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# The Cottonwood Crier

Newsletter  
January/February 2024



It's been a snowy start to the year at the Mansion.

*Welcome to the Cottonwood Crier newsletter! Continue reading below for*

Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation



Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario

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## OTF Capital Grant Recipient!

Cottonwood Mansion Museum is the grateful recipient of a 2023 Ontario Trillium Fund Capital Grant, in the amount of \$96,600 to restore and increase accessibility to our front porch. The project is set to begin in March 2024. Stay tuned for project updates!

## Upcoming Events



### Valentine's Afternoon Tea

Sunday, February 11th, 2024

11:00am & 2:00pm

\$60 per guest

-Tickets Closed-

Surround yourself in historic romance at our ever-popular Valentine's Afternoon Tea at Cottonwood Mansion. Enjoy the live music by our talented Harpist while you enjoy a set menu of sandwiches, scones, and Valentine's themed treats with a selection of tea options including our signatures, the Cottonwood Heritage Blend and the Country Blueberry Blend! This event concludes with an historic house tour of the mansion and the opportunity to visit our Gift Shop.

### Victorian House Guest Experience

Saturday, March 16th, 2024

11:00am-3:00pm

\$135 per guest

TICKETS AVAILABLE

We are thrilled to be hosting another set of sensory-packed Victorian House Guest Experiences in 2024! We have been receiving some stellar reviews regarding this program, and we can't wait to share it with more guests. A Spring-themed experience will run in March, and more themed experiences will run through-out





### **Public Paranormal Investigation**

April 27th, 2024

6:00pm & 8:30pm

\$65 per guest

#### **TICKETS AVAILABLE**

Public Paranormal Investigations, run in partnership with Spirit Hunters Ontario, allow guests to explore additional spaces previously closed to the public, utilize more equipment, both traditional and high-tech, and opportunities for guided and independent EVP sessions and independent investigation.

### **Book Tickets**

## **Past Events & Updates**

### **Volunteer Appreciation Celebration!**

Saturday, January 27th, 2024

10:00am-12:00pm

A big thank you to all of our devoted volunteers, we are so appreciative of all of your hard work and contributions that made the 2023 year successful!

If you would like to volunteer at Cottonwood Mansion, please reach out to us at [cottonwoodmansion@gmail.com](mailto:cottonwoodmansion@gmail.com)! We are always looking for enthusiastic help, and have a wide range of needs and skills that would be greatly appreciated.





The Victorian House Guest Experience is live! Book your tickets today!

[Book Now](#)

## President's Message

Clayt Spears, Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation

As a former business owner and a sixty plus years in the volunteering sector, I have always been cognizant of the fact that having key personnel (and wife) backing you up is paramount to your success and Cottonwood is a prime example of this. Its volunteer board of directors consists of seven individuals who meet monthly to shape and direct the various aspects of its operation and deal with the challenges that face any old building.

With regard to staff, when I returned as a trustee in the fall of 2020, I immediately contacted a young lady who, when she was a teenager, acted at our Murder Mysteries in the role of Lillian, the daughter of William Holmes and his second wife. I remember saying to Helen; "That young lady really lives and breathes Cottonwood Mansion." Brittany Van Dalen's hiring as our curator was approved by our trustees and the first thing she said to me was; "Clayton, we need to get rid of all the clutter and bring the Mansion back to the way it was when the family left in 1903." This scared me a bit because so many things had been donated; however, she literally

Holmes family lived. She was also instrumental in having cracks in the plaster repaired and getting the front hallway and music room repainted at basically no charge. In addition to all of this, she was successful in securing a \$77,000 grant from the Trillium Foundation which was used for the purchase of the outdoor washrooms.

In the spring of 2022 Brittany advised that she had been offered a position at another one of Haldimand's historic sites and it was one she couldn't refuse. She then made the recommendation to our trustees that we consider Iona Whatford and this was unanimously approved. Since arriving at Cottonwood, Iona has hosted many major events that have brought visitors from all over Ontario, plus even from other countries. She has created and organized a gift shop featuring a wide variety of souvenirs plus our own special blends of Cottonwood teas. In addition, she was successful in securing \$96,600 Trillium Foundation grant which will be used to restore and increase accessibility to Cottonwood's front porch this coming spring.

In approximately one month, Iona will be taking a leave of absence for one year because she and Andrew will be welcoming a new addition to their family. I know everyone is directing all their best wishes to this young couple as they enter an important era in their lives. In the interim the board has approved the hiring of Casey Monkelbaan. Like both Brittany and Iona, Casey has an earnest desire to see the Mansion survive for future generations. She has actually attended some of our events and has been volunteering at our site since February of last year. Cottonwood Mansion Museum is putting out an aura of positive vibes and I look forward to 2024.

-Clayt Spears, *President*



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