



TRAIL CREEK NEWS
NEWSLETTER OF THE TRAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Welcome!

Welcome to our next installment! Summer has once again retreated and fall is upon us. This time of year allows us to catch up on archival projects that we've been working on throughout the year. The second phase of the Teck Cominco project has come to an end, with the help of our summer student. With the strike now resolved, we can hopefully get moving on phase three in the coming months.

The Colombo Lodge project is coming along and a significant "dent has been made



Image of a Colombo Lodge parade in 1925.

to the pile." The Lodge has collected quite a fascinating array of documents pertaining to immigration in the late 1920s.

These papers certainly say a lot about immigration at the time and the politics of the Italian government at such a pivotal point in history. I'm sure these papers would prove useful for anyone

studying the Italian influx into Trail.

We have also completed the set up of the rotating display in the Sports Hall of Memories. The Society received jerseys from Richard Kromm, Garth Rizzuto, Tim Lenardon and Ray Ferraro and we thank them for their contribution.

We will soon be sitting down to prepare next year's budget that will be presented to City Council. We've had a great year this year and we hope to continue down that same road in the year to come.

Heritage Display Panel

During the summer, representatives of our Society, the Rossland Museum Association and the Beaver Valley and Pend d'Oreille Historical Society worked to finalize the

design and prepare the content for the large heritage display panel being developed to promote our area's history. Design has been completed and we hope to have the display panel

delivered soon. It is very impressive.

We will have more on this exciting joint venture with our neighbouring historical societies in the next newsletter.

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MEMBERS ABOUT TOWN

- Society member Greg Nesteroff riveted his audience with a story of Eli Carpenter, a 19th century miner in Slocan, known for his tightrope-walking talents, at the Castlegar Library in September
- Society member and historic painter Maureen Travers provided the Friends of the Library with a look into her creative process at their AGM in October

Museum: Report on the Season

This year the Society invested a bit more funding into advertising for the Museum. Areas of advertising included: radio spots, daily and weekly local newsprints, new brochures, and local television. Despite these efforts, attendance in the Museum was down substantially.

On the upside, our summer student, Andrew McIntyre, was able to successfully complete the second phase of the Teck Cominco Project. This included creating accession records for nearly 300 safety posters and database entry.

Recently, three Society members toured the Museum to assess its

ability to recount the history of our city in its current layout. The consensus was that the Museum lacks a certain sense of chronology. It was also decided that many pieces that are on display



Example of a Teck Cominco Safety Poster, circa 1965.

could quite simply be removed, making room for a different variety of pieces in our collection.

There is a misconception out there that a Museum must display all items in its collection. This, in fact, would ultimately hinder Museum attendance and provide visitors with little incentive to revisit the facility.

Although no plans have yet been formulated, we do know that volunteer hours and funding will be a necessity to complete a project of this sort. However, it may prove beneficial as we venture further into our search for support for a new Museum and Archives facility in Trail. Our history is what brought us here and we intend to preserve it as best we can.

Museum and Archive Project

The work to prepare a development strategy, business and financial plan for a new City museum and archives is progressing slowly. Funding in the amount of \$20—\$30,000 has been received from Western Diversification and we have submitted applications to the Columbia Basin Trust for \$15,000 and Canadian Heritage for \$10,000 to enable the plan to proceed. We hope to have all

funding in place by November. If not, we will continue to seek the funds necessary to proceed in the New Year.

The following organizations have provided us with letters of support:

City of Trail, Teck Cominco,

"...\$20-\$30,000 has been received..."

School District No. 20, Trail & District Chamber of Commerce, Trail & District Public Library, Greater Trail Community Skills Centre, Community Futures of Great

Trail, Kootenay Association for Science & Technology, and VISAC.

Heritage Federation of Southeast BC

The Heritage Federation of Southeast BC was incorporated as a society in July. Led by Laurie Charlton of the Rossland Museum Association, the organization is actively seeking members from the Boundary, West and East Kootenays and the upper Columbia area. There are over 50

heritage related organizations in southeast BC so we are hoping to be an effective lobby group for heritage in the region. Our Society became a member of the Federation in September.

The Federation hopes to have its first AGM in the Spring and is

preparing to draft a submission to the Columbia Basin Trust to obtain ongoing funding for the heritage projects and activities in the Basin.

City Hall Renovation

It has been City Council's priority to address the condition of City Hall since the failure of the Civic Centre referendum in 2002. This year, Council commissioned a plan to renovate the existing building, which appears to have public support.

In September, Council approved the renovation plan and will be submitting the project to referendum as part of the 2005 General Local Election on November 19th.

The offices of the Society, the

City Archives and the Museum collection in storage currently located in City Hall, have been included in the renovation plan. The Society's offices will be re-



The new headquarters of civic administration just after completion in 1928.

cated to the south part of the building, the storage space increased and conservation controls installed for the archives collection. A separate entrance to our offices will be provided from Spokane Street.

We hope the referendum is a success and we look forward to occupying the new quarters in the Fall of 2006, pending construction of a new museum and archives. Members of the Society are urged to support the referendum.

BC's #1 Sports Town

Following our submission to the Province newspaper in May for their BC's Best Sports Town feature, we hosted a reporter from the paper in July. We knew then we were in the top 3 and eagerly awaited the 10 day feature which started on August 29th. As the countdown began, many in the City purchased the Province daily

to see if we survived to the next day.

Finally, in the September 9th edition Trail was rewarded by being named the #1 sports town in BC. A deserving honour and one of which we can all be proud.

"...Trail was rewarded by being named the #1 sports town in B.C...."

The City's Promotion Committee is working hard to develop initiatives that will allow the City to capitalize on the free publicity. Look

for further information on this soon.

Our latest activities

In July, the Society assisted the Trail Jr. Smoke Eaters with their first annual golf tournament by putting together a display of historic hockey photos and jerseys from both senior and junior Smoke Eater teams. The display was at their Friday banquet and was well received. The Smoke

Eaters provided the Society with a contribution of \$250 for our efforts.

Thanks to Ken Caputo, Carol Bublitz and Rob LeRose for lending jerseys to us for the display.

On September 26, the Society once again participated in BC

River's Day, held at Gyro Park. We featured a display on the development of Gyro Park and also reminisced about Sandy Island. A special thanks to John d'Arcangelo for his delightful stories of Sandy Island. The display brought back many memories to those who frequented the beach.

Archives Appraisal

In June, the Trail Historical Society held its 3rd Annual Antiques and Collectibles Appraisal Day at the United Church Hall. This year, Mr. Al Bowen was again presented with an array of items, some items being particularly valuable.

Following Mr. Bowen's home appraisals, he ventured into the Trail City Archives to assess the collection. You may recall that last year, Mr. Bowen appraised our Museum and Sports Hall of Memories collections.

The Society provided Mr. Bowen with a list of our holdings and he also personally viewed certain items to get a feel for what we collect.

After a long four months, we received our appraisal in early October. Mr. Bowen appraised our archives collection at nearly \$56,000. This does not include the Museum, Sports, or Photograph collections. It came as quite a pleasant surprise. A copy of the appraisal is being forwarded to the City's chief administrative officer, David Perehudoff and also the City's insurers. Let's hope that this appraisal, along with last year's, will be a tool we can use to help secure funding for new and improved facilities in the months to come.

**Trail Museum, Sports Hall of Memories
And Trail City Archives operated by the
Trail Historical Society
Box 405, Trail, BC V1R 4L7**

**Phone: 250-364-0829
Fax: 250-364-0830
Email: history@trail.ca
Or sbenson@trail.ca
Website: www.trailhistory.com**

**The Trail City Archives is located on the
2nd floor of City Hall
1394 Pine Avenue, Trail.**

**The Trail Historical Society meets
on the 2nd Tuesday of every month
in the Community in Bloom office
at the old School Board building on
Columbia Avenue, Trail at 1:30.**

**We're on the web!
www.trailhistory.com**

Nurse Mildred Neilson - from the Archives

In August, I received a phone call from the programmer of the Burnaby Village Museum, Maurice Guibord, who was conducting a tour of the Ocean View Cemetery in Vancouver and was researching the death of Mildred Neilson, a young nurse who was murdered in the Trail-Tadanac hospital in February of 1925. Nurse Neilson was shot by Pat Hanley, described by the *Rosland Miner* as "a deranged war veteran," and died instantly.

It seems Mr. Hanley, the district manager of Monarch Life Insurance Co., had been in Vancouver earlier in the month and had stopped over with the parents of Nurse Neilson. Her mother had baked her a tin of cookies and Mr. Hanley was to deliver them to her upon his return to Trail. He arrived at the hospital, headed to the second floor and shot Nurse Neilson, who was off duty at the time, through the heart. He then proceeded to turn the gun on himself.



Mr. Hanley was taken to the Rossland Hospital to avoid any unpleasantness in Trail. He had visited doctors not long before this incident complaining of "nerves" and suicidal thoughts. He had apparently been gassed during the war.

As a result of her death, a collection was made around town and, in particular, smelter workers, for Nurse Neilson and \$1,300 was raised as a memorial fund and used to build a drinking fountain at her gravesite in Ocean View Cemetery in Vancouver.

Mr. Guibord had no information about Nurse Neilson, and so requested my help. As a thank you, Mr. Guibord took a snapshot of the fountain and Nurse Neilson's gravesite for our files, shown above.

Mr. Guibord also directed me to the Van-

couver City Archives who is in ownership of a photograph of whom they believe to be the parents of Ms. Neilson at her gravesite, shown at left.



Mr. Guibord was not aware that the monument was intended to be a drinking fountain, as the plumb-

ing is no longer functional.

A note from Mr. Guibord a little later on stated that he had been in contact with the archivist at the Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing who found that Mildred Neilson had graduated in the 1921 class, however only group photos were taken and no individual photos were accessible. He will try to find a photo of her for our files. It makes a nice addition to our archives.