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### **President's Report for 2014**

This Report covers the 2014 calendar year and the start of 2015. This has been a steady as you go period. The number of visits has significantly increased. Our financial position is healthy. And we are about to celebrate the "silver" anniversary of our opening 25 years ago on 12 May 1990.

#### **The House:**

Our wonderful woodwork has been revitalised during the last two years. We have nearly completed the process of replacing contemporary lighting fixtures more in keeping with the style of the house, yet using more efficient LED bulbs as these become more available in appropriate styles. We are being guided by an energy efficiency report provided by Tourism Vancouver and BC Hydro, and will be applying for a grant from the City to assist in implementing additional recommendations compatible with the nature of the house. Preparations for the 25th anniversary, and discussions with the Parks Board staff, prompted us to check archived photos of the impressive plantings originally around the house, notably in the Roedde Garden with its gazebo funded by the Garden Club of Vancouver. Parks Board budget cuts year after year have resulted in the loss of much of this colour. Board staff will see what can be done to reverse this decline in recognition of the anniversary. The bench near the front of the house, which Janet Bingham arranged in recognition of Elizabeth O'Kiely, now has Janet's name on it too, recognising their close collaboration leading to the founding of the Museum. Maintenance of the exterior fabric of the house continues to require attention by the City of Vancouver.

#### **Collections and Exhibitions:**

There were some small acquisitions during the year, but one major item was a German clock placed in the Parlour. This was donated by a great grand-daughter of Gustav and Matilda. Katherine Reeder is one of our notable and appreciated sustaining supporters. Our major exhibit was developed by Liberté Reilly, previously a volunteer, who was with us for the summer under the Canada Summer Jobs program. It presented three Vancouver pioneer families from different cultures; the Roedde family with their German origins and a focus on the Roedde Printers printing and book binding business, the Lam family with their Chinese origins and their Ho Sun Hing Printing Co business (only recently closed), and the occupants of the Kanaka Ranch on Char'Coal Harbour (where the Bayshore now sits) with their Hawaiian origins. At the exhibit launch Jan Walls spoke about the development of Chinese characters, and Jean Barman spoke about the Kanaka presence here. We are developing plans for similar exhibits presenting ethnic and cultural groups who were present in Vancouver during the time that the Roeddes lived in the house. During November our customary World War I Remembrance exhibit was mounted by Cam Cathcart using artifacts loaned by the B.C. Regiment (D.C.O.) Museum Society. Again in the Summer Ivan Sayers presented a sellout fashion show, as usual with the assistance of Maureen Tymkiw and Evelyn Hortobagyi, both former Board members.

#### **Public Programs:**

Sunday Tea and Tours continue to be popular. By prior arrangement we happily provide tea and cookies to organised tour groups including ESL groups. We experienced a significant increase in the number of visits by general tourists, perhaps assisted by the comparative value of the U.S. dollar. We track where our visitors come from with U.S.A. at the top of the list. While we are normally closed on Mondays, when public holidays fall on a Monday we sometimes open up relying on volunteers, perhaps flying an appropriate flag to indicate that the entry fee is waived in favour of "by donation" payment. Indeed, during May in celebration of our anniversary we propose to operate on "by donation" basis. Through collaboration with the Pacific Canada Heritage Centre - Museum of Migration we have been able to offer tours in Mandarin and Cantonese. We now offer written room-by-room guides in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Korean, Japanese and Chinese (traditional and simplified forms). Our second full season of second Sunday classical and second Thursday Jazz concerts was a signal success, and the third season is well under way. We are in the process of seeking additional funds to improve the rewards for the performers involved. We offer a unique setting for cultural events and performances. For some, while formally rentals, we actively support and promote them, for which we are compensated. Jolene Cumming of the Stanley Park Ecological Society presented "Stanley Park Postcard Secrets" using 60 rare photos. Renée Bucciarelli staged "The Belle of Amherst" (Emily Dickinson) over two weeks.

#### Schools:

Though interrupted for a short time last fall due to a strike, the program of visits by schools recovered quickly. Once again funding from the Vancouver Foundation (McGrane-Pearson Fund) allowed an enrichment of the normal program for inner city schools. This provided elimination of transportation costs and our own entry fees, coupled with a visit to the Stanley Park Ecological Society in Stanley Park. Our docents are now required to go through criminal record checks as a matter of course.

#### Marketing and Audience Development:

Increased programming requires that we up our game in this area, and we seem to have done so effectively, with the work mainly done out of the office. Our website requires constant updating and attention. A mobile website has been created since so many of our visitors now rely on their smart phones for information. Social media has to be followed, again by the office. It is some time since we had the benefit of professional guidance in this field of expertise. We will be retaining the services of a professional publicist in connection with our anniversary events, and expect to benefit from this over a longer term.

Our Salon Hour for Tourism industry representatives (including local B&Bs) was well received and will be repeated. We have become increasingly engaged in community events in our immediate neighbourhood (Barclay Square, Gordon Neighbourhood House) and the West End generally. We now have a reciprocal membership with the Royal B.C. Museum, and hope to have more such.

#### Human Resources:

Our Manager Sheila Giffen, and our Program Assistant Alyssa Sy de Jesus have now been employed by us for a year and have settled in. Alyssa who looks after volunteers, along with Liberté in the Summer, both started with us as volunteers. We retain Catherine Laub (Classical series) and Daniel Reynolds (Jazz series) to act as our Impresarios for those series. In addition to myself as Board Chair, Board members Sue Erb, Secretary, Josh Philipchalk, Treasurer, along with Vice-Presidents Billie-Ann Woo and Matthew Thiesen form the Executive, performing additional supervisory and daily decision making duties as necessary. Sue has produced reliable records of our meetings for many years. Among other Board members Philip Waddell represents the school program, gives tours, and connects us to the McGrane-Pearson fund. Lloyd McGregor looks after the website and has developed the mobile website, Paul O'Brien-Hill watches over maintenance of the house including the woodwork which now looks a lot healthier, Olga Kuznetsova having stepped back as Treasurer still gives us the benefit of her wisdom. Tammy Isaacson has been promoting performances, but now has to step off the Board due to greater responsibilities at the Alliance for Arts and Culture. I should mention too that Billie-Ann has both developed marketing plans, and has now taken on the task of chairing the committee tasked with preparations for the anniversary celebrations. With only Tammy departing there is a high level of stability on the Board arising out of their collective consent to re-election. Working closely as I do with all of those mentioned I want to thank them all very personally for the time and effort which they have provided to the Museum. It is my hope that my successor will come from their ranks. That is not to forget two essential groups of supporters not listed above. Many of our school docents have been with us for years, led by Jenny Yule. Special mention should be made of Betty Done who is unwell. Then there is a cadre of other volunteers, some short term some long term, providing tour guiding and other essential assistance; we could not operate without all this help. Many thanks for that.

#### Finance and Fundraising:

Our financial position remains sound. Donors have been generous, particularly in support of the concert series; very much appreciated. A number of grant applications require that we demonstrate our ability to fund 50% of a project ourselves, and this requires that we set aside or reserve that 50% before we are eligible. Such funds are not available for operating expenses or other projects accordingly. Such is not the case for our much appreciated Provincial Government Direct Access "gaming" grant which funds our school and general tourism programs. We have a long wish list, and will need to fundraise for much of that, for example as our technical hardware and software comes up for replacement. Mention of Planned Giving will come as no surprise, reminding that the Holcomb Fund at the Vancouver Foundation was established as an endowment to support the Museum and it can be added to by testamentary provisions in the wills of other supporters.

Respectfully submitted. Anthony Norfolk, President