

Newsletter February 2014



STRANGE BUT TRUE

Museums and their exhibits can, on occasion, have more impact on culture than one might think. Of particular importance were the great world expositions held in the 18th and early 19th century. They introduced new ideas on exhibiting and interaction and the logistics of dealing with mass appeal – something they had not worried about before. The 1851 Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London drew so many people that there was a need to construct temporary toilet facilities where, for the first time, one had to pay to go. Hence, the euphemism “to spend a penny” was born.

Thanks to Jack Lohman’s book *Museums at the Crossroad* [p35] for this tidbit. For anyone interested in museums and their role in the future, this book is highly recommended. Jack Lohman is the new CEO at the Royal BC Museum in Victoria and he brings world-wide experience and a very refreshing approach. The book is a compilation of essays and addresses given as key-note speaker in a variety of settings – the man speaks 12 languages. The book is available from Amazon.ca.

AGM

Come one, come all to our AGM and Potluck Supper on March 20th, 2014 at St Andrew’s Heritage Church Hall.

We’ll begin with the potluck supper at 6:30 pm followed by the AGM at 7:15 pm. Feel free to bring a guest – we encourage you to think of friends who might be interested in becoming members of the society.

Drinks will be provided but we ask that you bring your own plate and cutlery. We also ask that you bring a dish that can be sweet or savoury.

If you have any questions, contact Val at 604-463-5311 or mrmuseum@gmail.com.



MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2014, you will find a reminder note included with this newsletter. We need all your voices to support the cause of local heritage preservation and the construction of a new community history centre. We have a new option for paying – you can go to http://www.mapleridgemuseum.org/05_society/05_04_membership.html and pay using PayPal.

Registration Team.
From left to right:
Sandra Ayres, Gina
Leigh, and Julie
Koehn. Photo by Erica
Williams.



COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION NETWORKING CONFERENCE 2013

The Commission was delighted to support Heritage BC by hosting the annual Community Heritage Commission Networking Conference on November 30. We enjoyed this opportunity to showcase our Heritage Plan and our strong partnerships with the Maple Ridge Historical Society and District of Maple Ridge. On our behalf, Craig Spiers emceed the event and welcomed Heritage BC's new Executive Director Kathryn Molloy.

Maple Ridge Historical Society contributed generously to the success of the conference. President Erica Williams developed an impressive walking tour of heritage markers, signage, mosaics and public art. Erica and Dick Sutcliffe led tour groups, supported by Sandra Ayres and Gina Leigh. Thank you to Erica and Val Patenaude for the slide show that ran on the Council Chambers screen between presentations. Faye Isaac and Wendy Cook were on hand for assorted chores and housekeeping. And Faye kept the coffee flowing all day. The registration team—Sandra Ayres, Gina Leigh and Julie Koehn did a terrific job of welcoming participants.

Music was provided by CHC member Steve Ranta and Whisky Minstrels. Thank you to all the volunteers who joined this project. We appreciate the local merchants who donated door prizes and services. We look forward to strengthening our relationships with the business community. And we invite participants back to Maple Ridge to enjoy more of our hospitality and learn more about our rich history.

Learn more about the CHC at www.mapleridge.ca/128/Community-Heritage-Commission. The CHC welcomes candidates for Community-At-Large positions. Contact Lisa Zosiak lzosiak@mapleridge.ca for information. In November the Historical Society assigns two delegates to serve one year terms that begin in January. Learn more about joining the CHC as an Historical Society representative by contacting the museum director at mrmuseum@uniserve.com.

Brenda L. Smith, MRHS Delegate to CHC.



MYNTTI FAMILY STORY

Over the Family Day weekend, we received a tentative query from Eero Meskus of Finland seeking information on family members who had moved to Canada in the early years of the 20th century. Juho and Olga Myntti were married in 1900 and Juho [John] came to Canada alone in 1901 while Olga stayed back awaiting the birth of their only child, Vilho, later in the year.

They came to join the Finnish community at Sointula but soon were dissatisfied with the life there. Olga sent letters home to family describing the living conditions and her desire to move on. After some talk of going to Alaska, they instead came to Webster's Corners.

Olga's letters continued until her death in 1934. John wrote one more letter describing her as a popular local singer and performer who drew a large crowd for her funeral. The family in Finland had no further contact and knew only that Vilho appeared to have changed his name, married and had a few sons of his own.

Vilho Mynnti did change his name – to Bill Minty. He and his wife Ruth started a restaurant – Minty's Hamburgers – in 1938. The restaurant has been in continuous use ever since and is now called "Kitchen Ridge", located on Lougheed Highway just west of Tim Horton's.

Bill was also a great baseball player and was a pitcher and pitching coach until his untimely death of a heart attack during an old-timer's ball game in 1960.

The exchange of information with the family in Finland has broadened our information on the family and has provided us with these marvelous pictures of the senior Mynttis. We have shared our images of Bill Minty and his family with them. *vp*



Engagement of Olga and John Myntti, 1900. The photo was taken in Wasa – today's Vaasa – in Finland. Not in Wasa BC in East Kootenay.



Myntti family in Webster's Corners. 1912



Hair-art watch chain.

FIRST ARTIFACTS COLLECTED

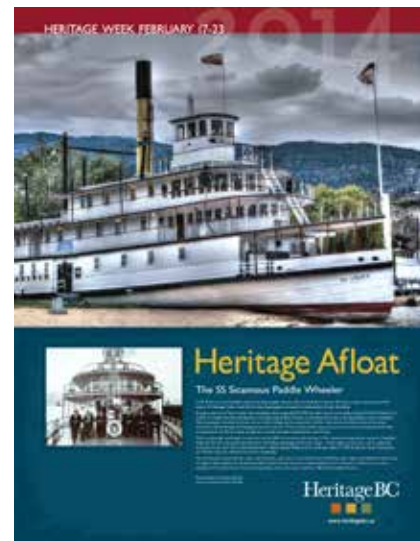
This year as we focus on celebrating 40 years of the Maple Ridge Museum, our displays will not only showcase the “history makers” who have helped shape the museum, but also look at the first artifacts accepted for donation. One of the more unique artifacts first collected is currently on display for Heritage Week at the library. This “Hair Art” Watch Chain belonged to Mrs. McLaughlin, who died in 1860, and her husband had a piece made from her hair.

“Hair art” or “hair jewelry” was immensely popular in the Victorian era. They were often made as tokens of love from hair exchanged between sweethearts, cherished friends, spouses or family members. Hair art could also be a type of a memorial. Known as mourning jewelry, it was made from the hair of someone deceased and worn by a surviving family member or loved one as a token of commemoration.

Creating hair work was a popular, mostly female, leisure pastime done at home, similar to knitting or lace making. Hair art was made at special braiding tables. Preparing the hair to be worked was critical. Hair needed to be boiled in soda water for around 15 minutes. The hair was then carefully dried, sorted, and divided

into strands of 20 or so hairs. Most pieces needed long hair, and each strand would be knotted at the end. Strands of hair were carefully positioned on top of the table and woven back and forth following the pattern. Requiring painstaking attention to detail and patience, hair work was a labour of love. Made into all sorts of items, from earrings, to bracelets, necklaces, watch chains, and brooches – hair art was limited only by the imagination of the maker.

Look for more unique pieces like this to be showcased throughout the year, in celebration of 40 years collecting history.



This year's Heritage BC week (February 17-21) theme focuses on the abundance of water surrounding British Columbia. “Most of our towns and cities have been built next to lakes and rivers, and where roads and railways were built on land, they linked to waterways to create a complete transportation network” (Heritage BC).

The museum has two cases in the library this month focusing on “Heritage Afloat”, and the third is devoted to our 40th Anniversary illustrating the early stages of building the museum through photographs and artifacts.

The exhibits will be on display until March 2nd.

DEWDNEY-ALOUETTE



Visit the Dewdney-Alouette Railway Society's diorama in the museum.

On the last Sunday of every month, members of the Dewdney-Alouette Railway Society are present to “talk trains” and operate the Diorama. Model Railroaders are welcome on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings before the last Sunday of the month.

Info: Dick Sutcliffe at 604-467-4301 or E-Mail: ras1@uniserve.com

