

President's Report 2008

During the two years in which I have been President we have come a long way in the process of raising Roedde House Museum to a whole new level.

Attendance

The 2003 Janzen Report sets a target for 2008 of 2,400 visitors. I am glad to report that the number actually achieved was 2,600. Initiatives now under development should result in a significant increase in that figure as our target audiences increase.

Cultural Diversity

Thanks to funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage we have started the process of reaching out to the Francophone and other culturally significant communities. Assisted by our consultant Janet Leduc we have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with La Maison de la Francophonie whereby they will assist us in an ambitious initiative to become a bilingual provider of our services. This should increase our attraction not only to Francophone tourists but also the extensive and increasing local Francophone school system. This initiative was launched at a signing ceremony attended by elected representatives of all levels of Government followed by a Radio Canada broadcast from the House. Subsequently the Provincial Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations, Joan McIntyre, visited the House to express her support for this initiative. Room by room guides are now available in English and French, with other languages to follow, starting with German, the first language of Gustav and Matilda Roedde. We are in the process of ensuring the integration of this initiative with our schools program.

Schools

This program, which has been recovering from the crisis resulting from litigation respecting the funding for field trips, is about to be taken to a new level. A grant from Telus, supplemented by our own resources, has funded not only a revitalised curriculum, Window to the Past, but also a marketing and publicity campaign, orchestrated by Kevin McKeown, which has resulted in prime time media exposure. A school visit has been recorded along with other events at the House, for the production of DVDs of varying lengths by producer Daniella Sorrentino. These will be used for marketing the House to school audiences, tourists (and potential users of the House for private events). We are in the process of further developing the curriculum to appeal to additional school grades and for use at the secondary level, along with the many ESL schools which have started to notice us as a serious learning opportunity.

Entertainment

We have now completed our second season of our redesigned Parlour Entertainments. Following this success, we will shortly commence plans for next season, hopefully including repeats of some full house performances. This program is entirely run by volunteers, led this year by Janet Bingham.

Collection

Our collection, administered by us on behalf of the City of Vancouver, has required little modification this year though it is better displayed. Some targeted acquisitions have been made, frequently assisted by much appreciated donations. We are intent on improving the quantity and quality of items on display. Our interactive "Please touch" display in the Collections room has been well received, particularly by school age visitors.

Finance

As our Treasurer's report will indicate, our financial base is sound. However, the demands on our resources will increase, particularly as we become more accessible through longer opening hours, and as the use of technology increases. We must seek grants and donations to a greater extent than before just as this challenge becomes more difficult.

Human Resources

Our Manager, Helene Perndl, joined us a year ago and has settled in well. Last summer, thanks to the Federal Government Student Summer Jobs Program, she was assisted by Angela Leung. Fortunately, when her studies permit, Angela has been able to continue with us on an as required basis. We could not operate without our numerous volunteers. Our Board members frequently do double duty, engaging additionally in the delivery of our programs. I must mention particularly Janet Bingham, Sue Erb, and Chantel O'Neil who, along with myself, form the Executive, an addition to their other work for the Museum. Janet requires special mention. She was Roedde House's primary founder, and literally wrote the book. She has indicated her intention to retire as Vice President, though not from the Board, and will continue her involvement in specific programs such as school visits. Her contribution continues to be unmatched. To all of the above I wish to express my sincerest thanks.

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony Norfolk, President