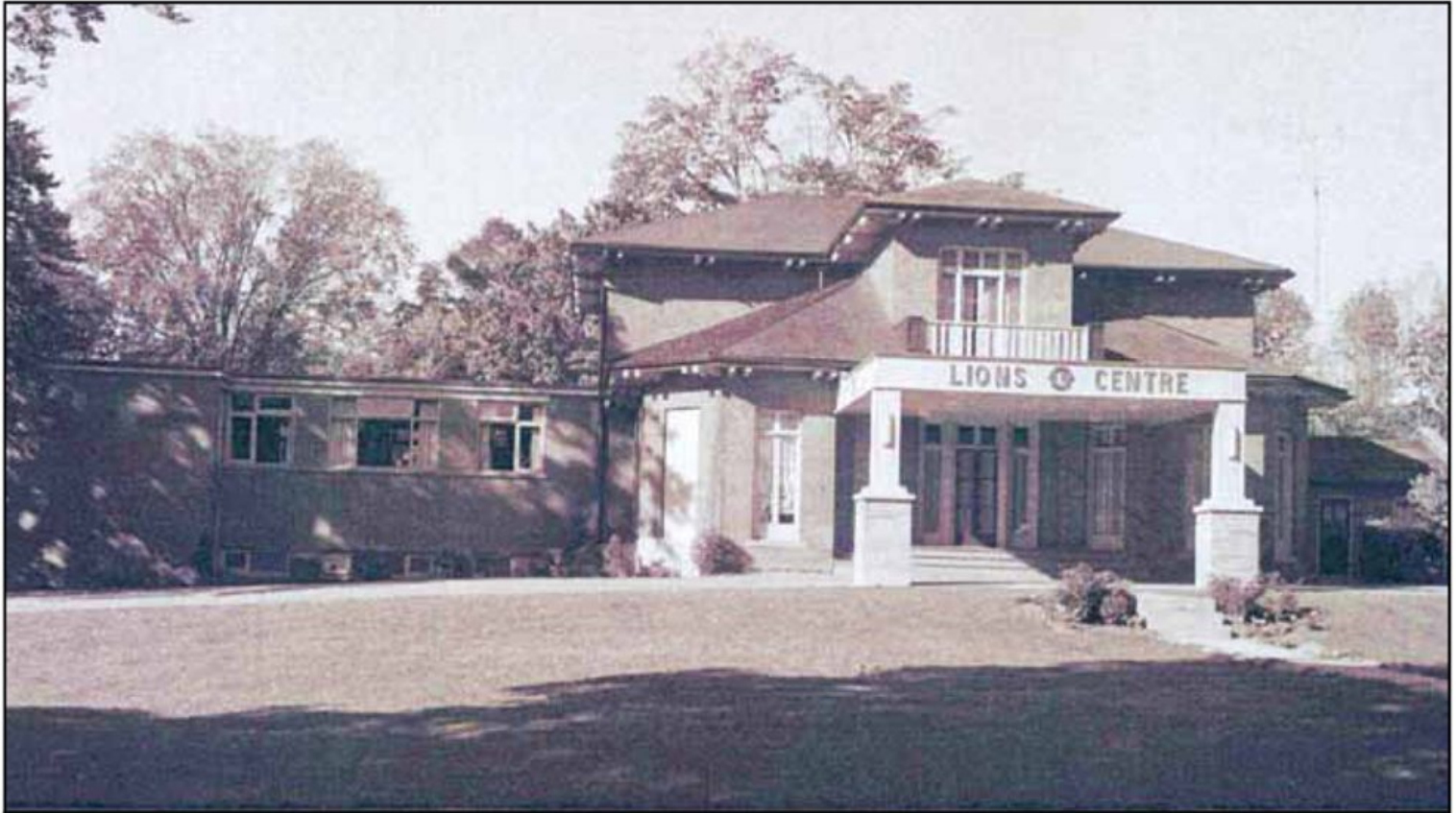


# Rathskamory: House of All Sorts



In the fall of 1946 the Bowmanville Lions Club moved into the Rathskamory House and converted it into a community centre.

## by Charles Taws

Research assistance by  
Doris Falls and Lois Whitfield

### CLARINGTON MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES

[www.claringtonmuseums.com](http://www.claringtonmuseums.com)

Did you know that the famous Canadian painter, Emily Carr, was also a writer? One of her books is entitled "The House of All Sorts". In it she describes the different people she rented apartments to in her house. I use the same title for this article but I want it to reflect the many different people who have visited the house that is now the Clarington Older Adult Centre over its 170 years of existence.

Anyone who walks up the semi-circular driveway of the Clarington Older Adult Centre can tell that the building wasn't originally built with that purpose in mind.

You can still see it was once a house and a very grand one at that. It was built in 1843 by Dr. George Humphrey Low who gave it the name Rathskamory. That makes it 4 years older than the Bowmanville Museum, known as Waverly Place, and it was built on a much grander scale. Can you imagine what the local people thought at the time? Most of them were living in small wooden houses and some still in log cabins. It must have been like a palace to them.

In 1843 Bowmanville was still growing eastward along King Street from the valley south of Vanstone Mill. The small settlement was still surrounded by primeval forest. Colonel Frederick Cubitt the second mayor of Bowmanville in 1860-61 (he actually served three terms in that office) recounted that as a young

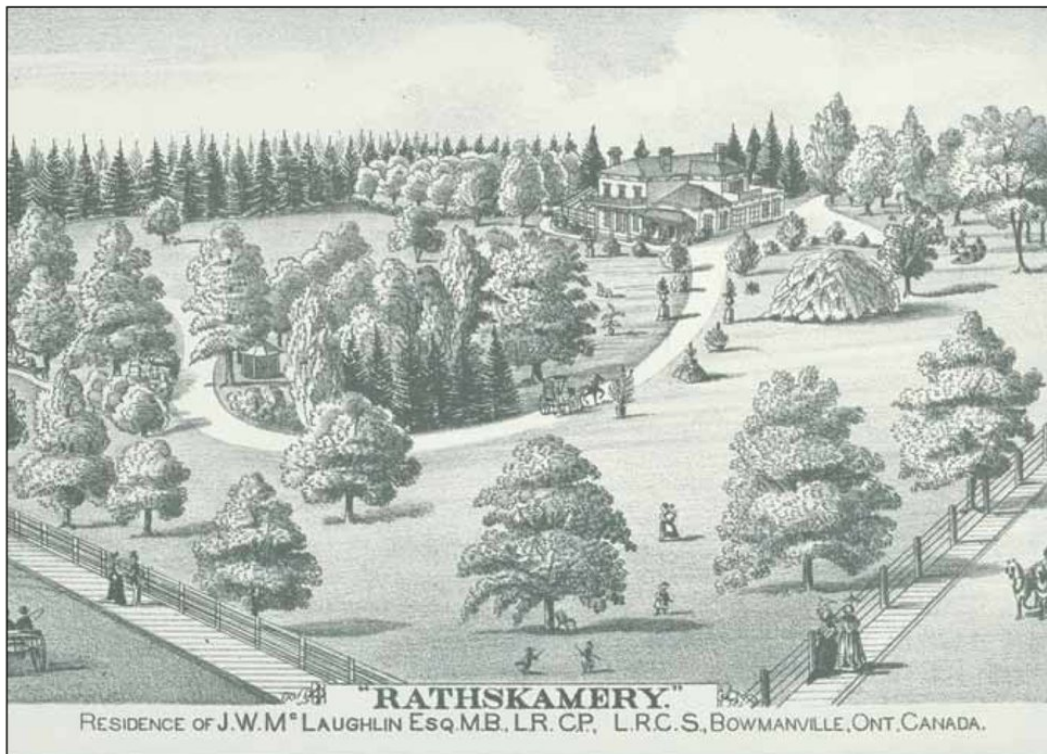
man, in 1840; he shot and killed a bear where Lowe Street and Beech Avenue meet today.

Who was Dr. Low? Unfortunately we don't know too much as his death was in 1865, and surviving Bowmanville newspapers only begin in 1868. However, we do know that he was a wealthy, well educated Anglo-Irish doctor who came to Canada in 1833. He was the first resident doctor in the southern part of Ontario County living between Whitby and Oshawa before moving to Bowmanville. Diana Grandfield in her book, "Bowmanville: An Architectural and Social History 1794-1999" sums up nicely what we know about him, "Until anaesthetics were in common use, surgeons were judged not only by their skill, but by their speed. Apparently, Dr. Low

was exceptional and in demand well beyond the confines of Bowmanville." He lived here in grand style with servants and entertained lavishly. He led a distinguished life and was active in religious, political and military affairs. One incident we find concerning Dr. Low takes place during the Rebellion of 1837. Early one morning John Burk of Bowmanville was awakened to find his house surrounded by soldiers lead by Dr. Low. Rumour had it that the notorious rebel Ben Lett was being hidden in the house and Dr. Low, in charge of a local militia brigade, was instructed to find him. Mr. Burk knew nothing of the matter but the soldiers searched his house from top to bottom. They found nothing and the Burks treated them all to a hearty breakfast and bid them

Continued on Page 4

# The House of All Sorts



Rathskamory House was built in 1843 by Dr. George Humphrey Low who gave it the name Rathskamory.

Continued from Page 1

good-bye. Years later it was found that Burk's young son, David, had pretended to be Ben Lett to frighten a newly arrived Irishman working on his father's farm.

Rathskamory wasn't the only estate in Bowmanville. In the 1840's this part of Bowmanville was where the wealthy were building their large houses with beautiful expanses of manicured lawns. Some other nearby estates include Marnwood, The Evergreens and Dundurn. The grand houses still stand but during the 1870's the grounds were divided into lots and sold off. Rathskamory has the distinction of being the only estate in Bowmanville with gatehouses. The front gate house is gone; it stood where 30 Lowe Street now stands. The back gate house still stands and is part of a home on the south west corner of Beech Avenue and Concession Street.



Dr. George Humphrey Low was an Anglo-Irish doctor who immigrated to Canada in 1833. He was the first resident doctor in the southern part of Ontario County living between Whitby and Oshawa before moving to Bowmanville. a surgeon who lived in grand style with servants and entertained lavishly.

Later owners of the estate include Dr. James Wellington McLaughlin. He was the brother of Robert who founded the McLaughlin Carriage Company. Dr. McLaughlin had a large and successful medical practice in Enniskillen and Bowmanville. Many remarked on his uncanny resemblance to British Prime Minister W.E. Gladstone. Dr. McLaughlin sold the lots and reduced the estate to 4 acres. Many of the beautiful houses on Beech Avenue and Centre Street date from this time. When Dr. McLaughlin died the house passed to his son Arthur. Arthur was killed in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme and his sister, Mary became owner. She had married Edmund S. Senkler and they retained the house until Mary's death in 1937.

During World War II the Boys' Training School just east of Bowmanville was converted into a German

Prisoner of War Camp. Some boys were sent home and others were taken to Rathskamory and The Evergreens where they operated as a temporary school until 1945.

In the fall of 1946 the Bowmanville Lions Club moved into the house and converted it into a community centre. The Lions Club is an international organization that provides a wide variety of community and charity programs. In Bowmanville they formed in 1935 and met at various locations on King Street before buying the Senklar property for \$3,500. Andy Thompson remembered, "This was considered a tremendous venture at that time, and I well remember the many discussions, pro and con, on the question by our members." Under them it became a hive of activity with many different social and community events being held. Banquets, dances, concerts, parties and meetings all happened frequently. The large addition to the south, added in 1953 at a cost of \$40,000, was to accommodate the increased usage of the property. The upstairs had a beautiful auditorium and banquet hall while the basement was a Scout hall.

It was still an actively used building when in 1989 a committee of older adults and local service club representatives began working with the Municipality to establish an activity centre for older adults. In 1992 Municipal Council established an advisory committee which became the Clarington Older Adult Centre Committee. They began offering programs at the Lions Centre in 1994. They were just one of many groups offering programs and services from the premises. In 1998 the Clarington Older Adult Association purchased the property from the Lions Club and the many renovations that bring it to its current status began.

This house is a blessed structure. From its beginnings in 1843 it has always been a place where people meet and have a good time. Whether it is a garden party from the Victorian age or a painting class today. It is truly a house for all sorts of people. It has always been a focal point in the community and will continue to be so for many years to come.

In August check out the Museum's display on Rathskamory at the Older Adult Centre. This has been a wonderful summer at the museums and the Wednesday Afternoon teas on the veranda at the Bowmanville Museum couldn't be more popular. If you want to come, be sure to make a reservation (905-623-2734). This fall we'll be introducing Curator's lecture series. The first one in September will be on Canadian Dolls, October's will be on stuffed toys, and November will be a show and tell with a brief discussion on collectible toys. Check out the website for more details ([www.claringtonmuseums.com](http://www.claringtonmuseums.com)) and we're also on facebook and twitter.



by **Jim Abernethy**, Publisher

[jim@claringtonpromoter.ca](mailto:jim@claringtonpromoter.ca)

## Up and Coming Events

I trust you are enjoying the summer that finally arrived. It appears that if you are fortunate enough to have a little space for a vegetable & herb garden, and you actually planted one, that you will be rewarded with a bountiful

crop this season.

If not, start planning now for next season by clearing an area and amending the soil with organics like sheep manure, compost and leaves that will start falling in another 8 weeks or so.

But before they do - there will be lots of time to get out and enjoy summer activities in Clarington.

For those serious gardeners and makers of preserves you might consider entering some of your produce in one of the

many competitions at the Orono Fair which has taken place every year for the past 161 years on the first weekend after Labour Day. For details visit [www.oronofair.com](http://www.oronofair.com) or call (905) 983-9510.

Sorry, as of press time we had no date for the arrival of The Stanley Cup, however it is coming to the Orono Arena. Once that date has been determined it will be posted on the Clarington Promoter website, visit [www.claringtonpromoter.ca](http://www.claringtonpromoter.ca) Bryan Bickell invites everyone to attend and asks that you please bring a donation for one of our local food banks.

The Third Annual Bryan Bickell Charity Classic Golf Tournament takes place on Friday August 23 at the Black Diamond Golf Club located on Highway 115.

For information about the 3rd Annual Bryan Bickell Charity Classic Golf Tournament, including sponsorship opportunities, contact Chad Maartense by email address: [chadmaartense@gmail.com](mailto:chadmaartense@gmail.com)

This edition contains a special pull-out feature for the Clarington Older Adults Association which celebrates 15 years of service in their historical building located on Beech Street in Bowmanville. I encourage you to get involved in the many programs they offer or perhaps consider becoming a volunteer..... see insert for all the information.

Recently, I was interviewed by Canada's business newspaper The Globe and Mail about real estate opportunities in Clarington. If you are interested in reading that interview it has been reprinted on page 15 of this edition.

By the way, if you know anyone looking for a 10 acre hobby farm on a quiet country road east of Brimacombe Ski Hill - I have a great opportunity that may need a little updating inside but has well-built structurally sound buildings..... priced well at \$475,000. Great spot (nice soil) to plant a vegetable garden!

# Do You Need a Shareholders' Agreement?



by Peter Hobb

COLLINS BARROW DURHAM LLP  
www.collinsbarrow.com

If your company has more than one shareholder the answer is yes. On more than one occasion I have had the experience of assisting businesses with multiple shareholders where the relationship between the shareholders has broken down and they were unable to resolve their differences. In these situations there was no shareholders' agreement. If there had been an agreement a lot of stress, pain and expense could likely have been avoided or significantly reduced.

A shareholders' agreement is a document that outlines how a business will be administered, the responsibilities of the different

parties to the agreement, the decision making process for major decisions, how ownership can be transferred or sold, financing of the business, arbitrating disputes, situations under which a shareholder can be expelled, etc. What the agreement will include will depend on the parties' circumstances and needs and the relevant corporate law. A shareholders' agreement not only provides protection for the shareholders but also protects the interests of close family members who could be affected by what happens in the business. If you are involved in a partnership the same arguments for having a shareholders' agreement apply to having a partnership agreement. A number of the same issues would be covered in a partnership agreement.

If a dispute develops between two or more shareholders the parties still have the option of negotiating a resolution that may be different than what is outlined in the shareholders' agreement. The shareholders'

agreement comes into play if the disputing parties cannot resolve their differences. It works like a safety net to ensure that shareholder disputes are resolved in a timely manner and at minimal cost while making sure such disputes do not disrupt the operation of the business significantly.

In addition to providing a blue print for resolving shareholder disputes these agreements also set out what happens in the case of premature death or long term disability of a shareholder. On death a sale will likely be triggered. The shareholders' agreement will normally set out how the price of the shares owned by the deceased shareholder will be valued, the payment terms, interest to be applied to any unpaid balance and security. The agreement may also require that life insurance be carried on the lives of each of the shareholders to ensure funds are available to purchase the shares of a deceased shareholder. The death of a shareholder highlights the importance

of having a shareholders' agreement. For example if there is no agreement the terms of the deceased shareholders' will may dictate who ends up with the shares. This may be contrary to what the other shareholders may think should happen. At this point it may be very difficult to negotiate a different outcome. A shareholders' agreement makes it very clear what will happen reducing stress for all involved at a very stressful time.

A shareholders' agreement would also set out those items which require the unanimous decision of shareholders. These items may include the purchase or sale of major assets, payment of dividends, material change in the nature of the business, remuneration of shareholders, contracts with shareholders or related parties, etc.

Shareholder agreements should be negotiated in the beginning of the business relationship when everybody is getting along. However, it is never too late to put one in place. There are a



number of other issues that would be covered in a shareholders' agreement in addition to what I have discussed in this article. Normally you would consult with your lawyer and accountant in developing the agreement. Your lawyer would draft the agreement. I caution you that you will likely not

think of every issue that could arise in developing the agreement. For this reason the agreement should be periodically reviewed and amended as appropriate, say every five years or when there is a shareholder change.



by Rik Davie,  
Managing Editor

rik@claringtonpromoter.ca

## THE SELF-PROMOTER

It's been an interesting couple of weeks around my house.

This past month alone I have had a full knee replacement... the second one no less.... finally managed three weeks with no nicotine of any kind and become a full-time burden

on red and the boss.

The university kid... Red's oldest daughter... is moving out and off to university. So along with getting no sleep at all and having to nurse me through pain killers and pills too numerous to mention she is prone to fits of tears mixed with joy as she prepares the university student to live on her own and out of mother's reach.

Couple that with the wedding of Red's son last month and the tears and fears that go along with being mother-

of-the-groom and poor Red is a bundle of frayed nerves shackled to a drug soaked house patient..... wow!

Now university girl is getting things well packed and organized and helping me with whenever I need as I need it as progress from bed-ridden to cane ridden to one cane and an ugly mood.

So quite a house of mood swings we are all living in just now!

But, as I begin to get around better on my brand new knee and the kids begin to embark on their newest life chapters it does give one pause to remark on how resilient the family group can be.

There is no doubt that Red is the rock upon which this particular family rests and despite the many changes happening and the multitude of crisis in the past 90 days or so every member of the family, Red, the student, the bride and groom and even the smallest member of the clan, the boss, have taken time to help the rest of the clan with their particular problem of the moment.

When I arrived home from the fantastic care I received at Lakeridge Health Oshawa and the amazing nursing team on the surgical ward, I had the full-time services of the boss as my nurse.

Just let a seven-year-old girl play hospital with a real live patient for a few days and she's in her glory. All the cold drinks and ice packs one could ever ask for and then some.

Red and Jim have taken up most of the burden for this edition of The Promoter so consider this my thank you to my family for putting up with the handicapped ill-tempered guy and my doctors note for not doing a lot to get out this edition. And a word to the wise... look after yourself when your young because when your old and the bills for a misspent youth come in they are hefty!!!

Guess I should be thankful that they are still making after market parts for 1953 models!!!