

roundUp

BRITISH COLUMBIA MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION
No 258 | SPRING 2014





Technology & Engagement

RoundUp

NO 258 | SPRING 2014

Cover photo Photo by Shane Lighter, Royal BC Museum.

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(Left) Radio BVM hosts Camille McDonald and Brian Wiebe conducting on the street interviews Photo: Burnaby Village Museum, Leanne Scherp

Editorial Policy *Roundup* is the quarterly publication of the BC Museums Association, providing a forum to highlight BC museums and galleries, and best practices relevant to museum and gallery professionals in the province. Quarterly themes are established by an editorial committee, who direct the managing editor to solicit related content. It is recommended that people contact the managing editor before submitting unsolicited content. Unsolicited content is reviewed by the editorial committee for suitability for the issue. Though the content published in *Roundup* does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the BC Museums Association, the BCMA reserves the right to reject or require edits to content at any point in the publication process due to suitability or space restrictions.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Peter Ord

One of my favourite sections in the museum's collection racks is the space occupied by our vintage and modern camera collection. The camera really is a beautiful piece of machinery; it seems to occupy that special nexus where art, design and technology come together. Be it a fashionable twin-lens reflex, a simplistic Kodak Brownie, or the technical beauty of a Hasselblad, the camera is able to provoke a sense of unending possibilities. The camera also reminds me of what a museum can be; a place where examples of art, design and technology are displayed many times over, be they artifacts as simple as a Clovis spear point, or in exhibits such as a larger than life Jeff Wall photography show. The museum and the gallery are places that not only offer a snapshot of the past, but they offer a space where the future can be explored.

In this issue of *Roundup*, you will find some wonderful and inspiring examples of how museums and galleries in BC have used technology to provoke new ideas about what constitutes contemporary museum practice. Museums are showing that they

are not dusty, antiquated places where the public walk through hushed and dark galleries, but spaces of dynamism and innovation where the imagination can get a good work out. Just witness the Two Rivers Gallery in Prince George. A partnership between their 3D Lab and the BC Cancer Agency is just one of many stories that unites art, design and technology [[see the story](#)].

In this spirit of dynamism and innovation, the BCMA council is also excited by what the future holds as a result of hiring Theresa Mackay, the BCMA's new Executive Director. It was 17 months ago at the conference in Kamloops that the membership encouraged Council to embrace a new direction at the 'BCMA Way Forward' plenary. Theresa perfectly embodies this new track; her vision and determination to clearly define the museum sector's role in British Columbia's future is an inspiration. She is also an excellent listener, and we hope you have a chance to share some of your aspirations with her. It is through this exciting new lens that the BCMA council will focus its energies on your behalf.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us in Penticton for *Conference 2014* from October 22-25! Called *The Third Space: Re-Imagining Our Cultural Landscape*, this year's conference includes keynote Kelvin Browne, CEO of the Gardiner Museum in Toronto and writer for the *National Post* and *Toronto Life*. Visit museumsassn.bc.ca for details and to register. See you there!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Theresa Mackay



Time flies. That is what I thought when I began to write this note to you. It has been just a few weeks since I started in my new role as Executive Director and I can already hear my Dad (may he rest in peace) saying, "And just what have you accomplished, hmm?". I suspect you are wondering the same.

That is a good- and timely- question. I have spent these past few weeks understanding who we are as an organization. I have met with members and future members from all walks of life and have listened to suggestions, thoughts and perspectives. I have looked at how we operate and where we need to go. And I have asked many, many questions.

This discovery does not stop today of course, but in this process of re-connecting I have been working with Council to begin re-inventing the association and re-imagining what we can become. I think you'd be pleased at the progress we've made.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Putting the "Fun" in Fundraiser

A 1920s inspired fundraiser was held on board the SS Sicamous paddlewheeler in Penticton in January. The Great Gatsby themed fundraiser featured dancers from the Penticton School of Dance, who volunteered to perform at the party. Dancers moved to the sound of swing music, dressed in vintage costumes complete with tassels and pearls. Guests learned the Charleston, and danced the night away.

Photo: Courtesy of Kylee Denison.



BC Remembers the First World War 2014-2018: A forum to explore directions, issues and opportunities

Presented by Royal Roads University and the BC Museums Association, in partnership

April 30, 2014 / 9am – 4pm

In Victoria or online

Free, thanks to the generous support of our partners.

Join us for this all-day session as we discuss approaches, plans and opportunities for commemorating the First World War during the 2014 – 2018 centenary period. Explore possible approaches to First World War commemoration through a facilitated program that focuses on issues, resources, partnerships, good practices and approaches from around the world while providing an opportunity for sharing and networking.

Forum attendance is either face-to-face in Victoria or by distance through the Royal Roads University online learning platform.

To register and for more information, visit museumsassn.bc.ca. Online and on campus spots are limited!



This event is generously supported by the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Royal Roads University.

Supporters:



I am excited to say that we have secured a new partnership with the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Royal Roads University and with them have developed a province-wide Focus Forum called *BC Remembers the First World War 2014-2018* [see information at left]. As well, this summer we will be welcoming one of their Master of Arts students to assist us with the beginnings of a comprehensive membership review, tackling first the platforms by which members connect and share information.

We have launched a spring events calendar to better communicate the professional development courses on offer, and have conducted a review of our brand. In terms of other events, Conference 2014 in Penticton is on the radar and we are working hard to gather this information and get it out to you. By the time you get this our regional workshops in collections management will be in full swing and new educational resources will soon be on our website. As well, we have begun to solidify our connections with key government representatives and cultural leaders.

Time flies. I'm humbled you've made me your pilot.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

Pioneer Days at Mackie Lake House

In December students sipped tea from china cups and experienced a tour of the Mackie Lake House. Merging the old and new, students were encouraged to type on a typewriter and Google using an encyclopaedia! Dressed in pioneer attire the students played games and entertained each other on the piano. The event is a teaser for the School Tours offered at Mackie Lake House in the spring.

Collections Care Spring Workshop Series

Two workshops took place in March: an introduction to collection management was held in Creston in mid-March, and managing digital collections was held in Kelowna on March 27.

Organizing Your Collection

April 10, 2014

Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George

Two top notch practitioners will explore two key aspects of collection organisation: how to document your collection and how to physically store it.

Instructors:

Heidi Swierenga, Conservator and Head of Collections Care and Management, UBC Museum of Anthropology
Heather Dunn, Heritage Information Analyst, Canadian Heritage Information Network [CHIN]

Storing Your Collection

April 15, 2014

The Museum of Vancouver

This participatory session will focus on the causes of deterioration of your collection and how best to make storage of your collection safe and effective. The session will include live demonstrations and hands-on projects.

Instructor:

Sarah Spafford-Ricci, Principal Conservator of Fine Art
Fraser Spafford Ricci Art & Archival Conservation Inc.,
Vancouver

Each workshop is a full day session from 9am to 4pm

Lunch and light refreshments are provided

Cost:

BCMA Members: \$25

Future Members: \$30

To register visit museumsassn.bc.ca.

TIME TO TALK ABOUT... YOU!

Tim Willis

BCMANEWS

This past spring, I have been working on behalf of the BCMA to coordinate professional development resources for members, with a focus on collections. The project is funded by the Government of Canada's Museums Assistance Program.

The work included surveying members and developing workshops [see sidebar]. Soon, we will launch a series of on-line professional development resources.

I'd like to share the results of the survey with you.

Profile of survey participants

65 organizations took part. The majority identified as museums [30] followed by 12 societies and other organizations, 10 historic sites, parks and interpretive centres, 8 art galleries and 5 individuals.

The largest number of respondents [37%] had an annual operating budget of less than \$100,000. Only 31% had budgets in excess of \$500,000.

Most [50%] received more than half of their funding from government sources.

The most significant sources of non-government support were admission fees [31%] and individual donations [31%]

The majority of respondents employed less than 20 people.

Over the past two years, 15% have reduced their regular paid staffing compliment.

In the past year, 67% of organizations had given staff a salary increase; 9% have not given an increase in the last 5 years.

Attendance and Membership

As most respondents were smaller regional organizations, attendance figures are modest. Close to 67% see 25,000 visitors or less each year. Only 5 organizations report attendance more than 75,000.

71% of the organizations have a membership or friends program – of these, most [75%] have less than 250 members.

School Programs

Virtually all [96%] of the respondents offer programs for schools. 35% take their programs to the classroom. However, only 40% feel they help teachers fulfill curriculum requirements

Opportunities and Challenges

Respondents identified four leading opportunities:

1. Collaboration with other arts/culture organizations
2. Social media and on-line technologies
3. Increased public programming
4. Increased attendance and participation rates

Their three greatest threats:

1. Reduction or elimination of government funding
2. Competition for private sector donations
3. Competition with popular entertainment or sports

Respondents identified four leading challenges:

- Inadequate collections storage and care

- Inadequate community engagement
- Inadequate exhibition and program facilities
- Weak and unstable operating finances

The survey asked to what extent they felt certain that their organization would be financially viable in 5 years. The result is encouraging: 82% are strongly or somewhat optimistic.

About your Collections

The respondents care for a total of close to 8 million objects [not counting archival holdings].

The most common type of collection is photographic [86%], followed by archival collections [80%] and historical objects [64%].

Less than half of the organizations [44%] regularly add to their collections.

More than half of organizations have 50% or more of their collections records on computer. However, only a small number have made their collection accessible to the public online [14% have half or more of their collection on-line].

Respondents report challenges with collections preservation:

- 35% reported no [or insignificant] temperature control for collections.
- 46% have no [or insignificant] humidity control.
- Only 30% have the majority of collections in controlled environments.
- 37% report no [or insignificant] fire suppression protection.

Organizations identified the three most significant threats to their collections:

1. Water damage
2. Damage from inadequate storage cases
3. Damage from overcrowding

BCMA Conference 2013 Papers Available on-line

An Introduction to Digital Preservation for Museums by Heather Dunn, Heritage Information Analyst, Canadian Heritage Information Network [CHIN] is one of several 2013 conference papers available via the [BCMA website](#)



Dunn introduces digital preservation tools recently made available through CHIN.

Presentations by keynote and guest speakers Alexandra Hatcher, Robert Janes, and Douglas Worts are also available on the site. The three papers relate to the overall conference theme of *Agents of Change - Engaging our Communities*.

Photo: Heather Dunn

A significant number of organizations [60%] feel their collections are at moderate to major risk.

The BCMA and You

40% were satisfied or very satisfied with the Association. 50% reported they are 'neither satisfied or unsatisfied' with the services of the Association.

A critical question asked how best the Association can serve its members. There was no clear leader, but the top four types of services identified were:

1. Providing information and news
2. Training and professional development
3. Advocacy at the national and provincial level
4. Organising conferences

16 potential professional development topics were offered for consideration. Respondents indicated significant interest in 9 topics:

1. Collections management
2. Fundraising and philanthropy
3. Audience development
4. Marketing and communications
5. Database management
6. Grant writing
7. Exhibition planning and development
8. Public programming
9. Curatorial practice

The future format for professional development was explored. There is no clear 'winner' though 'in person workshops and seminars' received the most [29%] support.

Tim Willis led the visitor experience departments at the Royal Alberta Museum and the Royal BC Museum. He is now a museum consultant living in Victoria.



THE **BC DIGITIZATION COALITION** LAUNCHES THE WEST BEYOND THE WEST SEARCH PORTAL AND HOSTING SERVICES


BCMANEWS

The BC Digitization Coalition is a grassroots group representing archives, libraries, museums and other institutions working toward the creation of a provincial digitization strategy in British Columbia. The Coalition has recently launched two services to help support the sustainability of BC's digitized historical materials.

The West Beyond the West search portal westbeyondthewest.ca allows users to search the digitized holdings of BC's libraries, archives, museums and other memory institutions. With so many institutions making historical materials available online, the Coalition identified the



**Digital,
interactive
storytelling.**



**Educational,
immersive
experiences.**

need for a single access point to search across multiple BC collections. WBTW also aids in the discovery of online historical resources from smaller institutions, driving traffic to participating institutions' digital collections. So far West Beyond the West indexes records from 10 institutions across BC including university and public libraries as well as the Museum of Vancouver, Campbell River Museum & Archives and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

The Coalition's second project is the development of the digital collection hosting service, West Beyond the West Hosting. WBTW Hosting collections.westbeyondthewest.ca is aimed at smaller institutions that are unable to or do not wish to host their own collections online. Powered by the open source "AtoM" (Access to Memory) software, WBTW Hosting provides institutions with their own digital space and branding and can store text, image, audio and video formats. WBTW Hosting just launched in 2014, announcing Terrace Public Library as its first institutional client. Terrace will begin adding issues of the *Terrace Standard* to WBTW Hosting in the coming months. Institutions using WBTW Hosting will automatically have their records exposed in the WBTW search portal as well.

Both WBTW and WBTW Hosting are available to BCMA members and the wider BC heritage community. WBTW Hosting offers a subsidized hosting rate of \$1/GB/Month. There is no charge to have existing digital collections indexed in the WBTW search portal.

For more information contact Mike Conroy, Coordinator, BC Digitization Coalition at michael.conroy@ubc.ca or visit coalition.westbeyondthewest.ca.

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WHOO'S NEWS

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Kelsey Wiebe at the Heritage Park Museum in Terrace was the lucky winner in the BCMA MAP Survey contest. She has won a free registration to BCMA Conference 2014 in Penticton. Thanks for participating, everyone, and we look forward to seeing all of you in Penticton from October 22 to 25!

The Burnaby Village Museum honoured volunteer **Ruby Johnson** at their annual volunteer appreciation luncheon in February. Johnson has been a volunteer at the Museum for 40 years. Assistant Director of Cultural Services **Denis Nokony** presented Johnson with a cartoon illustration he created for the occasion.



Ruby Johnson and Denis Nokony

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Voices from Vaudeville

In December, Kelowna Museums invited community groups to participate in the vaudeville show *Voices from Vaudeville: An Evening at the Laurel Packinghouse* as part of *The Voices of the Town: Vaudeville in Canada* travelling exhibition from Peterborough Museum, which was on display at the Okanagan Heritage Museum. The evening performances by Okanagan theatre groups, including Bumbershoot Theatre, New Vintage Theatre, Wentworth Music, Mission Dance Company, The Maple Keys, and students from Rutland Senior Secondary School.

Photo: Dana Murphy and Joelle Neufeld sell popcorn, gummie bears, animal crackers, and other goodies that were favourites in the early 1900s.



Don Evans

North Vancouver Museum announced that **Don Evans**, former President of the West Coast Railway Association which operates the Railway Heritage Park in Squamish, is Chair of the Campaign Cabinet for a new North Vancouver Museum. Don brings 40 years of business experience, extensive non-profit and community experience, as well as a keen interest in preserving local history. The Campaign is currently in a formative stage and a Fundraising

Feasibility Study is underway. The NVMA Commission also has a new leader. **Sanford Osler** became Chair of the Commission in January, replacing long-time Chair **Robert N. [Bob] Heywood** who joins Don Evans as a member of the New Museum Campaign Cabinet.

Carol Ballard has joined the North Vancouver Museum and Archives staff team as their Education Programmer. Most recently the Program Coordinator for the Delta Museum and Archives Society, she oversaw their programs department, managed the volunteer program, and managed the Delta side of the Richmond-Delta Regional Heritage Fair. Having previously been on staff at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and organized waterfront programs in Delta, Carol is excited to continue with maritime as well as community history in North Vancouver.

Holly Maxwell, the Nisga'a Museum's administrator has embarked on developing her knowledge and skills related to translating, understanding, utilizing, and developing Nisga'a Nation oral histories by participating in an online distance education course offered by Archives Association of British Columbia [AABC], *Oral History from Theory to Practice*. The Nisga'a Nation, through its Ayuukhl Nisga'a Department

[the official archives of the Nation], has collected and digitized hundreds of oral histories that relate to traditional Nisga'a stories, personal accounts and collective narratives associated with each Pdeek [tribe].

The Richmond Museum has hired a new Program Facilitator, **Sarah Carlson**. They also have a new Collections Intern, **Jose Nihira**, through UBC's Faculty of Arts Internship Program, who will be at the Museum until the end of May. Last but not least, **Peter Harris** will be retiring from his position as Exhibit and Program Coordinator of the Richmond Museum at the end of February.

The Cultural Resource Management Program at the University of Victoria announced **Tania Muir** as the new Program Director. Tania brings great enthusiasm to the program's 30-year legacy of excellence in educational programming for museum and heritage professionals. She previously worked at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in the areas of Marketing & Communications and Education. She received her MA in Communication and Culture from Royal Roads University in 2009 and her BA in English Literature from the University of Ottawa in 1996. For the past 20 years, Muir has worked in both formal and non-formal educational settings exploring links between pedagogical theory and practice, and developing innovative learning environments for learners of all ages. Tania looks forward to delivering dynamic, responsive, high quality programs for museum, culture and heritage professionals.

The Barkerville Heritage Trust announced that **Mandy Kilsby** was selected as the new Curator for Barkerville Historic Town. Originally from Quesnel, Kilsby worked for



Tania Muir

THANK YOU SHELLEY!

When calling in to the office or attending the annual conference you have likely spoken with Shelley Gauthier, the BCMA office administrator. After many years of service to the association, Shelley has decided to leave in order to pursue new opportunities.

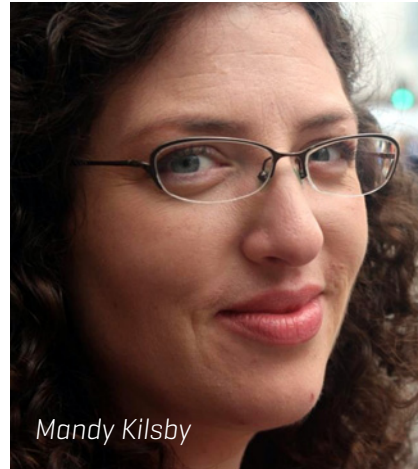
On behalf of the BCMA, Council, Committees and Members, we would like to thank you, Shelley, for your dedication to the BCMA. We wish you all the best in your new endeavors!



WISH YOU WERE HERE

First DAM gathering

What's happening in this dark and blurry photo? It's the first gathering of the Vancouver chapter of Drinking About Museums - a museum social gathering that has been spreading internationally in recent years. Luc Desmarais and Jillian Povarchook organized the event in November. It's an opportunity for museum professionals to network, socialize, share ideas, and talk about museums. Follow [#drinkingaboutmuseums](#) on Twitter to stay updated on future gatherings.



Kilsby brings to the position a Master's Degree in Women's Studies focusing on Gender, Language Policy and History from Simon Fraser University, as well as a University Teaching and Learning Certificate.



Ed Coleman was selected as the Chief Executive Officer of the Barkerville Heritage Trust in January. Coleman will be filling the shoes of departing CEO **Judy Campbell** who, after devoting 40 years to Barkerville in a wide variety of capacities culminating in a productive 7½ years as CEO, is leaving to pursue other passions and opportunities. Coleman holds a Bachelor of Business Education from Okanagan University College in Penticton and the University of British Columbia. He moved to Quesnel in 1990, and has worked for School District 28 as a teacher and administrator, including Manager of Cottonwood House Historic Site by agreement through the School District and the Heritage Branch. He also serves as Co-Chair of the BC Heritage Properties Managers' Group. Coleman was elected to Quesnel City Council in 2011 and chairs the Finance Committee, Audit Committee, Sustainability Task Force and is the City's representative of the Post-Secondary Education and Training Council.



*Host Camille McDonald and producer Matt Ball in the Radio BVM studio.
Photo: Burnaby Village Museum, Leanne Scherp*

RADIOBVM

Lisa Codd

The Burnaby Village Museum made an old technology new again with Radio BVM.

Burnaby Village Museum is a 10-acre site that depicts life in Burnaby with a focus on the 1920s. The Village includes heritage and replica buildings that represent a typical Burnaby neighbourhood. Like other historic site museums, we can sometimes be “old fashioned” in the wrong way: it is challenging to be seen as relevant to our contemporary community within the confines of a recreated environment.

Shushma Datt on Radio BVM



<http://youtu.be/TmrQcmgGRWl>

Canadian radio pioneer Shushma Datt was interviewed on Radio BVM on July 11.

Datt is credited with being the first Indo-Canadian broadcaster in the country. She currently operates Radio Rimjhim and RJ1200, as well as producing nine television programs on Shaw Cable Television and OMNI TV.

For our summer season in 2013, we embarked on a project that used audio technology to build an interpretive layer that added new and relevant content to the site, without disrupting the overall historic atmosphere.

The project was called *On the Air: Live from the Burnaby Village Museum* and featured a working radio station that broadcast to radios located throughout the Village, re-creating the experience of an early 20th century community radio station. Behind the scenes, content was captured with digital recording equipment, and stored and distributed with the help of iPods to a network of speakers hidden inside period radios.

Some of the content featured on Radio BVM was archival recordings of 1920s and 1930s broadcasts. We also recreated typical content from the 1920s and 1930s, playing popular songs from the era and reading news items, advertisements, and poetry on the air.

We felt that as a Village our site presented a unique opportunity to interpret the experience of how radio stations helped build community identity. We imagined our visitors as citizens of the Village during their visit, tuning in to a community radio station and hearing themselves reflected in the content. We felt it was more important to recreate the experience of early 20th century radio than to restrict the broadcast to material from the 1920s and 1930s. Visitors were able to participate in a shared experience of listening to a single station that was broadcasting content relevant to them as members of the Village community.

As citizens of the Village, visitors could watch content being created, as well as create content that was broadcast on Radio BVM. Visitors were interviewed “on the street” and invited into the broadcast booth to read advertising scripts and create sound effects. They could also watch local musicians perform in the studio.

A diversity of contemporary community partners were invited into the station and interviewed on a range of topics, both historical and contemporary. Topics included the history of Chinese market gardens in Burnaby, farmers’ markets, sports broadcasting and the history of broadcasting in BC.



Producer Matt Ball in the studio at Radio BVM. Photo: Burnaby Village Museum, Leanne Scherp.

Radio content was recorded, and interviews and some performances were edited and posted on the Museum's [YouTube channel](#), and shared via our social media channels, extending the experience beyond the Village.

The experience offered us a few lessons to consider for future planning. While this exhibit was focused on technology, the idea of adding interpretive layers onto the site is something we wish to continue, to honour our recreated environment while engaging with contemporary audiences and issues. A few observations that stood out for us include:

- Fears that visitors would find content from beyond the 1920s jarring or disruptive proved to be unfounded. Partners and visitors engaged with the concept.
- Using social media to distribute content was not as successful as we had hoped. In

retrospect, the recordings are much too long in length to attract much traffic on YouTube.

- Building an interpretive experience around a type of technology allowed us to move beyond a 1920s perspective, looking at the technology over a longer time period and connecting it to the contemporary community.
- The project created spaces and infrastructure that could be used for a variety of purposes by partners, allowing us to engage a wide variety of partners ranging from an immigrant storytelling group to an amateur radio club.
- The project required us to draw on new skills, utilizing the skills of staff who are not generally involved in project planning and development.

Lisa Codd is the Curator at the Burnaby Village Museum.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Dedication in Prince George

The Exploration Place Museum + Science Centre hosted the national opening for The Museum of Civilization's *Kids Celebrate!* exhibit this November 23 and used the opportunity to dedicate our new 2500 square foot temporary exhibit gallery to former Executive Director [1992 - 2003] George Phillips. The George Phillips Exhibit Gallery recognizes a man whose innovative ideas shaped our facility and impacted our industry. George's late wife, Norma, and his two sons were among the 200 guests.

Photo: Art Kaehn, chairman of the Regional District of Fraser Fort George addressing the audience.





Students carefully positioning their background and characters during filming. Photo: Richmond Museum

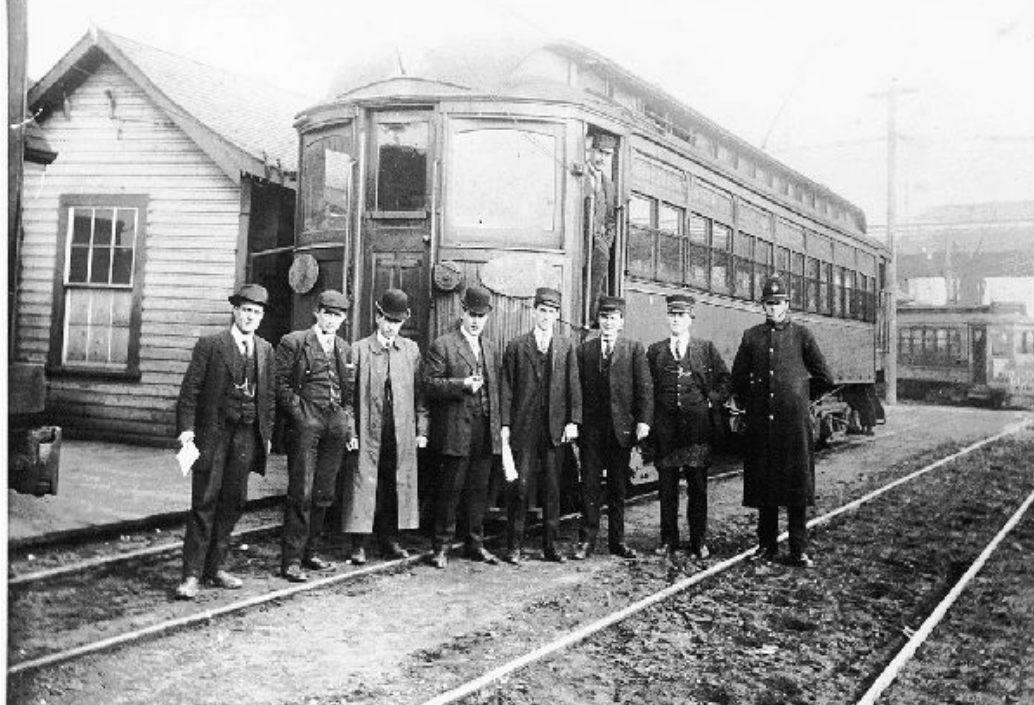
ANIMATING HISTORY: WHERE HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY COLLIDE (IN A GOOD WAY!)

Emily Ooi

"This is the coolest thing I've ever done!" This was the reaction from a student at the end of his field trip to the Richmond Museum for the *Animating History* program. As we gear up for our second season of this program, I couldn't agree with him more.

Animating History offers one-day film animation workshops for students in Grades 4-12. Working with a museum educator and professional animator, students write, direct and produce short films based on British Columbia's vibrant history. Since 2003, *Animating History* has offered workshops to Metro Vancouver students through ongoing partnerships with the Museum of Vancouver and Port Moody Station Museum.

In 2012, Reel to Real Film Society approached the Richmond Museum about offering this program. For our pilot program, we selected a theme inspired by the exhibition, *On The Move: Richmond's Transportation Legacy*. After discussing potential storylines, we chose "Love on the Tram #1220", the story of George Boston and Mary Williamson, whose romance was intertwined with the history of the Steveston Interurban Tram #1220.



*A group of men standing beside
a B.C. Electric Railway tram
Photo: City of Richmond Archives
1978 12 5*

On August 3, 1905, George began working on the Interurban Tram running between Vancouver and Steveston. Also travelling that day was Mary, celebrating her birthday. This chance encounter led to a romance over the following months as Mary traveled to Vancouver to learn dressmaking. As their love and marriage grew, so did George's career on the Interurban, and he held a variety of positions with the B.C. Electric Railway. He retired as one of the most popular railway men in the Lower Mainland. In 1958, George and Mary were the guests of honour on the last run of the Steveston to Marpole Interurban Tram. Through this story we were able to explore how the B.C. Electric Railway Interurban passenger line influenced people's lives and how Richmond's transportation systems changed over time.

The *Animating History* program was launched in October 2013 at the Richmond Museum & Heritage Service's annual professional development workshop for teachers. The day included a tour of the Steveston Interurban Tram Building, a tour of the *On the Move* exhibit and a hands-on demonstration of the *Animating History* program. Over the next month,

four classes ranging from Grades 3-6 visited the Richmond Museum for *Animating History*. The feedback from students, teachers and parents was overwhelmingly positive. The common thread was that this experience really brought the history of Richmond alive! While each class received the same story, they each had a different interpretation.

Their creativity and commitment to telling this story through their animation is evident in their videos:

- *"The Story of the Tram"* by Anderson Elementary.
- *"Romance on the Tram"* by Byng Elementary.
- *"The Tram 1220"* by McKay Elementary.
- *"Love on the Interurban Tram"* by Steves Elementary.

Kimberly Baker was the first Program Facilitator to deliver this program at the Richmond Museum. "*Animating History* offers students a new way to explore local history through stories and film," she reflects. "I was delighted to see every student in the room engaged with the program, interacting with the animators, and enjoying their creative process."



Each scene is created by a group of students, who work collaboratively to storyboard, create their characters and background, and film. This student is responsible for “directing” his group’s scene. Photo: Richmond Museum Society.

“I’m always impressed by the creativity and the brilliantly imaginative ways the students bring history to life,” says Chad Sorensen, who provides the animation expertise for *Animating History*. “The handcrafted and stylized characters and backgrounds that they are able to create in so short a time is inspiring.”

“The students always respond well to the *Animating History* program,” echoes Chris Gilpin, Program Facilitator at the Museum of Vancouver, who assisted with the Richmond Museum’s pilot season. “I think it works so well because it combines history with art and technology. Some students connect with the visual element of filmmaking, others are excited to use the computers. Either way they learn through group work. Every museum should investigate an education program like this.”

“Our animation workshops encourage imagination and

creativity, instill a sense of accomplishment, and give youth a place where they can create their own stories,” says Venay Felton, Executive Director of Reel to Real Film Society. “With a better understanding of story structure, they find new ways to express themselves and discover a new understanding of how media works.”

The *Animating History* program continues this spring. The completed animation videos will also be shown at the Steveston Interurban Tram Building, 4011 Moncton Street, Richmond BC.

Emily Ooi is the Educational Programs Coordinator of Richmond Museum & Heritage Services, City of Richmond. She is a member of the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of BC, Co-Organizer of the annual BC Field Trip Fair, and Chair of the Lower Mainland Museum Educators group.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

ROUNDUP READERS SHARE SOME HIGH AND LOW-TECH TOOLS THAT CAN BE USED IN BC MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES.



Cuyler Page demonstrating a Listening Stick in the Historic Grist Mill Tea Room.

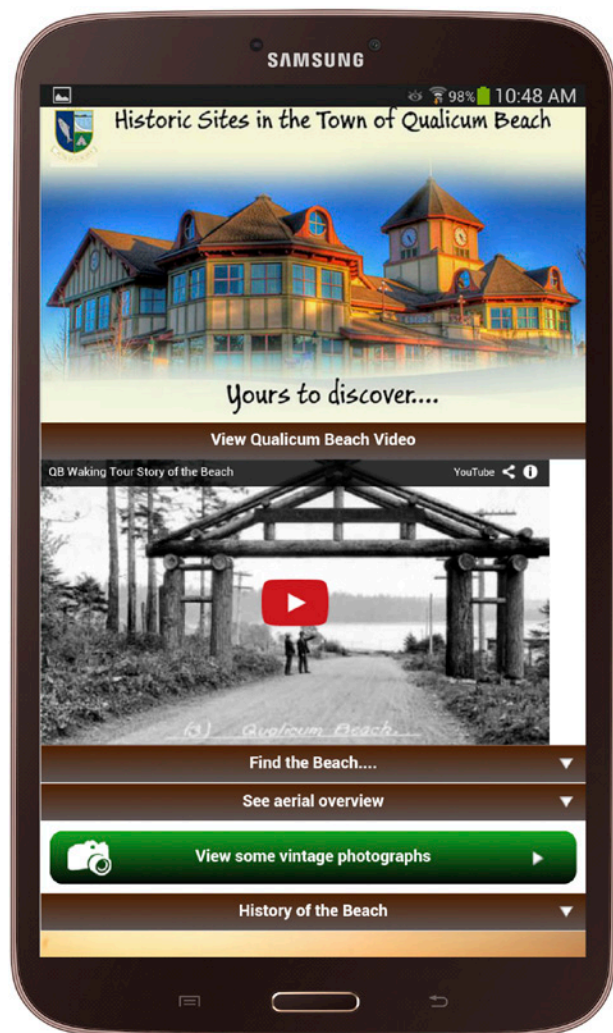
THE LISTENING STICK Cuyler Page

For a low cost technology to encourage visitor engagement and appreciation of the workings of many technologies, try a Listening Stick. With one end touched to a working artefact and the other pressed tight to your head just in front of an ear, a simple piece of dowel, a yardstick, table knife, baseball bat or broomstick can become an amazing tool of discovery.

Sound travels well through solid material, and a Listening Stick can provide access to the microsonic life that is a hidden part of mechanical artefacts. Auto mechanics use it for listening to the invisible inner workings of engines. Try it with things such as a clock, a typewriter, a sewing machine or even your computer. Even building walls can “talk” through a Listening Stick.

Check this [PBS Learning Media](#) video to see how it works and how it can even promote meaningful museum social interactions between visitors.

Cuyler Page is the principal of Heritage Interpretation Services in Vernon, BC.



A screen shot from the multi-media walking tour.

WALKING/DRIVING/ MUSEUM TOUR USING MOBILE TECHNOLOGY Cliff Craven

Historic sites and artefacts throughout our communities stand as witness to the past and their interesting stories offer a wealth of untouched cultural capital. This was the catalyst in developing a program for a Walking/Driving/Museum Tour that is being developed for the Parksville/Qualicum region that incorporates both offline and online components – signage, print, and mobile device technology (smartphones, tablets, etc). It speaks to explorers of all age groups and incorporates the much needed ‘online’ presence that is so crucial in today’s world.

While a tour map and didactic panels situated throughout the route are the physical markers of the tour, the ‘online’ component uses inexpensive, non-proprietary mobile phone technology to allow participants to easily access additional historical information using a smartphone or tablet. The content is a multi-media mix of images and sound that brings the tour ‘alive’ to both inform and entertain.

Cliff Craven is the owner of [Demo Target Multi-Media.com Media Delivery system](http://Demo.TargetMulti-Media.com/Media-Delivery-system).

WISH YOU WERE HERE

A Great Reception

On February 6, the BCMA hosted a reception at the Maritime Museum of BC in Victoria to welcome Theresa Mackay as the new Executive Director for the BCMA. In attendance were BCMA members, representatives of the local arts, culture and business communities, and elected representatives from the Province of BC, including Mr. Rob Fleming MLA and Ms. Lana Popham MLA.

Peter Ord addressing an enthusiastic audience at the MMBC on February 6. Photo: Nora Varga



The results of a 3D scan of Peter Ord.

3D SCANNING & PRINTING Peter Ord

The interplay between technology and art finds its latest form in 3D printing. The focus is less on the actual technology of the 3D printer itself, but more in the conversion of the physical attributes of an object into digital form, usually achieved by a 3D scanner. While scanners and printers have been around since the 1980s, it is only recently that the technology has become affordable and entered the realm of hobbyist or artist.

The most popular and widely referenced use of 3D technology can be found in the open-sourced files available from the web site of [Smithsonian Institution](#).

In BC, the Two Rivers Gallery in Prince George has used their 3D printer to forge new partnerships with the BC Cancer Agency to help guide radiation treatment for cancer patients ([see story](#)).

At the Penticton Museum, a new 3D scanner is being used to digitize art-deco objects in the collection for a young artist to cast and mold using recycled metals. This process of 3D printing and molding was pioneered in BC by the Makerspace organisation in Victoria ([see story](#)).

Peter Ord is the Director/Curator of the Penticton Museum and Archives.





Installation image of *Transience* [2010] by Flicker Art Media [Aleksandra Dulic & Kenneth Newby]. Photo: Sharon Doucette, courtesy of the artists.

BESTPRACTICES

SURREY URBAN SCREEN PROJECTING INTERACTIVE ART AFTER DARK Liane Davison

Imagined by artists and built by the City of Surrey as the public art feature for a recreation facility, Surrey Urban Screen exhibits interactive digital art on an enormous scale. Projected imagery can reach 9 metres high and 30 metres wide. Programmed as a satellite of the Surrey Art Gallery, this venue is different from almost all other large outdoor screens, as it is completely non-commercial. Nothing but art is shown, starting 30 minutes after sunset and concluding at midnight, September through April.

Exhibitions consist of commissioned site-specific projects using software robust enough to run continually for months. Many artists benefit from the generosity of previous artists: code is shared, files for virtually mapping the venue's irregular pattern of windows are

enhanced, new technology is tested and collaborative artist teams constantly challenge and develop the capacity of the venue's hard and soft architecture.

Launched with the venue as part of the 2010 Cultural Olympiad, the first project, *Glocal*, used a genetic algorithm to dynamically organize and present relationships between images drawn from a database of over 10,000 photographs. The second exhibition, *Transience*, was a suite of dynamic artworks that responded to the passing SkyTrain and added an audio capacity including a virtual piano to generate a soundtrack accessible by MP3 players and nearby car stereos. Following projects used gaming technology to generate effects or invited the public to interact with the artwork using text messaging, or stereoscopic



*Installation image of Year of Gif (2013) by Paul Wong.
Photo: Scott Massey,
courtesy of the artist.*

projects that utilized video drones. The *Longing and Forgetting* event planned in April 2014, will invite visitors to discover how the gyroscope and accelerometer of their smartphones can control and animate multiple projected video characters who appear to dance and climb the screen's wall surface.

Surrey Urban Screen offers artists freedom from the rectangular frame that confines most screen-based art, and challenges artists to consider audiences as diverse as the brief view by SkyTrain's 30,000+ daily passengers, as well as long-term audiences of the neighbouring residential towers and the community who use the recreation centre's gymnasium, youth centre, senior's centre and daycare. By 2015 the venue's projectors and computers will reach the end of their life expectancy, and the Gallery is currently fundraising to replace them. To find out more: [Surrey Urban Screen.ca](http://SurreyUrbanScreen.ca)

Liane Davison is the Director of the Surrey Art Gallery. Surrey Urban Screen was made possible by the City of Surrey Public Art Program, with support from the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Surrey Art Gallery Association and the BC Arts Council Unique Opportunities Program, and is a legacy of the Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad project CODE.



Photo by Shane Lighter,
Royal BC Museum.

BESTPRACTICES THE CHALLENGES OF DIGITALLY ENGAGING A PROVINCE-WIDE AUDIENCE OR HOW I LEARNED TO LOVE A PORTAL David Alexander

Digital engagement is a way to extend a museum's reach but it doesn't come without challenges.

This fall the Royal BC Museum will launch a learning portal. The portal will offer educators and students curated access to the inner most reaches of the provincial collection. Video, audio, images, artifacts, research papers, staff insight, educational games and worksheets – all of it is fodder for this new website. We are still in the midst of content development, but the portal will explore cultural, societal, government and environmental themes, pulling from the museum's human and natural history and archival collections.

This new digital engagement tool came about primarily as a way to solve two fairly unique challenges we have as the largest museum and archives in the province. The first challenge, how do we meet our mandate as a provincial museum and actually engage the entire province – not just those that walk in the doors – without blowing our budget. We have travelled

homegrown exhibitions and our curators visit schools across the province regularly but to provide meaningful content to every single community has been an unreachable goal until now. The second challenge is access. We have seven million items in our collection with only a tiny fraction of them on display or available to researchers. The portal won't provide access to the entire collection but it will shine a light on areas and expertise that have otherwise remained firmly wrapped within the walls of the museum.

There are challenges with this initiative that are also relevant to other museums – large and small:

Relevancy and Freshness

Like any large website, the portal will become stale quickly if content isn't refreshed often. We have funding to create content for the launch but also have retained some budget to keep on creating content after that – ensuring that there is something new for users as they come back to the portal. As well, we have opted for an easy-to-use, open source content management system, the same system we use for our corporate website, which our staff have been trained on. This will make it easier for staff to create and upload their own content in the future. The Learning department, one of the main content creators in the museum, is a key partner in this project.

Engagement

What keeps me awake at night is the thought that a year from now we have created this resource, and only a half dozen people are actually using it. To ensure it is a product that works for the audience we have set up test groups of teachers, students and librarians across the province. These groups will not only help us through the process, providing comments at key areas in the development, they will also be our champions when the site

launches, letting others know about it and spreading the word. And helping me sleep better at night.

Building for all platforms

For the portal to be a success, we know it has to be accessible on whatever devices our audience is using: smart phone, laptop, desktop or tablet. And it has to work on new and older browsers – schools across the province have varying levels of technology available. Our focus will be on content and usability and less on design, making it a product easily accessed across devices. As well, with the amount of content, searching is key. The portal will include a robust search function and strong metadata, be browsable via themes and content can also be found via timelines and maps. The focus will be on simple design and easy to find and use content.

The portal will be unique among North American museums and will hopefully not only offer content to all educators and students, but get them more engaged and interested in the environmental and cultural history of the province – so after spending some time with the portal, the user walks away from their laptop, smartphone or tablet and sees what is on offer at their own community museum or archive.

We are looking for a group of beta testers to help shape the portal from the museum community, if you are interested – or if you have questions about the portal, give me a shout at dalexander@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca.

David Alexander is the Head of New Archives and Digital Preservation at the Royal BC Museum, a new department dedicated to digitization of and access to the museum and archives collection.

*The interactive DialogTable
at the University of
Michigan's Museum of Art.
Photo: University of Michigan
Imageworks Blog.*



SOCIALIZING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Jason Clarke

GEEKSPEAK

In museums today, technology is no longer a stranger in a strange land. Digital exhibits now fit in seamlessly alongside the traditional dioramas, specimens, artwork and artifacts to enhance the whole learning experience without feeling awkward or out of place [we've certainly come a long way since the early days of CD-ROMs and Sony Walkman audio tours]. But what about the social experience? Isn't technology a solo event?

Technology often gets a bad rap for enabling nose-to-the-screen behaviour that takes away from the community experience that museums want to foster. But the truth is that technology doesn't always have to be a one-person show - it can actually encourage cooperation between visitors in surprising and effective ways.

Multi-user digital interactive exhibits are wizards at facilitating these shared connections and experiences. The 7-by-5 foot digital DialogTable at the University of Michigan's Museum of Art, for instance, is like a 21st century roundtable for museum goers. Visitors can highlight their favourite pieces which are then linked to other visitors' favourites on the table, creating a social platform for people to chat about what they loved (or flat-out hated) about the artwork they just viewed in the gallery.

Multi-player games are also excellent team builders. We all know that games are social stimulants [even to those who aren't the hyper-competitive type], and multi-player educational games that encourage visitors to work together just amplify that potency. The digital interactive Watershed of the Future game at the Manitoba Museum, for example, gives up to eight visitors the collective task

of shrinking the algae bloom in Lake Winnipeg. The Lake Winnipeg problem is far from a black-and-white issue, so strategy [and with that, social connection] is key to winning.

When attempting to create a community atmosphere, technology can be one of a museum's greatest allies. Whether it's through multi-user exhibits, educational games, or simply encouraging visitors to contribute to something bigger than themselves, today's digital world offers many options for constructing a rewarding social experience. And as technology advances, even more sophisticated and nuanced approaches to social engagement are likely on the horizon. It's safe to say our awkward years are finally behind us.

Jason Clarke, *Interpretive Writer & Content Researcher at NGX Interactive*





*Mackay chats with guests at a reception at the Maritime Museum on February 6.
Photo: Nora Varga*

Owl recently had lunch at the Clay Pigeon in Victoria with Theresa Mackay from the BC Museums Association. Once Owl got over the disappointment that no actual pigeons were on the menu, the two settled in to a conversation about the new BCMA Executive Director's background and goals for the BCMA.

How did you get involved in the museum and gallery sector?

Professionally speaking it began years ago when I worked for Harbourfront Centre, a multidisciplinary complex in Toronto that showcases works in contemporary visual arts, crafts, literature, music, dance and theatre. From there, I found my way to an executive role with the Royal BC Museum and I am now completing my Masters in Scottish history, a big part of which includes museum studies. I think the sector has always had a hold of my soul!

Do you remember when you fell in love with history?

I can remember dumpster-diving with my grandmother in Hope when I was about eight years old and finding a stove-top, red and white enamel coffee pot. It was like nothing I had ever seen



before and I was fascinated by the thought of it being used in someone's kitchen long ago! I think that may have started my obsession with history. It certainly has a connection to my current interest in folklore.

What brought you to this job at the BCMA?

I could say it was the great opportunity that the position poses, or that it is my way of giving back to the sector, but I think that those answers are perhaps fairly typical and expected. Looking deeper, it was and is about living a life that is full of the things that I am passionate about. I want to wake up every day to an inspired life. That is what brought me here.

I know it is still very early in your time with the BCMA, but can you share some thoughts about the future direction of the BCMA?

I think members can expect relevancy, engagement, support and advocacy as we move forward: relevancy as a hub and

connector; engagement with the BCMA itself and stakeholders; support to be the best at what we do; and advocacy on those issues that are important to us. Of course, these aren't the only things! But they are a start and with member support I know we can make it happen.

This is a time of transformation for the BCMA, but also for you. You have a new job, are back at school completing a Master's degree, and have teenage kids who are becoming more independent. Do you see any parallels between the change in your own life, and change at the BCMA?

Yes! With transformation comes change which can be uncomfortable, but this feeling is a sign that we are learning. Teenagers, organizations, new staff members and students all feel uncomfortable as they test the waters, try new things, and venture into new territory. I believe that learning to embrace the idea of feeling uncomfortable is important to growth and development. BCMA is now on this transformational path and I am excited to lead us on the journey.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

Careers in Culture

On February 8 Surrey Heritage Services and the Surrey Arts Centre presented our first Cultural Careers Conference for local youth at the Surrey Museum. Registrants took part in free workshops on visual arts, performing arts, archival and museum careers. They learned Taiko drumming and received advice on applying for a variety of post-secondary arts and heritage programs from representatives from UBC Archives, SFU Interactive Arts and Technology, Emily Carr University, and Douglas College Stagecraft and Event Technology.

Photo: Participants learning Taiko drumming with Uzume Taiko.



British Columbia Museums Association *Since 1957*

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