

# FLU, FIRE, FLOOD, FINANCIAL FEARS,\* AND FLU... AGAIN?

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## Without a Space

In February 2020, the PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives unveiled [Port Coquitlam's F Words: The Story of our City's Early Years](#). This exhibit examines four ruinous events in our City's history beginning with the letter 'F'. Can you guess which one is first?

The Spanish Flu arrived in Port Coquitlam in 1918 when infected soldiers travelling to the Pacific Coast introduced the City's first cases. When developing the exhibition, we were unaware of how relevant our topic was going to be. Only a month after opening *The F Words*, PoCo Heritage shut its doors with the arrival of the 'Coronavirus Flu' in our own community.

## Connect then Collect

With the museum and archives closed to the public, moving our programming online was the only option to maintain our community connection. Within a week of closure, we launched our first virtual pandemic program, [QUARANTALES](#). A "quarantale" is any creative work, written in any language and accompanied by images, illustrations, etc., that shares community member COVID-19 experiences. The intent of this program is to engage our entire diverse community, which we feel we have achieved with submissions received from seniors, new immigrants, and even secondary school classes!

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\* In 1920, a fire burned down businesses along Kingsway Avenue. The blaze ironically broke out in the fire station (originally Kelly Hall, PoCo's first city hall), damaging homes and storefronts. A year later, the Coquitlam River flooded, destroying much of downtown. In 1923, the municipality faced financial ruin when it was sued for fire losses. Because of the economic downturn and the community's troubled start, aggressive promotion to invest in Port Coquitlam didn't pan out quite as expected.

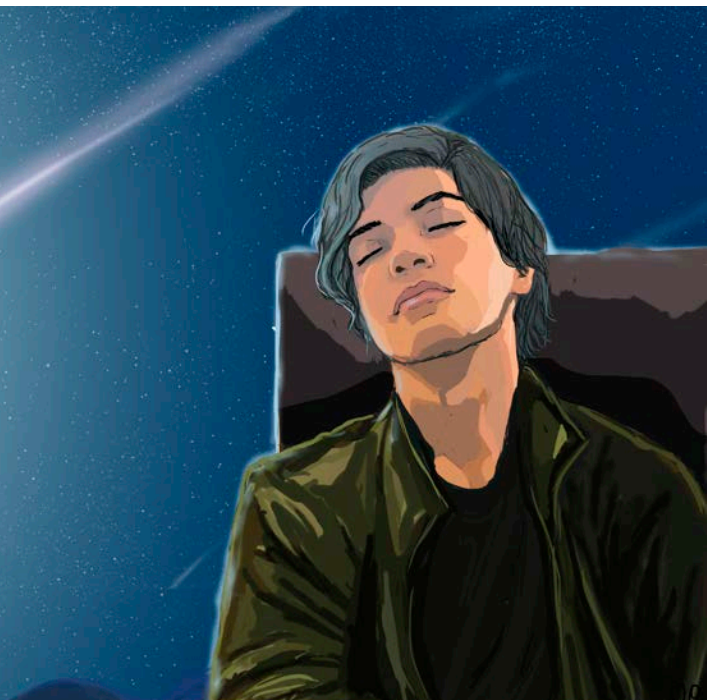
### Big Problem, Small Museum

For a small community museum, going completely virtual in a short period of time is a challenge, even without the added pressures of a pandemic. The PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives is managed and operated by a single full-time employee who is supported by volunteer subcommittees and the PoCo Heritage and Cultural Society's Board of Directors. For this small team, transitioning our museum from a physical to a virtual space seemed like a daunting and unachievable task.

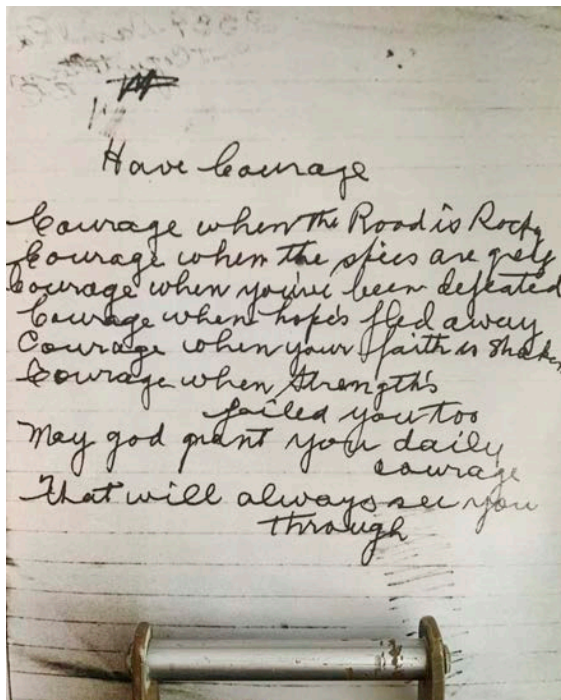
Yet, we did it!



Kanchan Lal with the F Words exhibit, 2020.  
Photo credit: PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives.



Meteor Falls,  
Quaran-tales, 2020.  
Photo credit/Artist:  
Apis Teicher.



Have Courage by  
Florence Marshall,  
Quaran-tales, 2020.  
Photo credit:  
Kelly Keno.

Virtual scavenger hunt participants, 2020.  
 Photo credit: PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives.



### Adapt, Adapt, Adapt

Since March, PoCo Heritage has successfully managed to adapt many of its resources to an online, remote format. Our previous in-person public programs are now hosted online through video chat webinars. School programs have been reworked into remote activity packages and learning toolkits. Holiday events are being celebrated as virtual scavenger hunts and tours are now available as self-guided walks.

This fall we were even able to host our 2nd Annual Brew-HaHa Fundraiser, Port Coquitlam's only artisan beer festival, by organizing the event on social media. This week-long event encouraged the public to support local PoCo breweries by offering prize and giveaway incentives. To raise funds, we set up an online shop where the public could purchase Brew-HaHa themed merchandise and make donations, all from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

Making small changes has enabled us to become fully virtual and continue to operate for our community. Instead of creating new resources, we focused on adjusting the programming and services we already provided.

### Change is Necessary

Although this year has been difficult, navigating the uncertainties and overwhelming feelings resulting from COVID-19, we have been presented with an abundance of new opportunities. The pandemic has challenged our ideas of what the museum means to our community, forcing us to rethink our accessibility. It has pushed us in a positive direction that requires us to reconsider how we deliver resources and share information. All of these new changes have taught us how to be more adaptable. Because of COVID-19, we are now stronger, more capable, and better prepared for the future.

***PoCo Heritage acknowledges and recognizes the unceded core traditional territory of the kwikwə́łəm (Kwkwetlem) First Nation which lies within the shared traditional territories of the sə́ilwətaʔ4 (Tsleil-Waututh), Katzie, xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), Quay Quayt and Stó:lō Nations. We thank them for the ability to learn, work, and operate on their sacred lands.***



Kanchan Lal.  
Photo credit: PoCo  
Heritage Museum  
and Archives.

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### Kanchan Lal

Kanchan Lal is a Museum Educator and Manager experienced in interactive program development and delivery. She has worked locally and internationally preserving intangible cultural heritage and knowledge. Previously, she was employed with the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) where she studied local Indigenous kastoms at the Vanuatu National Museum. Currently, she is working with CAM on developing new toolkits that outline the importance of museum engagement with new migrant communities.

Kanchan was the former Museum Coordinator of the PoCo Heritage Museum and Archives. As of November 2020, she is the Programs Coordinator at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Kanchan has a B.A. in History and Political Science from Simon Fraser University.

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### Resources

[pocoheritage.org](http://pocoheritage.org)

Quaran-tales, [pocoheritage.org/work/quaran-tales/](http://pocoheritage.org/work/quaran-tales/)

PoCo Heritage Self-Guided Art Walk, [pocoheritage.org/poco-heritage-art-walk/](http://pocoheritage.org/poco-heritage-art-walk/)

Online School Programs, [pocoheritage.org/online-learning/](http://pocoheritage.org/online-learning/)

PoCoPedia, [pocoheritage.pastperfectonline.com/](http://pocoheritage.pastperfectonline.com/)

2020 Brew HaHa  
Festival of Beers  
participant.  
Photo credit: PoCo  
Heritage Museum  
and Archives.

