



MAPLE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter May 2010



JUNE OUTING



OUR Saturday, June 19th outing will be a new departure.

We will gather at Maple Meadows West Coast Express station to catch the train bus into Vancouver, where we will have a guided tour of the Vancouver Police Museum.

There will be time for lunch in town before we catch either the 3:30 or 5:30 bus home. Be prepared to sign up for this unique event next month. *sn*

PROGRAMS FOR 2010-2011

THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE already has two suggestions for speakers for the coming year of program meetings.

Members of the MRHS are invited to attend a program selection meeting on Monday, May 31 at 7:00 pm in the Brickyard office. We are usually able to handle this job with just one meeting, plus follow-up by phone and e-mail.

If you have any ideas about program topics or presenters but cannot attend the May 31 meeting, please contact Curator Allison White at the Maple Ridge Museum. *sn*



MAY 27 PROGRAM MEETING VISITING A VERY DISTANT PAST

OUR PLANNED May program meeting has changed because **Jim Wolf** will be unable to come.

Luckily for us, **Erica Williams** came to the rescue on short notice, offering to present an illustrated lecture on the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, Alberta.

She has made a recent visit there, and will compare their world class dinosaur exhibits with those in the Royal Ontario Museum. She admits that the Tyrrell is one of her favourite museums. *sn*

MUSIC ON THE WHARF 2010

We now have the line-up of performers for our summer concert series on Port Haney Wharf. There are two newcomers to the event, plus two repeat appearances. The only thing we are lacking is a full roster of donors to keep us in the black.

- July 12 *Newhouse*
- July 26 *Singer Sean Ashby*
- August 9 *Hot Moonbeams*, a young garage band from Langley
- August 23 *Creole Jazz Band*

The first three concerts start at 7:30 pm, and the last one begins at 7:00 because the days will be getting shorter by then. *sn*



THE MUSEUM and Haney House have received notification of funding for summer students for both facilities so we are interviewing at the moment and will introduce the new crop of workers in the next newsletter.

On May 6, Val did a workshop for the BC Historical Federation on our community outreach programs and it was very well received. All over the province small museums and historical societies are struggling to protect their stories and share them with their citizens on a shoestring budget so our “Cheap & Cheerful” ways were much appreciated. The Maple Ridge Historical Society’s museum operations are somewhat ahead of the curve and we have good reason to be proud of ourselves.

Val has also been working with the Planning Department on a map of Maple Ridge which shows up to 3 names per street – the original name, the first numbered grid, and the current name. For example, 232nd Street will also be labelled “Lillooet Road” and “14th Avenue.” This will be a great benefit for the community and at the museum, will certainly help visitors who used to live here in the original name or first grid days and who are thwarted by the modern numbers in finding their old homes.

We are anticipating a major invasion on May 26 & 27 with the MRSS Grade 10 tours squeezed into 2 days. About 200 Grade 10’s will tour our facilities with their teachers and will also visit Port Haney Wharf and the interpretive signage along the Heritage Walk and in Brickwood Park. We appreciate teacher Lorne Ward’s efforts in organizing this adventure every year which allows us to communicate directly with an age group we don’t see very often. It is also a money-maker for us. *vp*



Photo Colleen Faranag courtesy The News

Cecelia Felbel and her son Trevor enjoying the tea and Haney House.

MOTHER’S DAY TEA AT HANEY HOUSE

THE ANNUAL Mother’s Day Tea at Haney House took place on Sunday, May 9th and we had close to 50 people join us for tea and treats on the veranda, which was up from last year’s attendees.

The weather cooperated nicely, and the gardens were a great backdrop for the quilt displays showcased by the Ridge Meadows Quilters’ Guild. The extra punches of colour brighten up Haney House, and the Guild’s hand work demonstrations inside the house and on the lawn added a final touch, making the visitor experience all the more memorable.

Many thanks to the Ridge Meadow’s Quilters’ Guild and to the volunteers who donated their time to make the event a success. *aw*

BC HISTORICAL FEDERATION

ANDREA LISTER—member, webmaster, and family historian—recently became the editor of *BC History*, the quarterly magazine of the BC Historical Federation. **Sheila Nickols** has written for this journal before as did **Fred Braches**, who received an award this month for the best article published in the journal in 2009.

As a member society the Maple Ridge Historical Society offers annual subscriptions to this magazine at a reduced rate: \$18.00 for four issues. *vp*



A school class admiring one of Nick Dyck's impressive creatures.

DYCK'S DINOSAUR PARK

IN HONOUR of this month's speaker's topic, we present our own local version of a dinosaur attraction.

Nick Dyck, an immigrant who came from Russia in the 1920s, arrived in BC in 1946 and took a job with the Hammond Cedar Division of BC Forest Products. He worked as paymaster and in first aid for the next 24 years. He married Tillie Holman in 1949. Their home was southeast of the corner of 203rd and Lougheed.

His interest in dinosaurs began in 1950 when he developed an enthusiasm for the study of prehistoric creatures. His studies led to the idea that recreating dinosaurs at something near their original size would be a way to share the information in a way that would enthuse and attract the public. He was right.

As he said in an interview with the *Maple Ridge - Pitt Meadows Gazette* in 1954, "There are tremendous possibilities in creating these prehistoric monsters from the standpoint of the tourist. Some people have the audacity to fence in a skunk, goat, rabbit, mice and such other things and charge admission to see them."

Working with pipe, angle iron and cement, he created his first dinosaur—22 ft. long and 10 ft. high—, a Brontosaurus, which was soon joined by a Tyrannosaurus.

Both were great favourites with visiting children. By 1958, he had added eight more dinosaurs plus representations of cave

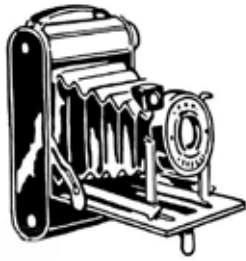
men, a moa, and a Sasquatch. Since the park was attracting a lot of attention, "Dyck's Dinosaur Park" was officially opened in 1958.

As Nick didn't retire until 1970, it fell to his wife Tillie to man the ticket office and oversee the park. They were always adding new features, including a fossil house that held items collected on their travels plus other exotica like a dried tarantula and a preserved baby monkey in a jar.

After 14 years of amusing and amazing the children of Hammond and a wide range of other visitors, the Dycks decided that Nick's age and health no longer permitted the heavy work needed to maintain and expand the park. The figures were put up for sale in the hope that a local buyer could be found. In the end, the dinosaurs went to the "Flintstones" park on the highway to Hope. The fossil collection was donated to Douglas College in New Westminster. Nick Dyck passed away in 1981, with Tillie following in 1998.

If you were one of those children who visited the park and have fond memories or a good story or two about Dyck's Dinosaur Park, please write them down and send them to the Maple Ridge Museum. Dyck's Park was a unique element in our history and we know too little about it. *ec*

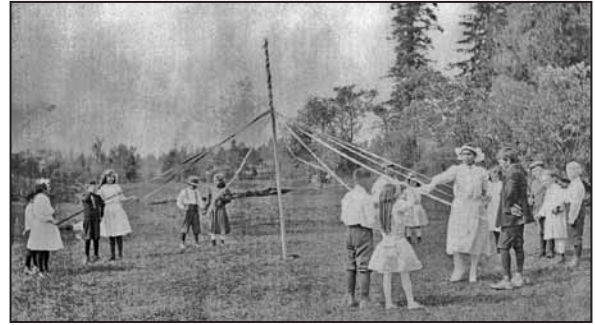
OUR CAMERAS PERFORM



IN OUR OBJECT COLLECTION, we have items that are duplicates and that have no particular local story that we retain for teaching and loan purposes or for display in places

where security isn't absolute. Occasionally we loan items to theatre groups who need props for period productions.

From June 9 to July 17, two of our folding cameras will be appearing in the play "Twentieth Century" at the Metro Theatre in Vancouver. Described as a "thrilling funhouse ride", the play takes place in 1933 on a train from Chicago to New York. For more details and ticket information see www.metrotheatre.org or phone 604-266-7191. *vp*



MAY DAY CELEBRATION

EACH of our original neighbourhoods had their own May Day celebration, most often centred around the community school. In this picture, the children from Albion School in 1913 are performing their Maypole dance in a field near their school. The taller, dark-haired girl towards the right of the picture is Adele Baker, daughter of Peter Baker after whom Baker Road, now 240th Street, was named. *vp*



WHONNOCK'S POST OFFICE CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF SERVICE

AT THE ADVENT of the railroad Noble Oliver coming from Eastern Canada built at Whonnock a general store (left part on picture) and home (right part) not far from the future station. In September 1884 the Post Office Inspector recommended that a post office be established in

the store. "It can be served with mail from the railway from once to three times a week as may be found convenient." A year later, on August 1st, 1885, Noble Oliver was appointed postmaster in Whonnock.

Earlier post offices had been opened at The Ridge (1876), Port Haney (1884) and Port Hammond (1885), but Whonnock is the only one in Maple Ridge that can boast 125 years of uninterrupted postal service to the community. When the old general store built by Noble Oliver burned down in March of 1916, the post office moved to the location where it still stands today.

The present postmaster is Sue Schulze—the only remaining "post master" in the Lower Mainland. Sue is planning a grand celebration at the post office on Friday, July 30, supported by the Whonnock Community Association.

Looking forward to seeing you there! *fb*

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

