



Photo by Melyssa Gloude

Hotel Quinte before the devastating fire that destroyed most of the building.



Photo by Jeff Peters

What remains of Hotel Quinte today after it was engulfed by fire on Dec. 20, 2012.

Saying goodbye to Hotel Quinte

Residents share found memories of historic landmark

By Jeff Peters

The character of a building can be described as many things from the run down to the sublime. Buildings and architecture in the cities and towns we live in often move past our peripherals in everyday life, like background placards of a Hollywood sound stage.

Most of us will walk with blinders on and rarely appreciate something beautiful when we see it.

The Hotel Quinte, which had seemed to have had its heyday, appeared to be making a comeback in downtown Belleville. With a renovation, albeit with

much delay, the heritage building was primed to return to its former glory.

The historic hotel went up in flames on Dec. 20 due to a cause that is yet to be determined. The blaze was finally under control by 4 a.m. the next morning and because of the fire, a piece of Belleville history has been lost.

The Hotel Quinte was built upon the framework of the Dafoe house which was a family owned inn constructed in 1860. In the 1880s, the hotel came into being, which like the Dafoe house was a rooming house for those coming through the 'Friendly City'.

While the hotel was under the title of the Dafoe House, a literary legend paid a brief yet memorable visit. Oscar Wilde famous playwright, essayist, poet, journalist and a leading voice in the aesthetics movement, spent an evening while on a lecture tour.

"He arrived here and he was all colours,

flamboyantly dressed, that's putting it mildly. The girls and women were falling all over him waiting for his arrival," Gerry Boyce muses about one of the hotel's best known patron.

Boyce is a retired schoolteacher author and member of the Hasting Historical Society. Boyce has been president of the club half dozen times in the 57 years he has lived in Belleville.

Boyce has fond memories of the hotel and has written about it in depth in his book "Belleville: A Popular History."

"You used to be able to go in the south side to a very attractive lobby, marble tiles and large column pillars with false marble tile. They were elaborate. The place was beautiful, it looked like a very attractive bank," Boyce recalls with a touch of sadness.

For Boyce, the history of the hotel is also a history of Belleville. The hotel was as Boyce puts it, "one of the few buildings that

was prominent, in which, sort of focused on the nice features of Belleville life."

"Belleville used to have the wharf street down here, we had Stony Lonesome out the north end and they were considered somewhat rough. This was regarded as somewhat elite."

For a building of its age, it has touched the lives of Belleville residents through many generations. John Irvine, 57, owner and operator of John's Hair Quarters, has worked adjacent to the hotel for nearly 25 years. The building holds fond memories from his youth.

"We had favorite musicians that performed there and when they were there they drew very well. They had John Lee Hooker play there at one point. They had some talented musicians in there at time frame when folk rock was the music of preference," recalls Irvine.

In the early 70s, Irvine was commissioned to paint a mural on the wall of the

Tropicana room, which was a popular folk bar, in exchange for a two month stay.

"I would paint through the night. It was a lot of fun. I have a background in arts to some degree. It was one of those things that is kind of interesting and I would bet that it's still there," Irvine said with a smile.

Despite the nostalgia, Irvine would ideally like to see condominiums take the place of the burnt husk of the hotel.

"Like McNab Towers lets say, because I believe if you get middle class people living downtown that you would get good spin off business from that," said Irvine.

Boyce has a more traditional take on the historic piece of architecture that was the Hotel Quinte.

"It would be nice if they had something to at least remind people that it was a hotel and it had been a hotel. Its been a hotel probably over 150 years," said Boyce.

New media wing to open May 1

Trent University students coming to Loyalist in the spring

By Lyndsay-Lee Quinn

Loyalist College will be welcoming Trent University students in the spring, but not with a new media wing.

The new media wing, where a new newsroom will be located, was set to open May 1, but is now not set to be complete until August, ready for the fall semester in September.

The wing will house journalism students at Loyalist, as well as the new Trent-Loyalist journalism pro-

gram.

The program will allow students at Trent to gain a joint-major honour's degree in journalism and another discipline of their choice, as well as an Ontario college advanced diploma in Journalism - online, print and broadcast from Loyalist.

Jane Harrison, dean of media arts and design, said that the delay will "not affect the education of the students," from Trent University or from Loyalist College.

There wasn't "any point in rushing to open this semester," said Harrison.

Part of the delay has to do with waiting on permits to be approved by the city, which were held up over the Christmas break. There is also

a lot of back and forth between the college and the city with paperwork and approvals causing some delay.

Some students in journalism programs at Loyalist are unaware of the new newsroom, but hope there will be vending machines and microwaves, for those late nights which seem to be more often than not in journalism.

Brandon White, a second-year journalism - online, print and broadcast student, said he hopes the new newsroom will "have enough space and equipment to work comfortably, and that it will be more self-contained," so that the journalism programs aren't so spread out, and stories are able to come together quicker.

Plans change last minute for strikers

By Julia McKay

Ontario elementary teachers, students and parents were left scrambling this past Friday morning when the final decision came down that local schools would be open after an overnight session of the Ontario Labour Relations Board deemed the planned one-day teachers protest illegal.

The one-day protests were part of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario response to the Governments Bill-115, which gives the provincial government the authority to block strikes, as well as freeze teacher wages and reduce the number of available sick days.

"The teachers believed that they were holding a legal political protest due to the results of the 1997 job protest court ruling," said Karen Fisk, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario local President.

The approximate 640 contract teachers were notified by email of the change in plans Friday morning.

"The message got out about their (teachers) protest and they got paid to teach the kids," said Fisk when asked about the feedback she'd received from teachers.

The Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board posted a message on their website at 4:30 a.m. Friday morning that all 42 elementary schools would be open to students.

There are about 10,400 elementary students under the board.

"We needed to get the message out quickly," said Kerry Donnell, communications officer for the board about using local radio and social media to inform local parents of the change.

According to Donnell, students will not be penalized if they missed school Friday.

Service dog provides help and companionship

Myriam Lublink

Samantha Hobbs took three weeks off from her classes at Loyalist College in November to go to Oakville, Ont. where she attended a Dog Guides of Canada training centre and met her new companion.

Hobbs, 26, originally from Kingston, is a second-year photojournalism student at Loyalist.

Hobbs was diagnosed with a form of spastic cerebral palsy when she was two years old and at age four, she received a wheelchair.

Hobbs had planned on getting a service dog when she became older and would require more assistance, but after some health problems in 2012, she realized that she needed the guide dog now.

"I fell and I was by myself and couldn't get up or reach a phone. I actually had to hurt myself to get up because I was trapped. After that, I decided that a dog would be a good idea."

Before Hobbs received her service dog she was nervous, wondering if her dog would actually like her. Hobbs and Jazzy, her dog, got along right away, but it wasn't until the day after meeting that she realized they were going to be assigned to each other.

"When they came in the next day, and I saw Jazzy and realized she was mine, I started freaking out. She ran over wagging her tail and licked my face. I was so glad because she was great and we already got along so well."

Jazzy has been trained to help Hobbs in her daily routines at home, at school and anywhere else they need to go. Jazzy is able to pick up things, open doors, bark for help and even help take off Hobbs' winter boots.

"I'm actually not in as much pain as before because I don't have to bend down as much since she can pick stuff up and open doors for me."

The transition to having a service dog that has been trained to stay with her at all times wasn't easy for Hobbs. Some of her neighbours looked at Jazzy as a pet and told her she wasn't



Photo by Myriam Lublink

Samantha Hobbs has been enjoying the company of her service dog, Jazzy, since November of last year. Jazzy has been trained to assist Hobbs with her daily routines like opening doors, pushing buttons and picking up dropped things. Hobbs was living on her own before she received Jazzy, now she says that she can't imagine life without her.

allowed into the apartment building's common rooms with her.

At school, Hobbs has had to explain

to her classmates and other students in the school that Jazzy isn't a regular dog - she's a working dog and has to

be treated differently than a pet.

"She's not a pet. Even if her service coat is off, she is still working. You

can't just walk up and pet her, she's a service dog. It's like having a wheelchair, only Jazzy is cuter."