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President's Report for 2012

I am happy to report that 2012 was a year of achievement.

The House

Development of the long anticipated Conservation Plan has just been completed. This essential planning tool was cost shared between Roedde House and the City of Vancouver. It establishes what is required for the preservation of the House in future. Inside the house we have installed modern efficient cool lighting in all display cases. The cost of completing the storage and display fixtures in the second floor collections room is to be shared between Roedde House and the Federal Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Cultural Spaces Fund.

Collections and Exhibitions

There were no major donations of items in 2012, though a few small items were accessioned. An exhibit of "Hats", smaller than last year, was kicked off with a fashion show by Ivan Sayers once again. Maureen Tymkiw and Evelyn Hortobagyi are to be congratulated. The pre-1930 weddings display is in the collections room. An exhibit displaying pre-1930 photography, including a quantity of German cartes de visite and parlour portraits, together with period photographic equipment, occupies one of the renovated display cases in the den. During November, as in previous years, with Cam Cathcart's assistance, we mounted a Remembrance exhibit of World War I militaria. This was made possible through loans from the B.C. regiment (D.C.O) Museum Society.

Public Programs

Our attendance confirmed the upward trajectory which has been consistent every year except for 2009. Open houses "by donation" on Victoria Day and B.C Day continue to be popular. We also participated in Culture Days in September. Rentals, particularly for weddings, have increased steadily. In March, Osimous Theatre rented the House for performances of Ibsen's Hedda Gabler. In October, Itsazoo Productions rented the House once again for performances of "Debts" by Mack Gordon, set in the House. Main floor entertainments continued to be varied. There were two readings, including the traditional Dickens at Christmas, and a book launch of the Joe Fortes Biography, "Our Friend Joe". While there were only three musical events in 2012, a fourth event was a fundraiser for a significantly more ambitious Second Sunday Concert Series planned for 2013.

Schools

In addition to those elementary schools who come every year, we are now visited by a number of inner city schools. The Vancouver Foundation (the McGrane -Pearson Fund) pays for transportation and entry fees. Now that our curriculum is available in French we have started recruiting francophone docents; our first French school tour has been booked. We also receive a number of visits from English as a second language schools. We are dependent, of course, on our much appreciated docents, many of whom have been long time contributors to the program. They are coordinated by Jenny Yule.

Marketing and Audience Development

Our bilingual, English-French website was launched early in 2011, receiving rave reviews. A tremendous increase in the number of visits to the website has been recorded. It is continually reviewed and updated at some cost. Our new rack cards, now with a QR code, have been supplemented by a revised version of our general information flyer in the tri-fold format. Our social media presence has been expanding quite dramatically.

Human Resources

Benedicte Schoepflin continues as part time Manager. Our organizational review advised that we should plan to employ “full time or equivalent” staff. In 2011 we chose the “equivalent” route by retaining Margaret Young as Programme Assistant, also on a part-time basis. Margaret is responsible for recruiting and deploying volunteers, providing personal tours, and marketing the Museum in the neighbourhood and to the tourist community. The number of volunteers recruited and retained has increased. They perform a range of tasks which would otherwise remain undone, and the opportunity for increased interaction with visitors improves the overall experience of visits all around. My fellow members of the Executive, Vice-President Philip Waddell, Secretary Sue Erb, and Treasurer Nikhila Prakash, have put in exceptional efforts. Nikhila will be resigning from the Board, but hopes to continue volunteering when time permits. In addition to all these responsibilities, Sue has managed Human Resources and has been responsible for all collection records and acquisitions. She is much appreciated for this and as a Tea and Tour Volunteer. Philip actively promotes public and school tours and maintains local relationships. Board Member Chris Stocker gives tours one day a week and continues his research into “Mr. Roedde’s Neighbours”. While resigning from the Board, his other volunteer work, including his research, will continue. We thank Nikhila and Chris for their contributions to the Board deliberations. Cam Cathcart, Theresa Leger and Erica Whalen, longstanding volunteers, joined the Board this year, adding this responsibility. Our chief founder and incumbent Board member Janet Bingham watches over us as the conscience of the enterprise. Succession Planning is always an essential process. Volunteers are much appreciated; we could not operate without them. Any resignation from the Board necessitates recruitment of a replacement.

Finance and Fundraising

Recently we have been able to make some significant capital expenditures to improve the Museum. These have to be funded by legacies, donations, and also grants from levels of governments, which usually require us to match dollar for dollar.

Particular thanks for generosity are due to: the Vancouver Foundation (the Roedde House Endowment and the McGrane-Pearson Fund), Mark De Silva, Marlena (Roedde) Swall, Betty Lou Sully, Chris Stocker, Janet Bingham, Councillor Tim Stevenson, with special thanks to the German Consulate General. The estate of the late Cydney Holcomb, a Roedde descendent, contributed materially as well.

Our operating income has to come from day to day operations, including rentals and special events and donations help too. For the last decade, our public and school tours have been supported by an essential and much appreciated “Gaming” Grant. In 2012 this was all in balance. However the grant for this year was recently refused and this is under appeal.

We must plan for future expenditures. For example, the recently completed Conservation Plan has identified a number of interior building maintenance issues which we will need to address over the next few years. These will require expenditures based on significant continued fundraising, including grant applications.

Respectfully submitted, Anthony Norfolk, President