



Grand River  
Conservation  
Authority



The Grand:  
A Canadian  
Heritage River

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Arnold VerVoort and his family operate a farm near Fergus where a lot has been done to protect the environment. Photo by Janet Baine.



## Watershed Award winners

*Each year the Grand River Conservation Authority recognizes the efforts of individuals and groups by presenting awards for outstanding examples of conservation and environmental work.*

*For 2005, the winner of the Honour Roll Award is S.C. Johnson and Son Ltd. of Brantford.*

*The winners of the Watershed Awards are Waterloo Region District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board; Greentec International Inc., Cambridge; Wilfrid Laurier/Mohawk Environmental Group, Brantford; Hillside Festival, Guelph; John Jackson of Kitchener, founder of the Great Lakes United; Vlad Jelinek, Rosewood Farm, Grand Valley; and Arnold VerVoort and Family farm, Fergus.*

*Winners are honoured at a special ceremony during the GRCA annual meeting in February. As part of the event, a slide show detailing the accomplishments of each winner was presented. The show was written and photographed by Janet Baine.*

*This article, adapted from the script for the show, highlights four winners of Watershed Awards. The other winners were featured in the previous edition of Grand Actions.*

### Hillside Festival, Guelph

Hillside Festival has grown over the past 21 years from a small, 11-hour festival to a three day event attracting 5,000 people a day.

It's on the island at Guelph Lake Conservation Area when the island's quiet tranquility is transformed into a hub of activity. Sold out for the first time in 2005, it featured 45 bands.

Music brings in the crowd, but Hillside is much more than music.

The festival is possible because of the vision of the Hillside board of directors, the staff and a thousand volunteers.

While they love music, they are fully committed to environmental leadership

All the food at Hillside is served on plastic plates with reusable cutlery that is washed by



*Plastic plates and cups used at Hillside Festival cut down on the amount of garbage generated during the event.*

teams of volunteers.

Beer is sipped from reusable mugs that patrons stow away from one year to the next.

These changes and sorting means there was less garbage in 2005, even though there were more people.

Buses run throughout the festival to bring people to Guelph Lake Island, so patrons don't need to drive. And, there's a bike lock-up, a Native area and environmental expo.

The main stage was powered by wind and the Sun stage is solar powered. As one performer, Robert Priest, wrote in *Now Magazine*: "How inspiring to hear the numerous mics, amps and instruments running directly on the local rays. Who knew such a small patch of sunlight could be so loud, so lyrical?"

In 2005 the festival added a green roof above the main stage. It was paid for by Hillside and donations were collected by the "green team" of volunteers.

Hillside shows what is possible. It leads the way in showing us that thousands of people can come together for three days but leave a small impact on the environment.



*The "green roof" on top of the Hillside Festival stage at Guelph Lake Conservation Area gets a watering.*

## **John Jackson, Founder of Great Lakes United, Kitchener**

**J**ohn Jackson is an environmental activist who lives in Kitchener.

For the past 30 years John has traveled around the Great Lakes to advise numerous groups.

His favourite spot in his neighbourhood is the grounds of Woodside, the childhood home of Mackenzie King where he goes to walk and think.

His vision is bigger than the Grand River, which empties into Lake Erie and connects with the Great Lakes, but his work for the Great Lakes also benefits our watershed.

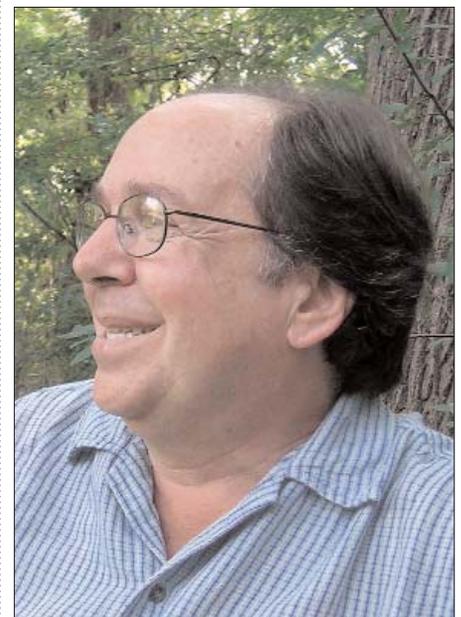
The work he gets paid for – such as teaching university courses and writing government reports – is secondary for John.

His real work is taking what he has learned from one citizens' groups and sharing it with the next.

Among his many awards is a prized

photo taken after the hard-won 15-year victory against a toxic waste facility. Many people asked at the time why he bothered to take on an impossible battle, but the group won.

A member of the group has published a book to tell the story, while Wilfrid



*John Jackson*

Laurier University has all Jackson's documentation from this battle in their special collection.

Jackson is a founder of Great Lakes United and has been on the board for 24 years.

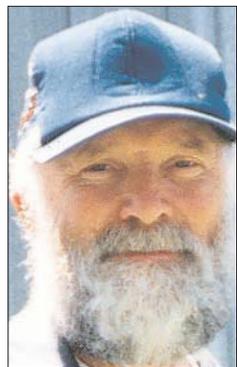
This organization strives to change policies so environmental battles no longer need to be fought in community after community around the Great Lakes.

Jackson is heartened by the successes he sees around him. He says he's fortunate to have the chance to see changes and this helps him to inspire other groups.

## Vlad Jelinek, Rosewood Farm, Grand Valley

Vlad Jelinek died in 2004, but before he did, he spent many years returning portions of Rosewood Farm in Grand Valley back to forests and wetlands.

He bought the farm in 1969 and worked as a meteorological technician for the Canadian government until he retired.



Vlad Jelinek

He knew some of the land wanted to go back to the wetland it once was and instead of fighting nature, he worked with it.

A map he created showed his long-term goals for the property—including the forests and wetlands.

Jelinek began turning fields into forests by having the GRCA plant trees each year until he died.

There is now a 20-acre plantation of mature trees. His two granddaughters helped with tree planting in the spring of 2004. Jelinek was also there on planting day, but by that time his health was failing.



Members of the Jelinek family dig in during a tree planting.

He lived a simple life. He had no phone and typed all his correspondence on a typewriter.

In the spring of 2004 he got news that the Wetland Habitat Fund would share the cost of excavating and building a dike to return the land to the wetland it once was.

Jelinek died that July, a month before the bulldozers created the wetland. Now the trees are growing up and there is already a diverse array of wildlife on the wetland, including a beaver dam.

Vlad Jelinek's dream of returning his land to wetlands and forests is an example for others to follow.

## Arnold VerVoort and family farm, Fergus

Arnold VerVoort was one of the first farmers in his area to do an environmental plan for his dairy farm, north of Fergus. He is now a member of the Environmental Farm Plan Review Committee, and the Wellington Stewardship Council.

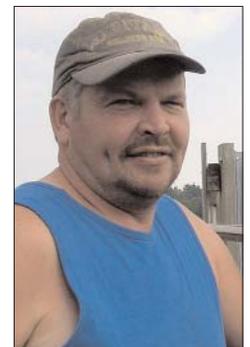
He had a long time interest in decreasing his farm's impact on the

environment.

He uses low-till farming techniques and crop rotation to ensure his land remains healthy.

Two years ago he put in fencing to keep his cows out of the Irvine River, which runs through his property. Already vegetation is growing up on the banks and animal waste doesn't get into the river.

But VerVoort's biggest undertaking was building an immense manure tank so the liquid manure would not wash right into the Irvine River.



Arnold VerVoort

A trench 20 feet wide used to wash animal waste into the river, washing away nutrients that Arnold would have preferred to spread on his fields.

His farm is used in GRCA displays about manure management.

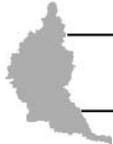
The tank is 12 feet deep and manure from the barn flows by gravity into it.

All the manure and milkhouse wastes are totally contained and contaminated runoff no longer washes into the river.

Not only is the river much cleaner now, but Arnold buys half as much fertilizer as he used to and organic fertilizer makes better crops, he says.

His farm is used in GRCA displays about manure management.

Efforts of farmers like Arnold VerVoort go a long way toward improving the Grand River watershed.



## MILESTONES

Milestones are progress or products of *The Grand Strategy* Joint Work Plan.

### Workshop addresses value of heritage in defining communities

By Barbara Veale  
GRCA Co-ordinator of Policy  
Planning and Partnerships

In an era where heritage is threatened by development pressures, many Ontario municipalities and private sector companies are making special efforts to retain and restore heritage assets.

Heritage is what gives our communities a sense of place and a competitive edge for attracting new economic development and business.

A capacity crowd of over 200 eager participants attended the ninth annual Heritage Day Workshop and celebration to find out more about how heritage can strengthen local economy and sense of place. The theme for the workshop was Heritage: The Competitive Edge. Aptly, the workshop was held at the University of Waterloo's newly renovated School of Architecture in the historic Riverside Silk Mills on the banks of the Grand River, a Canadian Heritage River.

Speakers shared first-hand experience about best practices and the proven benefits of promoting local heritage. The workshop also featured a mayors' panel,



*Participants in the Heritage Day Workshop discuss the value of heritage structures in a lecture theatre in the University of Waterloo School of Architecture in Cambridge.*

displays, tours of the school, and a reception at the Design at Riverside Gallery. Speakers included: Ken Doherty, City of Peterborough; Laurie Thatcher, Heritage Cambridge; Dr. Robert Shipley, Chair, UW Heritage Resources Centre; Dr. Rick Haldenby, Director, UW School of Architecture; Catherine Nasmith, Architect; David Jackson, Toronto's Distillery District; Jeremy Grant, Alton Mill; and Sean Fraser, Ontario Heritage Trust. On the Mayors' Panel were Mayor Tony Winter, Town of St. Marys and Craig Curtis, City Manager for the City of Owen Sound.

■ In the words of Glen Murray, former Mayor of Winnipeg: "When every place looks the same, there is no such thing as place anymore. Municipal cultural planning is about combating the 'geography of nowhere'."

■ We are all 'weavers of place' and need to look at everything we do through a 'cultural lens' – culture is defined by community.

■ It is time to reintroduce beauty into planning.

■ Identity is the 'wellspring' of civic pride.

■ Public works is public art.

■ Incentives such as tax relief for owners of heritage sites leads to a dramatic increase in applications for her-

itage designations.

■ Municipalities must take a leadership role in supporting heritage conservation and development – others will follow. Examples where this has occurred are Quebec City, Peterborough, Owen Sound and St. Marys. On the strength of its local heritage, Owen Sound has now become one of the top 50 places to retire in North America and is promoting itself as the cultural capital of Canada. St. Marys is focusing its tourism promotions on cultural festivals and heritage assets of the community and has as its slogan "a town worth living in."

■ Adaptive reuse and heritage preservation is a kind of development, not an impediment to development.

■ Academic institutions can illustrate by example, the sympathetic adaptive reuse of industrial heritage and can bring new energy and economic vitality to downtown cores.

■ A strong municipal heritage commitment is necessary BEFORE pressures to change are prevalent. Heritage policies should be developed in a collective exercise which engages the public and builds community.

■ A good architect is key to ensuring new development is sympathetic to existing historic landscapes and structures.

■ Good regulation is a prerequisite to heritage conservation.

■ The Distillery District in Toronto and the Alton Mill near Orangeville are examples of private developers who value heritage features and have a vision to create a community nucleus around adaptive reuse and who are extremely persistent and creative about how to realize their vision.

■ Over 50 provincial plaques have been erected in the watershed by the Ontario Heritage Trust.

■ New York City understands the competitive edge of heritage. Heritage districts are broadly embraced by community as an important conservation and economic development tool. More than 90 heritage districts are now established in the city centre – more than in the Province of Ontario.

The day concluded with a reception at Cambridge Galleries' newest art exhibition venue, the Design at Riverside Gallery located in the School of Architecture. Participants were encouraged to view the displays featuring textiles.

Many participants commented that it provided an excellent venue for sharing information and ideas, celebrating successes, and inspiring further community action to strengthen heritage appreciation and protection within the Grand River watershed.

A special thank you is extended to the City of Cambridge, the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation, and Heritage Cambridge, the primary sponsors of this year's Heritage Day Workshop and the local arrangements committee comprised of representatives from Heritage Cambridge, Cambridge Municipal Heritage Committee, City of Cambridge, University of Waterloo School of Architecture, the Grand River Conservation Authority, and The Grand Strategy Heritage Working Group. Special thanks should also be extended to two Southwood Secondary School students, Les Portillo and Kyle Rose, who provided music during the lunch

break and the Grade 12 baking students at Jacob Hespeler Secondary School who provided muffins and pastries during the morning refreshment break.

Ferndale Valley Inc. generously donated sparkling juices for the reception, while Sam's Club in Cambridge provided bottled water.

The Heritage Day Workshop is hosted every year by the Heritage Working Group of the Grand Strategy and is co-sponsored by the Grand River Conservation Authority and watershed municipalities. The 10th annual Heritage Day Workshop and Celebration is scheduled for Heritage Day, Monday, Feb. 19, 2007 at a location to be determined.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### Program aims to conserve Kitchener natural areas

An innovative new program is designed to conserve public natural areas in the City of Kitchener.

The Natural Areas Stewardship and Education program has three primary objectives:

1. To create opportunities for people to experience nature in the city;
2. To engage the community in urban natural area stewardship; and
3. To educate people living adjacent to natural areas about appropriate, low impact activities which will help to conserve nature.

Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists, acting as the lead agency, in conjunction with the City of Kitchener and the Waterloo Stewardship Network, has recently received Ontario Trillium Foundation funding for a two-year period.

The money will help support the initiative which involves creating educa-

tional fact sheets, leading interpretive hikes, establishing a self-guided interpretive trail and a variety of community based stewardship activities.

The purpose of this project is to educate community members and engage them to experience, and carry out stewardship activities within urban natural areas. The long term health of these urban natural areas is an ultimate desired outcome.

The program will be officially launched on April 29 at Homer Watson Park in Kitchener. After a brief ceremony at 9 a.m., there will be a variety of free activities for all ages. At 9:30 and 11:00 people can participate in guided bird-watching walks, habitat restoration, tree planting, or litter cleanup. At the same times family activity walks will include a wild bird clinic, a wetland creature interpretive display, and a forest ecology station.

There will also be an information centre, where you can learn about future activity days, get details of upcoming nature walks, pick up a fact filled Newsletter, or sign up to be involved in the development of a city wide Natural Areas Watch Program.

The GRCA, represented by Watershed Forester Virginia Gauley, is a supporting partner of the program.

### Brantford-Brant home to new children's water festival

Groundwater festivals have become an important way of bringing knowledge of the environment to elementary school students.

Over the past decade, more than 50,000 students from Waterloo Region and Wellington County elementary schools have heard about the importance of protecting our water at the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival, held annually at Doon Heritage Crossroads.



*Children learn about the components of a watershed at the Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival, now in its 11th year. A new children's water festival will be held in Brantford-Brant this year.*

Now children from Brant, Brantford and Six Nations will be able to get the water message at the first Brantford-Brant Water Festival to be held May 16 to 18 at Mohawk Park in Brantford.

The goal is to educate future decision makers and to empower children to initiate change within their homes, schools and communities.

The festival will give about 2,000 Grade 4 and 5 students the chance to participate in 35 fun, interactive stations where they will learn about where water comes from, how it is used and how to protect it.

The children will learn several key ideas: using water wisely, protecting the water supply, examining the relations between water and technology, and understanding the role of water in the ecosystem. These activities are consistent with Ontario elementary school curriculum guidelines.

"Brant Waterways Foundation is totally supportive of initiating an annual Children's Water Festival in Brantford and Brant County," said Mary Welsh,

secretary of the foundation, which is one of the sponsors.

"This festival fits extremely well with the Foundation's mandate to preserve, protect, restore and improve waterways in this area. Such an event compliments extremely well the grade 4 and 5 curriculum and addresses our generation's responsibility to teach our young people the importance of preserving a quality supply of water for now and in the future."

Children will attend the Brantford-Brant festival free of charge. Financial support and in-kind support will come from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and community sponsors including the City of Brantford, Brant Waterways Foundation, Grand River Conservation Authority, Brant Resources Stewardship Network, Grand Erie District School Board, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, Laurier Brantford, Brant County Health Unit, Long Point Region Conservation Authority, West Brantford Home Hardware, Six Nations Ecocentre and

the Brant Community Foundation.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation has approved a grant of \$99,800 to support the festival over the next three years. The organizing committee is seeking additional contributions from the community to cover the remainder of the \$64,000 annual budget.

The new Brantford-Brant festival is one of about 18 children's water festivals around the province.

The Waterloo-Wellington Children's Groundwater Festival is scheduled for May 29 to June 2 for school groups. The festival will be open to the public for the Family Water Festival on June 3.



**NOW AVAILABLE**

## **Shunpiking in Waterloo Region**

By Warren Stauch

**S**hunpiking was a favourite pastime of the wealthy at the turn of the 20th century as they sought ways to enjoy their new "toy" - the automobile - allowing them to leave their communities and tour, in one car or a parade of cars, the nearby areas on a day trip.

The term shunpiking comes from the word "shun", meaning to avoid, and "pike", a term referring to well-travelled main roads dating back to colonial times in the United States. Also called turn-pikes, these busy roads often required payment to travel on them. Payment was made at a toll station where a pike, a long wooden shaft, was placed across the road barring passage. After payment was made, the pike would be turned, or raised, to allow vehicles to pass. There was often a toll collected in order to cross bridges.

To avoid paying the tolls, travelers shunpiked taking the longer and most often scenic back roads through river valleys and across the hills and mountains. Today's weekend shunpikers travel the back roads for pleasure especially in

the fall of the year when they search out the changing colourful foliage.

Shunpiking just became easier in Waterloo Region. The Regional Municipality of Waterloo has recently unveiled a series of historical driving tours for each of its rural townships. Each tour is complete with a map and detailed reference notes.

Tour One, called the Southern Trail, takes the traveler on a 130-kilometre trip through North Dumfries Township, one of the most picturesque rural landscapes in Ontario. North Dumfries was the Scottish area of William Dickson and today is known for its glacial moraines, marshes and vistas. Ayr, on the banks of the Nith River, is the main village.

The Township of Woolwich, with its Mennonite farms, creeks and bridges, is the focus of the 95-kilometre long Tour Two. Travellers will be impressed by the cultural, historical and architectural diversity of this township north of Waterloo. The Visitor Centre in St. Jacobs offers an accurate depiction of the Mennonite lifestyle and culture which can be observed on the rural roads en route to the West Montrose Covered Bridge (1881), the last remaining covered bridge in Ontario.

Tour Three covers 75 kilometres through the historic German Block of Wilmot Township west of Kitchener-Waterloo and features the many small towns and villages such as Baden, St. Agatha, Petersburg, Mannheim and New Hamburg. Castle Kilbride, a Canadian national historic site in Baden, was the home of James Livingston, the flax and linseed oil king, and today is a wonderful museum.

Apple butter, corn and scenic views are featured in 73 kilometre long Tour Four through the Township of Wellesley, where the annual apple butter and cheese festival is held annually in late September. Wellesley Township, the most rural of the townships, is also home to a large Mennonite community and it is possible to visit (but not on Sundays) many farms that make solid

wood furniture and homemade quilts.

The set of four maps can be purchased at library branches throughout the Region, from Cambridge and Kitchener-Waterloo Tourism offices and at the Region of Waterloo headquarters building, 150 Frederick Street in Kitchener. The cost is \$2.00 for the set of four.

Since their release late last fall, these historical driving tours have become popular and have allowed watershed citizens and visitors to explore and shunpike the natural and cultural landscape of the central area of the Grand River watershed.

In addition to the driving tours, walking tours are also available, free of

charge, for the uptown area of the City of Waterloo (Waterloo City Hall, 100 Regina Street South). Heritage Cambridge (Box 22074 Galt Centre) has produced a series of historical walking tours for the Town of Preston, Old Galt, the Village of Blair and the Town of Hespeler in addition to its historical driving and cycling tour. Each comprehensive booklet costs \$2.00. The City of Cambridge Environmental Advisory Committee (740-4650) has produced an interesting and informative Natural Heritage Tour booklet.

If you are aware of other driving and walking tours in the watershed, please contact Warren Stauch at [mmegeo@golden.net](mailto:mmegeo@golden.net).



*The Starr Bridge on Brant County Road 2/53 will be rehabilitated, not replaced.*



## LOOK WHO'S TAKING ACTION

### Brant preserves bowstring bridge

By Oliver Watts  
County of Brant Heritage Committee

The County of Brant is refurbishing the concrete bowstring arch bridge over Fairchild Creek on Colborne Street just

east of Cainsville and Brantford.

The 75-year-old structure, which was built in 1931, needs repair and restoration. A recommendation had been made to remove it and replace it with a new box-beam structure in order to allow for wider lane widths and shoulders.

However, the Brant roads committee recognized that the bridge was the only one of its type in the county and that the concrete bowstring arch structure had considerable heritage value. They also decided that by restoring the sidewalk on the north side it could be made safe for

the bicycle traffic that has become common on county roads.

The engineering consultants have stated that the arches are strong enough for the anticipated traffic loads and that with proper maintenance, the bridge would last for another 50 years. An added bonus is that the cost of restoration is lower than the cost of replacement.

The Roads Committee took the views of the County Heritage Committee into consideration during its deliberations on the fate of the bridge. The Starr Bridge decision is an example of how, since its inception 1999, the restructured county has taken an active role in protecting and preserving its heritage in the face of significant development pressure.

## About this newsletter

This newsletter is produced bi-monthly as a communications tool by the Grand River Conservation Authority on behalf of the partners in *The Grand Strategy*. This newsletter can be seen at [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca)

### For information on *The Grand Strategy* contact:

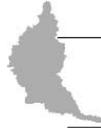
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Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of January, March, May, July, September and November. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Tax deductible donations and sponsorships toward the cost of producing this newsletter are always welcome.

**Publications Mail**  
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# The Grand Strategy Calendar

**Archaeology and the Mississaugas, May 13, Ayr** – Prof. Gary Warrick of Wilfrid Laurier University (Brantford Campus) will address the Waterloo Historical Society on the history of the Mississaugas who occupied southern Ontario during the late 18th century, including a settlement along the Grand River near Brantford. Ayr Fire Hall, Scott Street, Ayr, 1 p.m. Free.

**Sunoco Earth Day, April 22, RIM Park, Waterloo** - A family event where you can plant trees, build a bird box, see some awesome critters and learn about the environment. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at RIM Park, at University Avenue East and Park Road in Waterloo. Sponsors by Sunoco and the City of Waterloo, Earth Day Canada, the Region of Waterloo and the GRCA. Free admission. For more information contact the GRCA at (519) 621-2761 or the City of Waterloo at (519) 747-8643.

**Second Annual Earth Day Celebration, April 22, Royal City Park, Guelph** - Join the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots & Shoots members and volunteers, the City of Guelph, and Laughing Toad for an Earth Day celebration in Royal City-Silvercreek Park from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Community members of all ages are invited to participate in tree planting, invasive species removal, litter clean-up, workshops, eco-games and more! There will also be displays from local environmental groups, a raffle and entertainment from the Funky Mamas.

**Fourth Annual Silver Creek Clean-up, April 30, Howitt Park, Guelph** - The Jane Goodall Institute's Roots & Shoots office in Guelph is hosting an event to clean up Silver Creek in Howitt Park from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.. Youth from Guelph and surrounding communities are invited to join Roots & Shoots members, volunteers and neighbours as they

remove garbage from the creek and surrounding area, plant native trees and install an interpretive sign. Refreshments will be provided for all volunteers, and participants will be entered in a raffle for a variety of prizes.

**Grand River Conservation Foundation Golf Tournament, June 27, Cambridge** – This fundraising event organized by the GRCA honours the late Grant Erwin, a foundation director who died in October, 2004. Erwin's passion for the outdoors was reflected in his many efforts on behalf of the foundation,



particularly as the driving force behind The Living Classroom – Campaign for Outdoor Education. The tournament will take place at the Galt Country Club. Tickets are \$225, which includes a barbecue lunch, gala dinner, prizes, a partial charitable receipt, and a day of exceptional golf. A variety of promotional opportunities are also available for sponsors of the event. To reserve a place, sponsor, or for more information, go to [www.grandriver.ca/foundation](http://www.grandriver.ca/foundation), e-mail tournament chair Anita Hillis at [ahillis@grandriver.ca](mailto:ahillis@grandriver.ca) or call the foundation at (877) 29-GRAND.

**Postcards of the Grand River, Sept. 13, Kitchener** – A presentation by Ralph Beaumont, Communications Manager of the GRCA who will use historical postcards to explore the history of the Grand River and its communities. If you have postcards of the Grand, bring them along. Doon Heritage Crossroads, Hall of Fame Building, 10 Huron Road at Homer Watson Boulevard, Kitchener. 7:30 p.m. Free.