



President's Report for 2015

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This is the last report written under the old Presidency. After nearly nine years a new President was installed in January 2016. A new generation has taken over. The dominant feature of 2015 was the celebration of 25 years since the museum opened on 12 May 1990. Genevieve Raiche, who developed our logo, designed a variation to reflect this anniversary. A special exhibit is reported elsewhere. The public was encouraged to celebrate with us when we waived entry fees for the month of May. We were curious to see whether donations matched the income foregone. They did not. Our celebratory garden party was attended by representatives of the Municipal, Provincial and Federal levels of Government. The Parks Board paid special attention to the condition of the Roedde Garden next to the House.

The House:

After several years in process the collections room was completed with the addition of the final display cases and storage for the clothing collection. This final stage was cost shared with the Federal Department of Canadian Heritage. That Department has been very supportive of us over the years. The scullery has to look as traditional as possible while being functional for our operations and those of visiting caterers. It has been repainted. We took the opportunity to install more energy efficient stove and fridge, consistent with our initiative to improve energy efficiency overall, aiming at reducing operating costs. Upgrading of computer hardware and software is constant, and room by room guides can now be accessed from cellphones. Our aging folding chairs used for events such as concerts have been replaced by stacking chairs which are noticeably more comfortable.

Collections and Exhibitions:

The two additional display cabinets now installed in the collections room were immediately put to use. We can now display our historic cameras along with older photographic technology. Our major exhibit was developed by visiting curator Racan Souiedan. "Souvenirs of Howe Sound: A History of Local Tourism" incorporated Roedde family records about their time at their Horseshoe Bay cabin into the context of growing public enjoyment of Bowen Island and Howe Sound. Professor Jack Little spoke at the launch about the Union Steamship Company's involvement in all this. We continue to intersperse larger new exhibits with smaller displays using artefacts from our own collection such as Victorian seasonal cards. We also remount previous exhibits with some modifications. In November we customarily present a Remembrance exhibit with artefacts borrowed from the BC Regiment (D.C.O.) Museum. As we accumulate more Roedde family memorabilia we will now be able to display more of this in the Den.

Public Programs:

We keep track of 10 categories of visitors, including a significant number who enter "by donation" or free of charge. While our numbers have for some time been ahead of the targets laid out in our Strategic Plan, the numbers for 2015 were notably higher. This supported our decision to retain professional assistance with publicising the anniversary events. An additional factor was our participation in the Vancouver Tourism Passport Challenge. Our two concert series, Classical and Jazz, ran most successfully for a third year. A notable event in the Classical series was the performance of "Cornet" Viktor Ullman's legacy from Theresienstadt. Farmstead Days formed part of the Anniversary program. Again we participated in the National Culture Days events.

Schools:

This program operated in spring and fall almost at capacity. Barclay Manor assists in staging the groups. The generosity of the Vancouver Foundation (McGrane-Pearson Fund) enables us to provide transportation and free entry for Inner City Schools, coupled with an expanded experience in Stanley Park courtesy of the Stanley Park Ecology Society. We have a team of highly experienced docents for this program.

Marketing and Audience Development:

Maintenance of our website and active participation in social media engages a significant amount of staff time, along with the customary media releases and postering related to our many events. We do not engage in paid advertising, but take every opportunity for free publicity and media exposure (in one recent instance in San Francisco). Our yearly Salon Hour for tourism representatives is now established and is well attended. Our Museum shop has a limited quantity of offerings which do sell. There is room for improvement, and a new President with a background in marketing will see an enhancement in that area of activity.

Human Resources:

There have been significant changes. Our Manager for 18 months, Sheila Giffen, took an opportunity to commence a doctoral program at UBC. Sorry to see her go, we congratulate her, and wish her well. Before she left last summer she assisted in the process of selecting her successor. Annika Penner came to us after four years at Gulf of Georgia Cannery in Steveston. She has settled in well, working with Alyssa Sy de Jesus who continues as part time Program Assistant, managing our valued volunteers. Carly Whetter was our Canada Summer Jobs placement. Catherine Laub was our impresario for the Classical Concert series, and Daniel Reynolds for the Jazz series. On the Board, in January 2016 Anthony Norfolk passed the President's baton to Billie-Ann Woo, previously Vice-President, and the organiser of the 25th Anniversary celebrations. Sue Erb (herself a past President) continued as Secretary and the Board member responsible for the management of the collection and acquisitions. Josh Philipchalk continued as Treasurer, but most regrettably we will need to find his successor late this year. Philip Waddell is a school docent and the Board liaison to that program which has for a long time been managed by Jenny Yule. Philip is our connection to the McGrane-Pearson fund, and has recently been conducting research to correct a number of erroneous myths surrounding the Roedde family history. Lloyd McGregor is both a school docent and also our technology chief on the Board. Paul O'Brien-Hill has been orchestrating the maintenance of the interior of the House and planning our energy efficiency upgrade, but will be leaving the Board to move to Halifax. He will be missed indeed. Silmara Albi is responsible for co-ordinating the development and installation of exhibitions, currently taking maternity leave for a short while. We have a wonderful cadre of volunteers (which includes the Board members). Without them we could not operate. There are too many to list here, but a couple should be mentioned: Liberte Reilly started with us as a volunteer, became our Summer Student in 2014, and more recently was of material assistance in the anniversary program. Also, Natasha Holm connected to us when she was production manager for a play at the house. Ever since that she has designed on demand all the event posters which we have asked her for. We regret the demise of two significant members: Leonard McCann was one of our five founders, and maintained support for us until the end. (He gave us our collection of Victorian Valentine cards). Betty Done was one of our original school docents and remained with us until her health failed. We are most grateful to all of the above for the time and effort which they have provided, some over many years.

Finance and Fundraising:

Our financial position remains sound even though we did incur a deficit in 2015. We will attempt to eliminate that in 2016. In large measure this sound position overall is due to the continued support which we receive from the Provincial Government through Direct Access – gaming – program. This supports our tourism and school operations and is much appreciated. This year we are being moved to a different envelope within that field, and we have been given specific funds which assist us in transitioning to a different calendar for applications. The Holcomb fund at the Vancouver Foundation contributes materially to our income. We invite anyone reviewing their wills to consider donating to it. These days many grants are made on a 50% cost shared basis, similar to the Federal funding which completed our collections room. We are about to apply to the City of Vancouver for an Infrastructure Grant to perform work on the House in order to improve our energy efficiency. This means that we have to accumulate our share of the costs in advance of application. These funds are accordingly not available for operations. Meanwhile some may think us better off than we are. Our two concert series are dependent on specific fundraising in order to avoid being a drain on other operations. Consequently we are most grateful to those who have been sustaining these regular performances which are well supported. We always have a long wish list of projects in need of support, and we have been quite successful in working our way through this list. As mentioned above we will soon need to find Josh's successor as Treasurer, a key position filled by him with distinction.

Respectfully Submitted. Anthony Norfolk, Past President. Billie-Ann Woo, President.