



West Toronto Junction Historical Society

2024 Annual Report

prepared for the 2025 Annual General Meeting

May 15, 2025

Prepared to record the calendar year 2024

FINAL

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Introduction

The 2024 Annual Report of the West Toronto Junction Historical Society documents the structure, leadership, volunteers and activities of the Society during the calendar year 2024, with some reference made to matters taking place in 2025.

As recorded in this report, much was accomplished during 2024. This is to the credit of the Society's leadership and volunteers and to the continuing support of the membership and our broader community. These accomplishments came in the face of challenges, including the closure of St. John's West Toronto Anglican Church and vacancies for particular roles in the Society.

We also acknowledge with thanks the very welcome support of the Government of Ontario through the Heritage Organization Development Grant of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the continuing support of the Toronto Public Library, particularly the Annette Street Branch.

List of WTJHS Executive Members and Committee Chairs

Elected Executive Members

President – Vacant

Vice President – Yvonne Mazurak

Treasurer – Peggy Mooney

Recording Secretary – Ward Noble (Jan-Feb), Mannat Boparai (May-July), Hope Humphrey (Sept-Dec)

Membership Secretary – Adrian Schincariol

Corresponding Secretary – Christopher Ruddy

Standing Committee Chairs (also members of the Executive)

Nominating Committee – Richard Lundeen (Jan-June)

The Leader and Recorder Editorial Group – (Editor) Cass Pollack, (Chair) Vandra Masemann (Jan-Apr), Leila Mirsafian (May-Dec)

Engagement Facilitator – Katy Whitfield

Archives – David Bridge, Diana Fancher

Web/Media Coordinator – Nathaniel Dadson

Phone Crew – Richard Lundeen (Jan-June), Michael Bohdanowicz (Jul-Dec)

Display/Events – Vacant

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

2 May 2024 – 7 PM, AGM Meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Yvonne Mazurak (VP); Richard Lundeen (Nominating committee); Peggy Mooney (Treasurer); Christopher Ruty (Corresponding secretary); Vandra Masemann (L&R); Katy Whitfield (Engagement Facilitator); Nathaniel Dadson (Website/Official posts); Neil Ross (Past President); Hope Humphrey (acting Recording Secretary); Bob Roden (Swansea Historical Society); Bhutila Karpoche (MPP); plus 14 others

Minutes prepared by Hope Humphrey

Item	Description
1	Welcome - The meeting was called to order by Yvonne at 7:02 PM. Quorum was verified. Katy went over the protocol for electronic meetings. The Exec and Committee chairs introduced themselves.
2	Tribute to Past WTJHS President Gib Goodfellow – Neil Ross gave a creative, heartfelt tribute to Gib. Other members shared their memories. Karen Goodfellow appreciated Neil’s tribute in the L&R but to hear it said aloud was very special to her. Karen has also thanked those WTJHS members who have reached out to her family via Katy.
3.	MPP Bhutila Karpoche spoke about how important the WTJHS is to the community and how she appreciates the work done by the WTJHS especially “They Walked These Streets”.
4	Land Acknowledgement
5	Agenda – Madeleine M. moved acceptance of the agenda. Vandra 2 nd . CARRIED.
6	Minutes of April 6, 2023 AGM meeting – Hope highlighted items from this meeting including the bank balance April 6, 2023 was \$22,697.95 with \$3600 for rent coming due to the TPL, that Bhutila Karpoche said recognized us as a “mighty group of people” who keep the west end history alive. Hope moved approval of these minutes. Katy 2 nd . CARRIED.
7	Treasurer’s Report & Budget – Peggy circulated before this meeting. This upcoming budget is a tight deficit budget that will be funded from our savings. The WTJHS has saved \$27000. Archives IT investment (printer & computer) is a one-time investment. Hoping WTJHS will get a retroactive HST rebate that will balance the budget. Expenditures are mostly fixed costs and can’t be reduced. WTJHS will look at new ways to increase revenue. Peggy moved to approve the 2024 Budget. Yvonne 2 nd . CARRIED.

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8	Motion to Approve the 2023 Financial Statements – Peggy moved approval of the 2023 Financial statements. Yvonne 2 nd . CARRIED.
9	Motion to Appoint Accountant – Peggy moved to extend the appointment of Gallagher and Mannisto as the WTJHS accountant. Madeleine 2 nd , CARRIED.
10	Membership Report – Richard reported that the WTJHS membership at end of Dec 2023 was slightly lower than the previous year. Exec should address how to reverse this decline. Sixteen new members in 2023. Members renewed due to L&R & return of in-person/hybrid meetings. Other members did not renew possibly due to family financial difficulties as well as moving out of the area.
11	<p>Committee Reports – Yvonne opened up the floor to any questions and comments. The AGM 2023 Report has been posted on the website. No questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) They Walked These Streets – Katy thanked the WTJHS and the Swansea Historical Society for supporting “They Walked These Streets”. Have collected 1250 stories from Humber River to Dufferin from the lake to the Railway tracks. Arif Virani and Bhutla Karpoches’ offices supported the project. Katy spoke to 1500 students in local schools workshops. For 2024 create 2 indoor exhibition spaces at locations such as St John’s Anglican church. For the programming have the educational component in tribute to both Gib Goodfellow and Doug Hain. Have the outdoor spaces as well. If interested in sharing a story or helping with the research or do other TWTS pieces, please contact Katy. Thank you to Madeleine and Chris R. Organizational meeting in June. b) St John’s Anglican Church – Chris R stated that the St John’s website has developed info on the 100th anniversary of the church. Please check it out. c) Social Media – Richard said the WTJHS has struggled successfully to maintain and grow our Facebook followers (7500) and content. Moved to a 3 or 4-person group committee. One person – official posts (events), 1 person sharing input from other historical FB societies, and 2-3 people creating new posts with original info. Volunteers needed. d) Volunteer Coordinator – Vandra thanked all those who volunteered for the Society especially those volunteering for the website & FB. The hacking of the TPL in the Fall of 2023 closed the Archives office. Vandra is retiring at the end of June and she looks forward to a period of renewal.
12	<p>Announcements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Junction Farmer’s Mkt – Hope is organizing a group to go to the Farmer’s Mkt – Sept 7th and Oct 5th. b) Jane’s Walk – Chris R will be a tour guide on the May 4th walk of High Park Ave. This walk is a melding of city and neighbourhood planning with the cultural, and natural history of 1 street over 200 years.
13	Yvonne moved acceptance of all decisions and actions of the elected officers and the Executive since the last AGM. Madeleine 2 nd . CARRIED.

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14	<p>Election of Officers – Bob Roden, president of the Swansea Historical Society, oversaw the election. Bob read out the partial list of candidates and asked three times for new nominations from the floor for the offices.</p> <p>Elected Officers:</p> <p>No candidates for President</p> <p>Yvonne Mazurak – Vice President</p> <p>Peggy Mooney – Treasurer</p> <p>Adrian Schincariol - Membership Secretary</p> <p>Christopher Rutty – Corresponding Secretary</p> <p>No candidates for Recording Secretary</p> <p>Bob called for a motion to elect this slate of four candidates. Lance 2nd. CARRIED. Bob motioned we authorize the executive to add, remove, or replace executive members as required from now to the next AGM. Katy 2nd. CARRIED.</p>
15	<p>Bob moved a motion to thank retiring officers and volunteers for all of their hard work and efforts. Ward Noble retired as Recording secretary, Dave Muir retired as Corresponding Secretary and Chris Sears retired as Past President. Yvonne 2nd. CARRIED.</p>
16	<p>Yvonne motioned to approve Leila Mirsafian as Chair of the Leader and Recorder editorial group. Katy 2nd. CARRIED.</p>
17	<p>Yvonne’s VP comments: Yvonne thanked everyone who volunteers their time with the WTJHS. Look forward to honour the reasons the Society was created and looking for new ideas to engage ALL of our community. Katy thanked everyone for attending the meeting online tonite and encouraged members to share the Society’s work with others.</p>
18	<p>Yvonne moved for adjournment of the meeting at 8:28 PM. CARRIED.</p>

President's Report

Dear Members, Volunteers, and Friends,

It is with great joy that I extend my heartfelt greetings and deep appreciation to each of you in this year's President's Report. As we continue our search for a new leader to take the helm of our Society, I continue to have the honour of serving in the capacity of Acting President alongside the dedicated and passionate members of our Executive Committee.

As I reflect on all that the Society has done in the last year, I am impressed by the enthusiasm and continued support of our members and volunteers. Your dedication and involvement remain the cornerstone of everything we do, and I'm excited for the opportunities in the coming year to continue engaging with you and the broader community.

2024 proved to be another year of growth and achievement for the Society. We were delighted to host a variety of insightful speakers and were able to bring their presentations to an even wider audience through a hybrid—both in-person and online—format. Additionally, we had the pleasure of connecting with many of you at events like our presence at the Junction Farmer's Market and the Holiday Sale at the Annette Street Branch of the Toronto Public Library in December 2024. We also hosted our first (sold out!) "Haunted Pub Crawl", an event we look forward to making annual tradition for the Halloween season. These gatherings were not only well attended but provided a wonderful opportunity to meet new faces and engage in meaningful conversations.

Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome fresh perspectives from our expanding membership and Executive Committee. The Junction remains a truly unique and special part of our city, and we are dedicated to preserving and sharing its history. As we continue our work, we are equally committed to delivering programming that resonates with both our members and the wider community. The Executive Committee is currently working on several new initiatives for the upcoming year, and we are eager to share those with you soon. We of course always welcome support from our members who may have ideas for new initiatives or—better yet—want to help play a part in bringing them to life. Please never hesitate to reach out discuss how you may be able to get involved.

On behalf of the entire Executive Committee, I want to extend my sincere thanks once again for being an essential part of this journey. We look forward to all that 2025 has to offer, and we are excited about what lies ahead for both the Society and our community.

Warm regards,
Yvonne Mazurak
Vice President and Acting President, West Toronto Junction Historical Society

Financial Statements

This section contains financial statements as they appear in the report from Gallagher & Mannisto.

WEST TORONTO JUNCTION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DECEMBER 31, 2024

(unaudited)

(SEE COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

Gallagher
& Mannisto
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL
ACCOUNTANTS

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459 KING STREET EAST
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5A 1L6
TELEPHONE: 416.360.1010
FAX: 416.360.6802
WWW.GALLAGHERMANNISTO.CA

COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT

To Management of West Toronto Junction Historical Society

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the balance sheet of West Toronto Junction Historical Society as at December 31, 2024 and the statement of revenue, expense and members' equity for the year then ended, and Note 2, which describes the basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the compiled financial information.

Management is responsible for the accompanying financial information, including the accuracy and completeness of the underlying information used to compile it and the selection of the basis of accounting.

We performed this engagement in accordance with Canadian Standard on Related Services (CSRS) 4200, Compilation Engagements, which requires us to comply with relevant ethical requirements. Our responsibility is to assist management in the preparation of the financial information.

We did not perform an audit engagement or a review engagement, nor were we required to perform procedures to verify the accuracy or completeness of the information provided by management. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion or a review conclusion, or provide any form of assurance on the financial information.

Readers are cautioned that the financial information may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Toronto, Ontario
March 22, 2025

Gallagher & Mannisto
Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

*Gallagher
& Mannisto*
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL
ACCOUNTANTS

WEST TORONTO JUNCTION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2024
(unaudited)

(SEE COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

ASSETS

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 30,237	\$ 26,032
HST refundable	4,645	3,968
Inventory	<u>4,877</u>	<u>6,313</u>
	<u>\$ 39,759</u>	<u>\$ 36,313</u>

LIABILITIES AND MEMBERS' EQUITY

CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,050
MEMBERS' EQUITY	<u>38,709</u>	<u>35,263</u>
	<u>\$ 39,759</u>	<u>\$ 36,313</u>

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WEST TORONTO JUNCTION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF REVENUE, EXPENSE, AND MEMBERS' EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

(unaudited)

(SEE COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
REVENUE		
Membership fees	\$ 7,355	\$ 5,554
Contributions	3,175	2,566
Book sales	2,631	2,449
Grants	1,545	1,545
Events	1,144	35
Merchandise sales	757	1,739
	<u>16,607</u>	<u>13,888</u>
EXPENSE		
Rent and occupancy	3,065	2,949
Newsletter	2,515	2,826
Office and general	2,389	2,136
Advertising	1,274	250
Cost of books sold	1,169	959
Accounting	1,091	1,050
Insurance	1,089	675
Cost of T-shirts	267	679
Memberships	206	112
Bank charges	96	88
	<u>13,161</u>	<u>11,724</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSE	3,446	2,164
MEMBERS' EQUITY AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>35,263</u>	<u>33,099</u>
MEMBERS' EQUITY AT END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 38,709</u>	<u>\$ 35,263</u>

Gallagher
& Mannisto
 CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL
 ACCOUNTANTS

WEST TORONTO JUNCTION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

(unaudited)

(SEE COMPILATION ENGAGEMENT REPORT)

1. NATURE OF ORGANIZATION

The Society was incorporated as a not-for-profit without share capital organization during 1981 and is registered as a Canadian Charitable Organization. The Society seeks to preserve and tell the history of Toronto's West Junction neighbourhood through its archives, tours, public lectures and publications. It is a not-for-profit organization and therefore is exempt from income taxes.

2. BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The basis of accounting applied in the preparation of the financial information is on the historical cost basis, reflecting cash transactions with the addition of accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Inventory is valued at purchase cost. Revenue is recorded when received.

Corresponding Secretary's Report

Christopher Rutty

The Corresponding Secretary is responsible for monitoring correspondence of the Society received via the junctionhistorical@gmail.com email account and responding or referring correspondence to others more able to respond.

The email account is also monitored by other WTJHS Executive members and thus the primary role of this position has evolved into being focused on managing correspondence related to facilitating and promoting speakers for WTJHS public meetings and then leading the meetings, including from a technical perspective.

This was particularly true for in-person/online hybrid meetings held at St. John's West Toronto Anglican Church (SJWT) during 2024, until the June 6th meeting. The closure of the SJWT congregation (of which I was a member) at the end of July 2024 ended a successful series of hybrid meetings during 2023-24, leading to a return to meetings at the Annette Street Branch of Toronto Public Library, albeit in-person only. There was an effort to work with the Annette Library to set up a capacity for accommodating hybrid meetings in the basement auditorium, but it was not possible. Thus, the meetings remained in-person, although they have been video recorded, using my iPhone, to enable viewing later by those unable to attend. The November 5th meeting was held at Runnymede United Church in partnership with Runnymede to mark its 100th anniversary.

During 2024, the following WTJHS public meetings were held:

- Feb. 1, 2024 (@SJWT) – Hilary Dawson – “Finding 19th-century Black History in Toronto”
- March 7, 2024 (@SJWT) – Anne Shelton & Dave Lovell – “Perseverance and Glory: Unveiling 150 Years of the Argonaut Rowing Club's Rich Legacy”
- April 4, 2024 (@SJWT) – Richard Fiennes-Clinton – “Questioning Toronto: Celebrating Toronto's 190th Anniversary”
- June 6, 2024 (@SJWT) – Marilyn Miller & Charles Hazell – “Junction Heritage, Then & Now: Planning to Preserve the Junction”
- Oct 3, 2024 (@ Annette Library) – Chris Higgins – “Riverstoryz: Conversations on the Humber”
- Nov 5, 2024 (@Runnymede United Church) – Katy Whitfield – “On ‘Active’ Service: Stories from the Field and on the Homefront During World War I and II”
- Dec 5, 2024 (@ Annette Library) – Albert Koehl – “Wheeling Through Toronto: A History of the Bicycle and Its Riders”

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Another priority of the Corresponding Secretary during 2024 was focused on the development and support of social media content, principally via the WTJHS Facebook page. There have been several volunteers who have contributed Junction history focused postings during 2024, with the contributions of Olga Urbanova especially significant during October, November and December (and until the end of January 2025). Olga (using the Facebook name of Terra Verrucosus) contributed a remarkable run of some 45 Facebook postings between October 12 and Dec 31 (+ 14 during January 2025) on a wide variety of subjects. Each posting was quite detailed and included numerous archival photos. Olga brought her interest in history, especially of her local Junction neighbourhood, and knowledge of archival studies, to her postings. Of particular note, the frequency and details in her postings generated significantly boosted activity and engagement on the WTJHS Facebook page.

Thanks also to volunteers, Teresa O'Neill, Marianne Dimabogti, Katy Whitfield, Faissaal Zaaboune and Richard Lundeen, for their contributions to the WTJHS Facebook page, and to Nathaniel Dadson for facilitating communications with WTJHS members through the WTJHS MailChimp mailing list and the WTJHS website.

Membership Secretary's Report

Adrian Schincariol

Membership Data

This section contains membership data dated on December 30, 2024. It starts off by outlining the total numbers of WTJHS members on that date and respective expiry years for those memberships, if applicable, then outlines how many new members joined the WTJHS in 2024 and the prior two calendar years, goes over payment methods used for memberships in 2024 and 2025, and the types of memberships obtained in this period.

2024 Expiry	94	
2025 Expiry	43	
Total 2024- 2025	137	137
Life Members	26	26
Life Members "2022 Protocol"	10	10
Grand Total		173

20 new members for 2022
 17 new members for 2023
 22 new members to date 2024

Payment Method, 2024,25 memberships

Paypal	36
Cheque	32
Cash	9
EFT	56
Square	4

Membership Type Breakdown

Single	97
Family	38
Student	2
Total	137

Highlights from 2024

- 22 new members added to our memberships in 2024
- Sent welcome emails to new members
- Maintained and updated Membership list; including providing membership lists to Phone Crew and updating membership details as required
- Updated membership based on updates from the Phone Crew – removed members that confirmed they would not renew
- Maintained and updated email list through Mailchimp database
- Facilitated printing of labels for Leader and Recorder distribution

Committee Reports

Volunteer Coordinator's Report

Richard Lundeen, Vandra Masemann, and Teresa O'Neill

The Volunteers who are the subject of this report are mainly those in the non-Executive roles in the WTJHS, as shown in the following List of Volunteers.

In previous years, Vandra Masemann served as Volunteer Coordinator, linking potential volunteers with key roles in need of volunteers. Vandra also stepped in to fill some of these roles when no other volunteers were available. We greatly appreciate Vandra's past contributions in this role and in so many others.

In the first half of 2024, the Nominating Committee took responsibility for recruitment of non-Executive volunteers. For high priority volunteer roles, Richard Lundeen and some Executive members continued recruitment support in the second half of 2024. When Vandra retired, the Nominating Committee initiated recruitment of a Volunteer Coordinator with a somewhat expanded role including record-keeping and ongoing support for our non-Executive volunteers. A candidate was identified and Vandra, Teresa O'Neill and Richard Lundeen provided an orientation, but the candidate was not able to continue because of personal circumstances. The record-keeping component of the Volunteer Coordinator role has not yet been implemented.

Special mention is given to Chris Rutty, who continued to arrange the monthly hybrid events at St. John's West Toronto (SJWT) church through June 2024. The SJWT volunteers arranged for refreshments along with the WTJHS volunteers led by Diana Fancher and Hope Humphrey. Chris made good use of the SJWT Zoom capability, supported by high school volunteer Jack Noble. After the closure of SJWT in July 2024, planning was launched to return WTJHS general meetings to the auditorium on the lower level of the Annette Street Library. We appreciate the cooperation of Branch Librarian, Alex Kourtzanidis, who made this possible. Unfortunately, the equipment needed for hybrid meetings was not available so the meetings in the fall of 2024 were in-person only. Chris Rutty captured the presentations on his phone and made the video recordings available to those who couldn't attend in person. Our WTJHS setup and refreshment volunteers once again swung into action.

Many thanks to all volunteers for carrying out their tasks under varying circumstances during 2024. We also thank the Executive members who took on extra volunteer roles. We appreciate everyone's enthusiasm and devotion to keeping the WTJHS a thriving institution.

List of Committees and Volunteers

Archive Coordinators

David Bridge (Archive Renewal)

Diana Fancher (Archive Operations)

Archive Volunteers for Public Hours

Diana Blake

Diana Fancher

David Hulchanski

Richard Lundeen

Peggy Mooney

Sophie Rasper

Chris Rutty

Letty Snethen

IT Specialist (Archives)

Morris Thiong'o Wairimu

The Leader and Recorder Editorial Group

Vandra Masemann (Chair, January-April 2024)

Leila Mirsafian (Chair, May-December 2024)

Cass Pollack (Editor)

Michael Benedict

Gordon Craig

Gillian Gallimore

Hope Humphrey

Yvonne Mazurak (Ex officio)

Madeleine McDowell

Olga Urbanova

L&R Distribution

Gordon Craig (Coordinator)

Adrian Schincariol (Distribution lists and labels)

Diana Blake

Ruth Dobb

Mary Collins

Gillian Gallimore

Phyllis Goodfellow

Olga Goubar

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Hope Humphrey
Richard Lundeen
Leila Mirsafian
Teresa O'Neill
Sophie, Vladimir and Alex Rasper
Barbara Titherington

Finance

Charlene Fisher (Bookkeeping)
Peggy Mooney (Treasurer)

High Park Avenue Walking Tour (Jane's Walk)

Alex Taranu (Co-organizer and co-leader)
Dan Leeming (Co-organizer and co-leader)
Diana Fancher
Chris Rutty

Junction Farmer's Market Booth (September and October 2024)

Hope Humphrey (Coordinator)
Jim Baxter (Junction Heritage Conservation District)
Ruth Dobb
Diana Fancher (Junction Heritage Conservation District)
Yvonne Mazurak
Marilyn Miller (Junction Heritage Conservation District)
David Muir
Teresa O'Neill
Anne Ott
Christopher Sears
Katy Whitfield

Social Media (Facebook)

Marianne Dimabogti
Richard Lundeen
Teresa O'Neill
Chris Rutty
Olga Urbanova
Faissal Zaaboune

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Website and Email

Nathaniel Dadson (Web Coordinator)
Richard Lundeen (Content and timing)
Chris Rutty (Content and timing)

Nominating Committee (January – June 2024)

Richard Lundeen
Hope Humphrey
Vandra Masemann
David Muir
Teresa O'Neill

Phone Crew (Membership renewal)

Richard Lundeen (Coordinator 2024)
Michael Bohdanowicz (Coordinator 2025)
Mary Collins
David Muir
Anne Ott
Sophie Rasper
Adrian Schincariol (Membership lists and updates)

Meeting Setup and Technical Support

Jack Noble
Ward Noble
Tony Ricci
Chris Rutty

Meeting Refreshments

Diana Fancher (Organizer)
Hope Humphrey (Organizer)
Ruth Dobb
Richard Lundeen
Yvonne Mazurak
Madeleine McDowell
Peggy Mooney
Teresa O'Neill
Tony Ricci
Barbara Titherington

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Book Distribution/Sales/Management

Diana Fancher

Haunted Junction Pub Crawl (October 18 & 19 2024)

Yvonne Mazurak

Neil Ross

Hope Humphrey

Peggy Mooney

“They Walked These Streets. We Will Remember Them”

Katy Whitfield (Co-coordinator)

Ian Da Silva (Co-coordinator)

Jim Adams

Michael Di Tomaso

Karen Goodfellow

Lauren Woolfrey

Hope Humphrey

David Whitfield

Judy Whitfield

David Zayachowski

Scout Leaders at St. Paul’s Runnymede Anglican Church

Graphic Design / Posters

Khunkan Siripaiboon

2023 Annual Report Authors

Michael Bohdanowicz (Compiler)

Nathaniel Dadson

Diana Fancher

Richard Lundeen

Vandra Masemann

Yvonne Mazurak

David Muir

Ward Noble

Adrian Schincariol

Katy Whitfield

Faissal Zaaboune

The Leader & Recorder Editorial Group Report

Leila Mirsafian and Vandra Masemann

In 2024, *The Leader and Recorder* underwent a significant change with Vandra Masemann, a long-time and prolific contributor to the WTJHS in various roles, retiring as Chair of the Editorial Group. Vandra has continued to offer invaluable support to the Group, especially to the new Chair, Leila Mirsafian, which is much appreciated. Over the past year, the Editorial Group conducted planning meetings via Zoom, continuing the approach that began during the pandemic. Public access to our Archives was regularly available, with Toronto Public Library having nearly fully recovered from the previous year's cyberattack in March 2024. Our volunteers resumed in-person meetings for stuffing, now managed by Gordon Craig.

For its cover article, Issue 1 begins with "Quality Jewellers: Discovering the Building's History, Past and Present," which includes an introduction by Vandra Masemann, a WTJHS Facebook post by Teresa O'Neill, and an "Interview with Tony Prezio and Melanie Prezio" by Teresa O'Neill and Mary Collins. The article covers the development of the local business over its more-than-sixty-year history. Following the Notice of AGM, Call for Nominations, and Membership Renewals is a heartfelt reminiscence of Gib Goodfellow by Neil Ross. "Letter from Past President, Tom Carey, January 2024" follows, wishing us good luck in our search for a new president. Next is a summary of two presentations held at St. John's West Anglican Church, also available on Zoom. The first is "Finding 19th Century Black History in Toronto," presented by Hilary Dawson, Senior Historical Researcher, who sheds light on the Black presence, particularly in Etobicoke Township. The second is "Perseverance and Glory: Unveiling 150 Years of the Argonaut Rowing Club's Rich Legacy," presented by Anne Shelton and Dave Lovell, rowers/authors, who recount the captivating history of the Argonaut Rowing Club. The issue concludes with the "Nominating Committee's Message" by Richard Lundeen, Vandra Masemann, David Muir, and Hope Humphrey, sharing their priorities, efforts, and achievements in recruiting new volunteers.

Issue 2, in colour, features Christopher Rutt's "Celebrating the Past, Facing the Future: St. John's West Toronto Anglican Church & The Junction" as the cover article, offering a brief history of St. John's and the significant events it had witnessed during its slightly over 100 years of activity. The "Nominating Committee Report" by Richard Lundeen, Vandra Masemann, David Muir, Hope Humphrey, and Teresa O'Neill summarizes the committee's volunteer recruitment efforts before its retirement on June 30, 2024. Next is Raymond Kennedy's "Quality Jewellers and the Railwaymen's Watches," where he explains that Quality Jewellers, the subject of Issue #1 main article, was once an official railway watch inspector and repair shop, a status marked by a brass sign in the front window. A picture of the sign accompanies the essay. Sadly, this was Raymond's last contribution to *The Leader and Recorder*. The issue concludes with several tributes to Gib Goodfellow (1941 – 2024) from David Wencer, Christopher Moore, Madeleine

McDowell, and Christopher Sears, all acknowledging Gib's significant contributions at both the Society and the personal level. Colour photos in this issue include images of the St. John's over time, of Gib Goodfellow in various capacities at different Society events, and of the brass sign and CPR Time Service Department instruction and notice.

Issue 3 cover article is "Ward & Patch: An Entrepreneurial Story Spanning Six Decades," by Richard Lundeen, recounting how the partnership between Al Ward and Al Patch started in the Junction and evolved into a successful business. The article is illustrated by photos of teams sponsored by the brand and other memorabilia. This issue also includes an obituary for Raymond Kennedy (1941-2024), a co-founder and long-time dedicated volunteer of the West Toronto Junction Historical Society. Following a Membership Renewal Notice is Diana Fancher's "Celebrating 60 Years at Cosimo's Family Hairstyling." Having attended the 60th anniversary celebration at the salon, Diana reflects the interviews with the staff and loyal customers of this local business. Next comes the "Engagement Facilitator's Report" by Katy Whitfield, which briefly covers Society activities, including the "Haunted Junction Pub Crawl," presented by Neil Ross, and primarily focuses on the event "On Active Service: Learning Stories from the Battlefield and the Home Front during the World Wars," held on November 5 at Memorial Hall, Runnymede United Church. This event was part of the now five-year-old "They Walked These Streets... We Will Remember Them" remembrance project. The article is accompanied by several photos from the event and the project, showcasing some of the remarkable items displayed and the engaged crowd. The final page covers two reports by Hope Humphrey: one about the Society's participation at the Farmers Market and another about Chris Higgins's presentation "Riverstoryz: Conversations on the Humber," which brought WTJHS members to the basement of Annette Library for the first time since the pandemic.

In conclusion, we would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed in various ways—writing, editing, proofreading, graphic design and layout, producing address labels, and managing the stuffing, hand delivery, and mailing. Special thanks go to Cass Pollack, the Editor.

Archives Committee Report

David Bridge and Diana Fancher

The project to consolidate our archives records on a single platform continued throughout the year. A refurbished PC was specified and purchased. This computer will be used to run an in-house instance of the Access to Memory (AtoM) archival management system that will be the primary database for all of our archival records. The PC was tested and installed in the Archive, and installation of the AtoM application was begun, with the bulk of this ongoing activity planned for 2025.

Work on defining the fundamental layout and hierarchy of our records in AtoM continued, supported by consultations with a recent University of Toronto Faculty of Information graduate. Our printing/copying functionality at the archive was upgraded with the purchase of a new laser-printer/scanner/copier to facilitate requests for copies and printouts.

The ongoing revamping of our physical files has progressed to the point that all of the General Files A-Z have been reorganized, rehoused in acid free folders and, in the case of large files, broken down into retrievable subfiles. All photos have also been removed from the general files and either housed in boxes by file number or set aside for correction and/or scanning or better identification. Rehousing of the oral history files is about half done. The photos that remain in these files are more problematic and for the moment remain where they are until it can be determined where they belong.

Social Media Report

Olga Urbanova and Richard Lundeen

Three successive volunteers filled the Social Media Coordinator role during the course of 2024 as follows:

- Faisaal Zaaboune – January to July 2024
- Richard Lundeen – August to September 2024
- Olga Urbanova – October to December 2024

The WTJHS Facebook page is public, meaning that it is available for viewing by anyone with access to Facebook. We hope to extend our social media presence to Instagram during 2025.

As of December 2024, the WJTHS Facebook page had 7,900 followers, an increase of 200 over the December 2023 total.

There were 375,000 views during 2024. Compared to 2023, the audience reach was almost 250% higher. People spent more time viewing the posts but still less than a minute on average, and so the content interaction, meaning comments and sharing, was 8.7% higher when compared to 2023.

Starting in October, new content was posted virtually every day, which greatly contributed to the popularity of our Facebook page.

Our page continued to have a wide variety of posts during 2024. The top-performing content fell into two categories:

- Posts and photos about historical locations
- Posts promoting and reporting on WTJHS in-person and Zoom events

The most popular posts during 2024 were as follows:

- Q1 – Hotel series – Peacock Hotel (4,418 views)
- Q2 - West Toronto Junction's automobile legacy (20,907 views)
- Q3 - Announcement about WTJHS Archives opening hours (5,104 views)
- Q4 - In approximately 1890, the town of West Toronto Junction purchased McCormack and Jackson Lumber Dealers (40,250 views)

Original content contributors during 2024 included Teresa O'Neill, Marianne Dimabogti and Olga Urbanova.

Web Report

Nathaniel Dadson

Website

In 2024, the WTJHS website (wtjhs.ca) garnered significant attention with a total of 14,295 views and 5,244 visits. Impressively, each visitor engaged with an average of 2.80 pages, reflecting a high level of interest and interaction. Throughout the year, we published a total of 10 posts, contributing to our dynamic online presence and fostering ongoing engagement with our audience. These statistics underscore the effectiveness of our content strategy in attracting and retaining visitors, as well as the continued growth and impact of our platform.

Email Communications

Throughout 2024, our MailChimp email distribution service executed a total of 33 email campaigns targeting 232 subscribed Society members with an open rate of ~70%. These campaigns aimed to disseminate important information, promote events, and foster engagement within the Society.

- Total Emails Sent: 33 (including reminder emails)
- Open Rate Success: Achieved a remarkable open rate success across all campaigns.

In comparison to 2023, WTJHS saw notable improvements in both website engagement and email communications. Website visits increased by 12%, with a higher average of pages viewed per visitor, indicating stronger user interest. Additionally, our email campaigns maintained a high open rate of ~70%, reflecting consistent engagement from our members. With 10 new posts enriching our content strategy and 33 targeted email campaigns, we successfully expanded our digital reach and strengthened communication within the Society.

Engagement Facilitator's Report

Katy Whitfield

We began the year with a plan to diversify our programming offerings, and to work at trying to engage new members and the community in different ways to learn about the rich history of the Junction. I think we have achieved this goal in a variety of ways.

The Board of the Society and our amazing volunteers have been hard at work this year as we have connected with our community through the Junction Farmers Market, at our monthly meetings and with our exciting and well attended community engagement events. In late September and early October, under the leadership of Hope Humphrey, we participated in the Saturday morning Junction Farmers Market, where we sold the Society's t-shirts and history books as well as "new for 2024," buttons and magnets featuring a new logo for the WTJHS created by our volunteer designer, Khunkan. The new merchandise was a huge hit.

October's monthly meeting had us hear stories from local historian and writer Chris Higgins who shared his experiences of research and walks along the Humber River through his book *River Storyz*. The basement of the Annette Library was packed with local scouts and community members who were entertained by his stories about fishing, Hurricane Hazel and some local shenanigans that happened along the water. In preparation for Halloween and the spooky season in late October, incredibly learned storyteller Neil Ross hosted two sold out nights for the Haunted Junction Pub Crawl. The event took us from the Axis Grill, then into the Junction Underground and wrapped up at Shox on Dundas. Guests were entertained by spooky stories about local residents, of unexpected and scary events in local theatres and on local streets. While doing so, they enjoyed the company of friends and neighbours over local beverages and gained a better understanding of the history of the Junction through his stories. Thank you to Yvonne, Hope, Peggy, Cass and the planning committee for putting this exciting and engaging event together. Following up on this success, a True Crime themed walk led by Neil Ross was held over two nights in April 2025, thanks to the organization efforts of Yvonne Mazurak, Hope Humphrey and Cass Pollack.

November had us paused in the lead up to Remembrance Day to remember the 1,307 soldiers who served and who never returned who were all featured in the *They walked these streets... We will remember them*, Remembrance Project coordinated by Katy Whitfield, Engagement Facilitator. The project has now expanded to 11 memorials across the neighbourhood and is housed on 2 family homes, 8 churches, 1 Swansea Town Hall and the Annette Public Library. The project which tells soldier's stories on individualized info cards with QR cards to their military records helps the community to understand the sacrifice and contributions of these soldiers and the families they left behind during the First and Second World Wars. On November

5th, 2024 over 130 local residents of all ages came to “On Active Service: Learning stories from the Battlefield and on the Home Front during the World Wars” hosted in conjunction with Runnymede United Church as part of their centennial celebrations. The evening featured interactive museum exhibits created by Katy and her students at Bloor C.I., which were displayed alongside artifacts from HMCS York Museum and Archives and from the private collection of WTJHS member Mike DiTomaso. An interactive map of the project created by Lauren Woolfrey, also a WTJHS, helped community members find soldiers who lived in their homes and on their streets. In addition, stories were shared about the service of the soldiers and how the community was impacted not once but twice in the aftermath of the world wars. The event was an overwhelming success and we look forward to continuing to see how the project will grow in years to come!

In December we hosted Albert Kohl, author of [“Wheeling Through Toronto: A History of the Bicycle and Its Riders.”](#) With recent political discussions about getting rid of bike lanes, Kohl's timely book and presentation helped us to understand some of the complexities of bike history and culture in Toronto.

On December 7th, Hope Humphrey and Katy Whitfield, along with some of our faithful volunteers held a Holiday Sharing event and Sale at the Annette Library. We welcomed members to come and share artifacts with us and to come and buy some books and magnets and buttons as holiday gifts. We had a few guests stop by who shared maps, and letters that had personal connections to their families and a couple who brought a shortbread cookie recipe and even some real cookies to taste! It was a small but successful community building event.

On January 15, 2025, five members of the Society won the King Charles III Coronation medals. These WTJHS members are Katy Whitfield, Michael Di Tomaso, Madeleine McDowell, Ellen Moorhouse, and Paul Thompson. Justice Minister and Attorney General, MP Arif Virani honoured these five recipients in a ceremony at the Grenadier Restaurant in High Park. Each of these WTJHS members’ work and service to our community with their multi-talents, creativity and hard work has made Taiaiaiko’n/High Park/Parkdale a better place to live. We are proud of the contributions of these engaged members and contributors to the sharing of our neighbourhood’s histories. Congratulations to all recipients.

In February we hosted Pamella Houston from the Ontario Black History Society who shared about notable Black Torontonians through a dynamic presentation with slides and source materials and even a quiz! In March we connected with Adam Waiser from the Muddy York Podcast for a lively sharing about the controversial 1955 provincial election in Toronto’s St. Andrew riding! Both of these events were well attended with new people joining each meeting. Thank you to Hope Humphrey for helping to host and to Chris Ruddy for coordinating with our speakers and recording the presentations to share with our membership. In April, local historian

Mark Vendramini presented on the Music and Pop Culture History of Yonge Street.

As the year wraps to a close, here marks the end of my 2-½ years of service as the Engagement Facilitator for the WTJHS. I will continue to serve in a volunteer capacity as the Project Coordinator of the “*They walked these streets. We will remember them*” Remembrance Project indefinitely. This project continues to connect community members of all ages to remember those who served in the world wars and to build an education program for students and teachers across the community. At the time of writing, an event is planned to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the Liberation of the Netherlands in early May 2025. More information will be shared online.

Thank you to the WTJHS Executive Committee for their hard work and creative efforts in engaging our membership in 2024-2025. It has been a pleasure to serve in this role and I will look forward to supporting the work moving forward, as a volunteer, rather than as a member of the Executive Committee. We have many stories to be told and hope to continue to find a place in person, online and within the community to share them with the community.

Phone Crew Report

Richard Lundeen and Michael Bohdanowicz

The Phone Crew's primary role is to contact annual members who have not renewed their memberships for the current year (2024 for this report) in order to update them on the Society's activities and encourage them to renew. Set up in 2017 at a time when membership had been shrinking, the Phone Crew achieved an additional 50 renewals that year, helping to stabilize our membership numbers. Similar results were achieved in subsequent years

As of early March 2024, when the Phone Crew started our renewal campaign, 90 of the Society's 2023 annual members – close to two thirds - had not yet renewed for 2024. This posed a huge task for the members of the team, which led us to look for a more effective renewal process for the following year.

The majority of non-renewals as of March each year have been due to oversights rather than conscious decisions not to remain as members. About 70 had renewed by summer 2024 through the Phone Crew campaign. Two positive factors in the decision to renew were the appeal of the 2024 issues of *The Leader and Recorder* and the resumption of in-person meetings (with Zoom option retained).

However, 18 of our 2023 members did not renew for 2024. This resulted in a small decrease in total membership compared to 2023. The reasons for not renewing were not always stated but, where it could be determined, included having moved away, aging, loss of interest, and probably the ongoing pressure on household finances during 2024.

The stellar members of the Phone Crew for the 2024 renewal campaign were: Michael Bohdanowicz, Mary Collins, Richard Lundeen (Co-ordinator), Dave Muir, Anne Ott and Sophie Rasper.

At the conclusion of the 2024 renewal campaign, Richard Lundeen retired as Phone Crew Co-ordinator, replaced for the 2025 campaign by Michael Bohdanowicz. In November 2024, Michael and Richard met with Membership Secretary, Adrian Schincariol to develop a plan to achieve earlier and a higher proportion of renewals before the start of the 2025 Phone Crew campaign. The agreed first step was to issue an email in December 2024 reminding members that annual memberships expire on December 31st each year and encouraging them to renew now. This resulted in 25 renewals in December 2024 for 2025 memberships. Further emails were sent out in subsequent months, which helped further reduce the number of memberships in need of renewal when the Phone Crew got to work on reaching out to members with expired memberships on an individual basis.

Nominating Committee Report

Richard Lundeen

The WTJHS Executive Committee is required by the Society's by-laws to form a nominating committee at least sixty days in advance of the annual general meeting (AGM), with the mandate to present a slate of candidates for election to the Society's six officer positions. In 2022, the Executive Committee concluded that leadership succession was a continuing challenge and the Nominating Committee therefore was designated as a standing committee with an ongoing role throughout the year.

The Nominating Committee members during the first half of 2024 were Richard Lundeen (Chair), Vandra Masemann, David Muir, Hope Humphrey and Teresa O'Neill.

Slate of Officer Candidates for AGM

Officers elected at the AGM hold office until they retire or resign or are replaced at the next AGM. The normal term of office is from AGM to AGM and officers may stand for re-election. In addition to the slate of officer candidates presented by the Nominating Committee, other nominations may be made in advance or from the floor during the AGM, in which case an election is held.

The previous President, Christian von Donat, resigned in October 2023. From that point, recruitment of potential President candidates was a central focus for the Nominating Committee, with the following steps initiated in preparation for the AGM:

- Notices on Volunteer Toronto, Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO), Facebook pages, wtjhs.ca
- Posters ('WhoWeAre' and President) posted at Annette Library, around the Junction and on the WTJHS Facebook page
- Direct email sent to WTJHS members on February 24th
- Invited audience members at general meetings to nominate themselves or others
- Contacted recent new members (2022-2023) to ask for their interests, willingness to volunteer
- Contacted a few possible candidates in longer-term membership.

No willing candidates for President were identified by the AGM but nine volunteers for other roles were identified.

The previous Recording Secretary, Ward Noble, resigned in February 2024 and our recruitment activities had not identified a replacement in time for the AGM.

The 2024 AGM was held on May 2, 2024. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of candidates for four of the six officer positions: Yvonne Mazurak (continuing as Vice President); Peggy Mooney (continuing as Treasurer); Adrian Schincariol (continuing as Membership Secretary); and Christopher Rutty (as Corresponding Secretary, initially appointed in January 2024).

There were no other nominations at the AGM and the slate of candidates was approved.

Mannat Boparai was appointed as Recording Secretary later in May after the AGM.

Unfortunately, by the summer of 2024, Mannat was not able to continue. Hope Humphrey took on the Recording Secretary role for the balance of 2024. The role of President remained vacant for the rest of 2024. Vice President Yvonne Mazurak continued to provide leadership to the Executive Committee.

Recruitment of Other Volunteers

The Nominating Committee was successful in recruiting and recommending the appointment of other key volunteer roles at the Society:

- Social media – As of January 2024, Faissal Zaaboune filled the ‘official’ social media posting role and Marianne Dimabogti was appointed to research, write and post new social media content, with initial oversight and ongoing support by Christopher Rutty and Richard Lundeen. Faissal resigned in August 2024 and Olga Urbanova was appointed to this role as well as creating new content in October 2024. Teresa O’Neill continued to provide content for much of the year.
- Graphic Design - Khunkan Siripaiboon provided this service as of February 2024 and, among other accomplishments, created the posters for recruitment of the President and explaining ‘Who We Are.’
- Leader and Recorder Editorial Group – Leila Mirsafian was appointed as Chair in April 2024 replacing Vandra Masemann in this role and Gillian Gallimore was appointed as a member.
- Leader and Recorder distribution – Gordon Craig was appointed as Coordinator of L&R Distribution in April 2024, replacing the late Gib Goodfellow in this role. Several volunteers helped with sorting, labelling and delivering the 2024 issues.
- Phone Crew Coordinator (membership renewal campaign) – Richard Lundeen retired as Coordinator after the 2024 campaign and Michael Bohdanowicz was appointed to be responsible for leading the 2025 campaign.
- Saturday archive volunteers – A total of seven volunteers were confirmed during 2024: Diana Blake, Richard Lundeen and Sophie Rasper (continuing from 2023); Chris Rutty and Peggy Mooney as of January 2024, David Hulchanski in June and Letty Snethen in October.
- Volunteer Coordinator (for non-Executive roles) – a candidate was approved and was given an orientation but unfortunately had personal issues and was not able to take up the role. Recruitment continues for a replacement.

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- Farmers Market Coordinator – Hope Humphrey volunteered to organize WTJHS booths at the Junction Farmers Market in September and October 2024. Several volunteers assisted at the booth.
- ‘They Walked These Streets. We Will Remember Them.’ – Several volunteers assisted Coordinators Katy Whitfield and Ian da Silva in setting up and dismantling displays and a special Remembrance Week event at Runnymede United Church.
- Walking tour – Dan Leeming and Alex Taranu developed a Jane’s Walk of High Park Avenue and led the walking tour in May 2024.

Nominating Committee Membership

The members of the Nominating Committee for the first half of 2024 retired as of June 30, 2024. A reconstituted membership was not in place for the remainder of 2024 and recruitment activities were informal.