



Photo by Chloë Ellingson

Aristeidis Maroulis works at Olympic 76 Restaurant, originally started by his uncles, who have since moved back to Greece.

Digging into Belleville's history

Archaeologist shares findings at meeting of Historical Society

By Carleen Schmidt

Archaeologists have unearthed a possible tavern on one lot in Belleville and findings at another lot suggest that the family living there may have been in mourning.

"We opened up as many questions as we answered," said Nick Gromoff, founder of Ground Truth Archaeology.

These findings were from an archaeological dig conducted at the new courthouse location on James Street and Bridge Street in Belleville.

Gromoff presented the findings at the Hastings County Historical Society's general meeting at the Quinte Living Centre on Feb. 21.

"The excavation started in fall 2009 and ended in summer 2010," said Gromoff.

The presence of the colour black was found in beads, ceramics and hair combs. "Blackness is intriguing. It is not a typical colour," said Gromoff, who added that they believe some of the family living there may have been in mourning, which would explain the presence of the colour black.

There was also evidence showing the presence of children - marbles, a little doll and 30-40 slate pencil ends and slate boards were found, which is a high number meaning there may have been a little school there at some point.

Gromoff spoke to a large audience of about 100 people. There was obviously a lot of interest in the topic. Usually only about 60 people attend the meeting, but all the chairs were full and people were standing.

To construct a dig, archeologists mostly use toothbrushes and water and sometimes alcohol for certain items. According to Gromoff, though there isn't any one item that is most significant. The artifacts that help identify time periods, or what was going on there, are the most interesting.

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Local Greeks discuss the country's economic crisis:

Reflections on Greece

By Chloë Ellingson

As Greece continues to endure economic turmoil, members of the local Greek community reflect on life in Greece, life in Canada, and what it takes to survive.

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"Before the Euro, we didn't have a problem," said Kanellos Fountoukis last week in the kitchen of his Wellington restaurant. The then imminent recent Greek bailout is, in his opinion, backwards. "We

don't need to borrow anymore money. Let us do it."

Three years ago, Fountoukis left his life on the large Greek island of Kefalonia with his wife and three children to return to his native Canada. The child of Greek immigrants, he spent his early life in Montreal, returning to Greece as a young boy. Greece is where he built his life, and much of his family is still there.

"I came back for my kids' future," he says.

Fountoukis says Kefalonia's main industry is tourism, and that was his business. He owned and operated four restaurants that collectively employed 70 people. "Now 70 people have to look for jobs," says Fountoukis. He hears from them all too often.

"Everyday I receive phone calls," he says. They all ask about working for him in Canada, or if he knows of any jobs here. He'd like to bring former employees to Canada, but says he can't because of

immigration regulations. "Right now it's not easy," he says.

Fountoukis doesn't know why Greece isn't bankrupt already after years of it being threatened. He wishes Greece would declare bankruptcy and return to its former currency. "If we go back to the drachma," he says, "Greece is going to be in the right place."

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Archives making move to new digs

Historical Society works on getting capital to pay for building

By Joanna Becket

"An archives, as it turns out, is a bit like Rome. Can't be built in a day," wrote Orland French, former president, Hastings County Historical Society, in an opinion piece in The Belleville Intelligencer last November.

This is the public stage of the capital campaign headed up by French to move the Hastings County Historical Society community archives to a new location at the Irish Hall on Church Street.

French has found that although competition for the donor's dollar is stiff, Belleville residents are stepping up with private donations towards the estimated \$1.2 million required to build and equip a new site for the community's historical documents.

What sets this cause apart from other appeals for support, said French, is that it's a one-stage appeal.

"We're raising money for a capital campaign to create an archives and once the archives is complete, we're not going to come back in a year to the public and say we want more money, because the city and the county have taken on the responsibility of running it."

It's all in the name of preserving the past.

"If you don't preserve the past, then you have no community record of where you come from," said French.

"I think this is especially important for students, for those who study history, and for historians. People who are interested in genealogy, for example, really appreciate the kind of information they find in archives," he said.

The Hastings County Historical Society partnered with the City of Belleville and Hastings County to donate \$950,000 of the current \$1.2 million target. Corporate and private donations are helping to fill the balance needed to complete the project.

"We are getting close to the million dollar mark but there's still a shortfall of about \$300,000," said French.

The target start date for construction is likely to be in September, 2012, said French.

The historical society archives has been

operating out of the former Thurlow town hall on Cannifton Road North for the past 10 years, in a small space troubled by humidity, pests and structural issues.

At its present location the community archives has about 2,300 square feet of useable space.

The new Church Street site will house about 8,000 square feet of useable space.

The archives currently maintains collections of prints and negatives, maps, plans, architectural drawings, newspapers, microfilm, ledger books and family scrapbooks.

This past summer, The Belleville Intelligencer added an additional 900 bound volumes of newspapers, covering the period from the 1880s to 2011.

"We have half a ton, about 900 volumes, so all together we have over 1,000 bound volumes of The Belleville Intelligencer. The Intelligencer also donated their photographs and negatives," said the archivist Sharon White.

"It's been estimated that the archives has approximately one million negatives. More than half of them are from the Intelligencer," said White.

"The biggest issue is space, the amount of space and also the organization of space," she said. So the new building will have most of the archival records stored in a dedicated storage vault and it's called a vault because it's secure.

"It has environmental controls to monitor temperature, humidity and air quality. That's one of the things that make it a bit more costly than just building an office building, because you need to have these special controls."

Most of the shelving will be in the main halls that are two storeys high and will be designed to fill that space.

"The shelving is very specialized. It will be fitted to meet our requirements to make the most efficient use of the space," said White.

"I hope the new archives will be more spacious and there will be more things actually available for self-help in the reading room including electronic systems, so you can search on a data base.

"There will be a reference library to consult as well. We also have some genealogy materials and some information pamphlets about how to research your own house or property and also information about other heritage organizations in the area."

Will this new facility be state-of-the-art?



Photo by Joanna Becket

Sharon White, the archivist at Hastings County Historical Society Community Archives on Cannifton Road North, stands before the Belleville Intelligencer's recent donation of newspapers going back to the 1880s. "We received half a ton, about 900 volumes, so altogether we have over 1,000 bound volumes of the Belleville Intelligencer," said White. The move to the archives' new Church Street location is planned for 2013.

"It's not the Cadillac version," said White. "But I think it meets all the requirements for a good community archives that will preserve the records in the future and have good space for making them available and good space for the volunteers and archivists and people who work with the records."

The move is currently planned for 2013.

"But plans can change," said White. "We have to get it right. And that's one reason we've had the architect's feasibility study and the careful look at the design. The design will be tweaked, but we're very happy with it in terms of it being an efficient and cost effective use of the space," said White.

"We're getting there. It's very exciting," White said.

There were a lot of findings including ash, brick, coins, and buttons of all sorts, plates and smoking pipes. The archeologists also found bones from white-tailed deer, ducks, geese, turkey, passenger pigeons and local fish.

There were a couple different lots that they excavated on the property. Lot eight is the first Gromoff discussed. He talked about the history of the property owners, which was used to try to find out what was there previously and talked about people who had come by when the dig was going on and shared their memories of the property.

At the second lot on the site, Gromoff did the same, showed historical records of people who lived there previously and showed photographs of the excavation. The archeologists found a brick furnace with charcoals and ash, possibly from a smoke house, and found meat hooks as well. Numerous foot bones from cows were also found.

Later in the excavation, it became apparent that one of the deep pits dug by the archeologists was a root cellar with barrel scraps, sand and even a trap door with a hinge and bolt.

Lot one had to have gravel removed for excavation. Gromoff showed the history of home owners starting with James McNabb and found cutlery, pipes, coins, buttons from hunting jackets and military buttons from this site. Stoneware jugs were found from local Belleville merchants. They believe this site may have been a tavern.

Gromoff showed a slideshow at the meeting on the archeological assessment process in Ontario. There are four stages. The first stage has a background study conducted and tries to assess the property. Stage two is the assessment of the property to find archaeological sites by going out and looking for evidence on the property.

Stage three is when Gromoff came in. During stage three, archeologists find the limits of the site and create a grid and do the preliminary conclusions on the nature and date of the site. Finally, in stage four is the mitigation of development impacts, which determines the best approach for conserving the site.

In this case, the best way to conserve the site was to remove the artifacts for preservation. This is referred to as preservation through excavation.