

# perspectives



## Features

### At the Downtown Centre, You Might Not be Alone

By Madeline Barr

You may call it the DTC, Building T27, The Downtown Centre or the Old Courthouse. I have even heard it affectionately called the Outhouse. **What do I call it? – Haunted.**

Though it has never been proven or even investigated there have been a number of stories from a variety of sources that the building has more souls than just the living.

For those of you who have never been to the Downtown Centre, it is still complete with courtrooms and jail cells. There have been reports by other staff members of noises coming from the basement hallway where the jails cells still remain.

There have been other people who claim when they are working after hours they feel like someone is walking down the hall. They just catch a glimpse of someone out of the corner of their eye and when they run into the hall to see who it is, no one is there.

There have been conversations about working in the corner offices on the 4th floor on weekends. A woman working on a Saturday hears someone in the next office and goes over to see who it is. When she gets there no one is to be seen. The following week she has a conversation with some co-workers about her experience. She discovers that one co-worker's relative worked in that same office when the building was the courthouse and had experienced the same thing.

So who was it? The corner offices on the fourth floor were previously private offices for judges and chambers for special hearings. The judges' private offices were adjacent to each chamber and each had its own private washroom, built-in wardrobe and safe which are still there today. So, perhaps the visitor was a spirit of a judge returning to his chambers or perhaps an angered prisoner spirit looking for the judge that sentenced him to death.

Despite the rumour of hangings being carried out in the courthouse, there have been no actual executions done in the Downtown Centre. The last hanging in Hamilton was at the Wentworth County Jail (Barton Street Jail) on February 3, 1953 of 37 year old Harry Lee for the murder of Mary Rosenblatt. Nowhere close to the old courthouse. However, the last **public** hanging was on June 7, 1859 where 3000 people gathered at the gallows to watch the hanging of John Mitchell for the murder Eliza Welsh. Why is this significant? The gallows faced Jackson Street at the rear of 50 Main Street East.

Is Building T27 really haunted? It all depends on what you believe, what you choose to believe and your perception.

If you think that is interesting there have been strange happenings with other

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Downtown Centre Courthouse Ghost?

## A Quick History About Hamilton's Court Houses

**1817** – First official courthouse; a 2-story log cabin on John Street facing the current site. Ten years later the cabin was torn down and a stone inn was put in its place. The bar of the inn was a popular meeting place for the staff of the new courthouse

**1827** – Second courthouse was built on the current Main Street site. This building included holding cells where prisoners waited for trial or punishment – it was deemed inadequate by 1864.

**1877** – Cornerstone was laid for the third courthouse

**1879** – Third courthouse was opened. Total cost \$80,000

**1950s** – There was a need to accommodate the increase business and growing staff. There were many discussions on whether to add to the current courthouse or to build a new one. Mayor Lloyd D. Jackson didn't want to tear down the historic building. He stated he was, "rather fed up with the 'functional' argument. Somebody's grandmother mightn't be functional, but you don't do away with her just because she isn't."

**1956** – Court House was slated for demolition in January and all the building's fixtures were sold.

**1957** – April 12: Hamilton's Piggot Construction Company begins to build the \$3,250,000 Court House designed by Alvin Prack.

**1958** – June 18: Official opening of the 5-story courthouse.

Though it had been described in 1958 as one of the best buildings in Canada, it was not without its problems. In 1965 a fire on the top floor caused \$30,000 in damages. In 1972 a leak in the Court House roof required repairs. Though it was noted years before, nothing was done about it. What would have cost \$100 to fix at the time of the leak

## Editorial

### "If you only walk long enough"

The Cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked very good-natured, she thought: still it had very long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt it ought to be treated with respect. "Cheshire-Puss," she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider. "Come, it's pleased so far," thought Alice, and she went on. "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

- "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
- "I don't much care where—" said Alice.
- "Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.
- "—so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.
- "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."

This is my favourite passage from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. I envy and adore the Cheshire Cat, with his big grin and ability to appear and disappear at will. I wish that the cat who lives with me would suddenly share some poignant gems of wisdom, because I'm sure she is thinking them to herself. Alas, I am still trying to understand what each unique and curious meow must mean. The cat that Alice meets seems to have life all figured out. A certain sense of disillusion invades my senses when it appears that my vain efforts to get somewhere have seemingly led me down a path that was not chosen by me. Maybe if I had actually realized that the attempt to get *somewhere* was more important than knowing *where* to go, I would be more at peace with the world. Certainly, there are some days when I am preoccupied with where I want to be. On other days, I feel much more at peace when I accept that I am going *somewhere*. I always figured that Alice realized that she was on an adventure and knew it would be wise to keep moving along while asking pointed questions. Life is not so different than Wonderland. The main thing to keep in mind, according to Cheshire Cat, is that we will get *somewhere* if we only walk long enough. (It's also a good idea to be mindful of creatures with very long claws and a great many teeth. Ask questions first, before proceeding.)

# Mac Facts

## "The Building Without a Name"

By Marlene Monster



"The Building without a Name"  
McMaster T-26 in Zone 6 Parking Lot

Have you been to Zone 6 Parking Lot lately? Yes, there are cars, but if you look closely you will see a small structure that resembles three trailers stuck together. According to Maurice Forget, who has only worked at Mac for 38 years, this unit has history.

In his travels from the Applied Dynamics Lab, Civil Engineering over to the West Campus, he has seen this trailer building evolve.

It was first glued in the early 80's when several McMaster Solar researchers needed a lab. Several years later, the team dispersed, leaving the site up for grabs. Maurice's group had an eye on it for their Construction Materials Lab. However, the Hamilton-Scourge Project had just begun and secured the spot for their work. This project is an ongoing Marine archeological investigation of two schooners that sank in Lake Ontario during the War of 1812. The ghost ships Hamilton and Scourge are resting in 300 feet of water.

After the Scourge Project moved out, the trailers became vacant once again, although a single canoe still rests nearby!

Today, almost two decades later, a new occupant has moved in. Tim Horton's has converted the unit to a bakery. Space may be at a premium at McMaster, but T-26 is home to Horton's. Who knows, maybe one of these days T-26 will actually get a name. It

# Employee Health & Wellness

## Book Review: The No-Fail Diet

By Leslie Beck

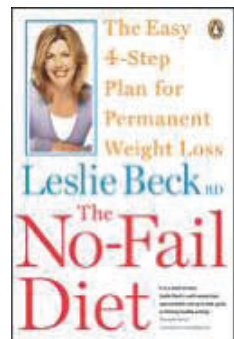
Penguin Books, 380 pages, \$28.00

Reviewed by Marlene Monster

Read this book and change your life. Leslie Beck, registered dietician and Canada's foremost nutritionist, outlines an easy 4-Step Plan for Permanent Weight Loss. In her practice she has helped over 2,000 people reach a healthy weight and maintain it for life.

Her recent book offers a 2 week Quick Start meal plan, Phase 1, for those who want to see results quickly. However, Phase 2 comprises the bulk of the No-Fail Diet, and takes 10 weeks, or so. In this Phase you can lose up to 30 pounds.

Beck includes complete daily menus for each week, followed by a chapter of 80 easy recipes. Perhaps what most distinguishes this book from others is the No-Fail 12 Week Fitness Program. Exercises in this chapter are designed to complement the diet program. Instructions are simple and each one follows the same format. Two clear photographs demonstrate set up and movement.



The No-Fail diet book is more than a "diet book". It is a healthy, balanced way of eating. And it

# Fun Stuff

Show off your knowledge about McMaster and complete the crossword! Prizes will be awarded to the first 3 complete and correct entries received. Submit your entries to Lorraine Redford c/o Wentworth House 101.

- 1st Prize: \$50 MacExpress Card
- 2nd Prize: \$30 MacExpress Card
- 3rd Prize: \$20 MacExpress Card

Download the [McMaster Crossword Puzzle](#) (36KB PDF).

Fun Stuff is a section where we post fun activities, puzzles, and contests. Check back each issue for a new challenge.

