

# MUSEUMS

British Columbia Museums Association

summer 2007

no. 237

roundup





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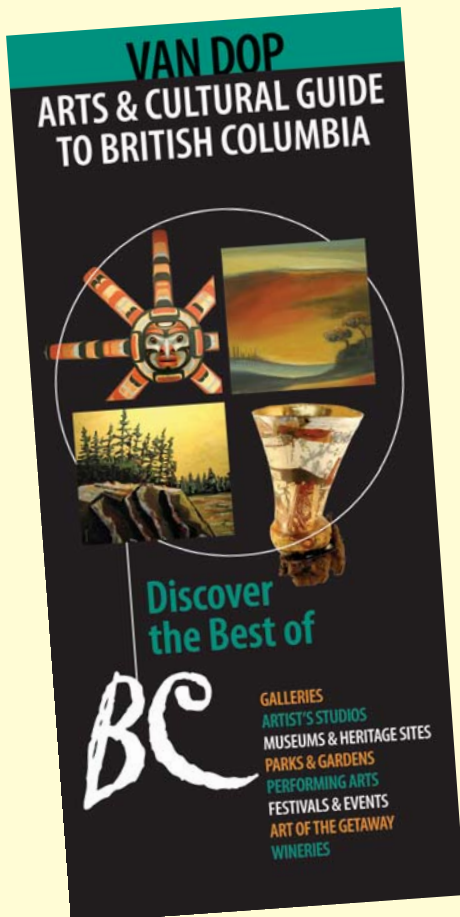
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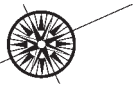
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**Cover image:** The Haida Heritage Centre at Qay'llnagaay on Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), courtesy of the Haida Heritage Centre. Photograph © Rolf Bettner; used with permission.



British Columbia  
Museums Association



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## contents

### OFF THE TOP

- 4 President's Message
- 5 Message from the Executive Director
- 6 BC2008

### FEATURES AND PRACTICE

- 7 Keeping Community in Mind
- 10 Giving Back or Giving Out?
- 12 Welcome Aboard! An Interview with Tim Willis
- 15 Engaging Community
- 16 Second Life: Museums in the Metaverse

### MEMBERS, MENTORS, MUSES

- 18 Celebrating Our Own
- 20 Whoo's News
- 22 BCMA Membership 2007
- 23 Member Profile: A Haida Dream Becomes a Reality

The BC Museums Association represents the interests of BC's museums and galleries with the generous assistance of the Province of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council.

# President's Message



Tracy Calogheros

Community. Is it a metaphorical term, an idea more than a physical place? Or is it a very physical collection of souls connected by proximity? Maybe proximity has nothing at all to do with the formation of a community and instead common goals and interests draw people together.

The BCMA exists as a facilitator for a broad and varied collection of professionals, volunteers and organizations. Our small office can have a very large footprint on the work being done by our industry, in British Columbia and indeed, well beyond; an interesting combination of the physical and the metaphorical. This journal in your hands is one expression of that.

Leah Best's interviews are a concrete interaction with peers designed to have real impacts on your personal life, nothing metaphorical there. The mining of our network of colleagues and vast professional experiences is a "help group" in the real world. You have only to open your email to the BCMA listserv on a daily basis, to know that our community is one that relies on reaching out and connecting with each other for advice, support and camaraderie.

The "Second Life" metaverse outlined in David Alexander's article, where the mundane physical limitations of gravity, geography and commerce give way to a virtual community that challenges our industry's great thinkers to ferret out the museums' role(s) there, is a community without any physicality at all; it is by its nature metaphorical.

So in looking at a "blank page" project like the National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic, the opportunity for dramatic evolution of our

community is imminent. I feel like, hand in glove with the NMC, we are poised at the start of one of those alpine snowboarding runs Leah and her boyfriend like so well. That after taking a deep breath, pushing off into the first sweeper, gaining speed into the moguls, hitting the ramps for a nollie front flip followed up at the next airborne by a backside rodeo, dropping into a tuck and carving a finish in a spray of powder, standing up, raising the goggles and looking around, the NMC will find themselves in a new world, embraced by their community cheering them on and claiming them as their own.

I believe that the enduring museums have always been about community and that all communities evolve over time. The addition of Tim Willis to the RBC Museum team is another such indicator that we are moving into a period of evolution in our community. Given that our role is simultaneously to look back into prehistory and forward into the unwritten, guided inevitably by the communities that sustain us, we, in the institutional sense, have always embraced the physical and been informed by the metaphorical. What seems to be different at this, our 50th anniversary as a community, is that we are beginning to think of ourselves, and our collective fate, as inextricably intertwined.

It was 1884 when Georges Seurat unintentionally offered us perhaps the best metaphor for our community. Each brilliant dot of a Seurat is beautiful. In and of itself, that dot has pigment and depth and can offer an audience its own experience. However, the true magnificence of the Seurat, the story it has to tell, can

*continued on page 6*

# Executive Director's Message

## Pride in Our Communities: The BC2008 Local Museums Program

Jim Harding

On May 17, the eve of this year's International Museums Day, The Honourable Stan Hagen, Minister of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, formally announced a \$350,000 grants program for museums and heritage organizations planning special exhibits and events commemorating BC2008—the province's year-long celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Crown Colony of British Columbia in 1858.

"Every corner of the province has a unique story to tell. Every community has helped make BC the great province it is today," said Minister Hagen. "This funding will help local arts and heritage organizations create exhibits and events that highlight their history, people and achievements as we come together as a province to celebrate BC2008."



*BCMA executive director Jim Harding (left) joins Minister of Community Services, Ida Chong (centre), and Minister of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, Stan Hagen (right), to announce the BC2008's Local Museums Program on May 17 at Helmcken House in Victoria.*

The BCMA was approached by the newly formed BC2008 Secretariat's executive director, Charles Parkinson, last December with an offer to help develop and administer a museums program that aligned with the province's five pillars for BC2008: Heritage, Communities, Aboriginals, Multiculturalism, and Arts and Culture. The BCMA was given full rein to propose a program format that would be accessible to BC's museums, including art galleries and heritage institutions; develop program criteria, guidelines and application forms; incorporate a "legacy" component that would recognize and promote BC2008 museum projects for the long term; set a schedule for application intakes; define the adjudication process and timetable; and to collaboratively, with BC2008, conduct program information and promotional campaigns to ensure as many BC museums as possible could access and take advantage of this program. In January, BCMA council members prepared an early draft of a program summary that led to a series of exchanges with BC2008 to develop the program, an eventual program delivery agreement and Minister Hagen's announcement at historic Helmcken House in Victoria, BC on May 17.

BC2008 is important for the BCMA and its members: It provides a direct program delivery partnership opportunity with the province; it gave BCMA the chance to design a museums-friendly program that would help BC museums leverage other funding sources which may be cultivated through BC2008 participation for future projects, exhibits or special initiatives; it provides a means for local museums to play a visible, if not central, role in their own communities through new

*continued on page 6*

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### Executive Director's Message

*continued from page 5*

or rejuvenated local partnerships—including BC2008's 98 local Spirit Committees—and as part of a major province-wide celebration; and it provides funding to help enable special projects, or new public exhibits of existing stored or community-based collections, that tell the stories of their community's unique sense of place. It is why the BCMA designed this program with the full title of "Pride in Our Communities: BC2008's Local Museums Program."

Administered by the BCMA grants coordinator Linda Eversole (250-356-9398), the Local Museums Program offers 50% matching funding up to a maximum of \$10,000 "towards projects that advance public knowledge and promote the public appreciation of, and greater access to, the rich heritage and vibrant visual arts in British Columbia ...". Eligible projects may include public exhibitions and presentations, including support for curatorial research, installation, presentation and audience development activities associated with a special exhibit or event that recognize

and support the province's BC2008 initiative. These may include public and interpretive programs such as historical re-enactments, school programs and enhanced commemorative interpretation; publication projects in history or visual arts, such as artists' books, catalogues, monographs and anthologies, intended for regional or provincial distribution. A project's "legacy component" may consist of a photo-documented event, digital archive, virtual exhibit or a published document that may be shared online as a legacy of the program.

There are two scheduled intakes of July 16, 2007 and January 15, 2008. Successful applicants will be notified within two months of the intake deadline. Projects must be in place by November 1, 2008. Complete program guidelines and the application form are available from the BCMA website at [www.museumsassn.bc.ca](http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca). For more information on BC2008 celebrations, please visit [www.bc2008.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bc2008.gov.bc.ca).

The BCMA will also be working closely with the Royal BC Museum in regards to BC2008 programming, including the projects funded under the BC2008 Local Museums Program and schedule coordination of the Royal Hudson travelling exhibit (see "An Interview with Tim Willis, RBCM," page 12).

We urge our museums, art galleries, archives and heritage institutions to take advantage of the Local Museums Program; to get involved in your community's local BC2008 celebrations; AND by doing so, to once again demonstrate the continuing, essential role our museums play in our communities, every day.

*ED note: At press time, BCMA had received almost 50 project inquiries in advance of the initial July 16 intake.*

### President's Message

*continued from page 4*

only be fully appreciated, when all of the individual, physical dots take up their role, vibrating in relationship to each other, coming together virtually, perhaps a little differently, for each individual viewer.

So it would seem that our community is both physical and metaphorical. An overarching story told by brilliant, individual experiences, currently gaining speed as we race our way into a period of dramatic evolution. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I did. A community of museums, could there be anything more noble? I'm looking forward to visiting your dot.

# Keeping Community in Mind

Alix Noble

*Designing museums with the community in mind requires rethinking the very definition of “museum.”*

Recently, the word “museum” has acquired all kinds of new definitions—a fact that hit home for exhibit planning and design firm AldrichPears Associates (APA) who has been working with the city of North Vancouver on the future National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic (NMC). The city facilitated the development of the concept and assembly of the land, and APA supported the process by developing the creative concept and sustainable business case for the centre. Though APA had developed master plans and exhibits for many facilities around the world, none had been as focused on audience and community as the NMC. As a result, the NMC will play a different role than many museums. It will be a museum, but it can also serve as a community centre, a career resource and a training ground. It can be a meeting place, a tourist attraction and a venue for celebration. It can also be a hub for maritime commerce and a place for sharing cultures and fostering marine traditions.

## What is the NMC?

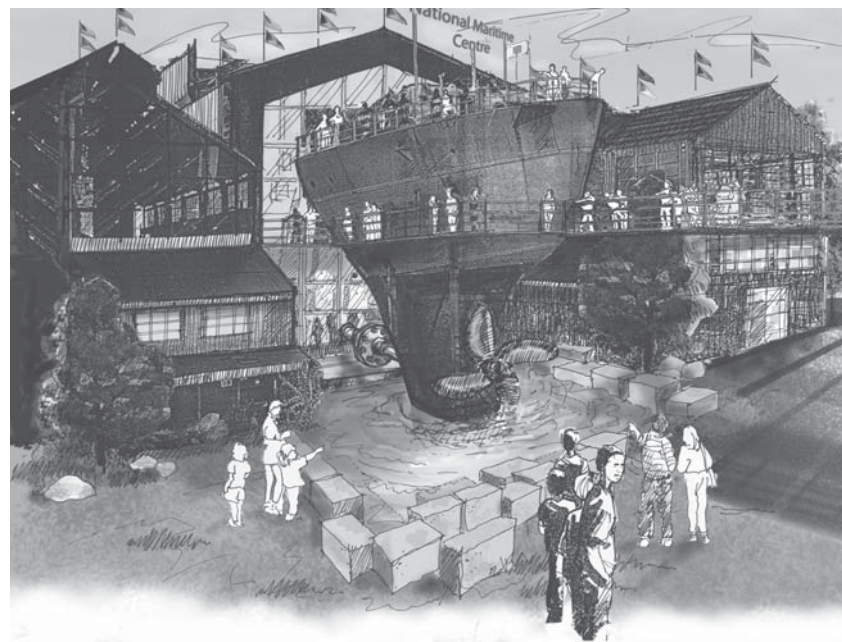
Still in planning stages, the NMC is to be a major new cultural facility on Vancouver’s North Shore, focused on the story of British Columbia and the Arctic as maritime regions. The idea originally stemmed from a desire for a new business model and location for the Vancouver Maritime Museum. The old Versatile Pacific Shipyards site at the foot of Lonsdale was identified as the perfect site, and the project is now awaiting capital funding before design work can continue.

## Why Community Matters

A great deal of work went into casting the foundations of this concept. From the first stages of the project, audience was one of the most important considerations. A market study conducted in cooperation with Small Planet Consulting and Blue Ice Communications demonstrated that the support of the local community—not the tourist audience alone—would determine the success of the institution.

## Getting the Community Involved

Initially, APA gathered a number of people from the maritime world to brainstorm a long list of potential stakeholders. Then, working with the partnership





consulting firm of Rockandel and Associates, APA identified types of relationships and partnerships and initiated discussions and workshops to talk about opportunities. What the firm discovered was that the NMC's constituency included many more groups of people than it had initially thought. "Local community" means more than simply visitors from the Lower Mainland interested in looking at exhibits. The NMC's community is made up of many stakeholder groups including educators, people involved in the North Shore's undersea technology industry, recreational boaters, maritime tradespeople, coastal First Nations groups and nearby residents.

APA brought together constituents from a long list that included the North Vancouver School District, Tourism Vancouver, Transport Canada and the Squamish Nation, to develop a long-term vision and master plan. With a focus on maritime education, the NMC's exhibit and education spaces will showcase historic artifacts and interactive displays. The centre is also being positioned to serve the maritime community's interests as a central West Coast hub for over 50 partners and the public.

### **Implications for Design**

As a result of intensive consultations with the NMC's community, APA developed a concept for a very different kind of maritime facility than it would have

developed based on narrative alone. The goal was not only to make the facility the kind of place that the community needs and wants, but to strengthen and reinforce the community.

### *Mix of Uses*

The community is reflected in the mix of uses detailed in the concept plan. That concept includes office and seminar space for industry partners such as BC Coast Pilots and the BC Marine Trades Association, who are drawn to the site for its authentic maritime heritage, waterfront access and transportation links. Classrooms can be used by the North Vancouver School District as well as Canadian Power and Sail Squadron. A workshop and small boat haulout provide workspace for heritage boat owners while enlivening the site for visitors. The concept also considers on-water activities such as safe boating programs at the Pier by the Canadian Coast Guard.

### *Exhibit Development*

Preliminary concept designs of the possible exhibit galleries also reflect community and provide opportunities for the community to further shape the facility's development in the years to come.

Initial exhibit concepts were presented at public open houses and workshops with a number of stakeholders, and community feedback was considered to make sure that exhibits were interesting, relevant and provided opportunities for input from community groups. For example, there are a number of areas throughout the galleries where exhibits focus on maritime trades, with possible links to facilities such as BCIT Marine Campus and opportunities for organizations to offer small group talks such as a youth speaker series. Based on community input, APA also made sure that the First Nations perspective would be featured throughout the facility instead of isolated in a specific gallery. A partnership with Nuytco Research, a North Vancouver-based world leader in the development and operation of undersea technology, will be fundamental in shaping the Deep Frontier gallery.

The process of exhibit and facility development has just begun: community groups will be pivotal in moving the design forward to ensure that visitor experiences are entertaining, meaningful and appropriate while fostering connections in the community.

**Reflection**

The NMC will be different from most cultural facilities because it will be built on partnerships. The hope is that it will be integrated with the needs of the maritime and local communities, thanks to education and industry partnerships. It will also be financially self-sustaining because of a different type of partnership—income from office, retail and commercial components to support the cultural functions.

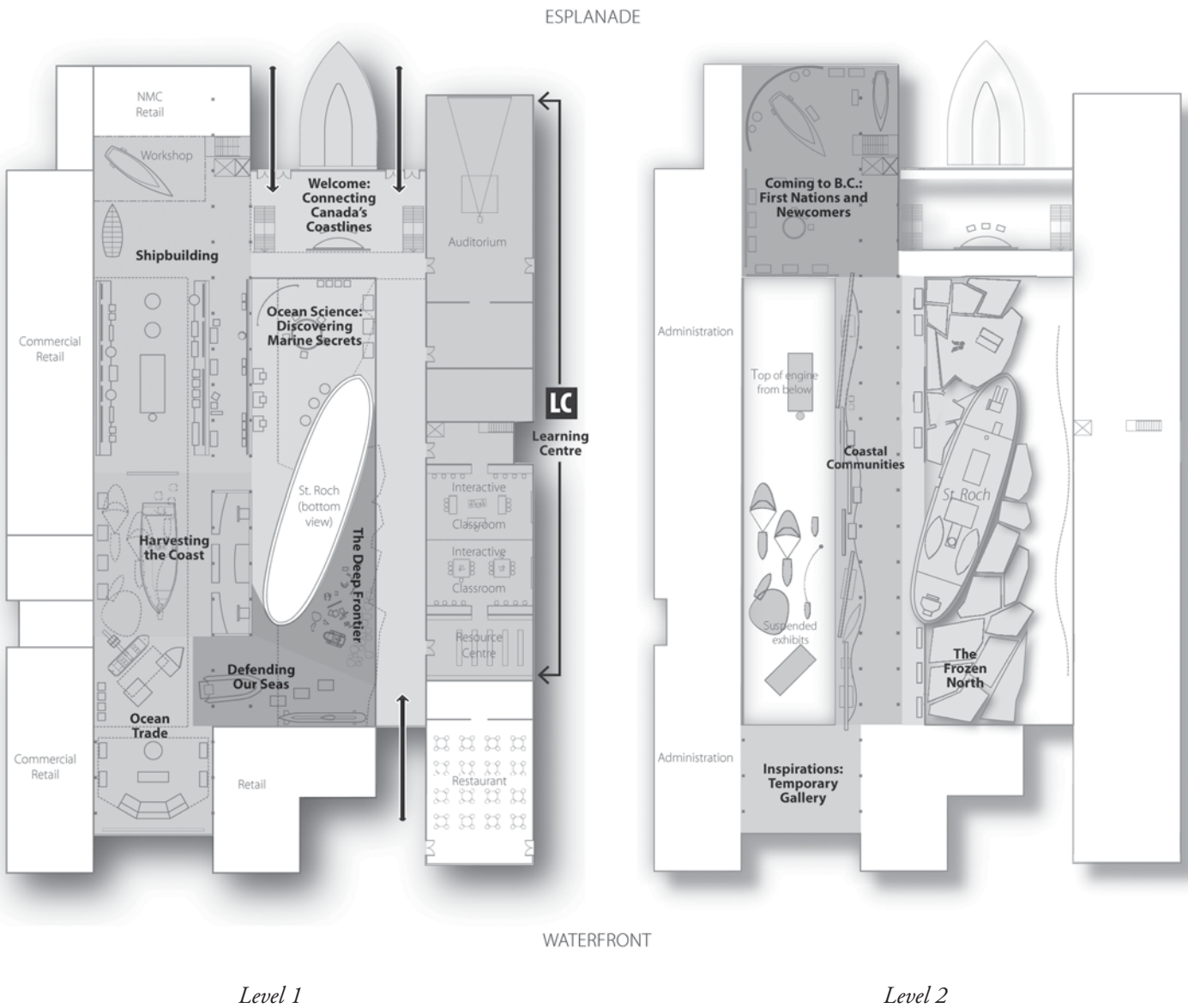
Considering the community from the outset makes for a distinctly different type of facility. The outcomes can't be predicted ahead of time; it's only through dialogue

and workshop that synergies can be discovered and given the opportunity to happen. It's clear that the conversations and efforts at involving community will continue to be important as the design progresses.

Developing and maintaining relationships involves work, but taking the time to do so up front helps shape a strong, dynamic and exciting concept.

For more information, contact the National Maritime Centre's project director, Larry Orr, at [lorry@cnv.org](mailto:lorry@cnv.org) or visit [www.cnv.org](http://www.cnv.org).

*Alix Noble is with AldrichPears Associates.*



# Giving Back or Giving Out?

## Community Obligation

Leah Best

In the last year, since becoming executive director of Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History, I have learned a few new things about myself and my role as ED. Apparently, I'm a workaholic who regularly puts in long shifts on weekdays and weekends to attend to my never-ending list of duties (this has also come as a surprise to my boyfriend, who thought we had moved to the Kootenays from Vancouver to indulge in our love of snowboarding and back-country touring). It seems too that, as the head of an organization that last October opened the doors to a newly remodeled \$3.2 million facility, I have become a junior member of Nelson's league of cultural leaders—a role that gives me, as ED, a voice in community decision making. Step into that role and it's pretty much a given that you will be approached by local groups wanting to tap into your professional abilities and fresh outlook.

As someone who is relatively new to this leadership role (although not new to the industry), I looked upon joining local boards with relative excitement. What a great way to raise the profile of my organization, to network with new colleagues—and to gain some valuable professional skills. To date, I have joined two boards (one local and one regional) and am hoping to join a third as well, all equally important opportunities to participate in community decision making. More importantly, it allows me to give back to a community that has given this organization so very much.

Upsides also have downsides and in my not-so-unique case it means even longer hours working on behalf of my organization. Lacking any real strategy to balance these commitments (so far, saying “yes” to

every new request isn't working), I decided to ask a few professionals and friends in the field about their experiences. Not surprisingly, I found that there are no easy answers and that what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for another.

### The Interviews

*Tammy Hardwick, Manager, Creston Museum*

The Creston Museum is an energetic organization that, this year, is undertaking a major renovation project to rebuild the “South Wing,” a historic outbuilding that currently houses the museum's artifact collection. Tammy has been the manager at the museum for nine years. Like most of us, Tammy volunteers her time to the organization after her 35 paid hours per week have come and gone. With respect to community work, she remembers being asked to sit on several boards within the first three months of her tenure. Since then she has sat on the boards of the local Chamber of Commerce and the Heritage Federation of South Eastern British Columbia, among others, and finds time to get involved in community celebrations with a heritage focus. “If it has something to do with heritage, then the museum needs to be there.” When asked how she manages her workload and her community commitments, she responds simply, “I do things that I really love to do.”

Over time, Tammy has developed personal strategies that guide her extra commitments. First, she's a consummate planner. By planning her time in advance, Tammy can develop her schedule and delegate tasks so that she can accommodate board meetings, planning committees, city presentations, AGMs, and so on.

Tammy does not attend meetings or events past 9 p.m. If a meeting is running long, she leaves. Her husband is supportive of her career and the extra commitment it takes, but a balanced work and personal life is important to Tammy. To that end, she's found she has an affinity for physical pastimes such as figure skating (which she took up four years ago and remains the only thing for which she'll leave early from work) and walking at Creston's nature preserve. She continues to work long hours but is satisfied knowing that she's doing the right thing for herself and for her organization.

*Catherine Ouellet-Martin, Executive Director,  
Delta Museum and Archives*

When I called Catherine on her cell phone to chat about this article, she was at the Tsawwassen golf course, volunteering to sign up golfers for a charity tournament—not for her own organization, but for an organization that she's hoping to partner with in the future. It was 5:30 p.m. and she was a long way from wrapping up her evening.

Catherine has been with the DMA for 10 years, and its ED for the last three. Like so many others, her job is a constant demand on her time that is made more challenging by the lack of sufficient resources and staff. As a young mom, she has had to make those tough calls home to say she'll be late—again. Yet, she's pragmatic about her situation. She works in the heritage industry, which for her means working with “a league of people whose lives do not necessarily correspond with my own.” She recognizes that chauffeuring her kids between ballet and trampoline lessons may not be the first thing that people who have grown children, or who are retired, might be thinking about when they ask her to commit to their organization.

Still, Catherine is assertive about her commitments on behalf of the DMA and seeks out new opportunities to get involved in Delta's community life. She attends Chamber of Commerce meetings, schedules in Rotary club luncheons, volunteers for partner organizations, acts in an advisory capacity to several organizations and recently added her involvement to River Mania 2008. When she's out at these events she's telling anyone who will listen that the museum is a valuable community asset. It is a conscious strategy to gain grassroots support—and it's worked. Catherine has had such positive feedback from the community that she recently

realized a significant increase in her municipal operating grant and has forged fundraising opportunities with new partners that have seen her fundraising revenue more than double in the last two years. For the groups she's involved with, she's vocal about setting time limits up front—no Saturday mornings; no late nights. During these times, her family comes first.



How much, then, should you give back to your community? The answer should be determined by your willingness and ability to contribute, without compromising your values or yourself. Here are a few tips I have/will adopt:

- **Manage expectations:** be up front with people about the time you have available to commit.
- **Set boundaries.** Personally, I never schedule meetings on Mondays. This is my one day per week to work diligently and without distractions at my desk.
- **Use your network as support.** I sensed relief in the people I spoke to at just being given the opportunity to talk about the challenges of work life vs. personal life.
- **Develop a speakers bureau/use your board to assist with community relations:** at Touchstones we have a standing committee that works together to identify opportunities for TN in the community, and delegates tasks to all members (not just the ED).

*Leah Best is Executive Director, Touchstones Nelson:  
Museum of Art and History in Nelson, BC.*

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# Welcome Aboard!

## An Interview with Tim Willis, RBCM

Joan Kew with Lisa Mort-Putland



*Tim Willis recently assumed the role of Director of Exhibitions at the Royal British Columbia Museum, coming to BC from the Royal Alberta Museum. The RAM has been undergoing an extensive physical renovation and expansion, in which Tim played a major role—working with a large number of consultants while rebuilding spaces, exhibits, philosophies, etc. RBCM is in the very earliest stages of revisioning and redevelopment, and will be drawing on Tim’s experiences, learning what other museums and institutions do well, through him.*

It was really interesting, Tim Willis says, to spend a long time at RAM and then come to the RBCM. They are both provincial museums, with parallel mandates and similar goals and visions, and yet the challenge for both is to what degree they are able to reach out in a provincial way. Both are stretched for resources, and there is a dynamic at play: to balance the need to have large exhibits which generate attendance and revenue peaks, and the wonder people feel when they explore exhibits that are born from their own backyard. Large-scale exhibitions such as Titanic are more attainable by large organizations, but even for them it’s a huge business challenge—meeting costs, goals, etc. It’s not just about money though; these shows do give visitors a chance to explore the world’s great collections and stories, and as well they are a learning experience for the host museum, which is exposed to ways in which other organizations choose to exhibit a particular story or collection.

### Tim’s Take on Exhibits

#### *Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition*

Tim talks enthusiastically about the Titanic exhibition, which was in the works before he came to the RBCM. The exhibition is organized into nine “chapters” and nine rooms—a modulated space that is non-uniform. Each room evokes a mood and tells a different part of the story. Tim feels that the chapters play like music. According to him, “... the best exhibitions are theatre. In some ways, they are also like a piece of music. They have a start and an end. There is a thread that takes the visitor on a journey with ebbs and flows, high points and quiet moments.”

To personally engage its BC audience, the RBCM put out a call via press release throughout the province, for people who had a connection to the Titanic. About 100 people called who had artifacts, stories—real gems—which were used to build the “postscript” display at the end of the exhibit, and visitors are quite held by it; they want to connect. Tim says there’s a lesson to be learned from this: “the most modest things are the most powerful ... One of the coolest items brought to us is a newspaper clipping about the suicide (many years later) of the lookout from the Titanic—he should have had binoculars on the lookout but didn’t; they didn’t see the iceberg until it was too late. You can only imagine the life he led—it is a very powerful piece.”



While blockbuster exhibits are usually in the domain of large organizations, Tim feels that a story well told doesn’t have to be of a large scale. He mentions

the Museum of [fictional] Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles, in which amazing exhibits are expertly displayed on a very small scale. He adds that the museum itself is so small that when he visited, the sole staff member left the keys of the museum with him so he could lock up, when she went to the airport to pick up a friend. Tim relays the story of another highly successful exhibit on a small scale, this one on Buddhism at the Royal Alberta Museum. The 108-piece collection was delivered by two Tibetan monks, who drove it across the country in a VW bus. Within a simple replica of a Tibetan temple, the use of colour, quiet space and a place to contemplate the beauty of the artifacts effectively gave visitors a sense of what Buddhism is.

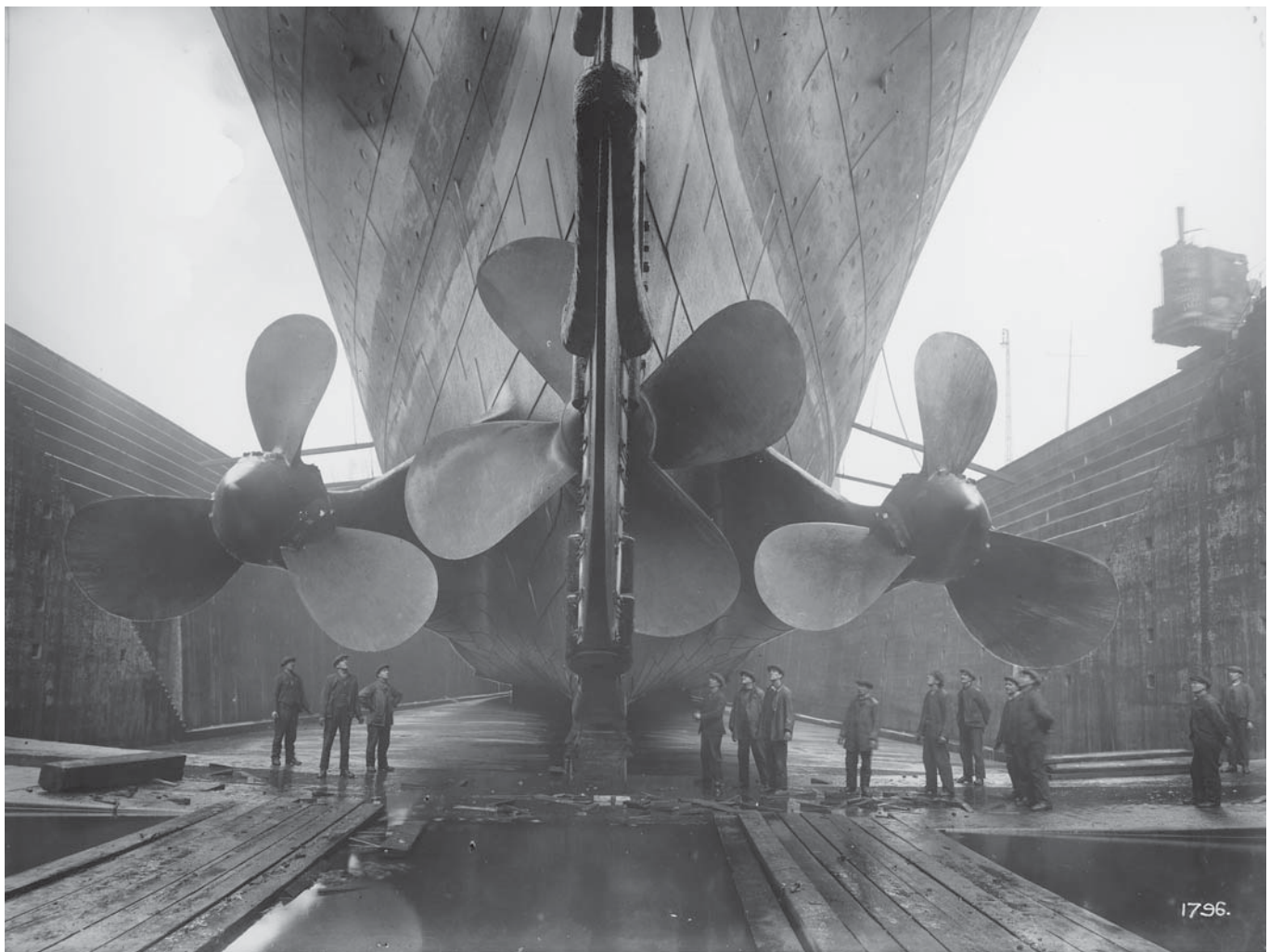
Exhibits must tell the story well, by creating settings that provide visitors with a sense of what the story is

going to be about, and then taking the visitors on a journey, rather than giving them “bits” of an experience. The audience must be told clearly what the thread of the story is, in order for the journey to be successful. Tim modestly says that he’s been involved with “one or two projects” that were well integrated—where all of the pieces were almost perfect—and that yes, building an exhibit really is like rocket science.

#### *The BC2008 Exhibit*

Along with setting a long-term vision for the visitor experience, the focus of Tim’s first year at RBCM is the project to mark BC2008.

The RBCM spent time exploring options about what to do for BC2008. There were challenges—for example, not a lot of time—but they realized that they didn’t need to do an entire history of BC. They’ve



*Image courtesy of RMS, Titanic Inc.*

chosen to create a large exhibit about character and identity, and are turning to the museum's collections of objects and specimens, as well as "mining" the BC Archives holdings, which so far has proven to be quite fascinating. Tim notes that the RAM doesn't have an archives connected to its facility, and that the RBCM is only able to do this exhibit because "we're working as a team [with the archives] and we're connected. It's a great benefit."

They have chosen 150 really great objects with illuminating stories—about what it means to be from, in, about BC. They are also doing a sort of "Sergeant Pepper's" collage with images of prominent BC people. The images will be historic, contemporary, animated with sound and movement, and the collage will contain surprises. Visitors will be asked to explore the collage and say what they think—who they feel was left out. The display will be organic: it will change, and visitors can add content; it's expected to be unexpected. The RBCM is also planning an accompanying people's history website, as well as an exhibit which will travel on the Royal Hudson steam train.

### Connecting Museums and Community

Tim Willis emphasizes the need for museums to learn from each other, and speaks positively of a new initiative

by the British Museum, who sent representatives to meet with him recently. They have experimented with sending individual objects to museums across Britain, and the response has been great. They are also committed to the idea of being a "world museum."

When asked about collaborating with other museums and heritage sites across the province, Tim says he's aware that they're not connecting to other museums as they would like to. Although the long-term strategy is to build on visitor experience, we must be conscious of the need to connect to both our communities and other museums as well. Technology is part of the answer, but it can never substitute for meeting people face to face.

**If you would like to meet Tim Willis face to face, join in his session "Why Is Developing a Good Exhibit So Hard?" at the upcoming BCMA conference in October.**

*Lisa Mort-Putland is a program coordinator for the Cultural Resource Management Program at the University of Victoria. Lisa holds a masters in public administration and has focused her research on organizational effectiveness in museum and heritage sector institutions. Joan Kew is the editor of Museums Roundup, and is Lisa's colleague at the University of Victoria.*

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# Engaging Community

Joan Kew



*The puppet show is PARMA's most recent addition to their medieval repertoire.*

It's England, 1371. A group of people sits in a meadow, laughing as Punch and Judy-style puppets bash each other with sticks and hurl jests at each other. The children are laughing at the violence, the adults at the innuendos passing over the children's heads. Juxtapose these images: past the stage through the trees is the *Odyssey* Launch Platform, in Victoria for repairs after January's failed rocket launch. To the right, gleaming in the afternoon sun, is the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Fisgard Lighthouse.

The show ends and the spectators resume their endless tasks of survival: spinning, weaving, sewing, cooking, repairing armour. They—actually, we—belong to a group called the Pacific Association for Re-creating the Middle Ages (PARMA). Every year for the week leading up to Canada Day, PARMA sets up camp at Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Sites.

When a site officer wanders by, I brave the sun's heat in my full-length woolen dress, elbows and hair appropriately out of sight as would be expected in the 14th century. "Excuse me, are you Dale?" Dale Mumford is the Business and Community Relations Officer at Fort Rodd Hill, and I want to talk to him about why he lets groups such as PARMA "play" here.



Dale considers PARMA to be one of the national historic sites' partners. The re-enactment group attracts members of the local community who may be interested in the Middle Ages, but might not visit the sites otherwise. During the week PARMA is there, attendance is up more than 100%, and they could use the revenue from admission fees. Once drawn in by a special event, many local families choose to buy annual passes.

The site has a relatively small budget compared to some other Parks Canada-administered national historic sites, and because they have extensive grounds and many buildings (all of which are original), most of the budget is dedicated to maintaining historic resources and modern visitor service infrastructure. There is relatively little money provided for personal services interpretation, and like many sites across Canada, summer student funding has been an issue. Dale sees re-enactors as volunteer interpreters; even though they are discussing the Middle Ages and not the sites' history, it enriches the experience of the visitors. The group is also added entertainment for the Canada Day festivities, when admission (as for all national historic sites) is free.

Fort Rodd Hill hosts other reenactment groups each year, and Dale really appreciates the dedication to authenticity found among all of them. They are serious about what they do, learning by really *living* in their chosen times. Although associates from similar institutions feel that the anachronism would be inappropriate for their sites, Dale sees it as an opportunity to engage the community. To address liability concerns, members of these groups become site volunteers, signing waivers and undergoing criminal record checks. In this way they are covered for third party liability through Parks Canada's national volunteer program.

It's really a win-win situation: the sites benefit from the added attraction and the increase in visitors; members of PARMA enjoy sharing their knowledge with those visitors. And in the evening, the re-enactors discuss England in 1371, what plans they have for expanding their "demo" next year, and who counted the most deer on the grounds after closing time.

# Second Life: Museums in the Metaverse

## Community Online

David Alexander



Second Life is one of the more popular social networking sites that have begun to populate the Internet. It is an online virtual world—a place where people meet, socialize and create their own identity. Every hotel and hot tub, meeting space, garden—everything—is created by Second Life users with software provided by the program's creators, San Francisco-based Linden Research Inc. Second Life

has its own currency, Linden dollars, that residents use to buy and sell goods and services. And buy and sell they do: according to *Business Week*, in February 2007 alone, \$5 million US changed hands on Second Life. In its inception in 2003, the virtual world had 160,000 users; at the beginning of 2007 this number had jumped to 2.5 million. Major American retailers such as Gap and American Apparel have set up shop there, universities have begun opening Second Life campuses and Sweden has even opened an embassy in the virtual world. Second Life is booming.

A few museums have already ventured into Second Life: the Louvre, San Francisco's Exploratorium, the San Jose Museum of Art and the International Spaceflight Museum are among those that have the most visible presence. There are also museums that exist only in

Second Life; the Bayside Beach Galleria Museum of Contemporary Art and Paris 1900 are among these. The Bayside Beach Galleria is a series of rooms in a busy section of Second Life with rotating contemporary art exhibits—a typical gallery transplanted into Second Life. Paris 1900 capitalizes on the boundless nature of Second Life. It is a complete replication of Paris in 1900 from cafés and nightclubs such as the Moulin Rouge (complete with elephant!), to shops selling clothes from wedding gowns to lingerie, that you can purchase for your avatar to wear. The user is fully immersed in the experience of Paris at the turn of the 20th century.

Compared to the eagerness in which business has embraced Second Life, museums have been slow to make their mark in the virtual world. Obviously money and resources have to be considered, but there are some compelling reasons why museums should be participating in this metaverse. In Second Life, a museum immediately has the potential to reach 2.5 million visitors that don't have to worry about the high price of gas or operating hours. Better yet, these are young visitors, those that you might otherwise never get through the door of your brick-and-mortar museum. As well, a Second Life presence allows a museum to extend the user experience—even beyond what's possible under the laws of physics!

The Exploratorium, for example, has created an environment where a user can catch a ride around the sun on Halley's comet to understand its trajectory, a performance not easily replicated in our world. You can reimagine your museum any way you want—forget the walls, forget the floor—you can change colours easily

and change shapes just as easily. You can even change the shape of all your curators. In a world where the sun always shines, there is no reason not to display artifacts in the open air or even floating in mid-air. Second Life users are able to fly and museums can take new approaches in displaying artifacts. The only limitation in Second Life is one's imagination.

If you are not ready to fully immerse yourself in the world of Second Life, at least dip your toes in the water. It is free to join and once there, you can begin to imagine some of the possibilities. Just watch out for falling comets.

*David Alexander (david@zeroonedesign.com) is one of the geeks at Zero One Design and his Second Life goal is to rough up his boy-next-door avatar a little. He blogs at blog.zeroonedesign.com.*

## Getting Started in Second Life

1. Visit [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com)
2. Pick a first name and then pick from a pool of second names (with a paid account you can make up your own last name). Follow this with your birthdate and email address.
3. Follow the steps to create your account and password.

When you first enter Second Life you will be visiting Orientation Island—a good place to explore and get your sea legs before venturing further in Second Life.

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# Celebrating Our Own

Compiled by Joan Kew



## Two Rivers Gallery Assigned Category 'A' Designation

Two Rivers Gallery in Prince George is excited to announce its official designation as a category "A" institution by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage. Managing Director Peter Thompson explains "this is an exciting development for Two Rivers Gallery ... it recognizes the gallery as part of an exclusive group of art museums and galleries across Canada."

Two Rivers Gallery curator George Harris states: "It is tremendously rewarding to know that the gallery has been recognized to have been built and is operating at the highest professional standard. This places us in the same category of art galleries as the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada. This designation is a credit to the vision, effort and energies of the city of Prince George and to all of those who contributed to the building of our gallery. It is an achievement of which we are tremendously proud."

The process of designation was very lengthy and took an in-depth look at the gallery facility and its systems to make sure it demonstrated the ability to meet specific legal, collections management and environmental criteria for the proper preservation of cultural property that is of significance and national importance to Canadian heritage. Besides confirming that the Two Rivers Gallery performs to exceptional standards, the designation also makes the gallery eligible for Multiple Cultural Property Grants and eligible to seek certification of cultural property for income tax purposes. This presents exciting opportunities in terms of the development of its fine art collection:

"A" designation adds incentives to potential donors of highly valued artworks, helping the gallery keep important artworks in the region rather than losing them to museums elsewhere.

Sharon Cochran, chair of the Prince George Regional Art Gallery Association which governs Two Rivers Gallery, said "congratulations to George Harris, Peter Thompson, the Two Rivers Gallery staff, and the city of Prince George. ... This designation recognizes the high standards with which the gallery manages collections and preserves cultural property. Further, it opens future possibilities that were not available to us before. On behalf of the Two Rivers Gallery board, I would like to express our pride and gratitude for this significant advance."

## Senator Pat Carney Visits Doukhobor Discovery Centre

BC Senator Pat Carney, who has long been concerned with heritage sites and museums, on this occasion selected the Discovery Centre and one other museum for close scrutiny to determine how the federal government might assist important museums in fulfilling their mandates.

She said that the Doukhobor Discovery Centre was a remarkable museum in many ways and all the more so because of its limited resources and funding support. She has asked curator Larry Ewashen to prepare a comprehensive report on the status of the centre, which will be presented to Jim Abbott, Parliamentary Secretary to Bev Oda, Minister of Heritage. Part of the purpose of this examination is to make Ms. Oda aware of support

needs of key museums. Ewashen notes that this request may indicate that special funding may be approved from a new museum assistance program.

Senator Carney said that the Doukhobor Discovery was a rare jewel of a museum speaking to the testimony of a hardy group of pioneers who contributed mightily to the province and Canadian society. Ms. Carney also indicated that the Doukhobor Discovery Centre should be recognized as a National Heritage Site, which would preserve its autonomy and future programs. In an interview for the Doukhobor Discovery Centre website, Ms. Carney said, “The Doukhobor Discovery Centre is a remarkable piece of history here in the West Kootenays ... it really shows a history of people who came here from protest and lived here in peace and made a remarkable contribution to their community through their way of life, their crafts, in terms of their religious spirit, and I would like to commend all of the volunteers who work so hard to make this wonderful Doukhobor Discovery Centre for the rest of us to enjoy and learn from.”

## The Canadian Museum of Rail Travel to Receive a Heritage Canada Foundation Achievement Award

The Heritage Canada Foundation and Heritage BC announced in May that the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel in Cranbrook, British Columbia, will receive a 2007 Achievement Award for the ambitious and creative Royal Alexandra Hall Restoration project. The award will be presented to Garry Anderson, executive director of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel.

The Royal Alexandra Hall, originally known as the Grand Café, was one of the finer features of the Royal Alexandra Hotel, which was built in Winnipeg in 1906 by the Canadian Pacific Railway. A favourite spot with Winnipeegers and the thousands of travellers who visited it, the café became synonymous with Edwardian elegance and first-class service.

When the hotel was demolished in 1971, the room was dismantled piece by piece and, except for the curved beamed ceiling, stored for 25 years in a semi-trailer before being purchased in 1996 by Streit Brothers Antiques. In 1999, the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel (CMRT) learned of the room and purchased the contents, along with the massive two-storey-high carved oak fireplace from the hotel’s formal dining room. The

Grand Café was recreated in the Royal Alexandra Hall, complete with vaulted ceiling and eight curved double French doors, as a major Millennium Project.

“The Royal Alexandra Hall restoration project is one that we are delighted to recognize,” said Heritage Canada Foundation executive director Natalie Bull. “The Canadian Museum of Rail Travel has—with much dedication and ingenuity—brought the elegance of the Grand Café back to life for all to enjoy. We congratulate this small community for such an ambitious project.”

Today, the elegant Royal Alexandra Hall is the centre-piece of the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel and its Deluxe Railway Hotel Architectural Tour. The space is also rented out for community and museum events.

This Heritage Canada Foundation Achievement Award, given jointly with Heritage BC, recognizes outstanding work in heritage advocacy and volunteerism, as well as projects that demonstrate a community’s commitment to heritage conservation.

### Response to Garry Anderson’s Heritage Canada Foundation Achievement Award

*by Dan Gallacher*

Warm congratulations to Garry Anderson in Cranbrook for both the Heritage Canada award and the work that both he and his colleagues have done to preserve, restore and display this fascinating part of the Royal Alexandra Hotel—a place I stayed in for a month or so back in 1948 or 49.

My Dad was transferred temporarily from Edmonton to Winnipeg where he worked as a CNR policeman. Our mom took us by train to visit him, and I still have memories of my younger brother and I misbehaving in the Manitoba legislative building (running around to the point of being shown the door).

Later, in 1958–59 when I was in the air force at Winnipeg, I missed the chance of going back to the hotel for a look, and when again there for a while in the mid 1970s, I had lost my chance as the structure was gone.

So, well done again, Garry! I will make a point of one day soon visiting your museum, and try to envision those days so long ago. (I think I remember the pancakes there, and my first taste of real maple syrup).

*Editor’s note: Garry Anderson was also a recipient of the British Columbia Community Achievement Award earlier this year for his work at the Canadian Museum of Rail Travel. Congratulations, Garry!*

## Canadian Heritage Supports UBC's Museum of Anthropology

On June 25, in the Great Hall of the Museum of Anthropology, The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women, announced funding of more than \$2.1 million for the Museum of Anthropology in support of its Renewal Project.

"For over 50 years now, the Museum of Anthropology has been making an important contribution to education and culture. From its modest beginnings in the basement of the University of British Columbia to its impressive facilities of today, the museum has been providing Canadians information and access to cultural artifacts from around the world," says Minister Oda. "... we are very pleased to support the museum's renewal project. The funding will be used in order to extend the museum's role as a public and research institution by embarking on a major expansion project. This will create unprecedented opportunities for broad public access to research, teaching and public enjoyment."

"This is extraordinarily good news and another vote of confidence for the museum's current Renewal Project, 'A Partnership of Peoples'," says museum director Dr. Anthony Shelton. "This award, which supports the museum's financial contribution to the project, will help us consolidate and extend our profile and relevance ... while at the same time increasing our international profile. The new physical structure will also provide a welcome new cultural space for the 2010 games."

The Museum of Anthropology is Canada's largest teaching museum and is renowned for giving access and insight into the cultures of indigenous peoples around the world. Its mission is to investigate, preserve and present objects and expressions of human creativity in order to promote understanding of and respect for world cultures.

This funding has been provided under the Cultural Spaces Canada Program (CSC) of the Department of Canadian Heritage, which contributes to improved physical conditions for artistic creativity and presentation/exhibition and seeks to give Canadians increased and improved access to performing arts, visual arts, media arts and to museum collections, heritage displays and exhibitions. CSC supports the improvement, renovation and expansion of arts and heritage facilities, and the acquisition of specialized equipment.



# Who's News

Hector Williams, PhD, president of the board of trustees of the Vancouver Maritime Museum announced the appointment of **Wesley A. Wenhardt** as executive director, effective May 15. Wesley's background includes nine years as vice president, business development and operations at The Tech Museum of Innovation in Silicon Valley, California, and seven years' association with the Canadian Museum of Civilization, both renowned learning centres and visitor attractions. "We are pleased and fortunate to have Wesley Wenhardt in this leadership role," said Dr. Williams. "His experience will prove invaluable to our museum."

The Kelowna Art Gallery is proud to welcome new staff member, **Liz Wylie**, as curator. For the past 10 years, Liz Wylie has held the position of curator for the University of Toronto Art Centre. Wylie has a Masters of Fine Arts in Canadian art history from Concordia University in Montreal, and she holds a BA in art history and studio art from York University. Wylie has also been an art critic and has built an impressive list of publications, including articles and reviews spanning the breadth of contemporary Canadian art. Liz Wylie brings to the Kelowna Art Gallery an in-depth knowledge of contemporary visual art, and is thrilled with her new career choice and move to the Okanagan.



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 Kathleen Boal, Saanichton, BC  
 Kathy Bond, Vancouver, BC  
 Kelowna Art Gallery  
 Kelowna Museums Society  
 Kerri Ward, Victoria, BC  
 Kettle River Museum Society  
 Kevin Neary, Victoria, BC  
 Kicking Horse Culture  
 Kimberley Davison, Vancouver, BC  
 Kimberley District Heritage Society  
 Kirstin Clausen, Garibaldi Heights, BC  
 Kitimat Centennial Museum  
 Kootenay Gallery of Art, History & Science  
 Kris Andersen, Victoria, BC  
 Krista Bergstrom, Vancouver, BC  
 Ksan Association  
 Lake Country Museum  
 Lakes District Museum Society  
 Lana Panko, White Rock, BC  
 Langley Centennial Museum & National Exhibition Centre  
 Larry A. Ewashen, Castlegar, BC  
 Lee Boyko, Regina, SK  
 Leonard McCann, Vancouver, BC  
 Lesia Davis, Campbell River, BC  
 Lesley Moore, Vancouver, BC  
 Linda Eversole, Victoria, BC  
 Linda Sawchyn, Kelowna, BC  
 Lisa Codd, Burnaby, BC  
 Lisa Langlet, North Delta, BC  
 Lisa Mort-Putland, Victoria, BC  
 Liz Crocker, Victoria, BC  
 Log Cabin Museum & Archives  
 Lone Butte Historical Association  
 Loretta Greenough, Chase, BC  
 Lorna Gunn, Kelowna, BC  
 Lorne Hammond, Victoria, BC  
 Louise-Marie Lessard, Vancouver, BC  
 Lynette Harper, Nanaimo, BC

Lynn Maranda, Richmond, BC  
 Lytton Museum and Archives  
 Mackenzie and District Museum  
 Maiko Behr, Consultant, Vancouver, BC  
 Maltwood Art Museum & Gallery  
 Maple Ridge Art Gallery  
 Maple Ridge Museum & Archives  
 Margaret-Anne Baxter, Terrace, BC  
 Maria J. Cruz, Surrey, BC  
 Marilyn Napoleon, Lillooet, BC  
 Maritime Museum of British Columbia  
 Mary Swift, Saanichton, BC  
 Matthew G. Wheeler, McBride, BC  
 Maurice Guibord, Vancouver, BC  
 Megan Long, Vancouver, BC  
 Metchosin School Museum  
 Michael Lundholm, Toronto, ON  
 Michelle Richard, North Vancouver, BC  
 Michel-Natal—Sparwood Heritage Society  
 Mission Museum  
 Mission Museum, Trethewey House  
 Murdoch's Bookshope  
 Museum of Northern British Columbia  
 Nadine Power, Coquitlam, BC  
 Nakusp & District Museum Society  
 Nanaimo Art Gallery  
 Nanaimo District Museum Society  
 Nancy Bruegeman, Vancouver, BC  
 Nelson & District Museum, Archives, Art Gallery & Historical Society  
 Nicholas Iuele, Saanichton, BC  
 Nicola Valley Museum Archives Association  
 Nita M. Morven, New Aiyansh, BC  
 N'K'ip Desert Cultural Centre  
 Noratek Solutions Inc.  
 North Thompson Museum  
 Nova Vancouver Museum & Archives  
 Nova Scotia Museum—The Library  
 Okanagan Military Museum Society  
 Okanagan Regional Library  
 O'Keefe Ranch & Interior Heritage Society  
 Oliver & District Heritage Society Museum & Archives  
 Original Costume Museum Society  
 Osoyoos Museum  
 Pamela Ramrup, Vancouver, BC  
 Panther Management  
 Paola Merkins, West Vancouver, BC  
 Parksville & District Historical Society  
 Patricia C. Kidd, Victoria, BC  
 Patricia Young, Gatineau, QC  
 Paul C. Thistle, Langley, BC  
 Paul M. Lima, Gatineau, QC  
 Pauline Rafferty, Victoria, BC  
 Pauline Thompson, Comox, BC  
 Pemberton & District Museum & Archives  
 Pender Islands Museum  
 Penticton Museum & Archives  
 Phill Ward, Salt Spring Island, BC  
 Pitt Meadows Heritage & Museum Society  
 Port Clements Historical Society Museum  
 Port Coquitlam Heritage & Cultural Society  
 Port Edward Historical Society  
 Port Hardy Museum and Archives  
 Port Moody Station Museum  
 Pouce Coupe Museum and Historical Society  
 Powell River Historical Museum & Archives Assoc.  
 Power House at Stave Falls  
 Presentation House Gallery  
 Prince Rupert City & Regional Archives  
 Quesnel & District Museum and Archives  
 R. Bury Media and Supplies Ltd.  
 R.J. Haney Heritage Park & Salmon Arm Museum  
 Railway & Forestry Museum, Prince George & Region  
 Rebecca Forrest, Maple Ridge, BC  
 Revelstoke Museum & Archives  
 Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre  
 Richard Percy, Coquitlam, BC  
 Richmond Art Gallery  
 Richmond Museum & Heritage Services  
 Robert McCullough, New Westminster, BC  
 Robyn Ewing, Vancouver, BC  
 Roedde House Preservation Society  
 Roger Baird, Ottawa, ON  
 Roger Ward, Westbank, BC  
 Rossland Historical Museum & Archives Assoc.  
 Royal BC Museum

Royal Roads University Library  
 RP Scholfield, New Westminster, BC  
 Saanich Historical Artifacts Society  
 Saanchita Balachandran, Vancouver, BC  
 Sandra Thomson, Nanaimo, BC  
 Sarah Charlie, Whitehorse, YT  
 Serials Support Team—Yale University Library  
 Shannon Barber, Prince George, BC  
 Shannon LaBelle, Vancouver, BC  
 Sharon Vallance, Mission, BC  
 Shelley Gauthier, Victoria, BC  
 Shelley Reid, Victoria, BC  
 Sidney Museum  
 Silvery Slokan Historical Society  
 Simon Fraser University—Serials Division  
 Simon Fraser University Art Gallery  
 Sooke Region Museum  
 South Peace Historical Society  
 SPARC Vintage Radio Museum  
 SS *Sicamous* Restoration Society  
 MSA Museum, Trethewey House  
 St. Margaret's School Archives  
 Stelter Factory Direct Ltd., Calgary, AB  
 Stephen Topfer, Victoria, BC  
 Sue Morhun, Langley, BC  
 Summerland Museum & Heritage Society  
 Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives  
 Surrey Art Gallery  
 Surrey Museum  
 Susan Demaine, McBride, BC  
 Susan Green, North Saanich, BC  
 Susan Walker, Orangeville, ON  
 Taryn Parker, Kamloops, BC  
 Terrace & District Museum Society & Heritage Park Museum  
 Terrace Regional Historical Society  
 The BC Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) (RCA) Museum Society  
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 The Protection Island Cultural Historical Society  
 The Rock Wall Project Entusiastico Society  
 The Royal Westminster Regiment Historical Society  
 The Whale Interpretive Centre  
 Tina Lowery, Victoria, BC  
 Tom Gooden, North Vancouver, BC  
 Tracy Calogheros, Prince George, BC  
 Trail Museum  
 Troy Hunter, Victoria, BC  
 Tudy Van Dop, New Westminster, BC  
 Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation  
 Two Rivers Gallery  
 UBC Museum of Anthropology  
 Ucluelet & Area Historical Society  
 U'mista Cultural Centre  
 UNBC Cooperative Education Dept.  
 University of Victoria—McPherson Library Serials  
 Ursula Surtees, Kelowna, BC  
 Valermont Museum & Archives  
 Valley Museum & Archives Society  
 Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre  
 Vancouver Art Gallery—Library  
 Vancouver Art Gallery Association  
 Vancouver Island Military Museum Society  
 Vancouver Maritime Museum Society  
 Vancouver Museum  
 Vancouver Police Historical Society  
 Vancouver Public Library  
 Vernon Public Art Gallery  
 Veronica Strong-Boag, Vancouver, BC  
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 Viviane Gosselin, Surrey, BC  
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 Whistler Museum & Archives Society  
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 Wilf Schmidt, Kamloops, BC  
 William C. Austin, Sidney, BC  
 Williams Lake Museum & Historical Society  
 Windermere Valley Museum & Archives  
 Yale & District Historical Society  
 Yorke Edwards, Victoria, BC  
 Zoser/Wosk, Vancouver, BC  
 Zero One Design

# A Haida Dream Becomes a Reality

## The Haida Heritage Centre at Qay'lnagaay

John Murray

The new Haida Heritage Centre, which opened on July 1 in Skidegate on Haida Gwaii (Queen Charlotte Islands), has been a dream of the Haida for over 40 years. The \$26 million centre incorporates the Haida Gwaii Museum and is located on the coast at the site of the Old Haida village of Qay'lnagaay (also spelled Kaay Llnagaay) or "Sea Lion Town."

In 1994 several Haida elders embarked on a project that would bring to life the concept of a heritage centre to share the islands' cultural diversity, rich heritage and history with the rest of the world. They developed key partnerships with government departments, educators, commercial enterprises and local stakeholders.

In June 2001 six monumental cedar poles representing each of the 14 clans were raised in front of the centre, which resembles a series of Haida longhouses, spanning the length of the beach and connected by interior walkways and atrium space. The design creates the feeling of a traditional Haida seaside village and is intended to showcase the unique, living culture, art and history of the Haida people. Three ancient poles were

raised in the centre's Pole Gallery in January 2007. Their mission statement says, "Qay'lnagaay is a place for the Haida voice to be heard. This is our gift to the world."

This world-class centre includes the Haida Gwaii Museum, and has extensive exhibits and audio-visuals, a gift shop, canoe house, carving shed, performing house, artisans' workshops and a restaurant/café. Briefings and orientation on Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site can also be obtained at the centre.

The Haida Heritage Centre allows the Haida to preserve and share their past and present with their children, their communities and visitors to Haida Gwaii from around the world. For more information about the Haida Heritage Centre, please call 250-559-7885, email [info@haidaheritagecentre.com](mailto:info@haidaheritagecentre.com) or visit the website at [www.haidaheritagecentre.com](http://www.haidaheritagecentre.com).

*John Murray is the Managing Director of Meadfield Consulting Inc., the company that has been handling the marketing for the Haida Heritage Centre since 2005.*



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