruger and L. Findlay who helped police recover stolen (music) records worth \$2,800 from the Fine Arts Section, and ensured that the WPL Board recognized the two librarians with personal gifts. In September, 1986, a sculpture called “Shared Joy” depicting a librarian and child reading by Chris Rees was commissioned in memory of Gladys Shepley and the dedication featured venerable CBC broadcaster Lister Sinclair.

Fred and Callie Israel, both qualified librarians who had met at Kitchener Public Library came to Windsor in 1968. Fred Israel was appointed Chief Librarian – later Director. He was tasked not only with building a new Main Library building, but finding a suitable location for it. Israel successfully guided the Board in the construction of the new building, and also dealt with a sudden downfall in budget afterwards. Callie Israel worked at the WPL branches specializing in children’s programming. They retired in 1992, and the auditorium in the Main/ Central Branch is named in Fred Israel’s honour.

In recent years, others have served as directors or chief executive officers of the WPL. Under their leadership, the library has made great strides in technological advances, developing programs such as the Children’s Learning Centres at Riverside, Central and Budimir Libraries, developed the Windsor Public Library Foundation for fundraising and oversaw the opening of the Bridgeview (2002) and Fontainebleau (2005) libraries.

It is important to mention the many Windsor Public Library staff members, too. As in the past and still today, many WPL staff have begun working with the organization after completing their education, and have remained dedicated to their customers and work of the library for their careers. The WPL staff have shared their love of books and learning with their customers, becoming a second family to many.

William Kay, Chief Librarian: 1894 – 1902

Anne Hume, Chief Librarian: 1936 -1956

Gladys Shepley, Chief Librarian: 1956 -1968

Fred Israel, Director: 1968 – 1992

Jean Dirksen, Director: 1992 – 1997

Steve Salmons, Chief Executive Officer: 1997 – 2004

Brian Bell, Chief Executive Officer: 2004 – 2008

Jean Foster, Acting Chief Executive Officer: 2008 – 2010

Barry Holmes, Chief Executive Officer: 2010 – 2012

Chris Woodrow, Acting Chief Executive Officer: 2012 -

## *Professional Accreditation*

The first librarian of the Windsor Public Library was William Kay, a teacher by training. The first professionally-trained librarian of Walkerville Library, Marcelle Frebault, was hired in 1918. Frebault was replaced by Anne Hume, also professionally-trained, and by 1924 two professional librarians were on staff.

The library board, concerned with getting and keeping experienced staff throughout the 1930s, reported the need for adequate pay to maintain high quality of service to meet the needs of customers. By 1940, of the 26 full-time librarians, 13 were professionally trained. The scarcity of suitable librarians forced the board to make the decision to reduce hours at the Main library and branches.

With the advancement of professional standards, and with the leadership of Anne Hume, the Essex County Library system began in 1940. The County Library system was headquartered at Willistead Library with Hume as County Librarian and selection, buying, cataloguing and distribution was performed by the Windsor Staff. In 1944 the County Library Board was financially able to support a trained librarian. WPL staff also took offices in the Ontario Library Association, the organization that supports all libraries in the province.

In 1946, new Regulations for public libraries were introduced which provided grants based on certification of librarians and municipal appropriations. This allowed the WPL Board to raise salaries and reverse the shortage of librarians. In 1965, the WPL participated in career fairs together with the University of Windsor librarians at the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Education.

## *Children*

During the first years of the establishment of the Windsor Public Library, children under 16 were not even allowed in the library. A great deal of discussion involved lowering this bar to the age of 14 in 1919. Since then, librarians at the Windsor Public Library worked tirelessly to educate children about books, reading, literacy and research, but emphasized the importance of sharing the joy of reading with children. A story hour had begun as early as 1918 at the Willistead Branch, with the Windsor library following suit the next year. Hilda Rankin was appointed the first children's librarian in 1919.

In 1932, lack of space forced the children's library at the Carnegie Branch to move to an exclusive space for children's books at the John Richardson Library Branch. Subsequently, other children's branches were established as in elementary schools (see Bricks and Mortar). By 1954, the board room at Willistead had been turned into a children's library. Services for children at that time included, "clubs for children, including a girls' poetry club, plays by youngsters, dolls and dollhouses, marionettes and schoolroom visits for book talks" (*WPL Annual Report, 1954*). Pre-school-aged children had their own story hours at the Hugh Beaton and Seminole Branches.

Children's Book Week was first organized in 1920 and Canadian Book Week in 1921. These events fostered encouragement to Canadian writers and supported their work to the Canadian reading public. Young Canada's Book Week was an annual event that encouraged children to celebrate books by dressing up as their favourite characters. At the inter-library finals of the 1950 competition, 300 Windsor children took part. Young Canada's Book Week featured readings and plays presented by children and a series of short radio programs on the local CBE radio station. In 1961, during the 13th annual celebration the Young Canada Book Week was credited with increasing the number of children as a result of the event. At one library, the traffic of young readers was higher than that of adults.

The Windsor Public Library also supported families by developing programs with Parent-Teacher Associations, who organized literary quizzes at the Bartlet House, inviting young customers from the Detroit Public Library to compete with Windsor's literary youth.

During the 1960s, Summer Reading Clubs were offered for children, and a prize was offered for the most books read and reported at the club gatherings. In the WPL's 75th anniversary report, programs for children had two purposes: to let children know what programs, resources and books were available at the library, and to establish an enduring relationship between children and the library, "which will foster and promote an interest in reading for personal pleasure and enrichment" (*WPL 75th Annual Report, 1969*).

A diversity of programming was offered by 1969: a reading by local author John Spellman of South Asian folk tales at Willistead (and it was noted that meeting a local author was unique for children), Black History week, poetry reading and folk singing written by children for children and a visit with a popular British author-illustrator, Brian Wildsmith. Picture books for children were increasing in popularity at the library.

Services for teenagers began in the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Librarians sought to "graduate" grade 8 students to adult books and encourage them to use resources at the library, although opinions varied as to what age this would be appropriate. Soon after its opening, the Seminole Branch librarians realized that local teenagers needed a welcoming space at their neighbourhood branch and that more than reading services were needed for them. The librarians called in the Family Services Bureau to arrange programs and showcase their resources for teens at that branch. New layouts of children's and teens sections were developed to separate teen books from younger children's books.

In the 1970s, chess games and tournaments were offered for children at the Windsor Public Library, with sometimes over 100 children taking part.

Collections of teen-focused books grew, but a more dedicated approach was needed in the current century to meet the needs of teenagers. The community, teens, library staff, authors and artists began an initiative to provide dedicated programming for teens in the summer of 2004. The Windsor Public Library was on the forefront of literary trends by introducing graphic novels to its collection of books for teens in 2005. The Windsor Public Library is one of only a few public libraries that are able to offer inter-library loans of its collection of graphic novels. Local businesses such as Border City Comics and individuals donated to this unique collection and a comic book club for teens was formed. Internationally-renowned artists such as David Finch and Jeff Lemire, both from the Windsor area, have offered support to WPL's teen programs, as have local writers such as Paul Vasey, Patrick Brode, Karl Jirgens, and Marty Gervais.

In September 2011, the first Teen Zone was introduced and coordinated by Librarians. Librarians of 1919 who first allowed children over 14 access to books would be amazed by the contemporary Teen Zones at Central, Budimir and Riverside locations in 2012. Over 2000 teens a year take advantage of the unique resources made available to them: laptop computers with wireless internet, video game consoles and large flat-screen televisions, at Riverside, a selection of musical instruments and sound mixing equipment for teens to be able to make and mix their own music. The selection of graphic novels has grown and teens have access to local graphic artists for advice about writing and illustrating their own graphic novels. Teen Zone activities are available during after school hours, and equipment is available to the rest of the WPL customers in other hours. Chess sets are still in use.

More programs for pre-school-aged children began at various branches. In 2002, an Early Years Advocate encouraged the Board to allow the opening of a new Children's Learning Centre which was focused on providing resources and programs on the critical early years of childhood, 0 to age 6.

The after-school Library Live programs are the contemporary equivalent of children's story hours, with programs developed by WPL staff for elementary-aged children with activities ranging from interactive readings to crafts, music and drama.

The days are gone when children had to "hush" when they came to the Windsor Public Library; but according to library policy today, "children under 10 years should normally be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

## *Multicultural*

The Windsor Public Library has always supported new immigrants to Canada and encouraged its customers to celebrate their diverse heritages. By the end of the 1940s, the library partnered

with the Education Council to provide naturalization citizenship classes, offering free use of films, books and librarians to speak on what the library could offer new Canadians.

In May 1960, the editor of the *Malta News*, George Bonavia was invited by the WPL to set up a series of displays at the Carnegie Branch. This “International Rendezvous at the Library” helped customers discover new cultures connected with Windsor residents. Later that year, the WPL organized a film series scheduled through the winter of displays with photographs, pictures and books, film nights and slide shows. In November 1960, Norway was the featured country, and the 1960-61 season’s selection of films included Poland, Ukraine, Lebanon, Russia and China.

In celebration of the “Know Canada Better” series, the Citizenship Council of Greater Windsor offered a presentation of “ethnic records” to the WPL. Multicultural displays are still held in the various branches. In 1992, an exhibit staged by Lua Kosak and Luba Manley called, “Memories, Achievements, and Dreams” was sponsored by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. The Congress was so impressed by the cooperation of Windsor librarians, they donated a copy of the National Film Board video, *Legacy to a New Land* to the library.

The WPL also made it possible for all new Canadians to learn about Canada with a free film series about various places in Canada, including Canada’s north in the 1960s and 1970s.

Certain branches catered to the city’s francophone population with French language books including Riverside, Remington Park and Seminole. Seminole began to host events for French Immersion students and members of the Polish-Canadian community by the 1980s. In 1986, the Minister of Citizenship and Culture sponsored a French Language Library Collection Development program with a grant for the WPL to purchase new children’s books and videos. By 1989, a full Languages Centre was in use with materials in all formats in French and 29 other languages, including Asiatic, European and Middle Eastern languages.

The WPL offered employment experience to youth as well, emphasizing equal access to all. These efforts were appreciated in 1994 when the African Community Organization of Windsor thanked the WPL for its participation in the jobsOntario Youth Program that summer.

Recognizing the founding cultures of Windsor and region, the curators at the François Baby House (Hiram Walker Museum) worked in cooperation with the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the Essex County Historical Society, Les Amis Duff-Baby, the Can-Am Friendship Centre, francophone heritage groups and the Sandwich First Baptist Church to establish an education program. This grant would fund programs recognizing the British, French, First Nations and African heritage of Windsor’s founders.

In May, 2003, the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County offered a presentation to the WPL Board offering guidelines on making the library more user-friendly to new Canadians. Their recommendations, including encouraging parents to bring their children to the programs offered at the Main Library through Early Years; educate the staff on needs of new Canadians; library cards offered to new Canadians as part of a “welcome” package; and the website available in multiple languages.

The Library Settlement Partnership (LSP) was established with the Windsor Public Library in 2009. The LSP's purpose is to facilitate and provide information, referral and other services to "support the successful settlement of newcomers to Ontario through a three-way partnership of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the settlement sector, and public libraries" (Foster, *WPL Board Annual Report*, September 25, 2012). Three settlement workers were assigned to Central, Sandwich and Forest Glade Branches. The program provides the WPL with updates on languages spoken by customers, and library services were found to have increased among new Canadians. According to Settlement agent, Sandhya Shanker, newcomers to Canada in turn feel comfortable in the library environment, and feel able to volunteer and offer their talents for special events such as Chinese New Year celebrations and the Human Library.

The WPL continues to host Citizenship and Immigration Canada Citizenship Ceremonies. One was held in October 2012. This particular event launched a new initiative and in cooperation with the Institute of Canadian Citizenship offering a program in which Cultural Access Pass gives new citizens the opportunity to visit 1,200 national and local historic sites, museums, provincial and national parks and other attractions for free for a year. New citizens from the Windsor-Essex area can pick up their passes from the WPL.

## ***Volunteers and Fundraising***

As with all cultural organizations in Windsor, the Windsor Public Library has benefitted from the extraordinary generosity and hard work of its supporters. In order to establish resources and programs in all branches, even those not receiving public funding, library customers have filled in the gaps. In 1925, a Friends of the Library group was organized after a community meeting where Windsorites showed great interest and concern for the WPL. Friends of the Library groups were formed to support most branches of the WPL. The volunteers give of their time and plan fundraising and special events to raise fund to improve library services.

The early WPL Board members demonstrated years of dedication to the voluntary work of the Board. In 1961, two Board members, Maxwell Schott, QC and Mrs. Gordon Kerr were honoured for over 25 years of service to the WPL. After Mrs. Kerr died, a memorial fund for the WPL was established in her honour by her former colleagues as was a similar account in the name of former Chief Librarian Anne Hume. In the 1969 Annual Report of the Chief Librarian, it was noted that In Memoriam gifts to the library were common as ways to offer support to grieving families and the library.

Unique approaches to fundraising were devised by librarians and board members. Upset by the disposal of hundreds of out-of-date books from the library collection, Board member Lloyd McLachlan suggested that books be offered to the public in a low-price sale. The first was held in November, 1977. This allowed low-income customers to own and share books, and became a continued source of funds for new books and materials at the WPL.

In 1994, the WPL Board adopted a policy of encouraging its members, staff and associated volunteers to “exercise creativity in developing mutually beneficial partnerships with both profit-making and non-profit organizations in our community and beyond” (*WPL Board Minutes*, April 7, 1994). In response, members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE 2067, presented equipment for use in children’s programming. The Friends of the Library at the Seminole Branch raised money for new electronic equipment also that year. They assisted with programming, outreach for Polish, Spanish and French communities in the neighbourhood and augmented literacy programs for children and adults. The Friends of Sandwich Library, for example, was led by John Muir and was crucial to the campaign to relocate the Mill Street location of the Sandwich Branch to the new location at Brock Elementary School on Sandwich Street. John Rutherford was also a driving force behind the Friends of Riverside Library which raised funds to defray the cost of construction and furnishing of the new branch building.

Another fundraising campaign undertaken in the late 1990s was the “Light the Future ... NOW!” initiative. This campaign raised thousands for books and materials in 1997 and continued for the following few years in order to keep reference materials up to date, especially as new electronic materials increased the cost of the collection.

Local service clubs have also supported the various branches of the WPL. The Optimist Club of Forest Glade raised thousands of dollars to establish the Forest-Glade Optimist branch of the Windsor Public Library. For the Riverside Branch, the Windsor East Kiwanis Club donated money for more books for Preschoolers. In 2010, the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee approved a grant to ensure that the doors of the Central Library had push-button access for wheelchair entry and also helped to fund the new elevator for that branch.

Local industries and businesses have also supported specific needs of the WPL. In 2005, Casino Windsor (now Caesar’s Windsor) donated a large sum to renovate the Gates Computer Training Lab, plus other education space for the Adult Literacy program, providing new equipment and helping to train staff.

## *Authors*

Lectures given by Canadian writers were another way the library board supported authors, as when Canadian journalist and author Madge MacBeth was invited to WPL to speak to customers and visitors. Among her early works are the novels *The Changeling* and *The Winning Game*.

The Windsor Public Library continued to support the work of local authors through its programs, author presentations, readings and purchasing of books. A writer-in-residence program was hosted by the library in 1988, featuring Ann Ireland, author of *A Certain Mr. Takahashi*, for an extended period of seven months. Governor General’s Award for Children’s Literature recipient Welwyn Wilton Katz was another Writer-in-Residence in 1990. Through a week-long series of events, she hosted local writers and children in workshops and presentations. In 1995, poet

and playwright Judith Fitzgerald was writer-in-residence. As a tribute to Windsor, she wrote an epic long poem, *River*, about the Detroit River and its history.

One of the longest author “friendships” with the Windsor Public Library belongs to Newbery Medal winning author Christopher Paul Curtis. In 2001, the WPL nominated Curtis for Windsor’s Mayor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts for his “literary work, community work and inspiration to Windsor’s children and to members of the artistic and African-Canadian communities” (*WPL Board Minutes*, April 4, 2001). Curtis’s association in the library began when librarians offered him space and encouragement to write his first best-seller, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963*, written in longhand over the course of several weeks. In 2004, Curtis joined the Windsor Symphony Orchestra’s composer-in-residence, Brent Lee for a program titled Literacy in Motion at the Capitol Theatre as a fund raiser.

## CULTURE

*“That’s what makes our day. We want to help you become whatever you want ... and we’ll help you with all the CDs, tapes, books and toys that you need.” (Windsor Public Library Employees, Windsor Star, December 20, 2002)*

The opening of a public library in Windsor was a modern advancement in 1894. The Windsor Public Library initially offered books, magazine, periodicals, reference works and a reading room to use the collection.

The move to a much larger facility, the Carnegie Library in 1903, permitted services other than lending reading material. The WPL invited professors from Toronto to conduct a series of lectures for entertainment and instruction. The admission was 15 cents for each lecture or 40 cents for an entire course. The lectures proved popular and were continued for years.

As the library developed, cultural events such as literary evenings, performances of recorded music and art exhibits were held regularly for the community. As part of its cultural responsibility, the Windsor Public Library offered the auditorium (with a seating capacity of 300), and other library spaces for community and social groups for meetings. The Windsor Literary and Scientific Society held weekly reading circles and the Essex Historical Society also met regularly at the library.

In the early 1920s, the library obtained a dozen paintings representative of the work of Canadian artists from the National Gallery. The art work was hung on the walls of the Reading Room at Carnegie Library and drew considerable interest from customers and visitors.

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, development and growth in Windsor required the expansion and introduction of many new library services. The WPL Board equipped and opened the art gallery at Willistead Manor, record and film collections were established and branch libraries

began to service the community.

The art gallery offered a variety of cultural activities including art classes, art demonstrations, a picture lending collection and exhibition of Windsor's art collection. These new services were very popular and added to the cultural and educational amenities of the community.

As technology advanced and the number of Windsor residents purchasing record players increased in the late 1940s, events of playing recorded music decreased but loans of records increased. Shows of 16 mm films replaced the evenings of recorded music. Librarians kept abreast of the current "moving pictures" (films) for education and historical significance to add to the library collection.

Throughout the 1950s, the WPL continued to enable the goals of many cultural groups including the Pilot Club, Windsor Art Association, Windsor and District Film Council, Windsor Theatre Guild, the Windsor branch of Royal Astronomical Society of Canada and Junior Chamber of Commerce. The art gallery expanded to include adult art workshops, a junior art association and gallery space for the art work in the loan collection. Curator-director Kenneth Saltmarche continued to arrange exhibitions, give gallery tours and encourage knowledge and understanding of the paintings, prints, sculptures and industrial art that made up the gallery's works. The Art Gallery took over its own governance in 1958 and moved out of the Windsor Public Library property at Willistead Manor and into its own building in 1975.

When the new Main Library opened, it once again dedicated space to exhibits and provided permanent space for collected art. The Library Planning Committee featured an Arts Liaison and Selection Committee headed by Art Gallery of Windsor Curator, Kenneth Saltmarche. This committee staged a contest for artwork – murals - to be included in the new building, and called for marquettes (smaller versions of murals to demonstrate what a larger version would look like) to be submitted. Six winners were chosen, including local artist Joseph de Angelis who produced the wooden relief sculpture by the elevator in the Lower Level. Other winners included: Tony Tascona of Winnipeg; Ed Drahanuk of Bragg Creek, Alberta; Fran Mikuska of Winnipeg; and Joseph Calleja and Ray Cattell of Toronto.

A framed print collection for borrowing was another new feature of the spacious, new library. The Main Library set aside space for local artists to exhibit their work at no charge and allowed emerging artists to develop awareness of their art in the community.

The new library had ample space for an auditorium, language centre, and film centre. On the main floor, the Main Library was unique in the establishment of a Bookstore. In March 1973, the WPL Board entered into an agreement with Information Canada and the Ministry of Government Services of Ontario to set up a government publications bookstore at the new library. The first manager was Reginald P. La Marre. This was the only such store outside of Toronto and by 1984, the Bookstore grossed \$67,000 in sales of government books, maps and charts. The Bookstore closed in the 1990s, with the advance of digitization the government departments centralized their sale of publications from Toronto.

The Windsor Public Library's ties to the Detroit Public Library began to loosen in the 1980s. There is a tradition of shared cultural events, and cross-learning at one another's conferences, but the modern library began to look more to its Canadian identity and ties.

The Windsor Public Library was designated a full depository library for the Social Sciences Division in 1989. This section can provide statistical information and copies of federal and provincial government publications from the 1900s. An Arts and Recreation section accumulated an extensive collection of sheet music and scores available to local musicians and other interested customers.

The Windsor Public Library has also welcomed live music and dance performances to its various branches, including performances by the Windsor Symphony Orchestra's musicians. "Peanut Butter n' Jam" concerts for two to five-year-olds are regularly held in branches, providing easier access for families to see live productions. Many multi-cultural groups also stage performances and holiday celebrations in various branches, not only providing low-cost entertainment and access to cultural events for new Canadians, but showcasing their artistic talents.

The Main Library also had the space to accommodate a large collection of VHS tapes in its Film Centre, adding to the 16mm film collection.

Appropriate for the industrial culture of Windsor, a privately-donated Automotive History Collection contains hundreds of copies of manufacturers' brochures on all types of vehicles and even shop manuals dating from the 1940s.

## **BookFest Windsor**

The Windsor Public Library has a long history of community partnerships, and one of the most fruitful is the long partnership with BookFest Windsor. Held annually since 2002, it was first known as The Windsor Festival of the Book. With main events held at the Capitol Theatre or the Art Gallery of Windsor, BookFest Windsor hosts some of the best writers in Canada and abroad in an annual three-day festival.

In 2004, the Windsor Public Library and the University of Windsor became partners with BookFest Windsor. The Windsor Public Library and the staff's Union, CUPE 2067 have sponsored various visiting BookFest Windsor authors from across Canada and the United States. Featured authors include Governor General's Award-winning Leamington native Nino Ricci, mystery writer Louise Penny and journalist Noah Richler, who praised the festival's cooperative nature and cultural atmosphere in Windsor. Because of BookFest Windsor, the Windsor Public Library was able to invite children's authors from the region such as Christopher Paul Curtis, and from across Canada, such as Susan Juby, Drew Hayden Taylor, and Martha Brooks to conduct special presentations to school groups at various branches of the WPL.

Windsor Reads, a week long event organized by BookFest Windsor celebrated one book with

a connection to Windsor, and was held annually with the assistance of the Windsor Public Library. In 2011, the WPL hosted a unique – and very Windsor - reading of Windsor's Alexander MacLeod's *Light Lifting* by his father, acclaimed novelist Alistair MacLeod at Devonshire Mall during Library Week.

Graphic Novels are represented at BookFest Windsor with presentations in partnership with both the WPL and Art Gallery of Windsor. Public Service Librarians were able to connect graphic novel authors and artists to the Teen Zone program at the Central (Main Branch). At the 2012 BookFest, author Richard Scarsbrook conducted a presentation at the Central Branch's Self-Publishing Lab.

## ***Self-Publishing Lab***

The Windsor Public Library's Self-Publishing Lab also allows authors to design and print their own books for various reasons for a nominal fee. In 2012, 91 books were published, and further revenue was derived from electronic scanning services. The Windsor Public Library can now work in partnership with established local authors who conduct workshops in writing and publishing.

Other workshops run by Self-Publishing Facilitator Sue Perry include a regular Writers' Group Meeting, Teens Write Now, Writing Your Family History and Cover Design. Adult and young adult authors can also upload an e-book edition for purchase through third-party online distributors.

The Self-Publishing Lab's Espresso Book Machine is able to print book pages and covers, and bind them with a straight "perfect bound" technique. The Facilitator also connects with writers' groups throughout Windsor and Essex County as a guest speaker at various events.

## ***Digital Communities***

The Windsor Public Library, led by Jean Foster, Director of Community Development & Partnerships, has obtained several grants in order to assist local cultural and heritage groups in establishing a web-based presence. In this way, history and information is recorded by project staff and updated by the Windsor Public Library staff in order to both preserve the heritage of these groups and to inform the public about Windsor's historical and multicultural assets. The "Digital Exhibits" are linked to the Windsor Public Library's website. These include the "Windsor Mosaic" series which highlight multicultural and heritage sites such as the Veterans Memories and Cultural Engines sites.

## ***EDUCATION***

*“Education does not end with the years of formal schooling.” – Gladys Shepley, Chief Librarian, Annual Report, 1963*

Since its foundation, the Windsor Public Library system has supported literacy, education and life long learning. At the opening of Carnegie Library in 1903, the Honourable Richard Harcourt, Minister of Education for Ontario, addressed the crowd, giving guidance on reading and advised that if followed “would distinctly improve the proclivities of our citizens” (R. Harcourt, *WPL Annual Report*, 1903).

To improve the inclination of citizens to read and to encourage adult education, librarians made a special effort to make personal contact with each person visiting the library. Lists were also created to assist customers in choosing reading material.

A year after World War I had ended Windsor underwent tremendous population and industrial growth. The growth of the automobile industry in the Border Cities grew the population from 15,000 in 1901 to over 175,000 in 1954. With this growth came the need for increased library resources and services.

To support the population and area of work, the Windsor Public Library began creating a technical section where employees could find the best, most up-to-date books on subjects of importance to them.

The library’s books were selected by a committee, which chose books to match the interest, needs and tastes of the community. Technical books were often recommended by experts in the field. “Readers may make the library a continuation school, where everyone may take a post-graduate course in self-culture.” (Archibald Coulter, Chairman of the Board, *WPL Annual Report*, 1907) The selection of books emphasized further education, vocational training and the classics as a part of well-rounded reading.

Education of adults continued as librarians fostered an appreciation of books and how to use them, and with the inauguration of other services including films, records, pictures and music, an important addition in adult education was formed.

By the end of the 1940s, the library partnered with the Education Council to provide naturalization citizenship classes, offering free use of films, books and librarians’ expertise to speak on what the library could offer new Canadians.

In 1960, Willistead librarians started a popular Great Books Discussion Group. At the Carnegie Branch, a series of lectures called “Law for the Layman,” presented by members of the Essex County Law Association as co-sponsors was so popular, that the auditorium was standing room only.

These education partnerships remained a part of the Windsor Public Library’s education program. In 1962, Gladys Shepley was the guest speaker at a series of educational lectures about critical reading which was sponsored by the Windsor Arts Council and the library’s Adult Educa-

tion Services.

In 1963, a lunchtime book education program was started to educate downtown business workers. This program continued to the new Main Library with the 1975 -76 series called "A Cavalcade of Canadian Authors." Variations of this program continued in 2013 with programs such as the "Best Sellers" group. Lectures and educational films were incorporated into the educational programming.

The new Main Library had specifically designed space for community groups to meet and learn, such as photography clubs, public forums on legal issues and presentations by the police force.

The library adopted a policy to reach out to older adults in 1988, by ensuring that libraries be accessible and welcoming to them, including building collections of Large Print books, CNIB Talking Books and expanding programs in the afternoons rather than in the evenings or at busy lunchtimes, and later, to offer computer instruction. In 2012, Elder College classes were welcomed to the WPL meeting rooms.

The Windsor Public Library has a mandate to support adult literacy in the community and throughout its decades of service, has offered several programs to support this. In 1978, a WPL Staff Task Force studied librarians' concerns about illiteracy in Windsor. The report next year recommended that the library establish a pilot project to conduct a one-to-one volunteer tutoring program. The project's budget provided materials for tutors and learners, office space at the Main Library, and a part-time Literacy Coordinator. In the 1980s, librarians such as Dorothy Madge oversaw a program that matched adult students with volunteer tutors on a one-to-one basis using the Laubach Instructional Method.

In 2000, the WPL Board made a motion regarding literacy, stating that it "desires a literate community to ensure independent access to the printed word" (*WPL Board Minutes*, September 21, 2000). In 2001, the Board quantified the goal of eliminating functional illiteracy of at least 20 people a year. By this time, WPL was one of 300 sites in Ontario that received support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program. GreenShield Foundation of Canada provided an initial two-year grant of \$20,000.

The program was supported by Windsor Volunteers for Literacy, a non-profit volunteer group of advocates for literacy training in Windsor. In 2011, a Deaf Stream Literacy program was launched at the Canadian Hearing Society location. The program continues in 2013 with an Adult Literacy coordinator, assessor and three instructors.

The inauguration of night school classes brought a demand for technical books including books for the latest information on radios, automobiles, engines and metal work and daily routine work for the librarian included preparation of reading lists and bibliographies that were desired by customers.

WPL promoted technical education to supply manpower for industry in Windsor by establishing

the Technical Sections in the adult libraries. In addition, Ford Motor Company donated funds to buy technical books and magazines, further developing this section in the library.

Cooperation with Windsor Public Library and the University of Windsor libraries continued and they shared services as well as expertise. In 1976, for example, Faculty of Law staff and professors conducted seminars on law reference works and books on the law for WPL librarians. Faculty from the university also appeared as lecturers for informal educational lectures at the WPL. The University's technical resources also assisted with copying and microfilming circulation records and shared data from their own newly-automated cataloguing program.

Recently, the WPL has partnered with the University of Windsor's new medical faculty to offer public education on new research in subjects such as breast cancer and diabetes.

## *Outreach to Schools*

To engage younger citizens, the library established specialized children's departments where appropriate books were available, and a children's librarian was available to encourage and guide young readers. Children's hour was started to interest young readers who were invited to attend and listen to stories. Reference and supplementary reading material were made available for school studies and popular fiction for recreational reading.

Throughout the next decade, the library strengthened its cooperation with the school board, offering talks whenever requested and meeting with new teachers to introduce them to the services of the library. Books were loaned to schools that were not located near the library and teachers reported the importance of these library books to the children.

The late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, juvenile libraries were opened and enjoyed high membership and circulation of books. Children's activities, such as story hour and class visits encouraged reading and use of the library. Information services to aid children with school work were also available.

A Parent-Teacher Reference Library was established in the ground floor room at Willistead for teachers and parents. The collection included basic books for a home library, child guidance reference and elementary education and titles to supplement school curricula. Teachers used the library regularly to stimulate their pupils in reading. They were requested to submit a list of recommended books, which the librarians acquired for the shelves. Along with required supplementary reading materials, a collection of books was displayed for easy access to high school students visiting the library. To further connect the library with the schools, the librarian regularly gave talks about books, reading and the library at local schools, home and school clubs and different associations in the city. These talks, along with a story hour became so popular that some requests for a librarian could not be met.

Librarians were also active in the community, acting as judges for public speaking contests, debates and speech contests in the schools, sat on service club committees and prepared a myriad of displays at conventions and group meetings.

The opening of a children's library in St. Alphonsus school lead the board to declare that, "the Public Library stands for that very thing; its educational policy follows a citizen from the cradle to the grave" (*WPL Annual Report*, 1941).

A Saturday morning art class for children was inaugurated in 1943 by art gallery curator Daphne Hein, who also gave gallery talks to the children based on the current exhibitions. As the WPL Board developed the gallery, a picture loan rental, and later the sculpture rental collection was available which offered art work to show in homes, offices and school rooms for a monthly rental charge.

Library branches were opened in the city's schools in order to ensure that children had easy access to books (see Branches). In the 1950s, a new program for Kindergarten students at Prince Edward School library allowed children to choose books to read for a week, and were even issued their own library card and stamp. Books were sent home with students in plastic bags for safe keeping by solicitous teachers and librarians. The hope was that by the time they reached Grade 1, children could choose their own books and take good care of them.

Members of the Boards of Education were represented on the WPL library board. In 1965, the University of Windsor, St. Clair College, the Boards of Education and the Windsor Public Library formed a Windsor Education Co-ordinating Committee to identify needs and coordinate programs.

The Carnegie Branch had set up a Parent-Teacher Reference Room in 1962, which housed a demonstration collection of basic books for a home library, books on child guidance and elementary education, and titles to supplement elementary school curricula. Canada's Centennial in 1967 brought a flurry of teachers' and students' requests for information about projects. Librarians gave annual "tours" to Grade 8 students each spring so that they would be able to "graduate" into adult books as they entered high school. Teenagers were encouraged to access scholarship and post-secondary education information available at the library, which acted as a guidance resource during these decades.

In 1969, the WPL set up a Special Education Pilot Project in conjunction with the Board of Education which consisted of a librarian visiting each class with a selection of books and leading a book discussion. Students and teachers found that this program renewed interest in books and reading and encouraged them to visit the libraries themselves.

School libraries benefitted from the educational programs of the WPL. In December, 1987 a public library terminal was installed at Catholic Central High School and other schools, and public librarians trained school librarians in its use. Public librarians also helped to set up school libraries, as in 1994 when St. Joseph's High School expressed appreciation to librarians for doing so.

In the 1990s, the WPL hosted a “Summer Reading Connection” juvenile literacy program for children aged 7 – 12 years old who were experiencing difficulties in reading. In 1996, the program connected 45 students with tutors and the demand for the latter outweighed the supply.

Seminole Branch manager Blodwen Reitz piloted a “Reading Connection” program of free tutoring to children and adults. A “Juvenile Literacy Program” began in the summer of 1997 as a summer program, and expanded with funding for year-round programs. It was renamed the Book Buddy program. A Book Buddy was an adult reader, who had undergone a screening program, and committed to meet at least once a week with a child to read. The Book Buddy program is still offered by the Windsor Public Library.

## BRICKS AND MORTAR

*... a new main branch that was in all respects the antithesis of the old: spacious, architecturally modernesque, up-to-date. (Windsor Star, August 4, 1990)*

## BUILDINGS

Lambie’s Hall (1894 – 1903)

The first library in Windsor opened in December 1894. A City of Windsor bylaw introduced permitting the development of a public library in Windsor had been submitted, and carried by a majority earlier in the year. City council and the Board of Education appointed representatives for the new library board, who, in turn, appointed a librarian and an assistant librarian. The motto of the new library board was, “*Aude sapere*” meaning “dare to be wise.”

The public library and reading room were located in Lambie’s Hall. Built in 1855, Lambie’s Hall was located at the corner of Pitt and Ferry Streets and was previously the first Protestant church in Windsor.

Borrowers selected books from a list and the librarian retrieved the library books from the shelves. Books could be read in the adjoining Reading Room, or taken home by cardholders. Windsor residents who paid five cents a year for the privilege of borrowing books could take out one book at a time. Of the over 5,000 books in the library when it opened, works of fiction were the most popular, followed by juvenile literature, periodicals and history.

Rules were introduced for the safety and use of the library which the librarian had to enforce. The librarian quickly found once customers were aware, they would usually comply with rules prohibiting smoking or pets and for requiring quiet in the library and reading room.

Walkerville and Sandwich councils were approached by the Windsor Public Library Board to make arrangements for library services available to their residents. In 1896, Walkerville Council agreed, paying \$175 for the year. This agreement continued until Walkerville established its own library in 1905.

By 1898 there were 1,428 Windsor Public Library cardholders and there was a need for larger and improved library accommodations. More than 7,500 books also required cataloguing in order to locate requested reading material. Andrew Braid, secretary of the Windsor St. Andrew's Society and the WPL board, wrote to American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to request funds for a public library. Carnegie, who made billions in the steel industry, donated funds that founded 156 libraries in Canada.

In 1901, because of the persistence of Andrew Braid, Carnegie agreed to fund the construction of a library in Windsor. After several delays, construction of the new library began in 1903 at the corner of Victoria Avenue and Park Street. Once the new library was built, the contents of the library at Lambie's Hall were transferred to the new Carnegie Library.

## ***Carnegie Library (1903 - 1973)***

The new Carnegie Library opened in 1903. The two-story brick building's entrance faced Victoria Avenue and included a main reading room, a stack room where the books were shelved, and an auditorium. The library had a capacity for about 60,000 volumes. At the opening of the library, Mayor Drake had the honour of being the first customer and borrowed the first book, fittingly, "*The Empire of Business*" by Andrew Carnegie.

The launch of the new library generated new services and programs. In the new building, those over the age of 16 were able to select books from the shelves themselves, a move that was hoped to encourage reading. A lecture series was also begun which hosted professors from Toronto University to put "this method of entertainment and instruction within reach of every person." (Andrew Braid, *WPL Annual Report*, 1903)

Under the direction of the WPL Board, library staff began to build up the selection of reading material. While more than half of the books in circulation were fiction (which was the most popular reading material), there were also books on most subjects including history, philosophy, science, religion and the languages. The reference department became a common resource for academic purposes for students and teachers. The librarians began creating lists of books on specific subjects and advertised them in the paper and distributing them in the library.

Over the next decade, Windsor's population grew, as did the volumes of books in the library, and the need for more room and additional shelving became apparent. The library board discussed offering branch services on the east and west end and in 1914, an east end branch opened which offered biweekly deliveries of books.

World events affected Windsor and the library when World War I began in 1914. Many Wind-

sor residents joined the forces overseas while many others contributed at home. Encouraged to join community groups or service organizations, many Windsorites raised money, made blankets and clothing and created care packages for soldiers. The library also offered space to use for war work such as lectures, meetings and the packing of boxes to go overseas.

Discussions of the war and its effects in newspapers, social groups and everyday life created a need for information in the community. People turned to the library to learn all they could about the conflict and war literature was in demand.

In 1915, the WPL board established library branches for soldiers of the 241st Battalion and the quarters of the Construction Corp in the Windsor Driving Park grounds at Ouellette and Tecumseh, where Jackson Park is today. The library board also allowed circulation of pamphlets and leaflets in the library regarding recruitment, public service and rationing.

In 1921, arrangements were made with the Town of Sandwich for library service at a rate of \$200 annually. This arrangement was dissolved after Sandwich established its own library in 1923.

In 1925, the Board made extensive modifications to the interior of Carnegie Library in an attempt to relieve the crowded conditions. The location of the front door was changed, making better use of the space, various departments were moved and shelving was built along both walls of a hallway that extended the length of the building.

The modifications alleviated the congested conditions of the library however, it was realized that a larger building was required for the library's services and programs. Carnegie Library had been built when the population of Windsor was around 13,400. Amalgamation of the Border Cities (Windsor, Walkerville and East Windsor) in 1935 brought the population to 120,000, further rendering the building inadequate. Amalgamation also brought all of the libraries into one system. At this time, the WPL system included eight libraries:

Sandwich Library in the former Teachers' Training School at 615 Mill Street

Carnegie Library at Victoria and Park Streets

John Richardson Library (at Wilson Park), children's library only

Prince Edward Public School, Giles Blvd and Parent, children's library only

Victoria Public School, Victoria and Ellis, children's library only

Willistead Library, main floor of Willistead Manor

Hugh Beaton Public School (previously called South Branch), Chilver Road at Lens

Ontario Street Public School, Ontario and Ellrose

A lack of space forced the WPL Board to split their headquarters between Willistead and Carnegie libraries. The chief librarian, business office and catalogue and children's departments were housed at Willistead while Carnegie became the Chief Reference Library.

Willistead had specializations within the WPL system by the 1960s: a Picture and Sculpture loan collection which netted about \$80 a month in revenue for the library, and a film collection with projectors could also be rented for a nominal fee. The Willistead Branch even staged outdoor picture shows in the adjacent park in the summer. They also provided "Projected Books" which involved a special projector of microfilmed books that would display images of the books on the ceiling for bed-ridden customers.

The WPL vacated Willistead Manor soon after the Carnegie Library opened. Some fittings were sold off, and still exist in local Walkerville homes in the area.

By the time the WPL celebrated 50 years of its service to Windsor in 1953, the Carnegie building held 59,847 books and seating areas were reduced to provide more shelving. The lower floor had been in use as auditorium, then given over to a children's library. That in turn was moved out of the building to the John Richardson Branch in 1932. The collection of French books had been moved to the Willistead Branch in 1950. Over 42,942 books had been borrowed that year and the business and technical subject area was most popular. Head librarian Gladys Shepley confessed to the *Windsor Star* that fewer books were being purchased in spite of the high demand, "Windsor is so often said not to be a cultural city, yet our fine arts and business and technical [sections] are held down in size so the building will not be too overtaxed" (Douglas, November 14, 1950).

The Windsor Public Library was too successful for its own good in terms of serving the public, and it was a complicated but well-loved working space for staff. Former WPL employee, Ronnie Filby began her career at the Carnegie Library and worked at that location for 10 years. She described the experience as "like being in *Little Women*" – the Carnegie building with its books and built on rooms had "all sorts of places to hide, that the public couldn't see, such as attics and magazine rooms" (Interview, November 9, 2012).

While a call for funds for a new building went out to Windsor's community leaders, librarians applied their resourcefulness to making the best of the Carnegie building, by expanding next door.

## ***Bartlet House, Annex and Victoria House (1957 – 1973)***

Community leader Miss Bartlet owned the large house next door to the Carnegie Library on Park Street. The WPL Board purchased her house in 1955 and renovated it, eventually adding an Annex building to connect the former residence to the library. The Bartlet House allowed the administration offices to return to the downtown site from Willistead, and the catalogue depart-

ment moved to the lower floor of the house. The back of the house acted as a receiving room for the 12,000 books delivered every year, and became a central clearing area for all the books in the Windsor library system (Hume, *WPL Annual Report*, 1955).

The lower floor of the Annex facilitated a children's library to be available downtown again, and the Parent-Teacher library from Willistead was also moved downtown. The Annex housed more administrative areas and a book processing area. There was even room in the Bartlet House for a small conference room to be made available rent free to community groups "which qualify as 'educational, cultural, non-profit, non-political organizations working for the good of the community'" and for lectures and film presentations by the library (Hume, 1955). On his retirement in 1992, Anne Hume's eventual successor Fred Israel commented on the location of the Chief Librarian's office in the former front bedroom of the Bartlet House was stifling in the summer, as the building had no air conditioning.

In 1969, the WPL acquired another home in the corner of Park and Victoria near the Carnegie, 450 Victoria Avenue, known as the Victoria House. The catalogue, order office and book processing moved there to ease still growing pressure on the venerable Carnegie building. The Carnegie with the Bartlet House and the Annex closed in November, 1973, when the new Main Library was built. It was demolished in April, 1974, and an eight-story apartment building stands on the site at Victoria and Park.

## ***East Branch (1914 - 1933)***

Branch library service began in 1914 with the opening of an east-end location at Lanspeary's Drug Store. The rented store was furnished with library shelving and furniture, and a significant quantity of books placed there.

Branch service consisted of biweekly deliveries of books previously selected by customers. Slips were provided on which customers indicated the titles of requested books. The branch was moved twice in 1920 before moving to a store property on Langlois Avenue in 1925. The branch was situated in a densely populated area and since it was in close distance to seven schools over 70% of the circulation of books in the first year consisted of children's books.

Originally, it was thought that the children's department at Carnegie Library would have a loss in circulation because of the branch service but children's registration rose. In 1926, the branch was expanded, taking up two stores. The branch was closed in 1933 as a result of a decrease in the Library Board's municipal funding during the Depression.

## ***Sandwich Library (1923 - )***

There were two Sandwich Branches in the Windsor's history. The first was established in 1923 as an Association Library in the Town of Sandwich, and was located in the auditorium of the

Town Hall, where the books were kept in sectional bookcases with locking glass doors. When the library was “closed,” the bookcase doors were locked. In 1936, the Sandwich Branch was moved to a former Teachers’ Training School building and closed in 1972.

In 1995, the WPL Board was still searching for a suitable location for this branch when the Principal of General Brock School approached the Board with the suggestion of sharing the location in the new school building planned. Friends of the Sandwich Library, headed by John Muir, presented the WPL Board with \$150,000 by the 1999 opening. The funds were raised through charity bingos in order to purchase resources for the new branch. The Sandwich Library Branch is a unique, contemporary approach to building-sharing with the school and the local police station.

## ***John Richardson Branch (Nov 1928 - 1972)***

In 1927 a site in Wilson Park in the vicinity of Adie Knox Herman Recreational complex was donated for a west-end library branch. Named after the first Ontario novelist, city council issued \$30,000 to construct the library. A drop in funding during the depression in 1932 forced the closure of the adult department. This changed to a children’s library, supplemented by the books for the children’s library at the main library which had been closed in order to provide needed space for adult books.

The juvenile library was very popular, hosting classes from nearby schools where children would learn how to find books, reference materials and use the card catalogue. Story hour was held every Saturday and brought large groups of children to hear the librarian read. The librarians found it a challenge to deal with an exclusive clientele of children as some of the younger customers would have trouble remembering when events took place. The library also responded to the development of schools requiring factual materials for school projects.

In 1969, the Richardson Branch absorbed the collections of the Prince Edward and Victoria Branches.

Local historian George F. Macdonald donated all the novels of John Richardson to the library.

## ***Hugh Beaton School Branch (1929 - )***

The South Branch Library, Walkerville opened in 1929 with Annabelle McKillop as librarian. When the Border Cities amalgamated, the South Branch name changed to Hugh Beaton, the name of the school where the library was located. In 1950, the branch was moved to John Campbell School (Summary of Library Service in the Border Area, 1894 – 1945) and in 1959, having outgrown this location, moved to its current site on Tecumseh Road East.

## ***Prince Edward School Branch (1933 - 1968)***

A small children's branch library opened in the basement of Prince Edward School in 1933 to bring services to children in the east end. The library welcomed school children who would visit the library with their teachers to learn how to use the library. The partnership with the school board boosted library membership and the circulation of books. In 1957, it was noted that this branch had a "new, contemporary look with fluorescent lighting, turquoise walls, and deeper turquoise shelves" (*WPL Annual Report*, 1957). When the school expanded to the library area, the collection was moved to another location and this branch was closed.

## ***Victoria School Branch (1934 - 1968)***

In 1934 a library branch opened at Victoria School with a small collection of books. It was only open to children for three afternoons a week.

An amendment to the city of Windsor Amalgamation Act in 1936 brought the libraries under the Public Libraries' Act of the province. A library board was appointed to take over management of the libraries and merged them into one library system. This branch was closed when demand for the location was reduced and the library was merging its assets for greater efficiency.

## ***J.E. Benson Memorial Library (1936 - 1951)***

The J.E. Benson Memorial Library was opened in the Ontario Street School under the joint management of Windsor and Walkerville. The library board received a grant from the city to purchase books and children's furniture.

The library was named in memory of J.E. Benson, Inspector of Public Schools, who established the branches in Prince Edward and Victoria schools. In 1951, the J.E. Benson Memorial Library moved from Ada C. Richards School to storage.

## ***Winston Churchill Library (1941 - 1952)***

In 1941, a children's library was opened in St. Alphonsus School in downtown Windsor. It was named in honour of the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who was "leading the world's fight to preserve democracy" during World War II. (*WPL Annual Report*, 1941) This, and other smaller locations were inefficient to run in the long term, and this branch closed in 1952 as demands for books changed after the War.

## ***Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor (1943 - )***

The WPL continued with its plans to develop Willistead as a community arts centre by dedicating space for an art gallery in 1943. Anne Hume who was a librarian at Walkerville Library

and appointed Chief Librarian upon amalgamation is largely credited for encouraging the library board in this new venture. New exhibitions were provided on a monthly basis by loan from the National Gallery of Canada or sponsored by the Windsor Art Association. The Art Association also provided lectures and discussion groups. According to librarian Anne Hume, "All of these services are part of the new techniques used to interest citizens in books and other cultural arts to the enrichment of individual and community life." (*Summary of Library Service in the Border Area, 1894 – 1945*, Hume, 1945)

The Art Gallery remained under management of the Library Board until 1959 when it became an autonomous, independent institution.

## ***Wartime Housing Deposit Library (1943 – 1953)***

Wartime homes were initially built in Windsor to provide housing for the influx of wartime factory workers during World War II. To provide library services in the area, a children's deposit library was opened in 1943 at the Wartime Housing Clubhouse on Westcott Road. The next year library services were made available for adult readers and 250 adult books were added to the Wartime Housing Clubhouse after the WPL board realized the success of the children's library. Adult services ceased in 1948 and the name of the branch library was changed to Westcott Road Children's Library in 1949.

## ***Seminole Library (1953 - )***

When Seminole opened in October, 1953, it was billed as a "Family reading centre" and featured a "Teen Corner" and an "experiment in book arrangement for adults ...worked out especially for [that] community" with a "You and Your Family" selection of books on parent-child relationships, and information about the home (*Invitation to Opening*, 1953). There was also a Club Room for Story Hours and Reading Clubs for teens. The *Windsor Star* donated funds for a record collection of classical and semi-classical music. After the opening, one customer noted, "Why, it doesn't look at all like a library!" which the librarian decided to accept as a compliment to the new space (*Windsor Star*, March 16, 1954).

This branch replaced the J.E. Benson and the Ada C. Richards School branches and incorporated the collection of the Westcott Road Children's Deposit Station.

Seminole was popular with local schools and local young people, often overcrowding the new branch. Holy Names School staged a play at this branch in 1968. By 1994, an annual flower garden planting by children was held, and "silly days" through the summer – although Blodwen Reitz, the librarian at the time admitted that "Spaghetti Fight Day" should not be repeated (*Windsor Star*, July 14, 1994).

The Friends of Seminole was formed in 1994, and its mandate was to fundraise for computer equipment, advise the librarians on programme development, assist with community outreach and help with literacy initiatives.

Seminole was renovated in 2000 and continues as the oldest branch in the WPL system.

## *Hiram Walker Museum (1958 - )*

*Tourists from the far corners of the world also saw the Windsor story and took it home with them. Newspaper editors from 35 of the United States toured the Museum. Through an interpreter, a group from Yokohama was taken back through the thousands of years of Man's occupancy on the Detroit [River]. (R. Alan Douglas, WPL Annual Report, 1958)*

Windsor, Ontario is a key area for the study of the history of First Nations in Canada and America and the first Europeans began to settle in Windsor. While many museums in Canada have incorporated a library space into their museum site, few public libraries have included a full museum as a branch of its operation. The François Baby (usually pronounced in the French manner as “bahbee” or “bawbee”) residence is one of the few surviving buildings that has witnessed this rich history. More detailed histories of the museum exist elsewhere, but a short background is necessary to explain the significance of the property.

Born in the 1760s, local merchant François Baby built a house in 1812 on his farm near the Detroit River, between Pitt and Ferry Streets in Windsor. Shortly afterwards, the house suffered the occupation of the American army during the War of 1812. The house was handed down through the generations, became a commercial building, and by the outbreak of World War II, was barely standing amidst urban development in downtown Windsor. In the early 1940s, local historians, including local community leader, historian and WPL Board member George F. MacDonald, and a recently-formed group called the Windsor Historic Sites Association (WHSA), petitioned the City of Windsor to take control of the home and restore it to its former grandeur and repurpose it as a museum for the benefit of Windsor citizens. The City passed a motion in June 1945 giving over the operation and maintenance of the Baby House to the Windsor Public Library Board.

Restoration took over a decade. Delays were caused by lack of funds, lack of recognition by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, a fire and vandalism. The community, especially teachers and students, began to support the rescue and restoration of the house and in November, 1947, the Windsor Teachers' Council formed a “Baby House Drive” Committee.

Local businesses began to support the effort, too, and once again, the Hiram Walker legacy came to the benefit of Windsor's culture when the distillery company donated \$37,000 in 1957 and won naming rights. According to the WPL Annual Report of 1958, George F. MacDonald donated his entire antique collection, plus hours of time to the project. Local architects Shepard and Masson designed the reconstructed house as a museum.

The Hiram Walker Museum was opened in May 7, 1958, by the Hon. A. Kelso Roberts, Attorney-General of Ontario. Windsor Historic Sites Association formally handed over the building and the historical collection of artifacts from the region to the WPL Board. The Windsor Public Library Board hired historian R. Alan Douglas to be the first curator of the Hiram Walker Museum. With one other staff member hired by the WPL, the newest branch of the Windsor Public Library became a great success, adding both archives and objects to the library archives, and also augmenting the library's visitor numbers. The curator and staff reported to the Windsor Public Library administration.

The Windsor Public Library quickly embraced the public and academic educational opportunity of having a museum in its "collection" by planning workshop programs of the preservation of museum artifacts for the Ontario Historical Society for 1958 (*Globe and Mail*, Oct. 7, 1957). The museum and library staff also benefitted from the help of professional curators from Detroit and Ontario. By September, 1963, the museum was declared a National Historic Site.

During its first full year of operation, 15,000 guests had toured the Museum, and local residents had scoured their attics and donated hundreds of historical objects, from a textile artist's magnifying glass to a "pioneer loom in working condition" (Douglas, *WPL Annual Report*, 1958).

In 1974, the board assisted Alan Douglas in the purchase of a rare water colour painting by Catharine Reynolds of Amherstburg, circa 1812, adding to the Museum's collection of objects important to local history. After George MacDonald's death, Chief Librarian Anne Hume noted in her 1963 report that MacDonald's collection of antique guns had been donated in his name and a campaign was mounted for more donations from the community, "a specific effort was directed toward the development of an important collection of firearms, suitable for exhibition to a public concerned with the Canadian aspects of local history" and "...truly representative of the various types of weapons that played a part in the settlement of the Detroit River frontier" (Hume, *WPL Annual Report*, 1960). Possibly this is one of the few times that a firearms collection has been mentioned in a library annual report.

In March, 1974, the Archivist of Ontario proposed that this Provincial Ministry take microfilm copies of the museum's fragile manuscripts collection in exchange for a microfilm copy for the museum. The Board, with the approval of the Windsor Historic Sites Association, also agreed that a large collection of the museum's archives be "loaned in perpetuity" to the Archives of Ontario in order to ensure the items could be preserved (*WPL Board Minutes*, March 5, 1974).

The museum's activities expanded the traditional library mandate further by overseeing the archaeological investigation of five sites of unique importance to the history of First Nations in the area, part of the commemoration of the WPL's 75th anniversary in 1969. In March, 1971, further archaeological studies of the area around the museum were conducted with the help of the Royal Ontario Museum and the University of Toronto, and their graduate students carried out the work.

The Museum volunteers and staff continued to promote the research work of the museum,

and often produced information to local and national media on Windsor and Canada's history. In 1984, Curator Alan Douglas was featured in a series of information broadcasts on local history, which had been very popular, and the Board congratulated him on this success. Laurence Grant, who succeeded Alan Douglas as Curator, was nominated for the 9th Annual Tourism Award in the Promotional Achievement category, highlighting the library's unusual involvement in the local tourism industry through its governance of the museum.

In 1982, a Museum Services Committee was struck in order to provide additional governance to the Museum and allow it to be eligible for provincially-funded grants. A feasibility study was conducted by the library to determine the Museum's future goals, in 1985 including the role of the curator, the demarcation of the duties of staff and volunteers, and the use of computers in museum work. The next year, 1985, a new East Gallery was added to the museum, and afterwards, celebrated the history of the Essex Kent Scottish Regiment was celebrated with a special exhibition there. In 1991, a proposal was made for a competition to rename the museum. It was changed to François Baby House Museum for a few years.

By the start of the new millennium in May, 2000, the Windsor Public Library Board reviewed its governance of the museum. The provincial Community Museum Operating Grant required the WPL to have an appointed or elected governing body that was responsible for the operation of the museum. The museum branch was overseen by a Museum Committee comprised of two Windsor Public Library Board members, two members of the Windsor Historic Sites Association and two members of the Museum Group with a possible two other members-at-large.

Another unique arrangement for the WPL Board was the shared lease of the Duff-Baby House and interpretive centre in Sandwich with the Ontario Heritage Foundation. In essence, the Duff-Baby House was yet another branch of the WPL.

Windsor was also unique in that it did not have a dedicated municipal museum – the original design of the space involved only part of the display being devoted to Windsor history. An area was arranged as a historic house reflecting the building's original owner. The museum then contained 15,000 artifacts mainly owned by the Windsor Public Library, the Windsor Historic Sites Association owned the MacDonald Collection – and the WHSA technically also owned the François Baby house. The annual visitor numbers swelled to over 51,000 including visitors to the interpretation centre. The François Baby House had 5,660 sq ft, with 1,750 sq ft of exhibition space, and the Duff-Baby Interpretation Centre had 1,000 sq ft.

The upkeep and collection of the museum was greatly augmented by the fundraising efforts and volunteers of the Friends of the Museum and Windsor Historic Sites Association. The Museum Board's mandate was for visitors to leave with a sense of relationship or connection between, "Windsor and elsewhere; Events and individuals; Objects and People; Ourselves and others"... and that "people will experience inspiration, relaxation and enrichment of their lives through the various heritage services offered by the Windsor Public Library" (*WPL Board Minutes*, May 10, 2000).

The museum and its volunteers also spearheaded local history celebrations and commemorations, such as the August 14, 1994 commemoration of the Surrender of Detroit in 1812. This began a tradition of hosting historical re-enactments. Having costumed interpreters on library property bringing history alive was another departure for the traditional interpretation of a library's community function.

In 2008, the Windsor Public Library Board completed the process to transfer management of Windsor's Community Museum to the Corporation of the City of Windsor and by August of that year, the transfer was complete. In 2012, Windsor's Community Museum was still operated by the City of Windsor, and took a vital role in Windsor's commemoration of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.

## ***Nikola Budimir Memorial Library (1965 - )***

Local business owner Nikola Budimir bequeathed the property for the library. The building was funded by the then municipality of the Township of Sandwich West and was opened in December, 1965. The architects, Johnson and McWhinnie donated artwork above the door. The enameled steel panels were cast in Italy. In 1973, the Budimir family donated the adjacent track of land so that the library could expand in 1975. In 1999, the Roseland Golden "K" Kiwanis Club of Windsor donated funds to enhance the Children's Area. Budimir Branch suffered a flood in late, 2011, but remains a popular meeting point in South Windsor.

## ***Riverside Library (1939 - )***

The Riverside Branch opened as an Association Library funded by subscription fees in December, 1939. Similar to a Mechanics Institute, it was first located in the Hydro Building on Wyandotte St. East, with limited opening hours and a membership fee of \$1 per year. It later became a tax-supported public library and a stand-alone branch was built in 1955. It became a branch of the Windsor Public Library in 1966.

"There is a definite community feeling in Riverside – our customers want small-town friendliness with large city resources," said Callie Israel, librarian in 1969 (*WPL Annual Report, 75th Anniversary*). The Riverside Branch grew to be one of the larger branches with a loyal group of customers. Most were professionals of British origin, and selective about their books, choosing books on music, gardening and the classics. Customers supported staff, often bringing in gifts to staff who had been ill and offering support, "much like a grandmother," said retired branch staff Ronnie Filby who moved to the Riverside Branch from the Carnegie Library in 1975 (Filby, November 9, 2012).

The customers took their role as partners with the Riverside Library very seriously, and in 1993, the Friends of Riverside Library donated \$100,000 to the WPL Board for the construction of a new building at the location. In 1995, the new building was built. By December, 1999, the

Friends had donated \$345,000 of the \$551,000 that they had committed to the branch. Ronnie Filby recalls that the customers even helped to move the books into the new building on moving day, wheeling carts of boxes of books: “we were as a family moving across the street” (Filby, November 9, 2012).

## ***Ambassador Branch (1972 – 2000)***

The Ambassador Branch was opened in 1972 in leased space in the Ambassador Plaza in the west end of Windsor. It was opened after the old Sandwich Branch and John Richardson library were closed. When the Ambassador location on Huron Line was subject to increased traffic congestion, making the trek to the library dangerous for children. The collection was absorbed into the Bridgeview Library in 2002.

## ***Tecumseh Mall Branch (1973 – 1988)***

The Tecumseh Branch leased mall space and by 1975, it was liaising with the new Main Branch’s language centre to provide French literature to the community and schools. This branch served two growing neighbourhoods at the time, Fontainebleau and the planned subdivision of Forest Glade. Customers enjoyed the convenience of a library in a main shopping area. The lease was could not be renewed in 1988, so plans were made for a library branch in Forest Glade.

## ***Main Library/Central Branch (1973 - )***

In her last Annual Report as Chief Librarian in 1956, Anne Hume reflected that the Bartlet House and Annex were only temporary measures to expand the area of the Carnegie Library. A new main library was needed. As the decade of the 1960s progressed, Windsor’s citizens began to deliberate on a fitting 1967 commemoration of the Centennial of Canada, and a strong group of citizens joined with the WPL Board to call for a new main library to be built by 1967.

It wasn’t until 1968, when Fred Israel took over as chief librarian that plans began to take place, after a 25-year campaign to find suitable funding and a location. In February 1970, the library erected a billboard at the Carnegie site letting everyone in Windsor know about the new location – at the site of the former Ursuline Music School on the east side of Ouellette Avenue at Elliott Street. Windsor architects Johnson – McWhinnie were contracted to design the modern building with 101,467 sq ft with three floors and open spaces.

The *Souvenir Brochure Commemorating the Opening of Windsor’s New Public Library*, November 24, 1973, describes the contemporary features unusual to Windsor’s library customers; vending machines (5% of sales were a fundraiser for the library), a drive-past book return chute, a sound system, air conditioning, and a mark of the decade of the 1970s, a smoking lounge. There was some public concern for the last feature, but the ethos of the day prevailed. There is

no longer a smoking lounge at the Main Branch.

An Information Centre was located on the main floor to allow customers direct access to an automated catalogue which was linked to all seven branches at the time. There was a dedicated Local History Collection and the Municipal Archives was able to move to the new library.

In the 2000s, the “Main Library” became known as the Central Branch, reflecting the interconnected systems and cooperation throughout the WPL system.

## Archives

Windsor Public Library Annual Reports account a special committee appointed with the responsibility of collection and preserving donations of old papers and documents as early as 1896, and of the importance of collecting and preserving the rare documents regarding early history (1897).

A donation to the library in 1909 of a valuable collection of minerals and fossils in a cabinet was placed in the general reading room at Carnegie, where it became an object of interest to visitors to the library.

During 1912, the WPL board began building up the collection of old and rare books, especially those pertaining to Canada and Canadian matters. The old and rare books were kept in a special department available to customers by request to the librarian.

Board member George F. Macdonald, a keen local historian gifted an extensive collection of manuscripts, maps, books relating to Windsor and area to the WPL in 1943. His collection of antiques was eventually donated to the WPL's museum, at the François Baby House. Another feature of the archives was the WPL's collection of newspaper archives at first collecting the actual printings, and as technology advanced, on microfilm in the reference room of the Carnegie, and later in the second floor Reference Section of the Main Library. All of Windsor's local newspapers were collected, including the *Windsor Herald* (1855), and other early ephemera, donated by George F. Macdonald. The *Windsor Daily Star* and now *The Windsor Star*, up to 1988, publications are available on microfilm at the Main Library. In 1994, the *Windsor Star* closed its library facilities to the public and referred people to access resources at the Windsor Public Library and the University of Windsor archives. Newspaper archives from the 1990s are now available through online databases at the WPL branches.

While the Carnegie Library housed archival materials, it wasn't until the Main Library was built in 1973 that the WPL had a dedicated Archives area. In November 1982, the WPL Board resolved to approach the City Administrator and municipal department heads to establish “a system for the retention and preservation of municipal records according to professionally agreed upon archival criteria ...” (*WPL Board Minutes*, December 7, 1982.) Prior to this, the City's archives had been stored and maintained in the vault of the old Downtown Market building. In 1984, the so-called Municipal Archives became the official repository of the archives of the City of Windsor.

The mandate of the Archive is to contribute to scholarship in the science of preservation and cataloguing manuscripts, sharing information with the public, academics and even other archives and local organizations. In September, 1993, the Canadian Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres expressed appreciation to the WPL Board for supporting their conference in Windsor. In 1994, the WPL Board received a matching grant from the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation to hire an Archives Assistant to process the records of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. Also in 1994, archivist Linda Chakmak staged an exhibition of archival materials at the Art Gallery of Windsor.

In 2000, the Archives Department was officially renamed Windsor's Community Archives; it occupied 3,100 sq ft with 2400 cubic ft of materials. According to CEO Steve Salmons, "the collection is comprised of approximately 8,000 photographs, 20,000 sets of architectural drawings, maps and plans, 1800 cubic feet of textual documentation" (*Report*, September 6, 2000). Windsor's Community Archives has outgrown its space and cannot collect much more material for now, but is used frequently by members of the public.

## ***Local History and Genealogy***

Separate from Windsor's Municipal Archives is the Main Library's Local History Collection located on the second floor of the Central Branch. By 2000, it housed the largest collection of materials pertaining to the city and county and its residents. It is comprised of historical scrapbooks, oral histories on tape, maps, atlases, archaeological material (primarily related to locating Native artifacts and burial grounds) and literary works by local authors. The Essex County Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society also owns materials within the collection and members volunteer regularly for an "Ask the Genealogist" program. Windsor Public Library also has a librarian on staff who is a trained genealogist.

## ***Remington Park Library (1983 - )***

At Remington Park's grand opening on January 11, 1983, Bob Girard, a volunteer with the Remington Park Neighbourhood Improvement Committee expressed appreciation to the Board for locating the library there, helping to improve the community's amenities and the partnership with the community involvement in building the branch was unique to the WPL. This branch was distinctive to the WPL system as it was mainly stocked with paperback books, but customers have access to all of the WPL books by placing holds on books from other branches. In 2011, Remington Park Library was renovated to make it more appealing to young customers, and more computers were added.

## ***Forest Glade – Optimist Library (1988 - )***

In 1986, the local Optimist Club pledged a 3-year donation of \$30,000 for a new branch in Forest Glade. The ground-breaking took place on January 9, 1988 and opened on May 7 of that year. Many French-speaking customers migrated to this branch after the Tecumseh Branch was closed. The Forest Glade Branch has a diverse multi-cultural customerage.

## ***Bridgeview – (2002 - )***

The Bridgeview Library took the place of the Ambassador Library, which was leased. The stand-alone building is located in a safer area for children to access. The WPL staged a contest to name the new branch and Sharissa Morrison, who was nine years old at the time, won the contest with the Bridgeview name.

## ***Fontainebleau Library (2005 -)***

The Friends of Fontainebleau formed in the summer of 2000 to acquire a plot of land for a local library and the Windsor Public Library Foundation joined forces to assist with fundraising. With both the support of the Friends of Fontainebleau and the WPL, the branch was opened in 2005.

# **BEYOND BRICKS AND MORTAR**

*“[The library] is a custodian and distributor of culture in a much wider sense: through records, pictures, prints, films, film-strips and microfilm collections of newspapers and scholarly studies. The trend is actually an extension of the nature of the book since the book is fundamentally a vehicle of culture. It is basically an effort to create a library without walls, an effort to open the book to the great mind of the public.” – C.P. Crowley, C.S.B. Chairman, WPL Board, 1954*

## ***Outreach***

In an effort to bring the experience of the library outside its walls, Windsor Public Library, early in its history, introduced outreach programs designed to match the unique needs of the community.

In 1914, the year World War I began, the WPL Board established book deposits library services in the local army camps in Windsor to supply servicemen with titles that suited their preferences. Books and magazines were also distributed to American troops passing through Wind-

sor on their way overseas. The WPL lent the Detroit Public Library a collection of war maps and posters.

Windsor Public Library initiated a branch library service in 1914. Books requested by customers were delivered twice a week to a rented space at Lanspeary's Drug Store on the east end of Windsor. Located in a heavily- populated residential area, this branch reached a circulation of 117,000 before it was closed given the financial constraints of the Depression. The Board of Education, unhappy with this branch closure, partnered with the WPL Board to open small lending library for children in Prince Edward School, and the following year in Victoria School. The partnership with the school board boosted library membership and the circulation of books.

Librarians were also active in the community, acting as judges for public speaking contests, debates and speech contests in the schools, sat on service club committees and prepared many displays at conventions and group meetings.

Beginning in 1947, the WPL allowed pre-naturalization citizenship classes the use of films and books at no charge to newcomers wanting to learn more about their new home. These services were expanded in the 1950s. The librarians created lists of books especially for customers whose first language was not English, and the demand for beginner English books rose. Librarians selected and displayed newspaper articles of interest to new Canadians on a bulletin board. Overall, the library became a welcoming place where New Canadians were informed about their community, learned English and made Windsor their home.

During the city of Windsor's Centennial celebration in 1954, the WPL's reference librarians were frequently called upon to act as the city's "memory," providing information about features of Windsor, such as the International Tunnel, biographies of Windsor's celebrities, history of the ferry service, industrial population, and the date of the first wartime house in Windsor.

## ***Extension Services***

As well as cultural outreach, the WPL's librarians began to see a need for outreach to those who could not physically visit the library. Many librarians dropped off books to elderly or sick neighbours on their own time, or visited hospitals. Before 1969, extension services by the WPL consisted of the loan of six books monthly to the Senior Citizen's Day Centre and the volunteer work of individual librarians.

By the start of 1970, a library van was delivering regular exchanges to psychiatric patients at IODE Hospital; senior citizens at a Seniors' hostel, Huron Lodge; "unwed mothers" at the Salvation Army's Faith Haven; and the patients at the old Riverview Hospital. Over 2300 books were exchanged in the first year. In 1971, Extension Services librarians worked in partnership with the CNIB in order to distribute large print and audio books. The service to seniors and hospitals was augmented with games and audio books. In 1975, the service was successfully extended to an Extension and Shut-in Service for disabled customers and was augmented by the work of

volunteers.

In 2008, the Windsor Public Library joined with the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County to establish a “community branch” located at the Hospice on Empress Ave. Books and audio-visual material are catalogued by the library, and a librarian visits once a week to refresh the books.

The Windsor Public Library regularly reaches out to various communities in the city, hoping to increase awareness about books, reading and literacy to children and adults through other activities, such as Sports and Technology. Former NHL hockey champion Adam Graves, for example, was named Honorary Chairman of the Friends of the Windsor Public Library in 1996. Graves appeared at the library to talk to children about his own love of reading and to read to eager fans who were happy to find sports-related books at the library. The Children’s area at Fontainebleau Branch is named after Graves and his wife Violet in honour of their fundraising efforts. WPL staff also support local organizations with their own fundraising drives including barbecues and collecting food donations in lieu of library fines during Amnesty Week, last held in 2010.

The WPL formed partnerships with other community services such as the Windsor Fire Department. In 1997, the Windsor Fire Fighters Benefit Fund donated \$10,000 to the WPL to develop a section on public fire education and prevention. The collection includes books and videos, which would be refreshed with new funds each year. In 2012, Doug Diet, with the Windsor Fire and Rescue Services, became the Project Leader for their Library Project, and staged several presentations on fire safety for children at the library branches. The project also donated \$2500 for children’s about safety.

## *WPL and Ontario Libraries*

Windsor Public librarians took pride in conducting further studies and research in order to increase their standards of service to the public. In doing so, they often collaborated with librarians from across Ontario and Canada through associations and educational institutions. WPL librarian Elizabeth Magee was a president of the fledging Institute of Professional Librarians in 1954, and she hoped not only to increase professional standards for librarians, but pay equity, too. In 1959, the first official meeting of the Institute of Professional Librarians and of the Clerical Section was held in Windsor to further the work of Windsor staff in promoting the aims of the associations.

Those Institute meetings in 1959 were part of an Ontario Library Association convention with meetings at various library branches. About 400 delegates from all over Ontario attended and a party was held for the delegates at the WPL’s most unique branch: the Hiram Walker Museum. The Windsor Public Library was also one of the earliest participants in a Regional Library Service, founded in 1967. Regional Library services allowed libraries to share resources and facilitate inter-library loans.

In 1987, smaller libraries in the region joined forces to found Southern Ontario Library Service

which combined support for fundraising, staff training, and centralized purchasing to secure prices and keep costs down. In 1989, the Southern Ontario Library Service was officially founded by the Ontario Ministry of Culture to support the work of regional libraries: "SOLS now serves the public libraries of almost 200 municipalities from Windsor to the Quebec border and north to Muskoka ...." (SOLS website).

Today, the WPL still benefits from the services of Southern Ontario Librarian Service (SOLS), which operates from distribution centres in London and Cambridge. In 2013, Geoff Johnson, one of the distribution personnel demonstrated his role to Cultural Engines staff. Johnson delivers books on interlibrary loan to Windsor sharing with the region including Middlesex, St. Thomas, Essex, Chatham and Wyoming. Libraries rotate collections annually, and new books are delivered in a timely manner to Windsor four days a week. These collections are a combination of interlibrary loans and the Southern Ontario Multi-Lingual Pool. Customers are more aware of the availability of books because of book searches on the internet, so demand for interlibrary loans has increased over the last decade.

## *Technology*

In libraries, technology influences the way librarians provide services and programs and how the public accesses information. When the library opened in 1894, to borrow a book, customers consulted a list of books available and the librarian would then retrieve it from the shelves. The lists, usually arranged alphabetically by author to show what was available at the library and enabled customers to find a book. Borrowers would fill out a slip of paper and give it to the librarian to retrieve the books.

By 1900, WPL printed catalogues of available books and copies of the catalogue were available in the library and for at home. The following year, librarians had included all of the books in the library with the exclusion of fiction and juvenile literature. The catalogue demonstrated great value to readers who preferred to have a printed directory to look through at home. By 1906, the catalogue had two supplements added to it and many books were not listed. The library board considered compiling a new catalogue but realized the lists were out of date soon after they were published as books were added to the collection every month. Instead, the WPL adopted the practice of other modern libraries, the card catalogue.

The year 1910 saw the installment of the Browne Charging System, a distribution system for library books. The Browne system used envelopes and pockets for each borrower. When a book was to be borrowed by a customer, the book card was removed and placed in the borrower's card pocket which had the borrower's name, address and registration number. Borrower's card pockets were kept at the circulation desk and proved to be popular with readers who were saved the trouble of writing out slips for the requested books.

The Readers' Advisory services were supplemented by printed lists compiled by staff to en-

courage interest in reading. In 1925, George F. MacDonald, a member of the board at the time, donated a mimeograph machine which was used to print book lists for customers, students and teachers.

By 1927, the library had outgrown the Browne Charging System and a new system using identification cards was inaugurated. Registered borrowers were given a card with their name, address, library number and date of expiration which had to be shown to take out books.

## Cataloguing

In 1962 the Master Catalogue was microfilmed. The Dewey Decimal Classification system with Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules and American Library Association filing rules had been adopted by the time of the WPL's 75th Anniversary in 1969, "bringing [WPL] into the mainstream of current cataloguing and classification practice" (Hume, 1969). Also that year, a Telex machine was in use, allowing librarians to place inter-library loan requests via text through phone landline technology.

Card catalogues were still in use until the 1970s, and in 1983, an automated circulation control and bibliographic information system was introduced, replacing the card catalogues. It was known as the "COMPUCAT system." By 1985, a fully automated check-out system and computerized catalogue was implemented. In order to save costs, the Windsor Public Library staff worked with a software company to devise its own programs, which turned out to be a "state of the art system" according to Director Fred Israel (*Windsor Star*, June 2, 1992). In 1998, the catalogue system, to an Integrated Library Management system and was replaced by the SIRSI Unicorn product. In 2012, self-check out machines were introduced at Riverside Branch, with installation at the other locations soon to follow. WPL librarians now carry tablet computers to assist customers in accessing information about books and resources.

## Film

In his Windsor Public Library Centennial Annual Report of 1954, Board President Rev. C.P. Crowley noted the library's embrace of modern technology. He suggested that even with the increasing popularity of television, librarians should not see "mass media as a threat," but also a tool for librarians to start discussions about books connected with the information customers gained from television shows.

The WPL embraced film technology in particular and was proud of having acquired its first film projectors and educational films, many of which were purchased from the National Film Board. In September 1959, librarians sponsored a film workshop at the Art Gallery at Willistead to train church leaders on the use of the projector. Nominal daily fees were charged for the rent of the projector and films, but these ceased in 1972.

The Willistead location came to have a film centre as one of its specialties by 1963, with fee exemptions for the Windsor and District Film Council members. A ceiling projector and micro-filmed ceiling projected books were available for bed-ridden customers. The library was still holding such events through the 1980s, with video player projections and workshops for local business owners when few members of the public had their own VCR recordings. By 2012, the WPL offered video, DVD and Blu-Ray movies for borrowing. The Windsor Public Library still has programs in partnership with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

### Printing and photocopying

Reproduction and copying technology was embraced early by the Windsor Public Library system and the main library was one of the few locations in the city that such services were available. As early as 1960, it was possible for the book processing and repair department to have the use of a "Thermofax copier." This machine allowed the library to save money on book purchases by copying and inserting a missing page into a damaged book rather than buying a new book. This machine was available to the public for 15 cents a sheet.

"Now, No One Escapes Fines!" enthused the *Windsor Daily Star* in April, 1965: a \$1,400 "Recordak Reader-Printer" was the library's newest technological addition. All books borrowed by customers were photographed with this machine, a microfilm camera, along with their library card. When a book was overdue, clerical staff could include a print-out of the exact book and date with the notification mailing, thus ending arguments about dates or books borrowed. Customers had been able to return books automatically with an AutoPage Book Return Box installed at Carnegie in 1955.

By 1969, the Xerox machine was available at five libraries and the public had made 77,000 copies that year. The catalogue department was also given a new offset press and copier and an experienced operator in order to print their 85,000 new catalogue cards needed annually.

In 2012, the Windsor Public Library took the concept of copying to a new level by setting up a Self-Publishing Lab on the ground floor of the main library. The Espresso Book Machine is an updated version of a print-on-demand copier, which was originally developed so that more valuable titles could stay in print with print-on-demand publishing rather than traditional expensive large print-runs. The system can print a book written and designed by local authors.

### Audio and Music

The Windsor Public Library was also a destination for new musical technology, such as a record player and classical and semi-classical recordings donated to Seminole Library by the *Windsor Star*. In 1955, it cost 25 cents to rent records for a week or a daily rate of 8 cents/day for 33 1/3 RPM records, or 2 cents a day for 78 PRM records. If a customer didn't have a record

player at home, a listening station was available at Carnegie and Seminole. In 1969, music fees were eliminated and the main branches of the library had music libraries.

CNIB “Talking Books” or audio books have long been a part of the WPL’s accessibility services – at first on tape, and then cassette and CD, and now the “DAISY” format. Educational kits are now available, with books, CDs and DVDs packaged in clear plastic bags for educators and the public to use. Versions of these kits are even available for book clubs. Downloadable audio books, music and e-books are now available through the WPL website via Freegal or OverDrive Media software.

## Newspapers

Until 1988, all newspapers carried by the Windsor Public Library, especially The *Windsor Star*’s editions from 1988, were placed on microfilm and are now available digitally or print.

In the 1990s enhanced content or digital versions of titles were available on CD ROMs, a boon to educators. Windsor Public Library was the first Canadian library to offer an Online Book Club in 2000. Through a subscribed service, customers could read a chapter a day for five days, to sample a book, then order the book through the library’s website or sign it out at the library. This was extended to Young Adult novels for teens later that year. In 2006, the WPL subscribed to the Newsgroup Direct system which allows timely print-on-demand newspapers to be available to customers on the same day. This service allows the library to download digital copies of newspapers from around the world and prints them on a local printer.

## Information Technology

In 2000, a new vision statement was adopted by the WPL: *Universal Access to the Universe of Ideas*.

During the turn of this century, the Windsor Public Library initiated several grant-funded projects to produce a series of Digital Communities which are available through the library’s website. Since 200, the WPL has been creating digital exhibits. The Millennium Fund provided funds to digitize local history. Windsor’s Community is the latest addition to this collection. The *Cultural Engines* project is one of them, as is a valuable series of interviews with Canadian Veterans from the Windsor area. In August, 2012, the WebCapture Department of the Library of Congress in Washington DC selected the WPL’s historic collection of materials related to the War of 1812 Bicentennial for its archives as they “considered the website to be an important part of this collection and the historical record” (Library of Congress, letter, August 16, 2012).

In 2013, the Windsor Public Library entered into a partnership with a group called Windsor Hackforge, a non-profit computer and electronics club with volunteers from the local Information Technology community, the University of Windsor and others to “spread excitement, interest and

knowledge in technology, particularly among young people” (CEO Report, October 29, 2012). Another technology initiative for youth took place on September 25, 2012, when WETECH Alliance brought Canadian astronaut Marc Garneau to a Robotics Open House, in order to encourage schools to join Sandwich Secondary School in entering FIRST Robotics contests.

## Milestones and Events

*“It was William Kay who inaugurated the library’s motto: ‘Aude Sapere’  
(Dare to be Wise)”  
(Library History in the City of Windsor – Local History Pamphlet File #93)*

The Windsor Public Library has witnessed significant milestones in its long history which now spans three centuries and has surpassed 100 years. WPL librarians and staff takes pride in important anniversaries and milestones.

In 1954, the WPL acknowledged its 60th “Jubilee” with a nostalgic look back at the 19th century by recreating Lambie’s Hall, the first Windsor library, in one corner of the Carnegie Library with librarians in historical costumes of the Victorian era. The “Library of the ‘Nineties” featured two sections of shelves closed off with bars to “give the effect of the closed stacks of the early library with a wicket, behind which was the librarian’s desk” (Hume, *60 Years of Service of Windsor Public Library*, 1954). The WPL had recently acquired back issues of the *Windsor Daily Star* on microfilm, so librarians showcased their new technology with a retrospective of the paper. Vintage signs were posted, warning customers, “Closed stacks – choose books from posted lists,’ ‘Library Catalogues for sale – 15 cents including supplements as issued,” and the motto, “Let your thoughts be gentle and your voice be low” (Hume, 1954). For added atmosphere, a shiny spittoon was placed far away from a table bearing a sign, “Reserved for Ladies.”

The Carnegie librarians researched and presented an exhibition on the Art of Bookmaking, which traced the history of shared knowledge from cave paintings on. The highlight of this exhibition was a 1585 bible, one of the earliest printed, donated by a neighbour of the Carnegie Library, a Mrs. Bennett. Named after the printer, the Charles Barker Bible was tucked away in the archives for safekeeping afterwards and generally forgotten until it was found again in 2011 by Local History librarian, Tom Vajdik.

The Walkerville Branch at Willistead staged an exhibition about children’s books, including one of the first dedicated children’s picture books, a “‘horn book’, a child-sized wooden paddle which had a piece of printed paper attached to it” (*Windsor Star*, April 23, 1954). Similar displays were available at the South Branch at John Campbell School, and the library’s modern new branch at Seminole featured a retrospective of films, books and photographs relating to 50 years of the automobile, Windsor’s chief industry of the time. Commemorative cotton bags were sold with a jubilee motto, “Our Hope for the Future.”

A Centennial Committee of WPL staff led by Laurence Grant, Curator of Windsor’s Commu-

nity Museum, planned a series of events and commemorations of the 100 years of service of the Windsor Public Library in 1994. A mobile exhibition giving an overview of the history of the Windsor Public Library system debuted at Windsor City Hall in June, 1994, and then “toured” each branch so that the public could share it in their neighbourhood branches. A flower bed in Jackson Park replicated the WPL’s Centennial logo and, in the tradition of the early library, a centennial tea was held in December of that year. As a fundraiser, the library sold book bags with the Centennial logo at all branches – pioneering the move to reusable bags replacing plastic.

## Broadcasts

Librarians have taken part in many local broadcasts over the history of the Windsor Public Library in order to let listeners know about programming at the library, or as part of the WPL’s education program. In 1954, Anne Hume offered thanks to local radio media, CKLW, CBE, the Radio Committee of the A.F.L. and C.C.L. which annually donated its scheduled weekly half-hour to Young Canada’s Book Week.

In 1957, WPL librarians had their first taste of television fame when Eileen Kelly and Joyce Taylor appeared in a children’s puppet show presentation for Canada Book Week. The WPL commissioned its first television commercial in 2011 produced by Media Street Productions complete with talking animals.

## Awards

The Windsor Public Library has long been a leader of excellence in innovation and service in the community and boasts a long list of awards that can be viewed on its website. Some highlights include technology and service awards.

In time for the WPL’s Centennial celebration, former library Director Fred Israel was named Librarian of the Year by the Ontario Library Association in January 1993, for his work planning the move of the Main Library from the Carnegie building to the new Main Library on Ouellette Avenue. In recognition of this, the WPL Board decided to name the new auditorium after Mr. Israel.

In April, 2003, CEO Steve Salmons was awarded the Queen’s Jubilee Medal for his “work in raising the profile of public libraries as an essential information resource for children, seniors and all Windsor residents” (*WPL Board Minutes*, April 9, 2003).

R. Alan Douglas, the first curator of François Baby House Museum (now Windsor’s Community Museum) received a Canadian Museum’s Association Award of Distinguished Service in April, 2008 for his 34 years of service to the community and Ontario museums. He had also received the E.J. Lajeunesse Award for his service to local history by the Essex County Historical Society and the Carnochan Award for the Ontario Historical Society in 1990 and 1992.

In a WPL Information Technology Update for the WPL Board in June, 2005, it was noted that

the WPL “embraced technology to expand services and programming” (*WPL Board Minutes*, June 8, 2005) and had as a consequence won 15 awards in a short span of five years for “technological leadership and innovation.” One of these awards included recognition by Alan Rock, then Minister of Industry, announcing the WPL’s groundbreaking use of the internet by a Canadian public library for its project *iCity – Historic Sites of Walkerville*. In 2012, the WPL continued this tradition with the CLA/OCLC Award for Innovation Technology for the Tomorrow Today project. This “innovative project has shown libraries that there are limitless ways to reach current and future customers. One of the most innovative aspects of the project was how WPL uses portable devices to create a mobile library branch” (*WPL Press Release*, November 2, 2012).

Other outreach programs at the Windsor Public Library have received awards, such as the long-serving Literacy program. It won the 2009 Canadian Library Association/Stan Heath Award for significant advancements in education and literacy in the community and was presented to Rachel Blok.

## ***Publications***

As early as 1913, the Windsor Public Library began publishing with a four-paged circular called *The Bulletin*. The monthly publication, which was distributed free, contained lists of books added to the library, lists of books on special subjects and literary news.

Librarians continued these advertisement throughout the years with the publication “What Goes on Inside” which reported on circulation and library services and was sent to thousands of homes in the Windsor area.

As a result of a news item in the *Ontario Library Review*, requests were made to Windsor Public librarians for publications they published, including bibliography on “Problems of Demobilization, Adjustment and Rehabilitation of Men and Women from the Armed Forces”, “Library Trends in Canada”, “Canada in the Post-War World” and histories of library service in Walkerville, Sandwich and Windsor.

Head librarians took advantage of anniversary milestones in the Library’s history to compile commemorative pamphlets and reports outlining the Windsor Public Library’s achievements to date. A pamphlet for the 60th Anniversary was published in 1954, *Sixty Years of Service – 1894 – 1954* written by librarians Anne Hume and Hilda Brooke, was printed by Sumner Printing Co. for the library. 32,000 copies were hand-distributed by Boy Scouts to every household in the city. Fifteen years later, an illustrated, mimeographed *75th Anniversary Annual Report* was published in 1969 – this time illustrated with photographs of the director and board members, with an *in memoriam* page acknowledging the work of long-term board member Mrs. Kerr.

The WPL celebrated the opening of the new Main Library in 1973 with a full-colour illustrated souvenir brochure. This offered a virtual tour of the new facilities and background about the artworks commissioned for the new building.

Windsor Public librarians also produced professional reports and contributed to on-going research on the role of libraries in the community. For example, Anne Hume was instrumental in starting up the Cataloguing in Publication (CIP) list, which announces new books to be published early so that librarians can order them in a timely manner. Librarian David Eady produced a neighbourhood report on how the Seminole Branch might best approach drop-in users in the early 1970s, *Seminole Branch Library*, 1974.

Various newsletters and events listings have been published by the WPL and distributed to the public. In the 2000s, the WPL produced a newsletter called, *Shelf Life: News from the Windsor Public Library*.

The WPL has produced a series of reports and catalogues of subject specialties. To augment literacy studies in 1981, David Eady produced a list of *Adult New Readers: a Bibliography* of books that met the criteria of a grade 8 reading level, but of interest to adults. Included were Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and a book on Jack Miner by the Council of Adult Education. Many such lists and reports are now published on the WPL website.

In partnership with Employment Ontario, the WPL has published its first e-book, *Cultural Engines: Celebrating Windsor's Cultural Community* in March, 2013. It is this book and website. The aim of the publication is to shed a spotlight on three of Windsor's longest-serving cultural organizations: the Art Gallery of Windsor, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and the Windsor Public Library (including Windsor's Community Museum and Windsor's Community Archives). Program coordinator Jean Foster and the community partners recognized that although the WPL's history was well-documented, the seven-decade histories of the Art Gallery of Windsor or the Windsor Symphony Orchestra were not easily available to the public. The Windsor Public Library and the Art Gallery of Windsor have a shared history, and had operated under the same administration in the same building for a time at Willistead Manor. The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has often worked in partnership with the other two organizations, also performing in their buildings. In a small, close-knit city such as Windsor, many of the Board Members, volunteers and fundraisers who have supported one organization have also supported the others. The aim of the publication of these histories is to celebrate the passion and dedication of those who have supported these organizations as professionals and as volunteers, and to encourage others to do in the future.

## Timeline

1894

First public library opened in Lambie's Hall on Ferry Street.

1895

Walkerville rented library service from Windsor.

1903

Carnegie Library opened at Victoria and Park with a grant from Andrew Carnegie.

1911

Public given access to shelves for those over 14.

1914

First branches opened at Lanspeary's Drug Stores, east and west locations.

1919

First separate children's libraries established, Windsor and Walkerville.

1921

Sandwich rented library service from Windsor.

1922

Walkerville Library moved to Willistead; (second floor Town Hall)

1923

Sandwich Library opened

1928

John Richardson Library opened.

1932

Children's Library at Main closed.

Books transferred to John Richardson.

Adult books at John Richardson transferred to Main.

John Richardson closed in the evenings.

1933

Prince Edward School Branch and Victoria School Branch opened (Children's branch).

1937

Library system was 8 libraries: Carnegie, John Richardson, Prince Edward, Victoria, Willistead, South Branch (Hugh Beaton School), Sandwich, J.E. Benson (Ontario Street School).

1940

St. Luke's Road Barracks library opened.

1941

Winston Churchill Branch opened in St. Alphonsus School.

1943

Deposit of Children's books placed in a Wartime Housing Clubhouse.

1945

A Friends of the Windsor Library Group organized.

1949

Books for adult beginners in English were purchased

French books were purchased for children.

1950

Hugh Beaton Branch, name changed to South Branch, moved to John Campbell School

Children living outside the city were charged \$.50 per year to borrow.

1951

J.E. Benson Memorial Library moved from Ada C. Richards School to storage.

1952

Winston Churchill closed

1953

Golden Anniversary – Carnegie Library

30th Anniversary – Sandwich Library

Silver Anniversary – John Richardson Library

Seminole Library opened

Westcott Road Community Centre Deposit station closed.

1954

Record player and recordings donated to Seminole Library by The Windsor Star

Population of city – 127, 340

Circulation – 555, 754

1955

AutoPage Book Return Box installed at Carnegie.

Bartlet House (adjacent to Carnegie) purchased

1956

Hiram Walker Historical Museum established under the Library Board's administration.

Debenture issue of \$92, 210 to build annex linking Carnegie Library and Bartlet House.

1957

Headquarters moved from Willistead to Bartlet House

Carnegie Annex & Bartlet House opened

Library Board takes over the administration of Willistead Coach House for art and handicrafts.

1958

Opening of Hiram Walker Historical Museum (May 7)

Exhibits in City Hall windows begun.

1959

South Branch Library opened at 1425 Tecumseh Road – citizens delegation (400 people) presented petition.

Art Gallery Administration assumed by Art Association

First International Freedom Festival held

OLA Conference held in Windsor

First copying machine installed at Carnegie reference.

1960

Population of Windsor 117, 629

Circulation 738, 104

Bookmobile service studied; Service to Sandwich West TWP discussed.

1961

Suburban residents pay \$10 per family

City By-laws and Minutes of City Council deposited and indexed

1962

Windsor Teacher's College opened

Master Catalogue was microfilmed

1963

First meeting of Southwestern Regional Library Co-operative held in Windsor

Offset duplicator purchased.

1964

Telex installed

Xerox and a reader-printer installed

1965

Bursaries for Library School introduced

1966

Windsor, Riverside, Sandwich East and Sandwich West amalgamated

Population 189,407

Circulation 884,294

Budimir and Riverside Libraries added

Sunday Service at Carnegie initiated

1967

Canada's Centennial Year

Free use of services throughout region was begun

Last Canadian Library Week held.

1968

Delivery van purchased

Prince Edward and Victoria Branches closed.

1969

75th Anniversary of Windsor Public Library

Photocopiers in 5 libraries provided

Establishment of Positions adopted

First Staff Development Day

Victoria House acquired

Extension Service expanded

1970

Printing Department established

Languages Collection established

Globe & Mail and New York Times on microfilm

1971

Shut-in Service inaugurated

South Branch enlarged

1972

Ground breaking for new library

John Richardson and Sandwich Libraries closed and Ambassador opened (July 2)

8 mm films introduced

1973

New Main Library opened

Tecumseh Mall Library opened

1974

9% reduction in library budget

Video tapes introduced

1975

Budimir addition finished

Art Gallery moves out of Willistead

Talking Books started

Audio Cassettes introduced

1976

Renovation of Seminole Branch

Professional Development Days for staff started.

1977

Willistead hours reduced to 3 days per week

Outdoor showcases built at Museum.

1978

Willistead Library closed

Story Van summer programme

1980

Adult Literacy Program starts

Highest circulation to date – 1, 067, 786 items.

1981

Hiram Walker Historical Museum Services Committee formed

“Visual Ear” donated by SWRL

1994

Windsor Public Library Centennial.

2000

Website introduced.

2013

Cultural Engines e-book and website published.

## Beginnings: The Windsor Symphony Orchestra

*“You are not contributing to a charity when you come to this group’s offering. You are adding to your own enrichment of living” – Angus Munro (Windsor Daily Star, April 22, 1939).*

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra (WSO) in various forms has been an integral establishment of culture in Windsor for almost a century. Opinions vary as to the exact date of the foundation of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, but evidence suggests that there has been strong support and a will to have an orchestra in Windsor since the late 1920s. H. Whorlow Bull, a qualified conductor and the Music Supervisor for Public School Board, was an early orchestra director. He had strong ties to All Saints’ Anglican Church in downtown Windsor, which was one of the largest churches in the region at that time, and was a natural location for sacred and

classical music, whether choral, organ, or small orchestral ensembles. An Optimists Orchestra and a Border Cities Orchestra performed *circa* 1929 with Frederick G. Vallance conducting Bull's memorial concert in 1929. There are mentions of occasional concerts through the 1930s, with a charity concert to raise funds for "delinquent boys" in March, 1936.

Peter C. Allan, local brass band conductor, took a brave step on April 22, 1938 when he decided to don formal wear and – a little nervously - led the performance of local musicians, amateurs and students in a popular full orchestra performance at the "Vocational School" (Patterson Collegiate). Later performances took place at Walkerville Collegiate High School or the Tivoli Theatre. Under the mentorship of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, particularly the DSO's Fred Vallance as Concertmaster, and with eager volunteers comprising about 45 music students, teachers and volunteers, a full orchestra was formed. "Last night in Windsor," claimed an enthusiastic reviewer, "the city's first real symphony [sic] came to life in a manner which left no doubt at all about its coming of age in a few years" (*Windsor Daily Star*, April 23, 1938).

The orchestra performed twice more in the next eighteen months, again to full houses and enthusiastic response. A pattern of performance and music emerged: guest soloists, including vocalists, violinists and, that night, even an electric organist played popular songs or arias from operas. Later, the orchestra would play better-known classical music, such as Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*. Apart from two or three concerts in 1940-41, this orchestra disbanded during World War II (1939-1945).

Meanwhile, the WSO's long partnership with public broadcasting began with another ensemble in 1941, comprising many of the same musicians, again called the Border Cities Orchestra, conducted by Ernest Rennie, in order to raise funds for troops overseas (Sharpe, 2007). Matti Holli, a talented young violinist, took over as conductor the next year. In November, 1945, Peter Allan called for local musicians to reconvene after the war at a rehearsal space on Sandwich Street, hoping for about 20 musicians to start.

The two groups apparently merged in the next two years, under the directorship of Holli, and funded by the Windsor Symphony Society. In 1947, the orchestra incorporated as a professional organization as the Windsor Federation of Musicians Symphony Orchestra. By May 1948, with the cooperation of the Windsor Federation of Musicians, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra was now an incorporated not-for-profit organization, which had performed seven concerts in the previous two years.

#### *Mandate:*

The mandates of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, like the organization, have developed over the years. At its founding, in 1946, as the *Windsor Daily Star* quotes, the orchestra's aims were simply, "to promote musical culture in Windsor" (Anon., Oct 29 1949). In 1998, a grant application for the WSO includes the Mission statement of the day: "To enrich community life and serve as an educational resource through live performance of orchestral music."

Today, the Mission Statement is expanded to celebrate the relationship of the Symphony peo-

ple who live locally: “The Mission of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra is to engage, entertain, educate and inspire people in South Western Ontario through performances of classical and popular music” (Sharpe, 2012).

# People

## *Maestri/ Conductors*

*“My hope is that from the seeds we have sown here the interest and love for good music will continue to grow in Windsor and that this fine city will be proud of its cultural development, as I am proud to be a Canadian and a Windsorite” (Matti Holli, Windsor Daily Star February 7, 1951).*

A conductor of a modern orchestra is a true multi-tasker. One has to be a good leader, educator, fund-raiser, entertainer and most of all, a well-rounded musician. If the position is a combination of a conductor and music director, then they must also take on the tasks of planning and programming the orchestra’s annual season and overseeing the educational component of the orchestra’s structure. The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has been fortunate in its roster of passionate individuals who have nurtured the ensemble through the years.

Pioneering conductors in Windsor deserve mention, although they predate the incorporation of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

### **H. Whorlow Bull, (ca 1920-1930)**

Born in England, Whorlow Bull (1872-1938) was a devotee of choral and orchestral music in Windsor. He was a conductor and the music supervisor of the Public School Board in the 1920s. He conducted early concerts, especially for the Windsor and Walkerville Choral Society who performed with organ and small orchestras. An early WSO concert in February of 1939 was a memorial to him.

### **Frederick G. Vallance (ca 1920-1930)**

An English-born musician and violin maker, Fred Vallance (dates unknown) immigrated to Detroit, MI. According to contemporary accounts, “Mr. Vallance because of his experience in British orchestras of national fame, has been of great assistance in starting the Windsor group off on the right foot and advising his younger colleague [Peter C. Allan]” (Munro, February 10, 1939). Vallance-made violins and bows are still used today and some are sold in vintage musical instrument auctions. Vallance is listed as Associate Conductor of the early incarnation of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

### **Peter C. Allan, (ca 1930-1950)**

A native of Clackmannanshire, Scotland, Peter Allan (dates unknown) was a noted band leader in the Windsor area in the 1940s and 1950s. Born into a family of musicians, he studied trumpet in Scotland. He founded several bands varied in musicianship and purpose, including a band for unemployed men, which became the Knights Templar Band and assisted with the 21st Essex Fusiliers Regimental Band and the Essex-Kent Scottish Pipes and Drums. He also composed music for bands, some of which was published. According to an audio interview of Windsor musician Celia Hardcastle in 1980, Allan formed a string quartet that played to great acclaim in the surrounding region, but was little-known in Windsor. Allan also formed a group of musicians from his band and string quartet that became the nucleus of the orchestra in a 1938 concert. Some time after that, Peter Allan left Windsor to return to Scotland.

### **Ernest Rennie (ca 1930-1950)**

Ernest Rennie (d. ca 1962) was a popular figure in Windsor and Chatham's music industry throughout the 1930s and War years. He ran a music shop and repaired instruments, but loved to bring musicians together to play for a good cause. He assembled an orchestra for Sunday night concerts at the Tivoli Theatre on Wyandotte Street in Windsor to raise funds to send care packages to troops overseas. Their repertoire mainly consisted of popular songs and light classics. The group once attempted to learn to play Rachmaninoff's *Peter and the Wolf*, but in 1940, it wasn't quite up to the challenge. According to Hardcastle, the orchestra comprised of thirty musicians who appreciated Rennie's talents, which was little acknowledged in the wider community. (Hardcastle, p. 57). Sadly, Rennie was involved in a serious car accident, and a back injury stopped his conducting.

### **Matti Holli (1947-1977)**

From a child musical prodigy to the Windsor Symphony Orchestra's longest-serving conductor and music director, Matti Holli (1916-1977) is a key figure in its history. Born in Tampere, Finland in 1916, Holli showed early promise, amazing his parents by reciting military marching songs at the age of four (he had snuck out the back fence and was listening to soldiers at a nearby base). One hopes that such lyrics were suitable for repetition by a small boy.

In 1923, his family immigrated to Windsor, where Holli studied musical theory, violin and piano at the Ursuline School of Music on Ouellette Ave. As a Grade 6 student, he became fascinated with the practice of conducting, and formed a small orchestra at the Ursuline School, as well as at his day school, Ada C. Richards School. At 16, he received the A.R.C.T. teacher's certificate from Toronto's Royal Conservatory, which was advanced for his age. His family had a modest income, so as a teenager, he was able to work as a jobbing musician both at the local radio stations, CKLW and CBE Windsor and in the summers at the Bob-Lo Island amusement park

dance hall.

He was multi-talented, and played violin, drums and brass as needed. Holli's brother Sulo, became an engineer but was also musically talented. As they looked alike, sometimes the Holli brothers secretly substituted for each other when the playing schedule was too busy for one of them.

As with many people from this area who have funded their educations through summer work at Bob-Lo Island, Holli continued his music education nearby at the distinguished Detroit Conservatory of Music, where he earned his Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees. He was an effective multi-tasker who also ran a musicians booking agency and ran at least two different dance bands, sometimes more. Celia Hardcastle tells of one evening when Holli's group needed a pianist, and although she was a cellist with a little training in the accordion, he persuaded her to take over on the piano to her chagrin, and his evident amusement.

Holli played violin with Ernest Rennie's group, and when Rennie could no longer conduct, Holli took over as leader of the group in 1946. As a long-term member of the local musicians union, he renamed the orchestra the Windsor Federation of Musicians Symphony Orchestra.

As well as his musical talent, Holli was an effective leader, teacher, mentor and administrator. He was able to persuade the Windsor city councillors to give the orchestra a grant, and shepherded the group to incorporation in 1947. He established the WSO's first office at the Norton Palmer Hotel in downtown Windsor and helped to found the Windsor Symphony Society.

In 1952, Holli co-founded a community orchestra in Wallaceburg, and conducted that orchestra for several years. He also established the Windsor Junior Symphony in 1957, and this became the International Youth Symphony.

Always proud of his Finnish heritage, Holli and his wife Delores, also a dedicated volunteer with the WSO, travelled to Europe and throughout North America in the summers. He was devoted to the music of Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, whom he was able to visit in Finland in 1953. Holli was honoured to take part in a conductors' exchange with a Finnish orchestra.

Some critics suggested that Holli's tenure at the WSO was too long, and as the WSO celebrated its 25th anniversary, it was suggested that fresh leadership was needed. However, Holli's dedication to his work with the WSO was evident through the years. Poignantly, five years before his death, Holli responded to these questions, "On the other hand, music isn't such an easy thing to leave. So many conductors die right on the podium and the thing is that as you mature, you are learning, you get a vast repertoire because you're doing new things each year that you have never played before. It becomes more and more interesting" (*Windsor Star*, October 28, 1972).

Holli died unexpectedly of a heart condition on November 11, 1977, hours before he was to conduct a concert featuring the very young local violinist Lara St. John. Known locally as a "gentle giant" with his trademark bow tie, Holli's efforts on behalf of the cultural life of Windsor were appreciated by musicians and the public.

### **Clifford Evens (1977-1979)**

Clifford Evens (1921-1980) performed double duty as the conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra (London, ON), and as interim conductor and advisor to the board of the WSO after Matti Holli's death. He was able to help the board with programming, even adjusting the lineup of music during the season in order to increase audiences and advising on guest musicians and conductors. Evens applied for the permanent post at the WSO, but the Board selected Laszlo Gati as the next conductor.

### **Laszlo Gati (1979 – 1985)**

Matti Holli's sudden death left a void of leadership with the WSO and a search was undertaken for a new conductor. A few guest conductors carried on the 1977-78 season, including a conductor with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, Laszlo Gati, who had performed with Canadian opera star Maureen Forrester. Gati (1925-) was born in Romania, and his family moved to Hungary when he was young. Gati studied violin and viola and was an accomplished soloist in these instruments.

Laszlo Gati had conducted the State Philharmonic Society of Hungary and was also head of symphonic and musical programming at Hungarian Radio in Budapest. Immigrating to Canada in 1957, Gati founded the Montreal Chamber Orchestra in 1959, and had conducted the Victoria Symphony Orchestra in British Columbia for 11 years before coming to Windsor.

A Victoria Symphony Orchestra board member praised Gati's work there, remarking on his ability to encourage cohesion in an orchestra and accompanying solo performers with a "sure and sensitive hand" (Murray Adaskin, February 18, 1979).

Laszlo Gati was a proponent of the educational work of an orchestra. George S. Gall, then Area Superintendent of the Windsor Board of Education endorsed Gati's work: "Maestro Gati's infectious enthusiasm and his obvious love of young people provided the ingredients for a musical experience that was most exciting and enjoyable" (Gall, *Letter*, November 16, 1979).

He sought to expand the professional repertoire with a 1979-80 season which was rich in music from Slavic composers and challenging classics. It was his dream to transform the WSO as a "corporate orchestra," relying on corporate sponsors and service clubs to underwrite concerts.

Gati also developed the idea of sending smaller ensembles made up of WSO members to play in local factories and work spaces in partnership with local industry.

Ill health caused Gati's early retirement from the WSO in 1985.

### **Timothy Vernon**

Timothy Vernon (1948-) performed as the Acting Conductor and Music Director for the 1985-6 Windsor Symphony Orchestra season. From British Columbia, Vernon studied piano and cello and as a teenager, was an organist for several Anglican churches in the area. He conducted his graduate studies in Vienna. Vernon was music director of the Canadian Opera Company's touring company at the time, and joined the music faculty at McGill University in 1985, the same year he assisted the WSO after Laszlo Gati retired.

### **Dwight Bennett (1986-1990)**

Dwight Bennett (1945-) was the Windsor Symphony Orchestra's first Canadian conductor. Having studied music at the University of Toronto, Bennett won numerous awards in his field. With experience conducting the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra, he was also an instructor at Lakehead University. Bennett was a proponent of youth orchestras, he was co-founder and Music Director of the Thunder Bay Summer Music Camp and conducted the Ontario Youth Orchestra for the Federation of Youth Orchestras.

Bennett had an extensive background in operatic conducting, including the Canadian Opera Company and he had recorded Canadian works for CBC with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra.

When appointed to the Windsor Symphony Orchestra in 1986, Bennett also conducted the Thunder Bay Symphony for an additional two years. He had an ambitious mandate for the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, which included employing only professional musicians, and increasing the number of core musicians from 10 to 20. He increased the number of performances, and even took the WSO on a tour.

Unfortunately, these plans coincided with an economic downturn in the Windsor community. Bennett left the WSO in 1990. The orchestra is still comprised entirely of professional musicians.

### **Susan Haig (1991-2001)**

Susan Haig, (1954- ) an energetic conductor from New Jersey was educated in liberal arts at Princeton University, holding Masters and Ph.D. degrees from Stony Brook University. Prior to joining the Windsor Symphony Orchestra in 1991, she was the popular associate conductor at the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, working with Mario Bernardi. Like Matti Holli, she demonstrated her musical talents at age four discovering that she had perfect pitch and started piano lessons. She also studied the viola, and her degrees are held in music, theory, composition and orchestral conducting.

Haig guest-conducted a WSO classics concert in October, 1990 and was the first woman conductor to do so. She joined the WSO in 1991 as conductor, and then her title was changed to music director.

Haig took a collaborative approach to conducting as both guest and incumbent, stating that “learning to rehearse well” is important: “The error usually [for a conductor] is talking too much. The players are so capable that they just need a clear physical signal. ...To have [a conductor] stoop and say, ‘no, I would like it to go this way’ is so annoying, because then you feel like you’re ... doing this person on the podium the favour of playing it the way they want, as opposed to doing what the music demands.” (*Globe and Mail*, November 30, 1991).

Haig studied with Toronto dancer/choreographer Paula Thomson to improve her conducting skills, and continually studies languages in order to interpret music more fully, especially opera music.

One of the highlights of Haig’s debut season with the WSO was a performance of Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* coordinating several choral groups with the orchestra: the Elmer Isler Singers, the Windsor Symphony Chorus and the Windsor Classic Chorale. “When the last notes ... thundered ... someone in the balcony leapt to his feet and cried out, not the standard and accepted ‘Bravo!’ but ‘Wow!’” (Gervais, *Windsor Star*, November 11, 1991).

Susan Haig, although American by birth, is a proponent of new Canadian orchestral music and founded the Windsor Canadian Music Festival in 1997, which took place annually until 2011 with the cooperation of the WSO and University School of Music (see also Composers).

Haig was committed to bringing the live orchestral experience to the community in small intimate concerts as well as at the large Chrysler Theatre, and engaging with the audience, including at the Art Gallery of Windsor. Haig remained with the WSO until the 2000-2001 season, but then she left to conduct the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra and work on other projects.

### **John Morris Russell (2001-2012)**

John Morris Russell (1960 - ) joined the Windsor Symphony Orchestra as it continued its journey to the cultural heart of the community that had begun with Susan Haig and her predecessors. A well-respected pops conductor from the USA, Russell has distinguished himself with more classical fare as well.

Born in Cleveland, OH, Russell was an enthusiastic music student in school, playing trumpet and appreciating all forms of music from Motown to Mozart. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Williams College in Massachusetts and a Master of Music degree in conducting from the University of Southern California. He has studied widely in London, England, at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, for example, and at the Pierre Monteaux School for Conductors in Maine.

Russell has guest conducted with several orchestras, including the Musikverein festival in Vienna with the Harlem Boys Choir, the Vienna Choir Boys, and actor Gregory Peck and his first performance with the WSO was in April, 2001. It was a well-received pops concert which caused the reviewer to dub him a “coach,” or “cheerleader,” rather than a conductor because of his animated interaction with both musicians and audience members. This was part of his ap-

plication for the post of Music Director at the WSO and he was a popular choice.

During his tenure at the WSO, Russell worked to de-mystify the role of a conductor and orchestra in the community. Like Haig, and even Holli before him, he engaged local musicians and performers, adults and children in concerts as performers. He held conducting workshops for musicians, music teachers and students.

Working with the youth of Windsor-Essex was a priority for Russell, and he reignited Windsor's heritage of youth orchestras by coordinating the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra with WSO's Assistant Conductor, Peter Wiebe in 2004. A lasting legacy of this emphasis on music for children is the 2008 Juno-nominated CD recording of *Peter and the Wolf & Last-Minute Lulu*. With Wiebe, Russell also implemented the Peanut Butter n' Jam concerts in small community venues such as Windsor Public Library locations and Family Jamboree concerts. Russell could often be found in area schools, meeting with students, and even allowed students to watch dress rehearsals of certain concerts.

Russell also raised the profile of the WSO with frequent orchestra performances on CBC radio and television including a CBC-TV special, "Opening Night," which also won an award.

Finding a permanent home for the WSO with better acoustics brought John Morris Russell to the unaccustomed role of community developer, leading a campaign to repurpose the Windsor Armouries, which is a heritage building in downtown Windsor. That building will be used for the University of Windsor's fine arts programs, and in Fall 2012, the WSO has been successfully relocated in the Capitol Theatre. Those efforts helped to inspire a downtown urban renewal for the cultural sector.

Russell's success in reaching out to the youth and families of Windsor Essex has paid dividends with a younger demographic now attending concerts, which means that the community will be enjoying the WSO for decades to come. In recognition of his efforts, Russell was named the Windsor Symphony Orchestra's first Conductor Laureate in 2011. However, he returned to Cincinnati as Pops Conductor in 2011, but he has continued to advise the WSO administration on the 2012-13 Season search for a new conductor.

### **Robert Franz (2013 - )**

After a year-long search for a new candidate, Robert Franz was selected from among a field of over 150 applicants. Franz, (1969- ) was born in Kingston, New York, and initially trained as an oboe player. He studied music at the North Carolina School of the Arts, receiving his Bachelor of Music in Oboe performance in 1990 and his Master of Music degree in conducting in 1992. He furthered his education at conducting workshops in the Czech Republic, St. Petersburg (Russia), Nashville, TN, and took part in the 1997 Conductor Preview.

Franz is known for supporting new music by contemporary composers, overseeing composer-in-residence programs at the Boise Philharmonic, and has worked with Pulitzer-Prize winning composer Jennifer Higdon and others such as Jake Heggie and Shulamit Ran. Franz is an

enthusiastic promoter of music education. Under his supervision, both the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Louisville Orchestra have been awarded the Leonard Bernstein Award for Educational Programming.

Franz is also an accomplished writer, and produces a regular blog, *Building Bridges with Music*, which offers insights into the musical and education process through his work. He has also written a book for children, *Stella's Magical Musical Tour of America*, which is packaged with a CD and is intended for use with children's symphony programs. *Stella* tells the story of a young girl's adventure in a hot air balloon, and incorporates musical elements throughout the journey.

Robert Franz is the WSO's new music director, as of July, 2013. He is also the Music Director of the Boise Philharmonic, Associate Conductor of the Houston Symphony, and Music Director of the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival Opera and Orchestra in Alaska.

## *Musicians/ Orchestra Members*

Having a symphony orchestra in a relatively small Canadian city such as Windsor has been a boon to local musicians, and Windsor is fortunate to have a nexus of talented people from the area and abroad who play in the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. Many of the early orchestra members who had a day job elsewhere played with an orchestra just for the chance to play in a larger group. Whether the musicians play full-time or in the past as part-time members, the musicians of the WSO have demonstrated extraordinary dedication.

Common attributes of WSO musicians through the years never seem to have changed: all have studied their chosen instruments for years; none is paid as highly as the hours of practice and performance represent, and because of this, most seek more than one source of income. Many WSO musicians are also instructors at the University of Windsor or other educational institutions, and most teach music to private students. Many travel to other cities such as Detroit and Toronto for extra opportunities to play.

In the 1940s, orchestra musicians even performed more than one volunteer job to keep the orchestra going, including fundraising and administrative work promoting and organizing concerts. A December, 1940 concert programme shows for example, Mrs. Claire Balman, the concert pianist and percussionist with the orchestra, was also the Vice-President, while a young violinist and occasional soloist Anna Gulak Grayson was the Social Convener, organizing the calendar of events.

WSO musicians often played for decades with the orchestra. As a young student, Anna Gulach (who lived across the road from Matti Holli) was the featured soloist in a May, 1939 concert. As Anna Grayson, she became an elementary music teacher in Essex County and played with the WSO until the 1980s.

The WSO's first concerts were held on Sunday nights – this was likely because on Saturday

nights most musicians played in jazz and pop ensembles at Windsor's famed dance venues such as the Top Hat and the Elmwood, with top performers such as Tony Bennett, Frankie Lane and Paul Anka. Many musicians had a regular income playing live on local radio broadcasts. Renowned local musician and sheet music store owner Celia Hardcastle suggested that Maestro Holli was "having some difficulty getting solo performers (especially the "free" performance ones). There was no money, so eventually he got around to asking me to solo at a performance. A freebie!" (Hardcastle, 1995, p.18).

In the early days, Holli recruited local musicians and students that he knew to play in the orchestra as it was a great opportunity to gain experience in one's music career. Now auditions are performed blind, where musicians perform behind a screen for the hiring committee, to ensure fairness in hiring.

About 45 musicians played with the WSO through the 1950s. By the 1970s, the number had grown to 65. The only full-time players were the concertmaster, principal second violin, viola and cello players.

In the 1970s, WSO musicians were rehearsing twice a week and three times every second week in various locations, including the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, and sometimes at the Cleary Auditorium. The local media have not always been supportive of the quality of WSO musicians: "the violins appeared a little ragged" said Spiros de Bono (*Windsor Daily Star*, October 30, 1967); "A note of caution – the WSO's brass section is a strong point, When they are at their best, and the strings are only mediocre, the balance is easily lost," mused Ken Counce, but also gave praise: "The percussionists deserved the plaudits here." (*Windsor Daily Star*, October 26, 1968). However, enthusiastic audiences came to concerts, with numbers reaching 1000 even in 1949 at the Tivoli.

Under Dwight Bennett in the late 1980s all musicians were fully professional, with 10 core players doubling to 20 and often 25 more were employed. There was a brief downturn when financial challenges forced the WSO to cut salaries and the musicians, all members of the Windsor Federation of Musicians were forced to go on a brief strike. Ultimately, most of the musicians chose to stay with the orchestra. The average musicians' salary in the late 1980s was \$20,000.

WSO musicians also perform all through the week and in the evenings, inside or out, in smaller groups around the city and county. Some of the dangers are carrying heavy instruments, playing in cold (or too hot) venues through all seasons. Some dangers are not so obvious: in 1984, Robert McPherson, then the Chair of Musicians Relations with the Board begged the funders on behalf of the cello section to provide chairs from the WSO for off-site concerts, otherwise chairs provided by other venues could be uncomfortable if not dangerous!

The WSO musicians remain a tight-knit supportive group. A few have met their spouses at orchestra rehearsals. Most often, WSO musicians offer support to each other, and the community often plays a role. Harpist Leda Maria Pap arrived in Windsor from her native Hungary, but could not afford to buy her own harp. In some European orchestras, such an instrument is

owned by the orchestra, not the musician. The local Hungarian community arranged fundraisers and helped Pap buy her own harp, which helped her to increase her income with extra concerts.

A tragedy occurred for the WSO when musicians Henryk and Ewa Uziel and two of their three children were involved in a car accident while visiting family in Europe in 2003. Henryk and the two children died in the accident and Ewa was badly hurt. The WSO, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra members and WSO administration all combined to produce a benefit concert for Ewa and her surviving son. Daniel Wnukowski, a young violinist who had benefitted from the Uziel's fundraising efforts on his behalf for tuition fees, performed. One of the most moving moments in the WSO's musicians' history, was when Ewa Uziel, still with a bandage on her neck, performed a violin solo at that concert. She, like many in the community, drew strength from her music.

## **Concertmasters**

A concertmaster (the title remains the same even if a woman holds the post) has a vital role in the orchestra. At concerts, they enter before the conductor, and having tuned their violin off-stage, will lead the musicians in the correct tuning for the concert. Behind the scenes, it is their job to insert the bowing marks in the musical scores to be played. These are indications of the up and down movement of the violin bows in order for the violin section to perform as a cohesive whole. The concertmaster may then rehearse with the string section in order to make sure that the bowing marks are effective, and discuss the details with the conductor to ensure a united interpretation of the composer's work.

The post of concertmaster has been a permanent full-time role with the WSO. Mr. W. McCabe was the WSO's earliest concertmaster in 1939. Lasse Pohjola served with the WSO for decades until his death in 1976, and then the first auditions for the role were held, with the salary beginning at \$8,000 per year.

The current concert master is Lillian Scheirich, who joined the WSO in 1989 and was appointed assistant concertmaster in 1991. She is also an accomplished violin soloist and teacher. She helped to found the Ambassador Chamber Players, and plays with La Corda Ensemble and the Detroit-Windsor Chamber Ensemble.

## **Windsor Symphony Chorus**

Throughout its history, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra has partnered with local choirs and performed choral music both at pops and classics concerts.

In the 1970s, the orchestra gave annual concerts with the Leamington Choral Society. Choir director Helen Law founded that choir in 1960, and it was also known as the Helen Law Singers.

Musician and university Professor Richard Householder established the Windsor Classic Chorale comprising 32 singers in 1977. From 1988, Householder directed the Windsor Symphony Chorus 80 to 100 voices. It is now directed by Joel Tranquilla.

These choirs and various others including the Elmer Iseler Singers, school and university choirs have all joined the WSO on programs that vary from Christmas pops, Handel's *Messiah*, and Haydn's *Requiem*.

Most choir members live in this area, and many belong to more than one choir. In 1999, a reviewer raved about the choirs' unity of performance, and the measure of enjoyment, not only for the audience, but for the singers themselves, who value the experience. Margaret Kapasi, the chorus master for the evening described the singers as they performed: "You could see the joy on them" (*Windsor Star*, April 10, 1999).

## Guest Artists

Guest musicians and artists who perform with the WSO include many talented Windsor-based musicians and vocalists. Some debuted with the WSO and went on to successful solo and teaching careers overseas and across North America. Some came from abroad and were embraced by the local cultural community. Many flourished under the nurturing of colleagues at the WSO, the proximity to a high-quality orchestra and exposure to appreciative audiences.

Catherine McKeever (1952 – 2012) was a favourite guest of the WSO, and her career is an example of the educational and professional opportunities afforded by the orchestra. McKeever's talent was recognised and encouraged by former conductor Susan Haig, and McKeever resolved to further her music education at the University of Windsor. Detroit-born Windsor resident McKeever was a popular vocal soloist for the WSO and Windsor Classic Chorale's performances of Bach choral pieces and Handel's *Messiah*. She died during the time of writing this project, at age 60. We dedicate this section to Catherine McKeever and her legacy as an artist and teacher.

The list of guest artists is too long to enumerate here, but a brief sampling demonstrates the breadth and quality of talent that has visited the stages in Windsor.

Local musicians may have been the less-expensive option for the cash-strapped Maestro Holli, but the WSO can take credit for acting as a proving ground for: Claire Balman, pianist – debuted with the WSO at age 19 to rave reviews in the 1940s; Anita Leshcheid, harpist; Margaret Kapasi, pianist; and Alexander Zonjic, flautist.

Debuts: more careers launched from the WSO: Adele Armin, violinist, worked with avant-garde artists and music, and the great Glenn Gould; Lara and Scott St. John, brother and sister violinists who as children debuted with the WSO, and returned as adults. Lara now has a successful recording career with her own recording company, and Scott teaches at Stanford and plays with the St. Lawrence String Quartet; and Adrienne Shannon, pianist, now with Queen's

University School of Music.

Canadian musicians have been welcomed to the WSO. Windsor is at the border with the USA, so Canadian culture can be overwhelmed by American media. The WSO has been proudly promoting artists from all over Canada. Others included Gordon Fleming, a composer and concert pianist from Goderich, ON, was also staff organist at Windsor's CBC station; Russell and Victor Braun, father and son vocalists; and Erika Raum, violinist.

Choirs are integral to many musical programmes such as Handel's *Messiah* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Helen Law Singers and the Leamington Choral Society were frequent guests; the University Singers; University Chamber Choir; and Windsor Symphony Chorus.

Classical Stars who visit the WSO are a measure of how highly regarded is the orchestra nationally and internationally, including: Anton Kuerti, Austrian-born naturalized Canadian pianist, composer and conductor; Maureen Forster, contralto; Canadian Brass, wind ensemble; and Quartetto Gelato, a chamber ensemble featuring Windsor native George Meanwell.

Pop, Rock, Country and Jazz stars bring newcomers to the orchestral experience: Salome Bey, singer, songwriter; Rita MacNeil, singer, songwriter; Jody Raffoul, singer, musician; Shahida Nurulla, jazz vocalist; Sultans of String; and Joe Coughlin, jazz singer.

Local media representatives have also graced the stage, often to narrate Peter and the Wolf: the late broadcaster Sonny Eliot; CTV anchor Jim Crichton; as has Stratford actor Colm Feore on a CD recording; and *Windsor Star* journalist Ted Shaw has played the laptop with the WSO at a pops concert with John Morris Russell.

Comedy, proof if ever needed, that classical music has a sense of humour has been an integral part of the pops concerts. The WSO has played "straight man" for Victor Borge, pianist; the Royal Canadian Air Farce, satire comedy group from CBC; and Steve Smith, better known as Red Green.

Sports stars have also been welcomed to the stage, including Windsor boxers Jeannine Gar-side and Mary Spencer.

## Composers

It may be a surprise to learn that the Windsor Symphony Orchestra (WSO) is at cutting edge in its support of new music and young – still living! – composers. Every conductor in the WSO's history has sought out music by Canadian composers, many of whom have collaborated with the orchestra to premiere their works in Windsor.

Susan Haig introduced the first Windsor Canadian Music Festival in January, 1997. Because of Haig's reputation for outreach, Windsor was chosen for a "Words and Music" themed festival. After that, the Windsor Canadian Music Festival became an annual event: a collaboration

between Canadian composers, Canadian poets during some years, the School of Music at the University of Windsor and the WSO.

In 1997, the WSO's first composer-in-residence, Jeffrey Ryan, took part in educational events, visited schools, and conducted workshops with local musicians and composers.

Innovative approaches to classical music such as electronica was another feature in 2006. The orchestra plays more than the well-known 150-year-old "standards" – it has also featured new technology for making music. In 2012, the New Canadian Music Festival will feature a performance by the University's Noiseboarder ensemble.

Brent Lee was composer-in-residence from 2003 - 2006 and is still involved with the WSO from his role with the School of Music in the University of Windsor. Lee composed special children's music for "Last Minute Lulu" with words by local author Christopher Paul Curtis for the Juno-nominated CD recording of *Peter and the Wolf and Last Minute Lulu* with the WSO.

With a nod to this area's rich history, Lee was commissioned by the WSO to write a piece commemorating the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, with a piece called "General Brock in Detroit," which premiered at an outdoor concert at Windsor's Riverfront on August 25, 2012. This concert also featured a young Windsor composer: a recent graduate from Walkerville Centre for the Creative Arts in Windsor, Eric Swiatoschik.

Peter Wiebe, with the WSO, has also arranged and composed several pieces of music for the WSO, the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Windsor Community Orchestra and children's Peanut Butter & Jam concerts. Here in this video, he explains the background of the *Comeback Symphonietta*.

## **Multiculturalism and Outreach**

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has always reflected Windsor's rich multicultural history in its programming, outreach and artists. This began with founding conductor Matti Holli, who often demonstrated pride in his native Finland in his music.

Holli often drew on other talented new Windsorites to perform with the WSO, such as baritone Petro Boyan Bolechiwksy who shared Ukrainian folk songs during a 1950 WSO concert. Twenty years later, the St. Vladimir Orthodox Cathedral's Ukrainian Bandurist Ensemble launched the 1971 WSO Young People's Concert season. (A bandura is a traditional Ukrainian 56-stringed-instrument, producing a sound similar to a harp and lute.) Then, as today, Windsor's ethnic communities had rich musical programs of their own, and often shared these with the orchestra.

Through the years, most ethnic communities in the city have been represented on stage with the WSO. In 1967, tenor Jacob Barkin delighted audiences with Yiddish ballads. A concerto for tabla and orchestra, "Trade Winds" was debuted in by composer Christien Ledroit, with tabla

soloist Shawn Mativetsky in 2008. Reviewer Harry Van Vugt praised one 1971 concert in as a “meeting at the UN” when the WSO welcomed Italian/Canadian Sergio Pezzetti, husband of Emilia Cundari<sup>1</sup> and Holli received an award from the Finnish Consul honouring his effort to promote the work of Jean Sibelius.

Conductor Laszlo Gati staged an ambitious series of partnerships with various communities in the early 1980s. In the 1979-80 season, committees were formed with members of the Chinese, Italian and Hungarian communities to seek sponsorship and to host appropriately themed concerts, with music and guest artists representing each community. Gati was able to celebrate his Hungarian roots with the popular pianist Béla Siki in a programme that included the Canadian and Hungarian anthems, Erkel’s Hunyadi-Laszlo Overture and Liszt’s 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody. The WSO outreach committee prepared kits with notes about the orchestra for communities to translate and distribute to members.

Multicultural partnerships continued under the direction of Susan Haig and John Morris Russell. Haig reached out to the Multicultural Council of Windsor and Region and honoured the Windsor festival known as the Carrousel of Nations dance groups in a pops concert in May, 1991.

The WSO remains committed to the heritage of the Windsor community with a focus on African-Canadian works and artists. In 1998 and 1999, Freedom Festival concerts celebrated this region’s rich history as a terminus of the Underground Railroad. A 1998 “Music of Freedom” concert featured Canadian baritone and opera singer Marcus Nance and the world premier of an original piece by composer Stewart Goodyear, *Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra*. In May 1999, Howard McCurdy, a former professor and the first African Canadian New Democrat Party representative, was the WSO’s guest narrator, and music selections included Copeland’s *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Lincoln Portrait*.

The tradition continued with Russell and Assistant Conductor Peter Weibe producing the “Wild and Wacky Woodwinds,” a children’s concert series which featured a composer from Amherstburg, Shelton Brooks (1886-1975).

Scottish heritage was celebrated in the Fall of 2002, with a themed programme featuring New Brunswick violinist Jasper Wood, and music which included Macmillan’s *Fantasy on Scottish Melodies*, Bruch’s *Scottish Fantasy*, and traditionally, Mendelssohn’s *Symphony No. 3 (Scottish)*.

The 2009-2010 WSO season honoured Windsor’s international sister cities with concerts designed to highlight the music and dance of each city and culture. Saltillo, Mexico, for example, was represented with a “Dia de los Muertos”-themed evening including Join Hands Puppeteers and Windsor Dance Experience, with greetings from Saltillo brought by Leamington’s Mexican consulate.

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has, of course, always celebrated the francophone heritage of Canada and Windsor in particular. As well as French or Quebecois-based music programmes, such as the March, 2010 *“la musique sublime”* with guest soprano, Suzie Le Blanc,

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and the University of Windsor Chorus, the WSO also offers concerts and events in French for local francophone families.

Marcel Beneteau was a featured guest artist in 2004 presenting his arrangements of French folksongs of the Detroit River.

*Francophone* programming includes work with students in French Immersion schools in the region, and the popular French-language children's concerts, *Tartines et Jam*, held in Belle River and at la Place Concorde, one of Windsor's French cultural centres.

## Women

As an organization, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra has not only welcomed women to its corps of musicians, administration and management but without the leadership of women volunteers, the WSO would not have existed. The Art Gallery of Windsor and the Windsor Public Library have similarly benefitted from the work of women. When many other businesses did not hire women as a matter of course, these organizations provided opportunities for women to showcase their talents.

The WSO as we know it was founded in the Fall of 1937 at the home of Mrs. W.T. Balman in Windsor. Details are unclear, but a Mrs. Claire Balman is listed as an early musician with the WSO, and this meeting may have been the nucleus of a local women's social group known as the Senior Mary Grant Society, lead by Mrs. Graham J. Lacker. This group sponsored the fifty musicians who played the first concert in April, 1938, and sponsored more after that.

The WSO Women's Association was formed in 1956 and continued to sponsor the orchestra by helping to fund young people's concerts, buying tickets for children who would not be able to afford to attend concerts, buying and repairing instruments and assisting the orchestra with general expenses, education and scholarships. They also instituted post-concert receptions so that WSO supporters and musicians could mingle after concerts. (See also Volunteers.)

In April 1972, the Women's Association comprised of 64 members who were thanked from the stage by Matti Holli for purchasing a celesta, a xylophone-type instrument, and had donated \$2,500 from their fundraising efforts to the WSO. A conductor's salary at the time was \$7,000, so the contribution was significant. As well as fundraising, the Women's Association was effectively the WSO's volunteer sales force. They sold tickets, subscriptions and canvassed for corporate sponsorship. They also took an active role on the Windsor Symphony Society Board, giving and gaining valuable executive experience.

The Women's Association executive were event planning experts, planning and holding teas, antique sales, and even fundraising literary events with the University of Windsor's writer-in-residence at the time, W.O. Mitchell.

In 1979, another affiliate women's group was formed. The Junior Women's Association changed

its name to the “Windsor Symphony League” in 1986. They worked at countless charity bingos in order to raise money for the WSO.

The professional and artistic role of women in the WSO was highlighted in an article in the *Windsor Daily Star* by Mary Botosan (October 22, 1965). Among 65 musicians in the WSO, 16 were women. Three female musicians at the time were in their teens, and so benefitted from the educational opportunities of belonging to an orchestra. “Housewife” was a common term in those days, and a few musicians called themselves that, although their music skills were at professional levels. One musician was studying dentistry and found that playing in the orchestra allowed her to relax. There were several women music teachers, including Anna Grayson, and Violet Webb Leach, who improved their own skills by playing with the WSO.

Margaret Krause, a popular local music teacher who had studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, England played the cello for the orchestra and in the 1980s also took on an administrative role as manager under Laszlo Gati.

Mina Grossman-Ianni was a board member and later general manager of the WSO from 1998 to 2006. She was the recipient of the Windsor Woman of the Year award and Orchestra Canada’s prestigious Betty Webster award for her work with CBC French radio and her work for the WSO. As manager, she upgraded the WSO office and management systems and restored financial stability.

The Roman Catholic religious order of the Ursuline Sisters played a crucial role in the development of music in the city of Windsor. They are an order dedicated to teaching, and ran a music school from a former mansion on Ouellette Avenue (now the location of the Central Branch of the Windsor Public Library). Many orchestra members studied with the Ursuline nuns, including conductor Matti Holli. In 1966, Vatican II changed the rules of the Ursuline Order and allowed the sisters to take a more visible role in the community. Music teacher Mother Mary Isaac from the Windsor school made her orchestra debut in the cello section of the WSO in November, 1966.

Female musicians still had challenges even in the music profession. Local musician Celia Hardcastle, who had studied music theory and cello from a very young age was obliged to request special permission to join the local musician’s union – not because she was underage, starting her first professional work in her teens - but because she was a woman.

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra broke new ground for professional female musicians in Canada by hiring Susan Haig, the first woman conductor to take charge of the ensemble in 1991. Before that, she was also the first female guest conductor to play with the WSO in 1990. At that time, Haig acknowledged that progress was slow for women in Canadian orchestras, but she had not found that it hampered her career (Gervais, *Windsor Star* October 26, 1990). Prior to joining the WSO, Haig was the Associate Conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra.

Haig founded the annual Canadian Music Festival (now known as the Windsor Canadian Music Festival), a partnership with the WSO and the University of Windsor to showcase Canadian

composers. Themes for Windsor Canadian Music Festival of 2000 have included women composers: Alexina Louie, Svetlana Maksimovic, Anita Sleeman, Heather Schmidt and Alice Ho. These composers worked in collaboration with Canadian poets, Di Brandt, Margaret Christakos, and Penn Kemp.

Also ground-breaking for the WSO was a time that the group had not one, but two women as conductors. Sarah John was an Apprentice Conductor for Susan Haig, then Assistant Conductor and “Conductor-in-the-Community” thanks to an arts grant. She conducted several concerts of the WSO, including a celebration of the 1996 Olympics featuring local Olympic athletes at the show. John continues her conducting career with the Greater Toronto Philharmonic Orchestra and Vespera, a women’s contemporary choral group.

## Children

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has provided music for children and many opportunities for children and teens to play and perform with the orchestra.

“Young People’s Concerts” were announced as part of the regular season in the 1962-63 season brochure, with concerts held on Saturday mornings at the Cleary Auditorium. Sponsored by the Women’s Symphony Association, these special concerts continued through the decades. Matti Holli announced his intention to introduce youth to Canadian and American composers. Young people’s concerts by the WSO have continued to offer a balance of classical and contemporary music.

Concert programs varied, with selections and special guests ranging from the music of Humperdinck, *Hansel and Gretel* with the Frances Kay Puppets in 1976, to Sharon, Lois and Bram in 1986. Saint-Saens’ *Carnival of the Animals* is a popular selection, but one composition recurs through the years: Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*.

*Peter and the Wolf* combines orchestral work and narration which introduces the various instruments and sounds of the orchestra. The WSO has offered several different interpretations of this classic through the ages, sometimes using puppets, and sometimes with local dance groups. Several celebrities have narrated for the WSO, including Jim Crichton, and the late Sonny Eliot, both local news anchors, and Stratford actor Colm Feore, who also recorded the narration on the orchestra’s CD. During one memorable Family Jamboree performance, conductor John Morris Russell asked the orchestra to dress in colour-coded shirts in order to indicate each orchestra section.

Audience participation is always encouraged now at children’s concerts, especially during the holidays and at Halloween when the audience was encouraged to dress up, too! The Dia de los Muertos concert in 2007 featured Join Hands Puppeteers and local dancers to commemorate the Mexican Day of the Dead and Hallowe’en. Blending classical music, science and fantasy,

the WSO performed a Symphony in Space concert in 2007, with footage from NASA, and featuring 35 young violinists.

Contemporary music helps to draw children into the music, such as a version of the Australian *Kookabura Song* by Marion Sinclair performed in 2003 sung by the audience as a round, with Dave Odette on the didgeridoo, an Australian aboriginal wind instrument. Assistant conductor Peter Wiebe is one of the orchestra members who has arranged and composed music especially for the young people's concerts (see video in Composers).

Peanut Butter n' Jam for ages two – five are a recent addition to the WSO events, with small ensembles performing half hour concerts at various locations around the city, including the Nikola Budimir Branch of the Windsor Public Library. These introduce children to music, both classical and contemporary. Hand movements and action songs are compulsory!

The early WSO relied on teenaged music students to perform as soloists – then playing to gain experience rather than for the small honorarium offered at the time. Gifted students took part in classical concerts, such as violinists Scott and Lara St. John, who have been guests of the WSO since they were 10 and 12. Hugh Dowell was a treble singer at age 12 when he performed in Handel's *Elijah* in 1997 and now plays the bagpipes as an adult. Children from dance groups have had the unique opportunity to perform with the WSO.

## *Fundraising/Volunteers*

It is a challenge to fully acknowledge the hours of dedicated labour, privately-donated millions of dollars and goodwill that the volunteers of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra have offered to the organization through the decades, and still do today. While federal, provincial and municipal government funding have been won by the WSO, the orchestra simply would not exist without fundraising efforts and volunteers. Ticket sales only cover a third of the orchestra costs, and that ratio has changed over the years. A small portion of the story of the WSO volunteers can be told through highlights.

The first orchestra itself was comprised of volunteer musicians, but the first concerts were largely funded by a group called the Senior Mary Grant Society. This dedicated group was succeeded by an official Windsor Symphony Society, founded in 1949. This group's sole purpose was to oversee the funding and well-being of the WSO. Being a member was a valuable experience for people working in the corporate and public sector.

In 1957, the women who volunteered for the WSO formed a supplementary group known as the Women's Association. The annual Antiques Sale was particularly popular in the region, which sold "everything from films to flatirons," according to the *Windsor Star* (Strachan, October 17, 1972). Much of the proceeds for this fundraising sponsored Young People's Concerts, and even assisted the orchestra with the purchase of special instruments, including a piano.

A Junior Women's Symphony organization, later known as the Symphony League, fundraised by working at bingos, offering the Musique Boutique at concerts, and an annual Fashion Show. Volunteers could contribute in unique ways: in 1987, a call was put out to members and subscribers to offer billets to out-of-town musicians to save on hotel costs!

Other imaginative fundraising efforts included a "Beat Beethoven Run," with sponsored runners accompanied by strains of Beethoven at Windsor's riverfront.

More glamorous fundraising events were the annual themed Gala Dinners allowing the public a chance to dress up and dance for a good cause.

Dedicated families have also sponsored both concerts – and in the case of the Kim Lucier Memorial trust sponsored a CD production and Saturday Pops Series, 2002-03 and the Toldo family still sponsors Pops concerts today.

In 1988, the WSO faced its worst financial crisis with 72 hours notice of closure of the WSO office and layoff of all staff. This, however, became a triumph of recognition of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra's value to the community and answered for us the questions of "Why do we need a professional symphony orchestra in this city? And what does it do for us?" However, the community as a whole refused to let go of its orchestra. The Save Our Symphony campaign was a remarkable collaboration among volunteers, the city and provincial governments. In order to match a grant offer from the provincial government, volunteers set up a phone bank at the Art Gallery of Windsor, and phoned just about everybody in the city – businesses, corporations, individuals to get pledges for their goal of \$200,000. A five-hour CBC radiothon from both their English and French stations raised another \$44,000, and the government of the city of Windsor donated another \$170,000. One new Board member during that transition time, Jean Bull offered her family's own grand piano as collateral for a bank loan.

Through all of this crisis, one musicians' representative, Leslie Magowan, told the local media that the "New York Federation of Musicians representative Lew Waldek told her that he 'has never seen a city take over in this kind of situation – to not only figure out the problem, but be prepared to do something and know what to do.' All this, noted Magowan, was done with remarkably no suggestions that would impinge on the artistic integrity of the WSO. Many musicians who demonstrated extraordinary loyalty to the WSO then are still members today (*Windsor This Month*, April, 1988).

The 1988-89 season had a stellar schedule, including guest appearances Maureen Forrester, pianist Andre Gagnon, and singer Cleo Laine which may never have happened. The last concert of Haydn's *Symphony No. 45 in F Sharp Minor*, known as Haydn's "Farewell" may have been prophetic; yet the season did continue, and memories of the Cleo Laine and John Dankworth concert are among musician Peter Wiebe's favourite memories of the WSO concerts.

## CULTURE

*“The symphony’s value goes beyond musicality – it enhances our quality of living and our sense of community, and makes us feel proud and privileged to live in this city and in this country.” Melanie Paul Tanovich, (“Letter to the editor” Windsor Star, May 1, 2007).*

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has partnered with many other forms of artistic expression from dance to visual art and sculpture.

The Art Gallery of Windsor (AGW), for example, has enjoyed a long interchange of artistic expression and education with the WSO. The 2006-2007 WSO season was crafted around a theme of music and art, not only reproducing artwork from the Gallery’s permanent collection in its brochures, but selecting music “painting a vibrant canvas of musical hues and textures,” as John Morris Russell said in 2006. Windsor artist Shirley Williams was commissioned to provide the cover art for the season brochure. The AGW’s curators, James Patten and Cassandra Getty took part in pre-concert talks and the annual Windsor Canadian Music Festival in February presented five new works inspired by visual artists and their art.

The WSO has performed other visual art-connected concerts, such as chamber music at the Art Gallery of Windsor, and even performed outdoors at the Odette Sculpture Garden, on the banks of the Detroit River in a “Sunsets, Sculptures and Serenades” concert in 1999.

Other small concerts have been held at various branches of the Windsor Public Library. A popular instance today is the “Peanut Butter n’ Jam” concerts held in the Nikola Budimir branch.

Dance is a natural partner of the WSO, and many pops and young people’s concerts have featured professional and student dancers. The Windsor City Ballet Company directed by Janice Brode took part in the WSO’s 1981 du Maurier Cabaret Series. In 1994, the WSO played host to Gizella Witkowsky and Serve Lovie from the National Ballet, for whom the orchestra played selections from *The Bartered Bride* by Smetana and selections by Tchaikowski (*The Journal*, December 1, 1994).

Ten years later, the WSO continued its support of student dancers by inviting just about every dance group in the city, to join the WSO in a “Song and Dance” pops concert including Hart School of Highland Dance, Teutonia Youth Dance Group, Napur Jhankar School of Dance, Windsor Barvanic, Ukrainian Dance Ensemble and HNM Dance Company with director Anh Nguyen. Marcel Beneteau, a francophone singer, songwriter and historian, also contributed his French folk songs from the Detroit River region.

The WSO and Windsor Light Music Theatre (formerly Windsor Light Opera) celebrated their mutual 60th Anniversaries in January, 2008 with a celebratory co-production concert series featuring selections from Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and Broadway musicals with WLMT director Susan Belleperche and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra’s John Morris Russell.

Later that year in a unique performance of music and drama, conductor John Morris Russell arranged an adaptation of *Dickens’ A Christmas Carol* with local actors from Windsor Light

Music Theatre and actor Alan Anderson from Portland, OR. The 25-minute retelling of the classic Christmas story with words and music was borrowed from a production originating with the Oregon Symphony Orchestra where Russell had been a guest conductor. There was also an unusual guest appearance by tenor Ross Paul, who was better known at the time as the president of the University of Windsor.

The WSO has also supported the literary arts through the years, more recently with the recording of well-known children's author Christopher Paul Curtis' adaptation of his own short story, "Last Minute Lulu" which he read to an orchestral music accompaniment. Windsor's first Poet Laureate, Marty Gervais (who also writes under C.H. Gervais) read poetry commemorating the anniversary of the Bi-Centennial of the War of 1812 at a special concert and city-wide commemoration on September 25, 2012.

## ***The Windsor Symphony Orchestra and Detroit***

In terms of Canadian ensembles, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra is unique in its proximity to a much larger American counterpart, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra which is just a twenty-minute drive over the international border. Rather than being overshadowed by this larger ensemble, the WSO has thrived on a special relationship with American musicians and patrons.

The very origins of the WSO were supported by Detroit musicians and conductors. Peter C. Allan, a founding conductor was able to draw on the expertise of Fred G. Vallance, the associate conductor with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. One of local band leader Ernest Rennie's early groups was called the "Border Cities Orchestra" in order to reflect the towns on the international border, before Sandwich, East Windsor, Walkerville and Windsor were amalgamated. The migration of musicians to and from Detroit was assured.

Reviewers in the *Windsor Star* often called on conductors, particularly founder Matti Holli, to reflect on the WSO's relationship with Detroit. In 1969, Holli emphasized the advantages, musicking that musicians have the advantage of the larger market for their talents, and students can access a variety of teachers, while still being able to play with the WSO as grounding for their musical development (*Windsor Daily Star*, September 20, 1969).

The WSO has welcomed guest orchestras and conductors from Detroit through the decades. November 26, 1972 was designated "Symphony Day" to mark the WSO's 25th Anniversary, and both the WSO and Detroit Symphony Orchestras gave concerts during a landmark day at the Cleary Auditorium.

Guest artists have enjoyed the special relationship between the two cities and performed with the WSO. Michigan's Rackham Symphony Choir joined the WSO in 1973. In 1975, a special celebration of the region's French and American roots brought guest conductor André Ameller from the Dijon Symphony, with Detroit's Cass Tech High Concert Choir sang Offenbach's *Neighbours' Chorus* from *La Jolie Parumeuse*.

The International Youth Symphony was a truly international initiative founded by Matti Holli in 1966. Ten years later, 83 members were evenly divided between Canadians and Americans, with rehearsals in Detroit's Christ Church near the Windsor-Detroit tunnel and performing 6 concerts a year, also split evenly between the two cities. This group survived a few transformations over the years and is the foundation of the Windsor Youth Symphony Orchestra today.

The Windsor-Detroit Freedom Festival has also benefitted from the help of the WSO as the orchestra staged a fundraising concert, "The Beatles and Beach Boys meet Bach and Beethoven" with Detroit's Own Teen Angels at the Fox Theatre in 1982. In 1984, the WSO was commissioned to help stimulate business for the newly opened Hilton International hotel in Windsor with a concert at Orchestra Hall in Detroit to encourage Americans to visit Windsor for concerts and stay overnight at the nearby hotel.

There have been quite a few homages to the Detroit "Motown Sound" through the years. In 2001, the "Detroit! Detroit!" show brought some of Detroit's top musicians to sold-out crowds in Windsor and was a highlight of the season. The General Manager of the WSO, Mina Grossmann, formed the idea of the program with jazz impresario Hugh Leal. The guest conductor was American John Morris Russell, then a candidate for the position of WSO conductor. Guest artists featured master trumpeter Marcus Belgrave and soloist Dee Dee McNeil of Motown Record fame. The playlist included light classics and orchestral medleys of the music of Stevie Wonder and jazz arrangements of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, "Toward the end of Sunday's concert, audience members showed their approval by rising spontaneously from their seats and cheering and sing along in a Belgrave-led chorus of *When the Saints Go Marching In*" (*Windsor Star*, April 9, 2001).

## ***WSO and Local Industry***

As Windsor has been known as an industrial city as well as a cultural hub, it is fitting to note the various connections that the Windsor Symphony Orchestra has with local industry. From the Musician's union, to the CAW and corporations, the WSO and the public have benefitted from these partnerships.

Most WSO musicians have been members of the American Federation of Musicians, Windsor Local 566 for most of the chapter's 101-year history. Celebrating the centennial of the Union with an exhibition at Windsor's Community Museum in 2011, it was noted that the Musician's Union is one of the oldest in the city. The Union endorsed the foundation of the WSO, and one of the early names was the "Windsor Federation of Musicians Symphony Orchestra" in 1947.

When she retired from touring as a professional musician, Celia Hardcastle, who as a woman had once been required to get permission to join the union, opened a sheet music store in downtown Windsor that effectively became the de-facto headquarters for the Local 566. When the WSO hired new musicians, first right of refusal was given to union members before spots were

opened to students, although students likely became members in due course. The Union also cooperated with WSO volunteers to steer the orchestra through difficult financial straits in the 1980s.

Conductors Laszlo Gati in the 1980s and Susan Haig in the 1990s attempted to stage concerts in local factories, with varying degrees of success. Usually, these were small groups of musicians in quartets and quintets. This didn't stop the local auto workers' and other trade unions from supporting the symphony with funds and ticket purchases.

The ultimate Union connection occurred in 1998, when Canadian Auto Workers president Ken Lewenza took to the stage with the WSO as narrator of *Peter and the Wolf*. Susan Haig, who was a popular speaker at service club and organizations' meetings, shared with the Windsor & District Labour Council that Lewenza was very qualified for the role, with a "strong voice ... and he speaks with a lot of passion," encouraging local union members to feel welcome at WSO concerts (*Windsor Star*, October 14, 1998).

The WSO relies on corporate support to supplement subscription income. Early sponsorship came from tobacco companies, such as du Maurier, which underwrote a concert series for the 1979-80 season. Government regulations on cigarette advertising halted this income. Hiram Walker Distillery (now owned by Beam Global Spirits and Wine) is an example of a corporation that has not only sponsored the WSO, but executives from the firm have also served on the WSO Board. This allows the WSO to benefit from executive corporate experience. In turn, the WSO is a drawing-card for Windsor-based development organizations to attract new businesses to culture-rich Windsor.

## EDUCATION

*"Give your young people the gift of personal contact with a force that builds fun at the same time it builds character." - Hon. Leopold Prince, Municipal Court Justice, New York City Amateur Symphony. There is in Windsor as well as other places a widespread belief that only the highly trained ear can appreciate symphonic music. [...] It is as much the property of the common ordinary citizen as good reading" (Munro, 1939).*

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has supported three major aspects of education: in schools, both elementary and secondary, with young musicians working towards a profession in music, and promoting music education to the public and music professionals.

As far back as 1926, people involved with orchestra groups in Windsor were also involved in bringing quality music education to schools. Detroit was the centre for a Music Supervisors' National Conference that year, featuring Windsor musicians and conductor H. Whorlow Bull.

The WSO and volunteers announced their intentions to provide scholarships for young musi-

cians and cooperate with local schools after incorporation in 1949. The WSO still arranges curriculum-based study guides for school use, providing background about the orchestra, the composers and music, all leading to weekday school concerts by the orchestra in the springtime. In the early days, these were completed with hours of preparation including research, writing, sourcing illustrations and music by volunteers such as Mary O’Neil and Jane Buttery. Now, one of the WSO musicians, oboe player Faith Schofield is the Education Coordinator for the WSO.

WSO musicians have also performed concerts in schools, and conductors including Susan Haig (who gamely spoke French when visiting francophone schools), John Morris Russell and Peter Wiebe have visited classrooms to teach conducting techniques in the classroom. In 2008, WSO staff helped to rehearse music students for an ensemble concert of Dvorak’s *Symphony no. # 9 in E major “From the New World.”* In 2010, a massed orchestra played the music of Gustav Holst at the Windsor Armories in a “One Community – One Symphony” concerts, with orchestras from seven area schools from all School Boards.

Occasionally, the WSO has been able to arrange unique opportunities for school children to watch dress rehearsals of performances that would not be available to them otherwise. In January, 1988, students were able to watch the dress rehearsal of Puccini’s *La Boheme* by the WSO and the Michigan Opera Theatre. John Morris Russell also invited a literacy class to a rehearsal of Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* in 2005. The students had been studying the words and music of the Beethoven biography for children, *Beethoven Lives Upstairs*.

The WSO has worked in partnership with area music schools to train young musicians, such as the Ursuline School of Music in the past and Académie Ste Cécile today. Students from these schools were even invited to be guest artists and soloists with the orchestra. The community welcomed this approach: “In presenting Miss Barbara Craig, 17-year-old Windsor concert pianist, Matti Holli, orchestra conductor, performed a fine civic duty in furthering this promising artist’s career” (*Windsor Star*, April 21, 1952).

Private and public music teachers have benefitted from WSO educational outreach, including conducting workshops. Occasionally, internationally-recognized artists such as Italian-Canadian Emilia Cundari, who sang on the opera stages of Europe, then retired from touring to settle in Windsor and teach in Detroit. She performed with the WSO in 1970, providing her an opportunity to maintain her performing skills.

The WSO has also sourced funding to provide conductor- and composer-in-residence programmes for young professionals, such as Assistant Conductor Sarah John, and Chorusmaster Jeffrey Douma for whom the WSO requested tuition for him to be able to guest-conduct spring educational concerts.

The WSO frequently connects with post-secondary education at the School of Music, and Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor. Many WSO musicians are professors, and the orchestra musicians partnered with the University’s Music Therapy students to provide practical experience in area hospitals and nursing homes.

The public has benefitted from WSO educational outreach by providing background information about music selections to be played at upcoming concerts. Dr. Edward Kovarik from the University of Windsor conducted free lunchtime “Concert Previews” in the 1980s. The WSO still offers pre-concert talks before concerts throughout each season.

## *Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra*

Youth orchestras through the years formed a kind of “farm team” for the WSO. In 1957, a Windsor Junior Symphony was performing, overseen by conductor Matti Holli, and in 1966, the International Youth Symphony was formed by Holli. This was a unique opportunity for this border region (see also Detroit). After Holli’s death in 1977, WSO board member Bruce Curry took over the 85 young musicians in the International Youth Symphony’s scheduled concert.

In 1988, Holli’s wife Delores oversaw the International Youth Symphony, which had to be disbanded as she had challenges finding strong string players from area schools. The 55 musicians were absorbed into the Windsor Community Orchestra, led by music professor Jim Tamburini. The late Margaret Krause, a WSO cellist and general manager of the WSO for a time, was praised after death in 2006 for bridging this gap by forming Windsor Strings in 1988, based at Académie Ste Cécile where she also taught cello and piano.

Thanks to these founding efforts, WSO conductors John Morris Russell and Peter Wiebe were able to draw on a wide pool of talent to form the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra (WSYO) and Windsor Symphony Junior Youth Orchestra (WSJYO) in 2004. The WSYO features students aged from 13 to 22 from all over Windsor and Essex County and gives them valuable experience playing as an ensemble, learning the discipline of a professional musician, and of course, a creative outlet. They played their first full concert on June 16, 2005 at Walkerville Collegiate, bringing the WSO full circle from one of their earliest venues.

The WSYO takes part in an annual Side-by-Side concert with the WSO, which began with a concert at the Windsor Armouries in April, 2008. The group has also toured to the Association des orchestres de jeunes du Québec festival in 2012. Every two years, the WSYO participates in the “One Community – One Symphony” Project which also involves local high school groups. All students study a long piece of music in-depth, and are brought together for the performance.

The Windsor Symphony Junior Youth Orchestra inherits Margaret Krause’s legacy of encouraging stringed instrument musicians aged 9 – 14.

Fundraising efforts for both groups continue through the year. WSYO musicians volunteer at the concession stand at WSO concerts to raise money. In 2009 and 2010, Pannini Palooza fundraisers were held at a local Italian club, with appearances by local celebrities such as Windsor Olympic hockey gold-medalist Meghan Agosta and was sponsored by Sun Life Financial.

The WSYO and WSJYO are conducted by Peter Wiebe with Gloria Zhang as Concertmaster

and have about 100 musicians in the roster.

## Bricks and Mortar

### *Buildings/ Homes through the years*

*“We landed on our feet at the Capitol...” Paul Meanwell, WSO General Manager (Windsor Star, September 22, 2012)*

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has always met the challenge of staging orchestra concerts in creative ways. In a small city like Windsor, it is not always easy to find the right venue for a full-sized orchestra and audience.

Many early concerts were held in school auditoriums, such as Patterson Collegiate Institute (1854-1973 and demolished in 1979) on Elliott and Goyeau in downtown Windsor. Another auditorium that was often filled to capacity by eager concert-goers was Walkerville Collegiate Institute, a relatively newer building on Richmond St. in Walkerville built in 1922. That school still maintains this musical heritage by housing the Walkerville Centre for the Creative Arts school alongside the High School, and is a regular venue for the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra. The Border Cities Orchestra played at the Knights of Columbus Hall in the early days.

The ornate Tivoli Theatre on Wyandotte Street in Windsor was the WSO's first long-term home from 1949 – 1958. The Tivoli, said conductor Matti Holli, was “I think the best, by far acoustically...It seemed to give a tremendously live sound.” (*Windsor Star*, October 28 1972). The Tivoli is now the Walkerville Theatre and is waiting for a new owner.

The orchestra also performed at the Capitol Theatre on what is now called University Avenue (formerly London Street) for two years, 1959 – 1961.

The rent for these halls was paid first by collecting free-will offerings from the audience, but mainly by fundraising from WSO volunteers and community groups. WSO office space was usually located in another office location downtown, including the now demolished Norton Palmer Hotel (just across the street from the former Carnegie Library) and on Ouellette Avenue.

In 1961, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra moved to its longest-term home, the newly-constructed Cleary Auditorium on Riverside Drive (later called the Chrysler Theatre and now the St. Clair Centre for the Arts). As rents would be required more consistently, and were higher, the orchestra had to start to sell admission tickets, which was a shock to regular attendees, and they had to work to rebuild audiences in the new space. There were challenges with this new space, however, and the minutes of a WSO Board meeting in 1982 include a plea from then conductor Laszlo Gati to install an acoustic shell on the stage that would improve the sound. Audiences might also remember a noisy air flow fan that needed to be switched off during concerts!

When the Cleary Hall was renovated in 1991, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra moved back to the smaller Walkerville Collegiate.

Throughout these decades, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra managers and conductors searched for a permanent home for the orchestra. The organization rented performance and rehearsal space, or used school gyms – in the very early days, Peter C. Allan called musicians to the space above a store on Sandwich Street. In 2009, conductor John Morris Russell spear-headed a feasibility study to see if the WSO could have a permanent home in the acoustically superior Windsor Armories (*Quarter Notes*, Fall 2009). Although Russell's instincts were correct about the usability of the building, other plans were in place and it is soon to become the new home of the Schools of Music and Visual Arts for the University of Windsor.

As part of an exciting revitalization of downtown Windsor, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra recently found a new home with an old friend, the Capitol Theatre in the Fall of 2012. Once one of the largest movie theatres in Canada (and the first to be fitted with air conditioning!), the Capitol Theatre, owned by the City of Windsor, but managed by the WSO, now boasts three welcoming auditoriums for flexible performance options and will be able to consolidate its administration, library, storage and rehearsal space in that one convenient location, plus offer performance space to rent to other arts groups in Windsor. The largest auditorium, the Pentastar Theatre, has been fitted with a portable wooden acoustic shell to improve acoustics even further.

## Beyond Bricks and Mortar

### Venues

*“Although it may not occur to the Windsor Symphony, some of the best sounds it makes – and some of the most exciting things its experiencing – are occurring not in the Chrysler Theatre...They’re in smaller venues ...”*  
(Marty Gervais, *Windsor Star*, January 9, 1992).

While Maestro Holli worked to develop the Orchestra itself, and find it a permanent home, his successors also worked to bring the orchestral experience to various venues in Windsor and Essex County for the benefit of those who may not be able to attend concerts in downtown Windsor. “This is an orchestra with deep roots in the community,” said John Morris Russell, “Windsor’s strength ... is that in addition to the usual menu of classics and pops, ...it takes the program to the people ...” (*Globe and Mail*, November 28, 2001). Another advantage to the musicians and audience being closer together is that a practice developed by Maestro Bennett, and continued by Maestros Haig and Russell, of providing a short commentary, or introduction to the music to be played. This practice helps draw in listeners who may otherwise have felt intimidated by an orchestral piece (*Windsor Star*, January 9, 1992.) Maestro Haig even began a practice of opening up dress rehearsals of the orchestra at a lower ticket price to benefit students and the public

(*Windsor Star*, November 8, 1991.)

As either a scaled-down version of the orchestra, or orchestra members taking on extra roles in smaller ensembles such as string or wind quartets, or members and conductors offering workshops in schools, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra is unique in its ability to adapt to various venues. Maestro Gati, for example, took orchestra members to play in factories, and to the newly-built popular innovation in shopping, the Devonshire Mall. In the 1982-83 season, a series of “Music at the Manor” concerts with members of the orchestra who also performed as part of the “Essex Winds, Cartier String Quartet and Border City Brass Quartet going back to Windsor’s artistic roots at Willistead Manor.

In Windsor, some unique venues have included MacKenzie Hall (a former courthouse and jail) for the Largely Canadian series, for example, and when an organ is needed for some music, at the Art Gallery of Windsor, at All Saints’ Church downtown, St. John the Baptist in Amherstburg, St. Anne’s in Tecumseh, Holy Rosary Church and Leamington United Mennonite Church. The orchestra has reached as far as Chatham at the Mary Webb Centre. Partnerships with the WSO and communities have been forged, including, for example, at the St. John the Baptist Church in Amherstburg, where from the 1983 on a Christmas concert tradition has continued through the years, “I would be remiss,” said Amherstburg Performing Arts director Pat Helmer in 1991, “if I didn’t mention the first of our Christmas concerts in the lovely setting ... Maestro Laszlo Gati gave us a concert like no other. ...When the first notes of the music came alive we heard the Nutcracker and all the favourites we hope to hear at Christmas.” (*Amherstburg Performing Arts: Celebrating a Perfect Ten: 1981 – 1991*, 1991.)

The WSO has taken to the road showcasing its excellence beyond Windsor and Essex. In addition to trips to Toronto for recordings and broadcasts, in the spring of 1987, conductor Dwight Bennett took the WSO to take part in the Pan American Arts Festival preview at the Warren Performing Arts Center in Indianapolis, Indiana. The orchestra was a cultural ambassador for the City of Windsor, as the City was bidding to host the 1994 Commonwealth Games at the time. According to reports by *Windsor Star* arts reporter Harry van Vugt, who followed the WSO on their tour, musicians were high-spirited on the trip (playing a few practical jokes on the reporter), but brought their enthusiasm to the stage before a small, but very appreciative audience (*Windsor Star*, May 15, 1987).

The WSO continues to perform outside of regular concert halls for various events, including locations of the Windsor Public Library, the Nikola Budimir branch and Place Concorde for Peanut Butter n’ Jam concerts, Phog Lounge for the Canadian Music Festival.

Outdoor concerts also prove popular, attracting even more appreciative listeners with riverside concerts in Amherstburg and Windsor’s Sculpture Gardens. In 2012, the WSO took part in a commemoration of the War of 1812 at Festival Plaza near Dieppe Park, “hundreds flocked to Festival Plaza and enjoyed a full concert that included Holst’s *Mars, Bringer of War*, Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture* and much more.” The National Ballet of Canada Conductor Dave Briskin was guest conductor, with sopranos Erin Armstrong and Jackie Robotaille, mezzo-soprano Kylee

Phillips, and baritone Adam Iannetta. Windsor's first Poet Laureate, Marty Gervais, read a poem based on local history with the orchestra providing musical accompaniment, and, for the grand finale, members of the Windsor Youth Symphony played percussion, and even the audience took part by being prompted to pop red balloons in place of cannon fire ([www.citywindsor.ca](http://www.citywindsor.ca), November, 2012).

## Community

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra is recognized throughout Canada and North America for its outreach and contribution to communities. Not only does the quality of the WSO reflect well on the cultural life of the community, encouraging investment to this region, but its community concerts are, "absolutely world-beating," according to Katherine Carleton, executive director of Orchestras Canada, "this is an extraordinarily engaged orchestra. The Windsor symphony really does set the standard for Canadian orchestras." (*Windsor Star*, March 11, 2011).

In its early days, the WSO connected very simply but meaningfully to the community in small ways as well, even, as early programs suggest, including the tradition of playing *O Canada* at concerts, with the lyrics printed in the programme for the audience followed by *God Save the King* (May 2, 1940). In 1982, the WSO board decided that playing the national anthem before each concert would become standard practice.

As today, early concerts were offered to help raise funds for other charitable organizations – during World War II, concerts conducted by band leader Ernest Rennie raised money to buy cigarettes for soldiers deployed overseas, and in 1949, a concert at Walkerville Collegiate helped to raise funds for the Canadian Cancer Society drive.

Still supporting Canada's armed forces, the WSO helped Windsor's naval reserve division, HMCS Hunter, celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Royal Navy with a "Winter Follies" concert in 2010.

The WSO has also supported other cultural organizations such as a "Willistead Restoration Concert – Pops in the Park." Smaller groups have been formed from the core orchestra to perform at charitable events and provide a little extra income for the musicians, such as the Border City Brass Quintet, who performed for Amherstburg Performing Arts in 1982, and the Cartier String Quartet at Willistead Manor (1981).

The WSO has connected with many faith communities through the years. Matti Holli's ties to sacred music brought members of the WSO to perform a concert at a Lutheran convention at Ford Auditorium in Detroit, MI. Musicians and conductors took part in the Christian Culture series that ran for decades in the community with concerts at Assumption Chapel, and regular holiday concerts with the Helen Law Singers and the Leamington Choral Society at the Mennonite Church there in the 1970s. The orchestra has been supported in turn by members of all faiths in the community.

Famously, early concerts have a verse or two of the evening hymn, *Abide with Me* in the programme, played in a “stately, reverential” manner by the orchestra, and an “inspiring finale to an inspiring concert” (*Windsor Star*, November 14, 1949). Years later, conductor Matti Holli reflected, “some of the people had requested that we end with something like this, perhaps because the concerts were on Sundays, ... I was young, of course, and eager to please everyone so we played *Abide With Me*. For some reason, the audience got so used to it that when we did away with it, many people said, “What’s wrong with *Abide With Me*? It’s a beautiful song. We like to sing it and why don’t you keep playing it?” (*Windsor Star* October 28, 1972)

The WSO has also celebrated and supported sports in the community with a “Windsor Salutes Hockey Night in Canada” programme with guest artist John Allan Cameron in 1981. In 2008, conductor John Morris Russell, created a “Summon the Heroes!” concert as part of the WSO’s Diamond Anniversary Pops series and as a prelude to the Beijing Olympics, featuring Windsor boxer Mary Spencer shadow-boxing to the theme from the movie, “Rocky.”

Reaching out to the music community of course is a priority for the WSO. In 1972, the WSO hosted the Ontario Federation of Symphony Orchestras Annual Conference in Windsor with a gala concert. The WSO has supported the “Largely Canadian Series” which highlights Canadian chamber music with outreach concerts at the Art Gallery of Windsor and at All Saints’ Anglican Church, downtown Windsor.

Ultimately, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra offers a larger contribution to the Windsor Essex communities by augmenting our quality of life with culture, education and vitality, as conductor Laszlo Gati wrote: “The presence of the WSO in the community is of inordinate value, not just because of the public concerts it represents, but also, it reaches tens of thousands of school age children’s concerts with the full orchestra, or with the different core groups” (WSO Newsletter, October, 1983).

## Technology

The advantage of a symphony orchestra is that the fundamental tools of the trade are timeless, and in a good acoustical environment, need no augmentation for a wonderful musical experience. The Windsor Symphony Orchestra, however, has been open to various technologies and breakthroughs in music and visual production.

One of the earliest concerts in 1938 featured cutting-edge technology for the time – an electric organ! Professor Charles Wuerth contributed to the April 23rd programme with selections on the organ on a packed programme featuring soloists, full orchestra pieces, including the “William Tell Overture,” selections from *The Student Prince*, *Faust*, *The Blue Danube*, *Pomp and Circumstance* and more (*Windsor Daily Star*, April 23, 1938).

Later WSO performances also have taken advantage of newly available technology. In the 2005 - 2006, season, composer Brent Lee incorporated electronic music and recordings in his

compositions and adapted electronica music for the WSO. He also incorporates computer programs such as *GarageBand* or *Logic Pro* in his composition technique. (*Windsor Star*, February 9, 2006.) This music was later adapted to be played at the Art Gallery of Windsor. Lee has also combined electronic media and traditional music as part of the 2010 Windsor Canadian Music Festival, “Music and Media” programme with events held in non-traditional (for the WSO) venues such as Phog, and Milk Coffee Bar in downtown Windsor.

Technology can also be incorporated into a nostalgically-themed programme. In 2007, the WSO staged a screening of Charlie Chaplin’s 1917 classic film, *The Immigrant* at the Capitol Theatre. In this performance, then Director of Operations Shannon Whidden worked with Windsor’s Suede Productions in order to program a time-code with a beta-tape transcription DVD, and Power-Point file on a monitor for Maestro Russell to be able to conduct the score in synchronization with the screen action. Even the screen was a special type, Cyclorama on loan from the Windsor Light Musical Theatre (*Windsor Star*, April 12, 2007).

In the WSO office, technology changes were a little slower to take place, but the key investment was always in the music. In the mid-1980s, the WSO Board recognized a need to keep track of its growing database of over 5000 people on the subscriber and patron list. At first this was done with catalogue cards and typewriters, but eventually, a large Apple “Lisa” computer was purchased with help from grant funding complete with a “near letter-quality dot matrix printer” (WSO, Board Minutes, 1983). Technology rapidly improved, and this version didn’t last long. By 1999, a local computer company helped to create an integrated network with Mac and PC computers. Now the WSO office is up to date with wireless access and a specialized in-house ticket printer, saving the organization money in printing and distribution costs.

The WSO is on the forefront of making use of the social media networking site, YouTube, during its search for a new conductor and artistic director. The 2011-12 conductor candidate search committee asked candidates to upload a sample of their conducting skills on YouTube. This is in place of the practice of candidates having to send in videotapes or DVDs of their performing skills. “Maybe we are doing a little pioneering,” the WSO’s executive director (now Capitol Theatre Managing Director) Jeth Mill was quoted at the time, “It is an entirely different world than 11 years ago when the symphony searched for the last conductor.” (*Windsor Star*, February 17, 2012.)

The windsorsymphony.com website, is a key communications tool for the WSO, as are social media sites. The website launched online ticket sales in 2002 and concert information is available online for the convenience of patrons, helping to connect us all to the music.

## ***Preservation***

Beth Hebert is the Windsor Symphony Orchestra’s long-term librarian and her role is two-fold; to ensure that all musicians taking part in a concert have the music they need in time for rehears-

als, and to make sure that all of the sheet music and concert recordings are kept safe.

Sheet music is kept in acid-free boxes in the WSO library and carefully catalogued for easy access. Photocopies of sheet music are only allowed by copyright to be used at rehearsals, not for performances.

Behind the scenes, every WSO concert is recorded for the WSO library, so that conductors can check earlier performances, musicians can use them for auditions, or the organization can use them for grant applications. These recordings began on reel-to-reel tape, progressed to cassette tapes, and now compact disks (CD) and digital files. These recordings are not available to the public for copyright reasons. See our Recordings chapter for commercial recordings.

## Milestones and Events

*“They were fine enough to be representing any city, Windsor or Chicago. It was a real symphony... a carefully blended congregation ...” (Windsor Daily Star, April 23, 1938)*

### Awards

In some media, the Windsor Symphony Orchestra has been wrongly put down as a “pretty good orchestra for a small lunch bucket city,” but in reality, the region has a high standard of culture, and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra has more than lived up to those standards. The evidence is both in the popularity of the WSO, and in national recognition of nominations and awards.

In 2001, the *Globe and Mail* reported on the remarkable achievement of the WSO recovering from a long financial crisis, citing Mina Grossman-Ianni’s management and the orchestra’s winning a prestigious Ontario Lieutenant-Governor’s Award in 2001. The WSO received a \$35,000 cheque and many accolades from fellow professionals. (Michael Posner, “Back from the brink” *Windsor Star*, November 28, 2001. Travelling from strength to strength, the WSO won the award again in 2003.

In 2004, the WSO had made outstanding performances and recordings on the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC)’s Radio 2 and on CBC television. These caught the attention of the industry, and the WSO was nominated for a Gemini Award.

In 2007, the orchestra won the Vida Peene Fund – Orchestra Award from the Ontario Arts Council.

America may have its Grammys, but in Canada, the Junos are the popular music awards, and in 2008, the WSO received a nomination for its CD album, *Peter and the Wolf & Last Minute Lulu*.

Various maestri have won their own awards in music, but Conductor Emeritus John Morris Russell achieved community recognition not only with his nomination as the WSO's first of that title, but with the community at large with the Multicultural Council's Herb Gray Harmony Award for his work with the orchestra in the wider community.

## Broadcasts

Without broadcasts by local and later national radio and television, it is doubtful that the Windsor Symphony Orchestra would have been able to continue its long performance history and professional standing.

The first conductor of the incorporated orchestra, Matti Holli had a long career as a radio musician and band leader long before he took over the WSO, as did a few of its musicians, such as Celia Hardcastle: "We had one string group that was featured on the Mutual Network and then in the early days, of course, ...pop orchestras at CKLW and also later at CBE, and its predecessor CRCW" (*Windsor Star*, October 28, 1972). The station maintained a studio orchestra of up to 20 musicians and according to a journalist quoting Holli, that group became the core for the orchestra that Holli set up..." (John Laycock, *Windsor Star*, January 31, 1976.) When the orchestra was formed, it is highly likely that Holli was able to use his connections with the local radio stations to broadcast concerts.

The income from these sponsorships and broadcast rights provided key funding for the organization through the years. (Harry van Vugt, *Windsor Star*, October 4, 1969).

The earliest radio stations in the area came on the scene in Detroit (1920) and Windsor about 1932 (*Windsor Star*, February 5, 2011), and they were keen to take advantage of programming provided by local musicians. In the early days, there were two radio stations based in Windsor, CKLW and CBE or CRCW) later to become the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Broadcasts on CKLW-FM began in 1948, and both radio stations broadcasted all 11 concerts for that season, an arrangement that Holli later described as "rather unique ... as far as orchestras are concerned" (*Windsor Star*, December 31, 1970).

Concerts were recorded from the Tivoli Theatre in the early 1950s, although often only half the concert was broadcast.

Local radio stations also helped the orchestra celebrate milestones, such as the Silver Anniversary live broadcast with CKLW and a summary of the history of the orchestra. The gala included a tribute to Holli's service, and featured local soprano Jeannine Morand.

The orchestra has been featured on national radio more recently, including "Music Around Us" recorded at the Glenn Gould studio at the CBC Broadcasting Centre in 1993, featuring a composition by 19 year-old Jason Grossi. The WSO has been featured in at least 17 concerts on CBC Radio Two.

On television, the WSO was on CBC's *Opening Night* series, with an award-winning performance of a Cross-Canada Christmas special. The orchestra and soloists Eugene Nakamura, violinist, and Darrett Zusko on piano were recorded at Windsor's Assumption Chapel in 2003.

## Recordings

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has recorded several soundtracks to great critical and popular acclaim. Recordings are expensive undertakings without a recording contract, and the WSO has relied on public, corporate and private funding to produce them. These archives demonstrate the quality of the orchestra nationally and internationally.

Under the directorship of Laszlo Gati in 1983, the WSO recorded *Rudy Plays Rachmaninoff* with Michael Rudy performing piano solos, with Laszlo Gati conducting *Rachmaninov Piano Concerto no. 3, op. 30*.

With Windsor soprano Peggy Dwyer, conductor Susan Haig initiated the WSO's first CD recording, *Mozart's Symphony no. 33 – Magic Flute Overture – Vorrei Speigarvi; Haydn, Symphony no. 82* in 1999.

The WSO's most recent recording reflects a key focus of the organization, music for children. *Peter and the Wolf & Last Minute Lulu* (2006) were narrated by Windsor native, Colm Feore, and local author Christopher Paul Curtis, who wrote the text for *Last Minute Lulu*. The review enthused, "[Feore's] sense of timing and trained voice make the most of the tale." (*Windsor Star*, November 25, 2006).

The music for *Last Minute Lulu* was composed by Brent Lee, of the University of Windsor's School of Music. The reviewer continued, "Lee's delightful score features the same instrumentation as *Peter and the Wolf*, so orchestras can perform both on the same program" (*Windsor Star*, November 25, 2006). This recording was nominated for a Juno award in Canada.

In 2005, the WSO was featured in an independent documentary about the preparation and staging of a concert in 2005, called *Clearly Symphony*. In it, orchestra members and conductor John Morris Russell are interviewed as they rehearse Beethoven's *5th Symphony*, *Four Songs by Strauss*, with soprano Peggy Dwyer, and a new composition by Brent Lee. Available at the library or from Suede Productions, the DVD is a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the work of an orchestra.

*Symphronica*, an exciting suite of new music composed by jazz pianist Ron Davis was recorded with Davis' band and the WSO under John Morris Russell in January, 2012.

## Publications by and about the WSO

At least one book and several published periodicals and programmes have supported the great work and told the story of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

The Windsor Symphony Orchestra has left a legacy of its own story told through programmes published professionally for each concert. Orchestra programmes often provide background and biographies of solo artists and conductors, and background about the music played, and a list of music played at each concert. Even the advertisers who support the orchestra and programme printing with their sponsorship provide a context for the history of the community of Windsor-Essex region. Past programmes for the WSO can be seen in the Windsor Public Library archives (*Windsor Municipal Archives*, MS 34) and on request from the WSO communications office.

The WSO produced its own periodicals on and off over the years as funds allowed. *Quarter Notes: A Newsletter from the Windsor Symphony* or QN as it was also known began its modern incarnation in 1986. The format then was quite simple – one colour on regular print. Windsor journalist Gene Sasso, noted improvements to the WSO's outreach: "Other education-related enhancements include a new quarterly programme magazine that will compile concert notes and information about the symphony and its guests" (*Windsor This Month*, September 1989). *Quarter Notes* upgraded to a glossy magazine format by the 1990's, but costs became prohibitive, and the paper publication was halted in the 2000s. *Keeping in Tune: Newsletter of the Windsor Symphony* was another informal publication from about 1993-1997. These newsletters pay tribute to the WSO's support organizations, the Windsor Symphony Society, the Windsor Symphony League and the Boards of Directors by highlighting the many fundraising events that were organised on behalf of the WSO.

For the WSO's 50th Anniversary in 1997, the organization produced a combined souvenir programme and history, *Windsor Symphony 1947 – 1997: Celebrating 50 Years of Music*. With interviews, anecdotes and information from the Windsor Public Library Archives, the publication to announce the 50th season's performances is a celebration of the musicians and volunteers whose hard work and passion carried the Windsor Symphony Orchestra to the present era. Many of those involved then are still passionate about the orchestra today. The book can be found at the WSO office or the Windsor Public Library.

Now, of course, much of that information is sought and constantly updated on the WSO's informative website, [windsorsymphony.com](http://windsorsymphony.com), and on social media.

Harrow, Ontario author and educator Jane Buttery gained an insight into the work of the Windsor Symphony Orchestra and conductor Susan Haig as an educational volunteer. As a writer, she was then inspired to tell the story of the WSO and its musicians to celebrate the 50th Anniversary Season of the orchestra in 1998. The book, *Portraits of an Orchestra: featuring the Musicians of the Windsor Symphony* provides in-depth interviews with the permanent orchestra members at the time, their training, and even family life as musicians. Conductor and Music Director Susan Haig is also featured providing inspiration for young musicians. *Portraits of an Orchestra* also shares educational information about the structure of an orchestra.

# Timeline

1923

A Border Cities Amateur Orchestra Society conducted by Henry C. McCaw is recorded in WSO history

1938

Rapturous review of debut concert of Windsor Symphony Orchestra at Paterson Collegiate, funded by the Senior Mary Grant Society

1947

Debut of the Windsor Federation of Musicians Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Matti Holli, funded by the Windsor Symphony Society. Ursuline School of Music Orchestra also plays (led by Matti Holli)

1948

Name of orchestra changed to Windsor Symphony Orchestra, and incorporation of the group as a non-profit organisation complete

1954

WSO takes part in a Centennial Concert broadcast for the hundredth anniversary of the City of Windsor

1957 - Matti Holli founds the Windsor Junior Orchestra, later to become the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra

1961

WSO moves to new home at the Cleary Auditorium (now Chrysler Theatre)

1977

Conductor Matti Holli, the WSO's longest-serving conductor and artist director, dies suddenly at age 60. WSO in 30th season

1979

Laszlo Gati is selected as the WSO's conductor

1983

WSO produces first commercial recording with Michael Rudy on piano

1991

Susan Haig, the WSO's first woman conductor is appointed

1997

WSO celebrates its 50th Anniversary, with Susan Haig as conductor and artistic director

2001

John Morris Russell appointed Conductor and Artist Director

2004

WSO nominated for a Gemini Award for performances on CBC TV's "Opening Night"

2008

WSO nominated for a Juno award for CD recording, Christopher Paul Curtis' vocal reading of his story, "Last-Minute Lulu." Music composed by Brent Lee

2012

WSO finds a new home at the renovated Capitol Theatre

# Art Gallery of Windsor: The Beginnings

*“This was a joint effort and Miss Hume persuaded the Windsor Library Board to spend some money to renovate and to adapt space on the second floor of Willistead for the purposes of a gallery. The Windsor Art Association and the Library Board became partners in an enterprise which years later became the Art Gallery of Windsor.” Kenneth Saltmarche, First Director, AGW*

In 1922 when the Walkerville Library moved into Willistead Manor, the Elizabethan-style mansion built for Edward Chandler Walker, it set the stage to secure a public art gallery in the Windsor area.

Before there was physical place dedicated to displaying art in the area, residents of the Border Cities (Windsor, Sandwich, Walkerville and East Windsor) who visited the Willistead Library were able to enjoy occasional art exhibitions arranged by the library board or other arts organizations.

These arts organizations include the Art Committee of the Associated Service Clubs, the Zonta Club, the Fakir Art Club and the Education Committee of the Local Council of Women. The Windsor Art Association was formed in 1936 and pulled the years of work and many members of these earlier groups together and continued to cooperate with the Windsor Public Library Board to promote an interest in the arts by providing art exhibitions and regular art activities, including classes and lectures.

Anne Hume, a Windsor public librarian, is largely credited for promoting the idea of exhibiting art and initiating and arranging the loan of exhibitions to be shown at Willistead Library in the early 1920s. Pictures or other artwork from esteemed collections such as the Royal Ontario Museum and later the National Gallery, and other regional art galleries would be hung as a complementary extension of library services.

Willistead Manor also held the administrative offices and council chambers for the Town of Walkerville. When the Border Cities amalgamated in 1935, the administrative offices and council chambers for the town vacated the Manor site and the Windsor Public Library Board gradually took over Willistead. The library was enlarged, and in 1943, a space on the second floor was renovated and donated to the Windsor Art Association.

The Windsor Art Association, for its part, sponsored exhibitions, and held art demonstrations, classes and lectures at Willistead. These activities were supported by the City of Windsor and the Windsor Public Library Board.

The first pieces of the permanent collection were donated by Windsor residents and art collectors, Dr. and Mrs. Sanborn during the opening ceremonies of the new Willistead Art Gallery, October 1, 1943. The bronze sculptures by noted French-Canadian sculptor and painter Suzor-

Coté, *The Old Pioneer* and *The Old Pioneer's Companion* are still a part of the Art Gallery of Windsor's collection today.

Incorporated in 1944, the gallery received enormous community support and soon began building on the collection, presenting regular exhibitions and developing education programs to stimulate Windsor residents in the arts and encourage local artists. In 1946 a full time director, Kenneth Saltmarche, was hired.

By the mid 1950s, the gallery's membership had increased, art activities expanded and the collection had grown. The art gallery had outgrown its space at Willistead. Talks to rectify the situation began, with the Windsor Art Association asking for independence from the Windsor Public Library board. When negotiations came to a standstill, the Windsor Art Association halted art programs, removed the art from Willistead and the Director resigned in protest. When negotiations resumed, the Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor became an autonomous organization with its own board of directors. In 1969, the gallery's name was changed to the Art Gallery of Windsor.

## People

*“What would this community be without an art gallery, what would we be without any forms of art whether it be visual, whether it be the symphony, whether it be the library, without these cultural things, that is the very fabric that keeps us together.” So is it something we could live without? I don't think so. I think it's an amazing asset.” (Sean White, President, Art Gallery of Windsor, 2012.)*

Caring for and maintaining a community-owned art collection of over 4,000 pieces of artwork takes a combination of loyal supporters, eager volunteers and a committed staff and board of directors to ensure that the AGW remains a viable organization. Here, we introduce you to the people who make the gallery a successful, lively meeting place for art and people.

## ***Volunteers and Special Event Fundraising***

Volunteers at the Art Gallery of Windsor have always been a large part of the foundation of the organization, playing a key role in creating and sustaining the gallery.

Art exhibitions at the newly formed Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor were sponsored by community social and volunteer clubs such as the Art Association and the Friends of the Windsor Public Library. With the organization of the volunteer service of the Women's Committee in 1953,

many Windsorites were introduced to the Art Gallery for the first time.

Early campaigns to bring people into the gallery achieved record success, attracting thousands to Willistead and increasing membership of the Art Association. The Committees' fundraising campaigns successfully helped to purchase art for the permanent collection, obtain supplies and equipment needed for social activities and enabled the Art Association to meet its goals of promoting an interest in art in the area.

In 1959, the Women's Committee's special projects included the 9th Annual Sale of Canadian Art. The sale, which was held for ten days in December, familiarized area residents with the work being done by contemporary Canadian artists. Also that year, the first Tour of Windsor Houses was organized with six homes in Windsor participating. These activities raised funds and also brought an increased awareness of the Art Association and the gallery in the community.

Molly Briggs, current chair of the AGW Volunteer Committee, has been a volunteer at the gallery since 1966. "Our majors successes have been the three cookbooks that we produced, all of which were Canadian best sellers, our Kitchen and Garden Tour which ran for 19 years and made a substantial amount of money and many times the money would be raised to buy important works for the art gallery's permanent collection," said Briggs. (Bridge and Fashion Show.jpg)

Volunteers contribute to the AGW in the same way today, giving generously of their time and talents to assist in presenting exhibitions, events and educational programs. They assist staff with mailings, and exhibit opening and hostess duties, tend the information desk and in the resource centre, cataloguing, shelving, filing, covering books and assisting the public. Volunteers supported the gift shop at the Art Gallery and Art Rental and Sales until 2011 when those enterprises were discontinued.

Often supporting staff through difficult times while continuing to perform at a level and quality that belied the lack of resources available, volunteers plan and develop fundraising events or develop and implement a recruitment program for new members and retaining members.

Another role the volunteers at the AGW serve is as a docent. Docents guide visitors through the art gallery and assist with their understanding and appreciation of the exhibitions and art work – a crucial contribution and benefit to visitors and the AGW. The AGW Volunteer Committee also has organized a number of events to involve the community such as tours to other art museums and the popular Art History Film Series. (video, docent)

Through a variety of fundraising events the Volunteer Committee donates to and supports successful initiatives during the year. Of special note are a number of highly successful, profile-raising events this year including the Jubilee Tea For Two or More and the Bridge & Fashion Show Luncheon, which provided a fashion show, silent auction and other draws and a luncheon for attendees, with all proceeds from this event benefiting the Art Gallery of Windsor.

New volunteers are always welcome to provide support in a range of activities and services which contribute to the success of the gallery and its programs.

In addition to the Volunteer Committee, a dedicated group of fundraisers led by Pam Rodzik has staged “Artrageous”, a large ticketed evening event held on a biennial basis for the past decade. This project has provided critical resources to the AGW during its first decade of operations at 401 Riverside Drive West.

## ***Donors***

The support that the AGW receives from individuals, public and private donors, foundations, governments and corporations is an indication of the importance the Windsor community recognizes in the arts.

The AGW depends on the generosity of donors who support and advocate for the Gallery. When you visit the Art Gallery of Windsor, many of the galleries are named after donors who have supported the gallery’s Named Space program.

Most art work in the AGW permanent collection has been generously donated by artists, private collectors and other art galleries. A major achievement for the AGW was the acquisition by gift from the Detroit Institute of Arts of the painting, “A Side Street” by Lawren Harris.

Donors have also established charitable bequests to the gallery to ensure the future of the gallery’s permanent collection. One of the earliest bequests was established by the family of Dorothy Smith in 1950 for the purchase of paintings by Canadian artists. The AGW quickly acquired “Grain Elevators” by E.S. Faiers and “Setting Out the Blocks” by Edward A. Hodgkinson using this fund.

## ***AGW Foundation***

The Art Gallery of Windsor Foundation was incorporated in 1979 to grow, receive, maintain and invest funds for the gallery to acquire and conserve the permanent collection. The foundation’s income is obtained from general gifts and donations, planned giving, bequests, investments and grants. (AGW Foundation.jpg)

In 1993, the AGW Board leased the gallery’s building to the Ontario Casino Corporation for use as a temporary casino. The bulk of the rental income was committed to the Foundation’s endowment fund, which supports the operation of the AGW. Since 1996, it has spent over \$8 million from the income earned on the endowment directly on gallery operations. Annual allotments from the foundation to the gallery sustain the AGW and create the significant cultural institution that it is today.

## ***Directors of the Art Gallery of Windsor***

The director of the Art Gallery of Windsor works with the board to lead the institution, offering vision, support and management to the gallery staff. The director is responsible for: the management of all art gallery affairs including the exhibition and educational programs, collections, finances and human resources and generating educational programs, fundraising and marketing initiatives. The director is also responsible for ensuring that museum standards are applied to the production of exhibitions as well as to the care, management, exhibition of the AGW's permanent collection.

Art gallery directors have diverse backgrounds and training. Many are trained in art history and have broad curatorial experience, as has been the case with the AGW's directors. Art gallery directors work directly with a board of directors, volunteers who are responsible for the overall condition of the Gallery. The director is supported by the board of directors who are community volunteers, giving their time and direction to support the AGW and make art available to the public.

Under the direction of Kenneth Saltmarche and subsequent Directors, the AGW has provided the community with one of the most valued permanent art collections and respected exhibition programs in the country. (Kenneth Saltmarche.jpg)

### **Daphne Hein Ellis (1943 – 1946)**

From the beginning, Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor functioned as a service of the Windsor Public Library system. The Windsor Public Library Board, who met at its Willistead headquarters in early 1943, discussed special art services for the library, planned gallery hours and appointed Daphne Hein, a local sculptor as part-time curator. It authorized librarian Anne Hume to attend regional meetings to learn of the plans to circulate educational loan exhibits from major museums and to renovate a space at Willistead to exhibit art work.

The opening ceremonies at the new Willistead Art Gallery overwhelmed the space, as more than 500 people attended. Hein described the gallery to the *Windsor Daily Star* as, "...well set-up, well-lighted and has all the attributes of a fine small museum." (*Windsor Daily Star*, 1943)

With the great show of community support of the arts, the curator immediately began building on interest in the arts by holding children's art classes, group and school tours and talks on the exhibitions.

Public support for the Art Gallery was also shown in the immense offers of loans and gifts of artwork. The Library Board created a special committee to select which pieces would be chosen for the permanent collection.

Throughout Hein's time as curator of the art gallery, attendance remained high and community support strong, with exhibits sponsored by Windsor Art Association, Windsor Public Library Board and the Friends of the Windsor Public Library. In 1946, Hein resigned to marry (as was

the practice at that time) and Kenneth Saltmarche was appointed as the first full-time curator.

### **Kenneth Saltmarche (1946 – 1985)**

It is difficult to speak of the Art Gallery of Windsor without mentioning the first full-time director, Kenneth Saltmarche. Hired in 1946, Saltmarche was appointed director of the Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor, to “develop an art gallery for the city of Windsor.”

Early on, Saltmarche developed a policy of focusing on Canadian art for the Gallery’s permanent collection. Recognizing the unique geographical situation of its location on an international border, he was committed to presenting Canadian exhibitions of regional, national and international significance.

“I remember very clearly, the feeling that was conveyed to me that, why bother trying to get an art gallery in Windsor when there is such a marvelous one in Detroit,” said Saltmarche. “I choose another point of view. I felt that it was very important to have an art gallery in this community. The Detroit collection did not include, certainly at that time, and even yet, does not include the works of Canadian artists. So I thought the thrust of our collecting in Windsor should be Canadian.” (Saltmarche, WPL interview, 1980)

While Saltmarche had the enormous challenge of developing a permanent collection from a collection of just a few pieces of art work, early support by Windsor residents for the arts was passionate. Saltmarche described Anne Hume, and the Windsor Art Association as “a small band of dedicated people who wanted better things for Windsor in the arts.”

Saltmarche further developed the arts education programs offered by the Gallery and continuing art classes for children and art workshops for adults. He launched a picture rental collection of framed reproductions and small sculptures. This lending program proved popular to the people of Windsor, while raising money for the Gallery.

By 1958, the Art Gallery had grown to the point where supporters believed it should become an independent art gallery, as opposed to another part of the library collection. It had grown in its influence and had outgrown its location at Willistead.

Saltmarche, who was paid by the Library Board, but shared the interests of the Windsor Art Association, resigned to protest the need for an independent art gallery, but was convinced to continue on as director. In 1959, with little progress in resolving the situation, the director took a firm stand and resigned again, and the Art Association removed the art from Willistead.

After months of negotiations, Windsor city council approved an independent Art Gallery in the city for the use of the community under the patronage of the Windsor Art Association. The agreement stipulated the Art Gallery would have its own budget, board of directors and the second floor of Willistead for the development of an independent art gallery, with the support of the City.

Saltmarche, who had developed the art gallery in size, standards and importance as well as built confidence with his devotion, influence and guidance, was appointed Director. "That was the end of 1959 and that was the real birth of what has become the AGW, something that could grow and be built upon. In other words, an institution."

As years passed the collection and art activities continued to grow and additional space was needed to further develop the art gallery. The idea of another location or building an addition on Willistead was discussed. In 1969, the gallery's name was changed to the Art Gallery of Windsor.

As an artist, Saltmarche held exhibitions of his own work and travelled extensively to sketch. He was the recipient of many commissions including portraiture for the Government of Ontario. In 1993 the Art Gallery of Windsor mounted a retrospective of his work and published a corresponding catalogue.

Known for his enthusiastic and robust vision, Saltmarche successfully initiated community involvement in the arts through innovative programs such as Art for All, designed to see Canadian art in Windsor homes. Art in the Park, a popular yearly event now run by the Rotary Club, intended to raise awareness in the arts and attract Windsor area residents to Willistead, was also started by Saltmarche. He also introduced the art gallery to the public through regular art reviews in the Windsor Daily Star, promoting the appreciation and understanding of the arts and art gallery activities.

Saltmarche grew the permanent collection to nearly 3,000 works of art by the time of his retirement in 1985.

(Quotes and information from Ken Saltmarche, Windsor Art Gallery (Local History Stack T577131)

### **Alf Bogusky (1985 - 1992)**

Alf Bogusky replaced Kenneth Saltmarche and was able to build upon the strong foundation built by his predecessor. A painter with a degree in fine arts, Bogusky was previously the director of the Southern Alberta Art Gallery.

Among Bogusky's greatest challenges during his tenure was taking the Gallery through a significant renovation program. The Art Gallery was housed in an old bottling plant reconditioned in the early 1970s in preparation for the art gallery and required the removal of asbestos insulation throughout the building.

The art gallery was closed in 1986 while the 60,000 square foot gallery interior was emptied and walls and ceiling removed to enable the removal of the asbestos insulation. Renovations followed which created new exhibition space, a library and resource centre, and the expansion and redesign of security, the information desk, gift shop and art rental facilities.

Bogusky also strengthened the gallery's reputation in contemporary art programming.

### **Vincent Varga (1992 – 1993)**

Vincent Varga, also a senior curator at the AGW, took over the post of interim director following Alf Bogusky's departure. Regarding Bogusky, Varga commented that, "he committed himself whole heartedly to the AGW and to all Windsor's creative communities. Through his highly refined professionalism, generosity of spirit, considerable energy, determination and belief in the educative role of cultural institutions, he rejuvenated the AGW and equipped it to meet the challenges of the future."

During his time short time at the head of the AGW, Varga continued to uphold the high level of services and programs before moving to Sante Fe, New Mexico where he contributed to the SITE Sante Fe contemporary art projects.

### **Nataley Nagy (1993 - 2001)**

Nataley Nagy told the Windsor Star in 1993 that she was interested in the Windsor gallery's top spot because of the, "dedicated volunteers, a strong board, committed professional staff, a sound framework and master plan."

Hired with a mandate to build attendance, and facing major upgrades and maintenance to an aging building, Nagy and the board of directors of the day, realized the benefits of hosting Ontario's first interim casino, proposed the art gallery's building and won the bid. The understanding was that the AGW would vacate the building for three years, receive an endowment and eventually return to a refurbished building.

The decision to vacate the art gallery's home for a temporary casino was controversial with the public, members of the art gallery and local artists. Nonetheless, Nagy and Varga set to finding a new home. "We looked all over town, because I felt it was part of a community-building strategy to do look-sees. We kept coming back to the mall." (*Toledo Blade*, 1994)

Attendance increased rapidly at the Devonshire Mall location with the first year seeing 100,000 visitors, a record for the Art Gallery. "The AGW has a strong national profile in Canada and the art community admires the move to the mall. The general feeling is bravo for having the courage to do it," remarked Helga Pakasaar, curator of contemporary art. (*Detroit News* – Aug 16, 1996 – The gallery gamble)

When the permanent Casino Windsor was built, the AGW Board of Directors and Management faced many challenges regarding whether to relocate to its riverfront location and refit the building again, or build in a different location. The decision though, was to move back to the downtown core near the former gallery location. In 1999, the AGW Board of Directed presented the plans for a new art gallery to be built near the old location and construction started later in

the year. Nagy left her post at the AGW in 2001 after overseeing the move from the mall into the state-of-the-art climate controlled facility.

### **Glen Cumming (2001 - 2004)**

Glen Cumming was the director of the Art Gallery of Windsor for three years. Cumming was the former director at galleries in Hamilton, Oshawa, Kitchener-Waterloo, Edmonton and New York City before coming to Windsor. Cummings was also a champion of the gallery's permanent art collection. During his tenure, Cummings grew the collection, managing to acquire through purchase or donation over 180 works, including works by Sorel Etrog, Windsor-born John Scott, photographs by Edward Burtynsky and six paintings by John Hartman.

### **Gilles Hébert (2004 –2009)**

The Art Gallery of Windsor welcomed Gilles Hebert as director in 2004. Hébert, who had previously headed Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery and the St. Norbert Arts Centre near Winnipeg, found that "his greatest challenge is to put together a program that has resonance for the community". He also headed the Gallery with the major challenges of revenue generation and maintaining the building, which had become extremely expensive to maintain, and oversaw a major retrofit of the HVAC climate-control system.

### **Catharine Mastin (2010 - )**

Catharine Mastin was Curator of Canadian Art at the Art Gallery of Windsor from 1989-95, during which time she was awarded the 1993 and 1995 Ontario Association of Art Galleries Curatorial Writing Awards for projects on Wyndham Lewis in Canada and representations of First Peoples in Canadian art. Mastin has worked as a guest curator at several art galleries across Canada and taught at York University. She received her M.A. in art history and architecture and her B.A. Honours in studio and art history, both from York University, and her PhD from the University of Alberta in Women's History.

Prior to becoming Director at the Art Gallery of Windsor, Catharine Mastin was Senior Curator of Art at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary from 1995-2006, leading the art department's activities in collections development, exhibitions and public access.

Upon acceptance of the AGW director, Mastin said "The AGW is a gem and important contributor to the national visual arts community. In accepting this position I will work diligently to champion the Gallery's critical role in the city and beyond."

During her first two years she has overseen a major organizational restructuring including the 49-year lease agreement with the City of Windsor and sale of the 401 Riverside Drive West to them.

## ***The Visual Artist***

Artists examine, explore and interpret their experiences and the world around them, introducing different perspectives and new ways of understanding ourselves and others through their art. The visual artists represented at the AGW show the depth of the rich history of our country and this region.

Visual artists showing at the AGW have created a wide range of art forms that include but are not limited to sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, photography and video.

The AGW's support of local artists began with founding director Kenneth Saltmarche, who was committed to displaying work of artists from the area. Art in the Park, an annual art display and sale held at Willistead, was initially started to provide an opportunity for artists in Windsor and the surrounding region to exhibit and sell their work.

The AGW also supports local artists through exhibitions and by supporting the initiatives of local artists every year. For example, at the scheduled reopening of the Art Gallery of Windsor after asbestos removal in 1987, the works of fourteen Windsor artists were exhibited. More recently, each year for the past several years, local artists have participated in numerous group and solo shows. The art gallery's exhibitions archive, available online at [www.agw.ca](http://www.agw.ca), recounts local participation in gallery exhibitions since 1998. In 2000, the AGW mounted an exhibition of fourteen works in Washington, D.C., at the Organization of American States, with three works from Windsor artists. (*Windsor Star*, Mar 1, 2000) Over the years, the AGW has continued to support local artists by organizing such projects as the *Windsor Biennial*, a major exhibition that showcases contemporary art from Windsor and surrounding communities. Drawing hundreds of submissions, the juried exhibition provides an opportunity for artists, curators and the community to recognize this area's talent in contemporary art. In 2004, the Biennial expanded to include artists from across the border and, in 2011, showcased artists within a hundred mile radius.

Local artists are also involved in educational programming at the AGW. They share their expertise and enthusiasm for art by participating in tours, talks, panel discussions and at Sundays in the Studio, workshops offered to families and children based on the current exhibitions.

(image from Sundays in the Studio)

## ***Art Gallery of Windsor Members***

The AGW memberships support the programs and services offered at the AGW. The gallery welcomes new members and benefits include free admission to most programs and a subscription to the AGW Gallery Guide publication. Many AGW members also take part in the daily operation of the AGW as volunteers.

# Culture

*“Richardson and I, as directors of a kind of David and Goliath situation gallery on each side of the river, became very close professional associates and friends and he was very supportive. I was constantly in and out of the art institute and I use to joke that I could run across there and borrow a couple of light bulbs for a show. We had some tough times even buying light bulbs in those days, but they were very, very helpful in a very practical kind of way. That continues to this day. (Ken Saltmarche, WPL, 1980.)*

## **Art, Music and Literature**

The AGW has historically partnered with other cultural institutions, organizations and individuals to animate and complement the gallery’s exhibitions and the permanent collection.

The Library Board, which originally oversaw the art gallery, believed books could be enhanced by paintings, music, musical and speech recordings, films, talks, discussion groups and the radio.

At its opening ceremony in 1943, the art gallery blended art, music and literature while sharing a cultural space. In addition to the donation of the first art work to the permanent collection, the celebration also included a musical demonstration and the showing of an art film based on noted Canadian painter, Tom Thomson.

The activities held at Willistead by the art gallery were catalysts for the exchange of ideas and understanding and appreciation of the visual arts in the community and generated other cultural activities. Many social and community groups including the Windsor Handicraft Guild, the May Court Club and the Local Council of Women of Windsor regularly used Willistead as their meeting place.

When the Carling building was being retrofitted into an art gallery in the early 1970s, the design included a theatre in which films of exhibiting artists could be shown and a combination auditorium and gallery with a stage and projection screen where visual arts as well as other artistic expression could be portrayed.

Over the years, the AGW has collaborated numerous times with St. Clair College, the University of Windsor’s Schools of Visual Arts and Music and the Windsor Symphony Orchestra to examine and consider the vibrant relationship between visual arts and dance, music and literature. For example, *Alone + Together* was a recent visiting artists series presented in collaboration with

the University of Windsor's School of Visual Arts and the AGW

The AGW is also a popular meeting space that has served as a venue for hosting receptions, special events, social events and festivals, including Bookfest Windsor, a yearly festival showcasing our regions literary talent, and the Windsor International Film Festival, a weekend of screenings, exhibitions and activities to celebrate the magic of cinema. The Red Bull Air Race events also provided an opportunity for the AGW to showcase a photo exhibition of the air race, featuring a flight simulator, photo booths and stunning views of the air race from the gallery.

These partnerships have provided the AGW with an opportunity to introduce new audiences to the gallery, ensuring that the gallery is an exciting destination for our community and tourists. The AGW became a window to Windsor when it hosted national media for the 2009 TVO Kids "Don't Sit Still" tour and CBC with Peter Mansbridge broadcasting the evening news offering stunning views from the art gallery to the country.

## *Multicultural*

The Art Gallery of Windsor is the place to view significant works of art by regional, national international artists. Art allows people to take pride in their own cultural identity while gaining knowledge, appreciation and respect for the art of other cultures. The Windsor and Essex County region is home to Canada's fourth most ethnically diverse city and the permanent collection and touring exhibitions offered at the AGW reflect the region and the country's multiculturalism.

Images of artwork: Claude Tousignant, *Chromatic Transformer*, Karoo Ashevak, *Untitled Inuit figure* and Emily Carr's *Yan Mortuary Poles*

Caption:

Many exhibits have focused on artworks from First Nations peoples, the Francophone community and women artists as well. Important pieces in the permanent collection include Karoo Ashevak's *Untitled Inuit figure*, Claude Tousignant's *Chromatic Transformer* and Emily Carr's *Yan Mortuary Poles*.

## *Detroit and Windsor*

Just a short distance from Windsor, Detroit is home the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), a major American art museum with diverse international collections of art. While truly a magnificent art museum, the DIA does not offer the remarkable and unique art work accessible at the AGW: a collection dominantly reflecting the diversity of art practice in Canada.

Edward Chandler Walker and his family were great patrons of the arts. Edward, along with Willis Walker and their father Hiram Walker were founding members of the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA). More than patrons, the Walkers collected many important pieces of art work from the United States and Europe.

An indication of the importance of the arts for the family is revealed in the plans for Willistead Manor. Built for Edward Chandler Walker and his wife Mary in Walkerville in 1906, it incorporated detailed plans to the interior of the home for the display of their sizeable art collection. At the time of Edward Walker's death in 1915, he had given a total of 10 masterpieces to the DIA including priceless paintings by Monet, Renoir, Pissarro and Cassatt.

The relationship with the AGW and other cultural institutions in Detroit has historically been mutually supportive. When the Windsor Art Association held its inaugural meeting in 1936, Edgar Richardson who was the educational secretary and later became the director of the DIA, was the guest speaker. At other times, when funding was not available to bring in Canadian lecturers, the DIA generously supplied speakers for AGW lecture series.

In the late 1930s, Kenneth Saltmarche, first full time curator at the AGW, took drawing classes in Detroit prior to enrolling at the Ontario College of Art. Detroit, at that time, was also where Windsor area residents would go to take advantage of music performances and art exhibitions. Saltmarche found that the Americans he knew had very little knowledge about Canada or the arts in the Windsor community.

When hired as director of the AGW, Saltmarche cultivated a friendly association with the DIA. He felt it important that exhibitions and the permanent collection should be Canadian, acting as a show window for the arts in Canada and often sent the DIA exhibitions of Canadian art.

In a show of this reciprocal relationship, in 1966, on the 100th birthday of Windsor, the DIA presenting the AGW with Lawren Harris' painting, *A Side Street* (1919). The AGW has also been gifted other fine art from the DIA, Archives of American Art and other American art institutions. According to Saltmarche, the DIA "willingly lent us everything from masterpieces of European painting to replacements for our burned-out picture-lighting lamps." (*Canadian Art*, 1957)

Marking the 100th anniversary of Hiram Walker and Sons Ltd in 1958, an exhibition of the Walker collection was held at the AGW. The large crowd, including many Detroiters, took advantage of the close proximity and were able to view paintings by such masters as Monet and Renoir. The paintings, loaned from the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, where they went upon the death of Mary Walker, had not hung on the walls at Willistead for 40 years. Throughout the years, many such loans continued, including from art collectors and enthusiasts from Detroit who were patrons of the Willistead Art Gallery.

International celebrations between Windsor and Detroit over the years have often been marked by an exchange of artwork and other materials. In 2007, when the DIA closed for renovations, Detroiters were encouraged to cross the river and visit the AGW to enjoy the art, a light lunch and even consider the AGW's art rental program for displaying Canadian art in homes and busi-

nesses. (*Detroit Free Press*, 2007)

Symposiums regarding the cultural geography of Windsor and Detroit between the two cities are common with our American neighbours joining in debates and discussions at the AGW. International events such as the Detroit Auto Show or the Red Bull Air Races have spawned exhibits that provide a variety of perspectives from both countries.

The AGW Biennial, an exhibition of diverse and innovative contemporary artworks includes artists from Southwestern Ontario and the Detroit region.

In 2012 the AGW hosted *Made in America: American Photographers 1900 – 1950*. In addition to the exhibit, panel discussions and lectures brought artists art enthusiast and experts together to engage with some key works in this exhibition from diverse perspectives to examine the discourse on photography today.

## Education

*“I get to use my expertise, training and schooling. It’s very satisfying to share that after I retired and am no longer teaching. But that’s what docents do: teach.” (Jim Mroczkowski, Docent AGW/Ret. Professor, Nipissing University, 2012)*

Throughout the course of its rich history, the Art Gallery of Windsor (AGW) has taken a leading role in art education, playing a vital role in the artistic and cultural life of residents in the Windsor region and beyond.

The Windsor Art Association (WAA), the predecessor of the Art Gallery of Windsor, was formed expressly to educate the community about the arts, to promote an interest through regular art activities and to create a permanent collection available for the community.

This early educational programming was the foundation of programming today. It included art classes for children and adults that inspired imagination and self-expression in a positive and encouraging environment. Tours of the exhibition were enjoyed by thousands of school children who were brought in to view the paintings, and various community and arts organizations met at Willistead to discuss art topics. These programs were designed to advance visual literacy by fostering an understanding and appreciation of the aesthetics of visual arts.

Exhibitions, such as the annual Exhibition of Essex County Artists introduced audiences to the work of local artists. Touring exhibitions brought art from all over the world to Windsor, including The Art of Australia, Canadian Society of Painters in Water-Colour and Western Hemisphere Art.

In the ensuing years, curator-director Kenneth Saltmarche expanded educational program-

ming, presenting stimulating and thought-provoking lectures by internationally known artists, curators, art critics and historians. The lectures created an awareness, excitement and understanding of the arts in the community.

Saltmarche also initiated a picture loan program, acquiring a collection of framed reproductions and small sculptures to encourage Windsor residents to rent or buy the art for their homes or offices. Interest in the newly-developed picture loan program was evident in the constant demand of the services, and was seen “as the most fruitful educational project ever undertaken by the Windsor Art Association and the Library Board” (*WPL Annual Report*, 1950).

Saltmarche also educated Windsor residents about the arts and the activities of the gallery in the local paper. For 25 years, he wrote art criticism on shows that were at the Willistead Art Gallery and promoted the art gallery as a source of education, recreation and inspiration. Saltmarche encouraged people to get to know about art, as well as to support the living artist by owning a personal collection for their own appreciation. The gallery had excellent cooperation with the Superintendent of Education and classes came for tours weekly.

The AGW’s educational programming has continued to grow to include art discovery workshops, studio classes, gallery tours, lectures, panel discussions and teacher workshops. A current listing of the AGW’s events can be found on their website at [www.agw.ca](http://www.agw.ca).

Over the last few years, the AGW has toured exhibitions from the permanent collection throughout Ontario and Canada, as well as to locations in the U.S., with art work being loaned to the Textile Museum of Canada, the Museum London, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, the Nickle Arts Museum, University of Calgary and the Canadian Embassy, Tokyo, Japan, among others.

The AGW will continue playing a dynamic role in the cultural community of Windsor. According to director Catharine Mastin, “Our vision going forward is to focus the Gallery on a dynamic exhibition program and develop new and renewed educational and publishing initiatives.” (AGW News Release, 2012).

## Bricks and Mortar

*“Art is a powerful tool, in my opinion. Art can do things that policy can’t, that demonstrating on the street can’t. It can address ideas and topics and questions that are resonate in our contemporary society in ways that perhaps can escape the different polemics that exist or politics that exist on the ground level. It’s a different way of looking at or understanding our culture and our cultures, and understanding our histories. “Srimoyee Mitra, Curator of Contemporary Art, AGW, 2012*

## Homes Throughout the Years

The Art Gallery of Windsor has had a long history in the community and many homes, beginning in one room of a home in Walkerville and today is housed in a building on Riverside Drive that cost \$23 million to construct. The AGW's 70-year history of homes throughout the years follows.

### **Willistead Manor**

The Art Gallery of Windsor's first and longest standing home was at Willistead Manor, the former home of Edward Walker, son of Hiram Walker. Completed in 1906, the Elizabethan manor was the centre of Walkerville's residential area. Designed by renowned architect Albert Kahn, the Manor, a gatekeeper's lodge and a coach house are set on a sixteen-acre park and named after Willis Walker, Edward's brother. After Edward Walker's death, his widow Mary donated the Manor and grounds to the Town of Walkerville.

In its early years as a public building, Willistead Manor contained the municipal offices of Walkerville on the first floor and the Walkerville Library on the second floor. The library arranged the first exhibition of art works for Windsor area residents, loaned from the Royal Ontario Museum as early as 1921 and later from the National Gallery.

When Windsor amalgamated with Walkerville in 1935, the Willistead Library continued to use the building and renovated 106 feet of exhibition space for the Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor in 1943. The library administration was moved to the Bartlet House in 1957. The art gallery was given use of the entire second floor, additional office space on the third floor and a workshop and storage area in the basement which allowed the further development of the Gallery.

With the permanent collection growing but the art gallery limited to 4,500 square feet of space in Willistead, it was clear that an addition was needed or the Art Gallery would have to move to meet the needs of its expanding functions. There were other problems. "The building is not fire or burglar proof nor is it temperature or humidity controlled" AGW director Kenneth Saltmarche told the Windsor Star. Additionally, the gallery has been refused valuable collections for display because of these factors. (*Windsor Daily Star*, 1971)

Mr. Saltmarche also asserted that what had made Willistead Manor so impressive was also a disadvantage to the art gallery. He remarked, "The vast majority of the Windsor public will not visit or make use of its gallery because of the aura of exclusivity which attaches to what was once a splendid private house in what was once a socially exclusive residential area." (K. Saltmarche, 1980)

In 1970, in an effort to resolve the issue, Mayor Frank Wansbrough suggested the art gallery relocate to an empty brewery warehouse on Riverside Drive west. Skeptical at first, Saltmarche and the Board of Directors was soon convinced after touring the well-made, spacious facility.

## **The Carling Building - 445 Riverside Drive West**

The Carling Breweries Bottling Plant was about 20 years old when it was purchased by the city. Although it was not initially thought to be an ideal building or location, the repurposing of the industrial building turned out to be a triumph for the art gallery and the city.

The gallery's Board of Directors received a valuable building and property by accepting the city's offer, (*Windsor Star*, Sept. 23, 1975) even so, the building required major renovations to be repurposed as an art gallery.

Toronto architect David Horne was hired to redesign the 60,000 square foot rectangular red brick warehouse and money was quickly raised through a volunteer fundraising drive in the community with federal and provincial grants for the renovations and redesign.

The renewed AGW opened in September 1975 on Windsor's downtown riverfront for \$2.25 million. The gallery featured a high ceiling that could be positioned in proportion to pictures hung there. The design was bright, open and airy, had ample display areas and improved visitor services such as the auditorium and a small theatre for films. The neutral background of the floor and walls complemented the art and an open air terrace off the central foyer on the third floor offered a spectacular view of the city to visitors. The gallery's new home also included a freight elevator, loading dock, an up-to-date security system and modern temperature and humidity control system.

The art gallery enjoyed ten years of operations when it was discovered that asbestos had been used for insulation. It was then closed temporarily in 1986 while the 60,000 square foot gallery interior was emptied and walls and ceilings removed to enable the removal of the asbestos insulation. Further renovations followed which created new exhibition space, a library and a resource center. The expansion and redesign of security, the information desk, gift shop and art rental facilities were added to the amenities.

By the early 1990s, the AGW's aging building, now facing its fourth decade, was facing major upgrades and required substantial maintenance. It lacked the proper storage area and needed a new roof. Under the leadership of Director Nataley Nagy, the Board of Directors proposed the art gallery building as a temporary site for Ontario's first interim casino. The understanding was that the AGW would vacate the building for three years, forming an endowment formed from the facility rental income and eventually return to a refurbished building.

## **Devonshire Mall**

Considering various options for a temporary location, AGW Director Nataley Nagy and curator Vincent Varga set out to find a new home for the art gallery. "We looked all over town, because I felt it was part of a community-building strategy to do look-sees. We kept coming back to the mall," said Nagy. (*Toledo Blade*, July 24, 1994)

The AGW opened in a renovated furniture store at Devonshire Mall in November 1993. In its first full month at the mall, 12,700 people visited the gallery compared with previous attendance of 33,000 visitors in a year. At the mall, the AGW was able to connect with and engage many Windsorites for the first time.

The original three-year temporary move was extended on until the casino built its own permanent quarters and vacated the building in 1998. The AGW Board considered whether to relocate to its riverfront location or build in a different location and, working with city administration and council, eventually decided to return to downtown. The lease of the AGW created a \$6.7 million endowment fund and enabled the construction of a \$23 million state-of-the-art facility for the AGW's collection and exhibitions.

In 1999, the AGW Board of Directors announced plans to demolish the art gallery and build a new facility near the old location and construction at 401 Riverside started later in the year.

### **401 Riverside Drive**

The AGW opened its fourth home at 401 Riverside Drive in February 2001. The opening exhibit featured Impressionist Masterpieces from the National Gallery of Canada was well-received and attracted audiences from the region and beyond.

The three-storey 74,000-square foot building has a framework of glass extended at each end and gives views of Windsor's downtown and Detroit across the river. The building was described by the architects as "a cultural beacon, designed as an elegant glass form, spans the entire building." (Reich+Petch/Moffat Kinoshita Architects Inc., 2001)

Only a year after opening, the new building began to present challenges for the AGW: the high-tech climate control system cost more to maintain and utilities rose significantly. To compound matters further, funding from the city and other sources decreased. Throughout the next decade, these problems continued to plague the art gallery, and learning to do more with less became the reality for the gallery staff.

In 2011, the AGW developed the "Green Roof" and Eco Lounge project with support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Windsor Family Credit Union. In its short history this redevelopment has provided valuable new spaces for public programming. The terrace is plant covered, has seating and offers spectacular views of Windsor and Detroit.

On January 4, 2013, the AGW sold and transferred ownership of the 401 Riverside Drive West building to the City of Windsor to further enhance the AGW's sustainability and support the development of a "Cultural Hub" through a shared tenancy agreement.

In a message from the AGW's President Sean White and Director Catharine Mastin in December 2012, membership was assured that, "The agreement significantly enhances financial stability for the Gallery and allows us to move forward in our mission to continue providing the

city with a Canadian Heritage designated 'Category A' art gallery that we can all be proud of.”

In a 49-year gratis lease agreement signed in December 2012, the AGW will remain an independent, distinctly governed organization at the 401 Riverside Drive West building as a tenant on the mezzanine, second and third floors. Moving forward the gallery can now concentrate on a dynamic exhibition program and develop new and renewed educational and publishing initiatives.

## *The Permanent Collection*

The Art Gallery of Windsor's permanent collection represents a wide range of Canadian paintings, sculptures, and works on paper from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries as well as some art from Europe, the USA and Asia. The Gallery's collection of over 4,000 objects includes works by Emily Carr, members of the Group of Seven and a selection of Inuit art. The collection highlights also include contemporary art projects with Stan Douglas, Rita McKeogh and Chris Cran, as well as major acquisitions by founding members of the Royal Canadian Academy.

In 2011 the AGW began digitizing the collection. Progress to date on the digitization can be viewed online at [www.agw.ca](http://www.agw.ca) and by visiting the gallery to see original works.

The Art Gallery of Windsor's collection belongs to the AGW and is held in trust for the people of Windsor and Essex County. Works in storage are kept in international museum standards conditions to control light, exposure, humidity and temperature and it is also regularly showcased in long-term and changing exhibitions. Most of the permanent collection has been donated. Art-works have also been purchased through the financial support of individuals, public and private donors, foundations and corporations exclusively for the acquisition of art.

The Art Gallery's curatorial activities are a reflection of their goals, developed from research and understanding the arts community in Windsor. These goals include: art practice in Windsor, border culture, urban transformation, gender and feminism, indigenous art practices and the permanent collection

In addition to an impressive exhibition schedule and despite financial constraints, the AGW offers a wide range of educational programs and community outreach services. Art classes for all ages, workshops and artist lectures are all part of the gallery experience.

### **Plan your visit**

The AGW offers free admission during regular public hours, providing the opportunity to view a wide range of Canadian art work at one of Ontario's most significant galleries. Donations are accepted and will help the AGW continue its high level of programs and services. There is a fee for special programs, events and activities. Educational Programming such as Fridays Live! are

monthly events featuring studio workshops, reading, tours and performances related to current exhibitions. The AGW also offers hands-on activities for children, youth, and their families based on current exhibitions. Special public tours and lectures are offered on the weekends.

### **Resource Centre**

The AGW's Resource Centre includes over 10,000 books and catalogues, with a focus on Canadian art. Research material is also available to support the gallery's programming and permanent art collection. The resources are accessible by appointment but can not be removed from the centre. Gallery staff may borrow materials as needed and docents have material made available to assist them with tours and other programming.

## **Beyond Brick and Mortar**

*"We work with a very dedicated team of docents, studio artists, presenters and volunteers. They are the ambassadors to our audiences and we would not be able to do what we do without them." MaryAnne Van Watterghem, Education and Public Programs Coordinator, AGW, 2012*

## **Technology**

The art gallery is the most ideal place to access the original art, but it's not the only way to view the AGW's collection. Embracing technology, the AGW began digitizing the permanent collection of 4,000 items in 2011. Funded from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Museums and Technology Fund, the project will improve the gallery's collection management and increased public access to a selection of the permanent collection. The AGW also has an online presence using Facebook, Twitter and Youtube where the art can be enjoyed.

Technology has not only changed the way we see art, but the way it is presented. For curator Srimoyee Mitra, new technologies expand the possibilities for curatorial interpretation of the art. "It is important to acknowledge and understand the constant research, and what the artist is using," said Mitra. (Cultural Engines Interview, 2012) Artist and art works are influenced by a range of technological issues including everything from mechanisms to play films and video to preservation and presentation of art.

(video of S. Mitra)

## Outreach

The AGW's Education Department extends out into the community to make the gallery available to all who want to learn about the permanent collection and exhibitions.

First director-curator Kenneth Saltmarche encouraged young people through the arts, partnered with community and city-wide organizations and offering volunteer opportunities to foster community engagement in the arts.

One major event, Art in the Park, a long-established annual city event, was partly created to bring people in the community to Willistead and support local artists through purchase of their work. Over the years, the AGW has also partnered with other galleries to showcase the permanent collection. *The Group of Seven and Other Highlights* from the AGW's permanent collection has been exhibited in the Gibson Gallery in Amherstburg.

For several decades, the AGW maintained an art rental program and this was one way the AGW reached out to the community. The program brought art into homes and businesses in the community, raising public awareness of the art gallery and interest in Canadian art.

Today, the AGW continues its mission to educate through partnerships and outreach. Each year, thousands of children and adults take part in activities planned and initiated by the AGW. Some of these have included City Walk for the Arts, Art in the Park, the Multicultural Council's Carrousel of the Nations and the Chocolate Festival and the Sandwich Towne Festival. The AGW also offers teacher's workshops that offer opportunities for teachers to create lesson plans that relate to the AGW collection and special exhibitions.

(video of M. Van Watteghem)

## Milestones and Events

*"The transformation happening at the art gallery now is significant. We are operating under a new model to improve our sustainability. Visitors can expect a focus on our exhibitions, our publication program, education and the permanent collection." Catharine Mastin, Director, AGW, 2012*

## Awards

The Art Gallery of Windsor has won numerous awards for curatorial projects in catalogue de-

sign, curatorial writing and education from the Ontario Association of Art Galleries (OAAG). The OAAG is a registered charitable organization that supports and represents Ontario's public art galleries. The OAAG winners are chosen yearly by professional peers, and the awards recognize artistic merit and excellence in nine categories.

Noted past awards include the Colleague Award given to Paddy O'Brien (Oakville Galleries / Museum London / Art Gallery of Windsor), the Partners Award, given to Ron Ianni, the Curatorial Writing Award was given to Jessica Bradley for her essay in the catalogue accompanying the Betty Goodwin: Signs of Life show. That catalogue, produced by Judith Poirier for Windsor and the National Gallery also won an award for its design, and an Educators' Award was given to Christine Goodchild for a workshop for students from the Adult Learning Centre. Catharine Martin was awarded the 1993 and 1995 OAAG curatorial writing awards for projects on Wyndham Lewis and representations of First Peoples in Canadian Art.

## Publications

The Art Gallery of Windsor (AGW) has published often on its exhibitions throughout its history. Publications complement the exhibitions by offering such content as documentation of the exhibit; photographic and pictures and descriptions of the pieces on display, an explanation the context of the work, and insight into the creative process.

Historically, the AGW has published between two and six catalogues annually. Catalogues are often the only record of an exhibition once it is disassembled. A wide range of artists and media are represented. One of the AGW's significant publications was about a British modernist artist, Wyndham Lewis. The multi-authored volume entitled "[The Talented Intruder: Wyndham Lewis in Canada, 1939 – 1945](#)" is not only of interest to Windsor art lovers, but is used as a reference for art historians and other academics. The AGW has also published on the work of local artists such as Paul Vasey (*The Age of the Cities*, 1997), Marty Gervais (*A Show of Hands*, 2004) and Andrew Foot's *A Guide to Modern Architecture in Windsor 1940 - 1970*, whose photographic images are a reminder of Windsor's past.

More recently the AGW has embarked on a new chapter of publishing history by producing electronic publications. Launched in 2011, this initiative enables art enthusiasts, collectors and visitors to access available catalogues online. The AGW's e-publications include *Female Self-Representation and the Public Trust: Mary E. Wrinch and the AGW Collection*, the *2011 AGW Biennial*, *Joseph Hubbard: You Don't Know What You Are Seeing (Romancing the Gallery)* and *John Scott: Mean Machines*.

## Timeline

1920s

Local art associations held exhibitions in Windsor, including works borrowed from the Royal Ontario Museum and the National Art Gallery.

1936

The Windsor Art Association was formed to promote the arts, arrange art exhibits and work toward opening a permanent art gallery in Windsor. (135.3 or 135.5.jpg)

1943

The north bedroom on the second floor of Willistead was renovated for an art gallery.

1946

Kenneth Saltmarche was appointed first full-time curator. (PC-S-140.jpg)

1951

The Windsor Art Association had 400 members. (Windsor art Association\_1954)

1953

The Women's Committee of volunteers was formed.

1956

Junior Committee of younger women volunteers was formed.

1956

The major Lawren Harris painting, A Side Street was given by the Detroit Institute of Art.

1958

The art collection was moved into storage over tensions between the library and the Windsor Art Association.

1959

In an agreement between the Library Board and the Art Association, an independent institution was formed, the Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor.

1970

The art gallery identified that the accommodations in Willistead Manor will not be sufficient to serve the Windsor's future needs.

1975

The Art Gallery of Windsor opened at its newly renovated 445 Riverside Drive West location. (Carling Building 2.jpg)

1985

Director Kenneth Saltmarche retired after 39 years at the AGW, having built an impressive collection and wide support in the community.

1985

Alf Bogusky was appointed second Director.

1986

AGW closed for 18 months for asbestos removal.

1993

Nataley Nagy was appointed the third Director, and with the Board worked towards the agreement to rent the building to the Ontario Casino Corporation to establish Ontario's first casino. The Art Gallery temporarily relocated to Devonshire Mall. (Devonshire Mall)

2001

The AGW returned to its former downtown waterfront site in a new state-of-the-art building at 401 Riverside Drive West. Glen Cumming became the fourth Director.

2003

The AGW celebrated its 60th anniversary.

2004

Gilles Hébert was appointed the gallery's fifth Director

2010

Catharine Mastin was appointed the sixth director of the AGW.

2011

The City of Windsor began negotiations with the AGW Board of Directors to partner in creating a shared community cultural space and made public an offer to purchase the building and develop a long-term lease agreement. (401 Riverside.jpg)

2012

The AGW Board of Directors completed the 49-year lease and purchase agreements related to the acquisition of 401 Riverside Drive West by the City of Windsor.

## Did You Know?

- \* A library by-law was prepared and voted on, on June 26, 1894 and accepted by the largest majority for any proposal submitted to the citizens of Windsor at that time.
- \* Kenneth Saltmarche, AGW Director begins writing art criticisms for the local papers in 1948 under the pseudonym David Mawr.
- \* One of the first WSO concerts in Windsor was called “Concerts for Smokes” as they raised funds to send care packages such as candy and cigarettes to Windsor’s Armed Forces overseas during WWII.
- \* The WPL borrowed an exhibit from the Royal Ontario Museum consisting of Egyptian, Roman and Chinese potteries, embroideries and coins in 1922.
- \* The price of borrowing art work from the picture lending collection in 1950 from the Willistead Art Gallery of Windsor ranged from \$.25 to \$1.25 a month.
  - \* The WSO’s first full-time manager in 1976 was Erling Alfee, also a double bass player.
- \* The painting “Owl’s Head Mountain” is donated to the Art Gallery by W.F. Herman, Hugh Graybiel, W.L. Clark and Richard Graybiel of the *Windsor Star* in 1964.
- \* The comedy troupe, The Royal Canadian Air Farce teased the WSO’s musicians with threats to play a kazoo along with Dvorak’s Slavonic Dance at their 1987 joint concert.
- \* The John Richardson Library was opened in November 7, 1928. John Richardson was the first Canadian born author to receive international recognition.
- \* Trespassers broke into Willistead Art Gallery in 1966 and punched a hole through a painting, valued at about \$1000.
- \* Full access: Jazz singer, Joe Coughlin performed from a motorized wheelchair with the WSO, featuring songs from his album, *Slow and Slower*, in 2011.
- \* From 1922 until the 1970s, the Walkerville Library, which was later named Willistead Library, was housed in Willistead Manor.
- \* Art in the Park, Windsor’s annual outdoor art festival began by the AGW, enjoys its 3rd year in 1972, and over 25,000 visitors to Willistead Park.
- \* Composer Brent Lee turned the tables on electronic music with his 2006 Symphony No.1:Chorea when he asked the live musicians to play sounds like synthesizers on their real instruments.
- \* In 1955, thefts of books on technological subjects were on the rise, which included cook-books. Bibles were the second-most stolen books from the stacks.
- \* An electrical fire temporarily left the gallery without power and the essential climate control system in 1991.

- \* The WSO banned using real cannons during outdoor performances of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture after one exploded during a WSO concert in 1980. No one was seriously hurt.
- \* There were 2,900 pieces of art to transfer when the art gallery moved back to its 401 Riverside Drive West location in 2001.
- \* The branch manager of the Seminole Branch resolved never to repeat one year's outdoor "fun day" activity on the branch's property: a spaghetti fight for children, 1994.

## Cultural Engines Acknowledgements

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Rebecca Canty

Dean Corriveau

Sarah Jarvis

Dedication:

The authors dedicate this project to the members of the Windsor Essex community who have supported these valuable cultural organizations through the decades.

***Resource List available at [www.culturalengines.com](http://www.culturalengines.com)***

