

CELEBRATING VANCOUVER'S PAST FOR THE FUTURE



Roedde House Museum

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Roedde House Preservation Society

President's Report for 2009

When visiting other house museums, I usually encounter velvet ropes prohibiting entry to rooms and "do not touch" signs. We are doing better. Our visitors are invited to enter all rooms, and are encouraged to handle some of our artefacts. This approach is being increasingly adopted elsewhere.

The House

Our focus in 2009 has been the upstairs bathroom. It is believed that this was fitted out with running water in the 1920's. During the renovations carried out 20 years ago some modifications were made which were not in sympathy with the original style, and we have for some time been unable to use the room for technical reasons. Plans were initiated in 2009 which are resulting currently in a thorough restoration of this room to a usable state. For much of this we have to thank Bill and Maureen Tymkiw, and Phaeden and Maureen Arvantidis, along with the City of Vancouver. We have also developed plans for significant improvements to the office furnishings. Installation is imminent, thanks again to Bill and Maureen Tymkiw. Late in 2009 we became acutely aware that our two computers are nearing the end of their useful life and must be replaced shortly. A replacement strategy is under development. We are very much aware that we should have in place a professionally developed Conservation Plan for the building. This is something for which we will actively seek funding this year.

Collections and Exhibitions

We have introduced a schedule of temporary exhibitions, aided by the acquisition of an additional display case for the parlour. Organised by Maureen Tymkiw, Evelyn Hortobagyi and Julia Michaelis, our Victorian Valentines cards were followed by Easter bonnets, then by purses and gloves, and then dolls. A number of lenders generously chose to donate their items to the Museum. Cam Cathcart was able to obtain the loan of items from the B.C. Regiment (D.C.O.) Museum Society to supplement our own collection of militaria for a Remembrance exhibition in November. In December our collection of Victorian Christmas Cards was displayed, and we set up a historic winter sports display in preparation for the Olympics. Exhibits are now photographed with the intention of adding to our website. The acquisition of additional mannequins at a very reasonable cost will enable us to increase our clothing displays.

Public Programs

2009 was a challenging year for the tourist industry generally. We held our own. Our room by room guides in English, French and German have been well received. Subject to fundraising, we intend to introduce audio tours next. Highlights of our Parlour entertainment program were the concerts staged in cooperation with City Opera Vancouver and also two performances by Carolyn Finlay and Don Mowat, the first celebrating the correspondence between Robert and Clara Schumann, the second the annual Christmas Dickens readings in which Cam Cathcart participates. We are very much open to proposals for such entertainment.

School Programs

The Museum is unquestionably an educational facility. In addition to educating the general public we educate school students, so far only at elementary level. In 2009 we started development of a curriculum targeted at secondary students. Our preliminary work indicates that Grade 10 English and Grade 10 Social Studies are good prospects. Additionally, thanks to Nina Ho, a teacher at Eric Hamber, and to Photographer Jonathan Cruz, assisted by stylist David Wilkes, a grade 12 Fashion Designer course has been developed, based on our clothing collection. Jonathan's resulting photography already enhances our website. More visits will necessitate more Docents to supplement our much appreciated faithful cadre, and our complement has been increasing if slowly. Jenny Yule, now assisted by Katherine Hume, manages this program.

Marketing and Audience Development

In 2009 we put significant efforts into developing materials for promoting the Museum. We have developed a new promotional flier for widespread distribution. Our new website is up and running. Our DVD promoting school tours was completed and distributed to all Vancouver's elementary schools and will soon be reachable on our website. Our DVD promoting tourist visits is virtually complete. Kevin McKeown kindly donated his voice-over on both, following Janet Bingham's scripts. We now have a presence on Facebook. We expect that all these initiatives will start to pay off during the current year. We have been developing plans for our outreach to the Francophone community along with its associated school systems, an initiative led by Jean-Francois Jutras. The translation of curriculum and marketing materials has been facilitated by an Olympic Legacies Now grant, and the possibility of additional assistance with this project is being pursued.

Human Resources

Our Manager, Helene Perndl, covers the day to day operations of the Museum. Last summer, thanks to the Federal Government Student Summer Jobs Program, she was assisted by Hannah Hart. When her studies permitted, Angela Leung, the previous year's summer student, was until recently 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 Sue Erb, and Chantel O'Neil who, along with myself, form the Executive, an addition to their other work for the Museum. Under Sue's leadership we have been increasing our volunteer base and we have identified additional Board positions, which we are in the process of filling. We are sad that our Treasurer, Chantel O'Neil is moving on but she leaves the position running smoothly for which we thank her. Sharon Sprinkhuysen, CGA, has agreed to join us as Treasurer.

Finance and Fundraising

While our finances remain sound, we incurred significant market development expenses in 2009. We have received the third instalment of our three year Provincial Government grant. This is a significant \$25,000 per year from the Human and Social Services envelope of gaming grants. However, the criteria for such grants is currently under review; (Museums have been mentioned in a related policy release). We are in the process of applying for support from a number of foundations and have been exploring the possibility of establishing a foundation which could be built from legacies, particularly those from Roedde family, as well as others.

We have grounds for quiet satisfaction that the calendar year 2009 has been characterised by positive progress on a number of fronts simultaneously, and it is heartening to hear that this is being recognised.

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony Norfolk, President