

O'Connor Irish Heritage House

Imagine the Possibilities...



Centre of Culture, Heritage and Learning

Summer 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1

Welcome Friends...

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Greetings friends,

In Toronto we are blessed to have a tremendous sample of architecture in the old Scarborough 600 acre quadrant: Victoria Park, Pharmacy, Lawrence, and 401 area - once known as "Maryvale Farm," now including Senator O'Connor College School and encompassing the O'Connor Estate - former home of Senator Frank O'Connor.

O'Connor Estate was built in 1933 in the Colonial Revival style. The newly built Senator O'Connor College School is a modern state of the art creation of Kearns Mancini Architect Inc. completed this year, 2005.

Across the greater Toronto area there are warmly felt connections to these two amazing buildings: former students of the De La Salle Brothers and Daughters of Wisdom; former residents, the Christian Brothers and staff; likewise Alumni and staff and students of the Senator O'Connor School as well as friends and family of Senator Frank O'Connor himself.

At this time we find ourselves at an extraordinary crossroads when the 60-year old Senator O'Connor School is to be demolished and, in order to save the O'Connor Estate from a similar fate, the challenge is to find a suitable use for the three Estate buildings which befit its status and is compatible with the Toronto Catholic District School Board's mandate of education. Before our eyes is the changing face of heritage.

To quote a recent statement by

Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chair of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, "New buildings do not detract from the old. On the contrary, the two forms live together in a remarkable harmony, a symmetry that feeds on each other to create a mélange of architectural styles. These combined styles reflect the enterprising people we were of the past, and the innovative people we have become today. We must embrace this dichotomy to preserve this unique heritage."

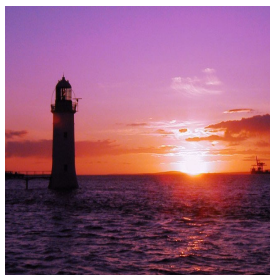
What befits this glorious Estate? A group of Irish immigrants have formed the O'Connor Irish Heritage House Committee with the intent of working together in conjunction with the School Board for the purpose of repair and restoration of the O'Connor Estate. It is our desire to use O'Connor Estate as a place of Irish culture, heritage and learning. The Irish have a remarkable history in the growth and development of Toronto especially in the area of education.

April 2005 marked a new era in the people's efforts to identify remarkable heritage treasures in our City. This provides the impetus needed to protect O'Connor Estate. We saw the recent passing of the new Ontario Heritage Act having received royal assent in April. Come on board ye people of Irish birth and Irish descent and help us to preserve and promote this heritage treasure. Through this important effort and exciting project, together we can house our rich culture, at the same time; pass along our heritage through learning programmes at O'Connor Estate.

Be part of the plan - be part of the action - be part of the legacy



O'Connor Irish Heritage House



Irish Te Deum

Thanks be to God	When our pockets are empty
For the light and the darkness	When again they overflow
For the hail and the snow	That the Mass bell and steeple
For shower and sunshine	Are heard and are seen throughout Erin's
For all things that grow	green isle
For lightening and tempest	That the priest and the people
For weal and for woe	Are ever united in danger and trial
For His own great goodness	That the brave sons of Erin
That what is is so	Have the Faith of their Fathers far over the
Thanks be to God when the harvest is	sea
plenty	That Erin's fair daughter
When the thorn is low	Pass close after Mary on Heaven's high-
	way

"The passion of the heart and soul. The passion that makes you realize that this is something that may only come once in a lifetime and you want to be part of it."

Viv D'Arcy

Be a Founding Member...

A One time opportunity to be a Founding Member in this exciting project. Until October 31st 2005 you are invited to join in – and for perpetuity be among those with vision for Irish culture, heritage and learning at O'Connor Estate in Toronto! Include your name, address, email and phone number with your cheque for \$100.

~ A Founding Membership Certificate will be mailed to you ~

Please fill out the form below. Make your cheque out to:

'Maura Walsh' (Treasurer)

303 Runnymede Road

Toronto, ON M6S 2Y5

***PLEASE MAKE A NOTE ON THE CHEQUE MEMO: "O'Connor Irish Heritage House"**



*A look inside...
O'Connor Irish
Heritage House.*

✂

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Yes! I would like to be a Founding Member of **O'Connor Irish Heritage**



Viv D'Arcy, Legacy to O'Connor Irish Heritage House - March 21st

Printed with kind permission of Viv's daughter, Michelle Chisholm.

Viv D'Arcy was a firm friend of the Irish Community in Toronto and loved all things Irish. He published the Irish Canadian Press and wrote a book: " Tales From The Pawn." We are proud he spent time in the interest of O'Connor Estate as a place for Irish culture, heritage and learning in Toronto.

Here are some of Viv's thoughts:

I left the town hall meeting of March 7th. That night I couldn't sleep.

I kept seeing the line in the brochure that said "Think of the possibilities." And suddenly realized that this was the place that I had been dreaming of since we closed the old Irish centre. I didn't have to think of the possibilities I knew them all in my heart.

An elegant place that my children and their children's children could gather and celebrate their heritage.

A place that the Irish and their friends could come and perhaps dine, play snooker, cards, chess, checkers or Scrabble in a relaxed and friendly surrounding.

Where we could listen to the sounds of music and dance as adults and children learned the ways of their forefathers.

Where shanachies told stories and both children and adults learned the ancient language of the Gaels.

Where we would have a Heritage Room where we

would display items of historical interest and a library that would be filled with stories of our race and culture.

Where musical evenings, accompanied by fine dining would bring this wonderful building to life again.

Where we could bring the dignitaries from our homeland on their visits to our new country and not feel the shame of having 'no home.'

"Think of the possibilities" I don't have to because I have lived with this building in my imagination since 1988.

I then let my mind dwell on what I thought was the most positive aspect of the Town Hall meeting and I'm sure you will agree that it was the input made by Sean McCann. When he was finished he got the only round of applause of the night and I thought why was this, he said nothing that we have not heard a dozen times before and yet people, including myself, put their hands together in apparition.

Then it came to me, it was not what he said but how he said it.

He said it with Passion.

Is that then the secret, have we lost our Passion? The passion of the heart and soul. The passion that makes you realize that this is something that may only come once in a lifetime and you want to be part of it.

**** The above comes from what turned out to be Viv's final address on the matter of a place for Irish culture and heritage in Toronto. Viv died March 27th, Easter Sunday 2005.**

Support the O'Connor Irish Heritage House...

Would you like to "**Share the Vision**" and get involved and support the O'Connor Irish Heritage House?

Your contributions and donations to this project are welcomed.

For more information please visit www.IrishHeritageHouse.com or email us at info@irishheritagehouse.com



A look inside... the O'Connor Irish Heritage House



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Historical Note: ~Francis Patrick O'Connor

Frank Patrick O'Connor was born in Deseronto, Ontario on April 9, 1885. In 1913, he and his wife Ellen, moved to Toronto and opened a small candy store on Yonge Street. This was the beginning of the successful Laura Secord Candy Company.

O'Connor acquired approximately 500 acres of land and developed a country estate which he called Maryvale after his daughter Mary. Dairy cattle and pure bred horses were raised on this farm.

O'Connor was involved in politics and was made a Senator by McKenzie King. During his life, O'Connor gave a large part of his fortune to churches, schools, hospitals and charities. He became good friends with the Christian Brothers and when he died, he bequeathed his estate to the Brothers. Today, Senator O'Connor College School stands on part of the Maryvale Estate adjacent to the original O'Connor home.

O'Connor died at Maryvale on August 21, 1939.



Senator Frank O'Connor
circa 1929



Community Classifieds ...

St. Paul's Toronto School of Irish Music

Chair: Norita Fleming
Phone: 905-881-5012
Email: noritasbb@rogers.com

Kearns Mancini Architects Inc

Jonathan Kearns & Tony Mancini
Phone: 416-536-5666
Email: mail@kmai.com
Web: www.kmai.com

Maureen's Reel Irish Dancing

Director: Maureen Mulvey-O'Leary
Phone: 416-446-6993
Email: moleary2001@rogers.com
Web: www.expag.com/maureensreelirishdancing

What'stheStorey.ca – Web, Media and Software Solutions

Contact: Jeff Storey
Phone: 416-994-5332
Email: info@whatsthestorey.ca
Web: www.WhatstheStorey.ca

Harp Electric Limited

Liam Carroll & John Molloy
Phone: 905-471-3028
Email: harp.electric@bellnet.ca

John C. McSweeney, Sales Associate

Re/Max Ultimate Realty Inc., Realtor
Phone: (416)487-5131/ (416)492-0421
Email: jmcsweeney@trebnet.com

Irish Choral Society of Canada

Director: Karen D'Aoust
Phone: 416-653-9102
Email: icsoc@canada.com

*** You can have your business card added here – contact us at info@irishheritagehouse.com**

“Walking, I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands.”

Linda Hogan (b. 1947 Native American Writer)

Be part of the plan. Be part of the action. Be part of the legacy