



# Trail Creek News

Newsletter of the Trail Historical Society

## Welcome! Museum open!

Welcome to all to another summer season! The Museum is now open to visitors and we have a few new exhibits to offer you.

There has been much going on since our last newsletter from March. As you can see, this is a double issue! We have been so busy getting ready for summer and we're right on track.

Summer is always the busy season for the Society, with the Museum open and local festivities grab our attention. This summer season, the Society has and will be involved in many activities. On June 17, Society Director Sarah Benson visited the Grade 3 class at Glenmerry School, where Pioneer Day was in full swing. Sarah offered 5 groups of



*Be sure to visit the Trail Museum this summer!*

grade threes a glimpse into the lives of Trail's early settlers with artifacts, pictures and interesting facts.

The Society has also been asked by the Smoke Eater Executive to fashion a display featuring items and artifacts of the Junior Smoke Eater team, to be placed on exhibit in conjunction with the Junior Smoke Eater Golf Tournament and Banquet in July. We hope to come up with some interesting items for

the display.

We hope to get started on a new archival project with the Colombo Lodge this summer and also get moving into Phase III of the Teck Cominco Project. Both endeavours are discussed further in this issue. Other ongoing projects include the Ore Car Project and the Historical Display Grant from the RDKB to put together a promotional exhibit for the Rossland, Trail and Beaver Valley historical societies. We hope to make some progress with them all this summer.

The Society would also like to extend its thanks to the City of Trail for supplying the Archives workroom with a much appreciated air-conditioner!

## Changes to Society's Bylaws

As a result of discussions amongst the membership at the AGM, a review of the Society's Bylaws was undertaken by Lorna Nutini and Jamie Forbes in conjunction with the City's solicitor, Chris McEwan.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Society were registered in 1977. The review of the Bylaws found

that we were not in compliance with certain requirements in practice, and the language in the document was out of date. It was thus decided to prepare a new set of bylaws to replace the 1977 document.

The revised bylaws were presented to the membership at the regular meeting on May 18th and were sub-

sequently endorsed. They were registered with the Province on May 30th. The changes are not substantial but do confirm the current practices followed for the election of Directors, the end of the fiscal year, the month of the AGM, and membership categories. This was a worthwhile exercise and long overdue.

### Inside this Issue:

Historical Display Grant	2	Waneta Plaza Photo Project	5
Mrs. Mac Display	2	Trail's Trails Walking Tours	5
New Museum & Archives Project	2	Museum Update	6
3rd Annual Antique Appraisal Day	3	Ore Car Project	6
"Sports Town" Submission	3	Hall of Memories Update	6
Museum Brochure	3	Heritage Federation of Southeast BC	7
Conference Report	4	City Gift to Colombo Lodge	7
Colombo Lodge Archival Project	4	Memorial Centre Mural	7
Teck Cominco Archival Project	4	An Interesting Enquiry	8
Newest Acquisitions	5		

## Historical Display Grant

In 2004, in partnership with the Rossland Museum Association and the Beaver Valley/Pend d'Oreille Historical Society, we obtained a grant from the Regional District Community Services Commission to develop a large display panel to promote our area's history and work of our 3 societies. These funds were sufficient enough to purchase the hardware for the display. This year, the Commission has agreed to provide a further grant of \$8100.00 to complete the design of the display panel.

Representatives from the 3 organizations recently met to develop the conceptual design and Frank Communications of Salmo and Calgary will prepare the artwork. We recently sat down on a confer-



An example of what our display unit will resemble. Brochure pockets are to be added to the front.

were advised to implement a common theme that will appropriately highlight the histories of our respective areas. After a meeting with the three societies, it was decided that the primary theme of the display will be the people, the workers and settlers that came to the area in the early days. A map of the area will be

used to create the background of the lower section, showing the locations of communities and the railways.

The middle section will feature various archival photographs, with descriptions, from each society. A statement will also be prepared that will reflect the histories of our areas, in keeping with the theme.

The display is portable and it is intended to be used at events in and outside of the area, at conferences and in public facilities to promote our museums and the preservation of our area's history. Small pockets are to be added to each section in order to house each societies' promotional brochures. Having this added feature will allow for the unit to be unattended while on display.

## Mrs. Mac Display

In December of last year, our City lost won of its truly inspiring citizens. Ethel McIntosh passed away at 104 years young. Mrs. Mac was probably best known for her editing and proofreading skills, which kept her busy until her retirement from the Trail Daily Times at the age of 80. She was also a member of the Trail Historical Society.

Her family requested in the announce-

ments of her passing that in lieu of flowers, donations were to be made to the Trail Historical Society in her memory. The Society received generous donations from local residents and also from the family of Mrs. Mac.

With these donations, the Society purchased a portable display stand that now



Our stand is currently located in the lobby of City Hall.

houses our publications, videos and art cards. It is located in the lobby of City Hall. We have affixed a dedication to the stand that acknowledges the life and contributions of Mrs. Mac.

We appreciate all donations made in her memory and her family for thinking of us.

## New Museum and Archives Project

The Society has been pursuing the idea of constructing a new City museum and archives since the Civic Centre referendum failed in 2002. Early this year, a study was prepared to determine the feasibility of such a project. This study was funded by the City of Trail and Canadian Heritage. The results of the study were very positive and City Council has endorsed its recommendations and the need for a new museum and archives for the City.

The next step in the planning process is to develop a business, financial and strategic plan for the facility, prepare a conceptual design and a construction cost estimate. If the project is deemed to be viable at that point, funding sources will be sought to proceed to construction.

The Society recently called for proposals to carry out the next phase for the project and funding is being sought to complete this work. We hope to be in a position to make a decision on proceeding with the project by late fall.

*"...City Council has endorsed ... the need for a new museum and archives for the City."*

## 3rd Annual Antique & Collectibles Appraisal Day

The 3rd Annual Antique & Collectibles Appraisal Day took place on Saturday, June 4th at the Knox United Church Hall. We were lucky enough to have had great weather to help draw some more attention to ourselves, in terms of session bookings and spectators.

Once again, renowned appraiser, Mr. Al Bowen of Coquitlam returned to shed some light on the many items brought in for review. Only two sessions were held this year, however we certainly saw a fair share of valuable items.

Two items, one a Masonic ring boasting a 1.5 carat diamond and an ivory roman soldier carving dating from the 2nd century A.D. were both valued around \$15,000!

We saw several paintings and prints, the



*This is an original Clement Drew painting appraised by Mr. Bowen to be worth around \$2000.00. Clement Drew was an American painter who lived from 1806-1889.*

one pictured above valued at \$2,000. Other items viewed included violins, tables, books, tableware, coins, clocks, microscopes, and figurines.

Mr. Bowen also conducted several home appraisals from Castlegar to Salmo, with some very interesting finds, particularly World War II memorabilia.

Last year, Mr. Bowen took an inventory of our museum and sports collection and provided an appraisal on those items. This year, we had him peruse the Archives for any valuable items. He spent a few hours in our Archives, sifting through the collection. He will provide us with an appraisal sometime this summer.

We would like to thank Mr. Bowen for making the trip up and to all those who volunteered their time organizing and planning this great event. See you next year!

## “Sports Town” Submission

The Province newspaper recently printed an article requesting BC’s towns to answer this question: “Is your town a sports town?” If so, the paper asked for submissions offering an explanation as to why your town should qualify as one of BC’s best sports towns.

Jamie and Sarah, with the help of Brian Pipes, decided to put together an extensive list of Trail’s sports accomplishments and submit it to the Province. The

deadline was June 9th.

The document was sent, all 9 pages. Staff of the newspaper will then review all submissions and create a top ten list of the best sport towns in the Province.

Throughout the summer, they plan to feature the top ten towns weekly, starting

*“We hope our submission will shine...”*

with ten and finishing up with number one.

We hope that our submission will shine and land us at the very least in the top five, if not the number one slot! Be sure to pick up the Province newspaper this summer to find out where we’ll be!

## Museum Brochure

Our newest brochure is currently in the works and will be completed and printed by the end of the month or early in July. We have received a total of \$2150.00 to fund our project from the Columbia Basin Trust via the BC Arts Council, Waneta Plaza (Anthem Properties) and Benson Oil. Each contributor will receive acknowledgment on the brochure.

The three-paneled brochure is being de-

signed by Glenn Schneider, who has chosen to maintain the design concept put forth by our website. The brochure will feature like colours and design characteristics that are present in our website.

Once the layout and printing is complete, we plan to



The initial brochure concept design by Glenn Schneider.

distribute the brochures to all surrounding museums, archives, Visitor Info Centres, and Chambers of Commerce. We will also be distributing them to all local hotels and motels.

Any monies that are not spent on the layout and initial printing will be saved for a reprint once the first 3000 have been distributed.

## Conference Report

In April, Historical Society Director Sarah Benson attended the Archives Association of British Columbia's annual conference and workshop. The conference, entitled Building Archives and Communities, was geared towards the small community archives, struggling to secure funding, donors, facilities and lasting volunteers. The workshop, entitled Management of Archives, was a hands-on learning experience focusing on the practical aspects of running and managing an Archives.

The conference was a good reminder that most, if not all, smaller archives and museums are struggling to remain active in their communities. The federal and provincial funding that was once provided to the heritage sector is no longer there and many archives and museums are



A landmark in Fort Langley, the Community Hall was completed in 1931 and is a designated "Heritage" Building

working countless hours just to secure wages, pushing to the wayside programs and supply needs.

The many sessions focused on fundraising, self-promotion, maintaining a strong and varied volunteer pool, and building community ties through "friendraising." The 3-day conference was a timely one

that provided us with the tools we will soon need to see our New Museum and Archives proposal off the ground.

In early May, Sarah was off to Kelowna to take part in a workshop entitled Dollars and Donors: How to write a successful grant proposal. This workshop, again, came to us at a good time, provided the necessary insight into grant organizations and foundations.

Both workshops and the conference were timely events. The information provided to us will undoubtedly prove invaluable in the months and year to come as our New Museum and Archives project begins to take shape.

## Colombo Lodge Archival Project

Earlier this year, the Trail Historical Society presented a proposal to the Colombo Lodge that offered a detailed outline of the work and cost involved in creating a database for their archival and artifact collection.

The proposal was accepted by the Colombo Lodge and they moved forward to seek funding for the project. After submitting an application and then presenting it to the Board of Directors, the

RDKB has awarded the Colombo Lodge a total of \$2000.00 to help fund the project. An initial \$2500.00 was donated by the *Sorelle* (Sisters of the Colombo).

Work will get started on that shortly, as they are eager to get a system put together and create better access to their

*"...RDKB has awarded the Colombo Lodge a total of \$2000.00 to help fund the project."*

collection.

Without the dedication of current Colombo archivist Anne Gagliani, this project would not have gotten off the ground and we are grateful to her for ensuring the preservation and

longevity of the Colombo Lodge Archives in our community. It is an important archives to our City and a fitting time to get going on such an essential project.

## Teck Cominco Archival Project

The Teck Cominco Archival Project has reached the last leg of Phase II. The final items to be indexed were all textual records, including ledgers, reports, publications and safety posters.

Already indexed and digitized are the 3000 odd 4" x 5" negatives that made up the first section of Phase II. Phase I is closely tied with Phase II, as it consisted of hundreds of prints developed from

those negatives. As the negatives are being indexed and digitized, the prints then become identifiable. There still remain a few unidentified prints as Phase III consists of 30,000 35mm negatives.

Currently, we are recording and indexing the safety posters created by Joe Cushner. The majority of these posters date from the 1960s and warn employees of Cominco about the dangers of careless-

ness and recklessness in the workplace.

They also announce the many safety competitions once held in the Cominco Arena.



A sample of one of the Joe Cushner safety posters.

## Newest Acquisitions

We have had a number of new acquisitions this year, and some of particular interest, not only to the Society, but also to the community.

Early in the year, Eleanor Harper of the former Jaycettes, donated the club's collection of papers, photos, minutes, and newspaper clippings. Just recently, Gord Pisacreta donated five large boxes containing the complete Jaycees fonds. These are two important acquisitions for the Archives.

We also received a Trail Smoke Eater Booster Club jacket, donated by Tiger Milburn. This jacket will be placed in the Sports Hall of Memories. Another addition to the Sports Hall of Memories is the framed photo of Don Freschi and his Provincial Championship curling team.



*The image of the Victory Arch recently acquired by the Archives.*

tory Arch over the main gates. No other picture like this exists, as it was illegal for photographs to be taken in Cominco at the time. The Society purchased that

Earlier this spring, it was brought to the attention of the Archives that a large photo existed of the main gates at Cominco on VE Day. Cominco had erected what they called the Vic-

photo and we have added it to our collection of photographs.

The negative of this photograph was found in the camera of a former employee by his son many years after the image was taken. The image was seen by a friend, who requested the negative in order to enlarge it. The seller of the image is no longer aware of the location of the negative. The photo will be placed in the Museum in front of the display explaining the role of Cominco in World War Two.

Many more items have been donated this year, as well. Be sure to stop by and take a look!

## Waneta Plaza Photo Project

Earlier in the spring, the Historical Society was approached by Linda McDermid, Mall Manager at Waneta Plaza. As most of you know, with the new Canadian Tire store came a brand new Mark's Work Warehouse. This left a vacancy in the mall where Mark's used to be located. Since its departure, there have been white boards covering the space.

Linda wanted to spruce things up a bit and asked to view some archival photos

that would be appropriate to display in the mall. Her idea came from the Ferraro Foods building in Rossland, where archival photos were enlarged and displayed on the exterior of the building.

We have provided her with a number of images that we thought would be appropriate. The images were then taken to Interior Signs to be enlarged and scanned onto coroplast for easy set up and removal. The images will soon be dis-

played on the white boards that are currently covering the former Mark's Work Warehouse store in the mall.

We encourage other businesses to embrace the history of the area and create similar displays using personal photos or those found in the Trail City Archives!

## Trail's Trails Walking Tours

The Trail Historical Society has been involved with the Waddell Project's endeavour to promote the health benefits of walking in the Trail area. The Waddell Project is an effort undertaken by the BC Cancer Agency that strives to educate the public on cancer prevention. Walking and regular physical activity is considered to be beneficial to cancer prevention.

The Trail Historical Society was contacted by Harold Stanley, the Waddell

Project's coordinator, to submit a series of historical walking tours to add to their list of walking tours called "Trail's Trails."

Lorna Nutini and Sarah put together a guided path to follow from both the downtown and the upper West Trail areas. The downtown tour is based on the historic plaques that will soon be placed on the many historic buildings downtown. Other walks include a nature walk,



*The Arlington Hotel, one of the many buildings on the historic walking tour.*

the Rock Wall tour and the Terry Fox Run route. A large display will be erected downtown that will indicate the many walks that have been provided by local groups. Be sure to look for it soon!

## Museum Update

The Museum is once again open for the season with some new exhibits and new faces. In mid-May, the Society received its notice that no funding could be provided this year from the HRDC to hire a summer student. However, two weeks later, we received word that more funding was secured and that the HRDC could provide us with some of it. We immediately put together the job description and sent it over to the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre where Student Employment Officer Ben Fisher helped us to attract candidates. After interviews, Lorna Nutini and Sarah hired 22 year old Andrew McIntyre to fill the position of Museum Attendant. Andrew is studying recreational therapy at UVic and has worked extensively with seniors, children, and those with disabilities in this field. He is

keen to develop some new exhibits and to also create liaisons with the City's Parks and Rec Program and several seniors' residences and extended care facilities. We feel he is the right person for the job. We wish Andrew all the best for the summer and we hope he enjoys his experience in the Trail Museum.

Lorna Nutini, Sandy Hart, and



The Queen's gown now on display in the museum. Other artifacts include crowns and photos.

Sarah have finished the spring cleaning in the Museum and also made some room for a few new exhibits. Currently in the

assembling stage is the Miss Trail display, which features photos, crowns, banners, trophies and other memorabilia from the defunct program. Many contributors helped make this display possible and we are grateful to them and to the City of Trail for loaning those items.

We hope to get one more exhibit going by mid-summer.

Be sure to visit the Museum this summer! A big thank you to those volunteers who have donated their lunch hours to man the Museum!

## Ore Car Project

The Society continues to advance this project although progress has been slow. In reviewing the status of the project, it has been decided to locate the exhibit (a CP Rail ore car and caboose) in Jubilee Park directly behind the former Eagles building, where it was originally planned to go.

The site is well located for public access to the exhibit and will become a part of

the City's Esplanade/riverfront beautification project.

The next step is to prepare a business plan for the project and seek the donation of a caboose. Contact has been made with Procor (at Teck Cominco)

*"...the project could be a reality by next year."*

and the Kootenay Valley Railway to obtain their assistance in refurbishing the cars and locating them on the site. A budget is being prepared and the project could be a reality by next year.

## Hall of Memories Update

The Sports Hall of Memories will be seeing a few additions in the year to come. We will be installing a new touch screen monitor in our Kiosk Centre with advanced software that will help extend its lifespan. The current monitor often experiences problems, as it is constantly running. We feel replacing it with a newer model and installing a screensaver will help avoid a similar problem.

In addition to the monitor, the Society feels a visitor counter will help us get an idea of traffic flow and visitors to the exhibit. We currently have no way of tracking visitor numbers to the Sports Hall of Memories. We intend to install a small counter above one of the most popular display cases that will digitally track the number of visitors to the Hall.



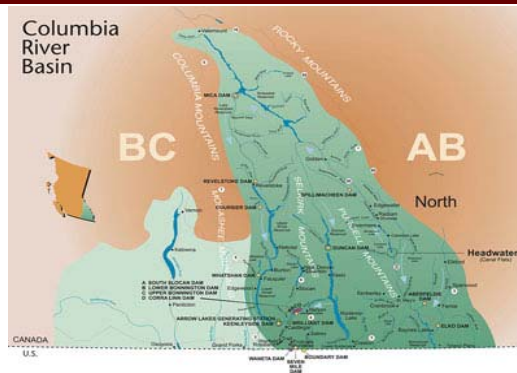
The kiosk centre in the Sports Hall of Memories will soon be replaced!

These sorts of numbers become valuable assets when applying for funding from grant organizations, as we can provide solid proof that our facilities are important and valued by the community.

## Heritage Federation of Southeast BC

On May 28th, Jamie Forbes attended a meeting of heritage organizations from the East and West Kootenays in Creston on the behalf of the Society. The purpose of the meeting was to determine if there was interest in forming an association of organizations involved in preserving the region's history. The primary purpose of such an organization would be to attempt to access more funding for heritage from the Columbia Basin Trust.

There was unanimous agreement among those in attendance that by banding together in a registered society, the heritage organizations in the region would be better represented in seeking funding for heritage related projects and our local museums and archives, not only from the CBT, but from other funding



*This map offers an idea as to those areas that will be influenced by the establishment of this organization. The basin spans as far north as Valemont, and as far east as Sparwood.*

agencies as well. The organization would also be able to lobby the Federal and Provincial Governments and the private sector on heritage matters of importance to our region and membership. The organization will be called the Heritage Federa-

tion of Southeast BC. Geographically, all heritage associations from the Boundary area, the West and East Kootenays and the balance of the Columbia Basin (Revelstoke and Valemont) are eligible to join. So far, the response to the invitation to participate in the Federation has been very good. The Constitution and Bylaws have been prepared and forwarded to the Province for registration. An AGM of the Federation will be held in the Fall.

We have every confidence the Federation will strengthen our ability to obtain funding for our museums and archives and will be successful in representing the interests of the heritage sector in southeast BC.

## City Gift to Colombo Lodge

In honour of its Centenario celebrations, the City of Trail has commissioned the incredible talents of artist and Society member Maureen Travers to create a painting that reflects and depicts the people, activities and contributions of the Colombo Lodge and its members.

Colombo Lodge officials worked closely with the City and with the artist herself to come up with appropriate images to in-

clude in the painting. Once the preliminary sketch was approved, Maureen was able to get started.

Work began last month and Maureen has been working hard to complete the project by its scheduled unveiling date. The unveiling is planned for July 2nd, to be done in conjunction with the many events scheduled for the day, including the parade, the Legacy & Open House, and the

Homecoming Celebration and Banquet. The unveiling will happen at 1:30 at the Colombo Lodge with Mayor Bogs and Lodge President Ron Parisotto present to reveal the painting to onlookers.

For more information on the Colombo Lodge and its Centenario celebrations and events, please visit their website at [www.colombolodge.ca](http://www.colombolodge.ca).

## Memorial Centre Mural

As most of you are undoubtedly aware, the painting of the Memorial Centre mural is well underway. The two artists of Canadian Murals are working hard to create a mural that honours the hockey legacies in Trail.

The Historical Society has been a part of the conceptual planning stage. Several meetings were held, in conjunction with the City of Trail and the Community in

Bloom, to come up with a concept and to depict the appropriate imagery that would illustrate Trail's hockey heritage.

The Society dug into the Archives to provide the artists with suitable images, trophies and colours in order to produce an



**The mural as on June 14, 2005. The artists have come a long way in just one week!**

accurate depiction.

The two artists, of Canadian Murals in Passmore, have worked on paintings in Vernon and in and around Nelson. Check out their website at [www.canadianmurals.com](http://www.canadianmurals.com) and browse some of their work.

Trail Museum, Sports Hall of  
Memories, and Trail City Archives  
operated by the  
Trail Historical Society

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

Phone: 250-364-0829  
Fax: 250-364-0830  
Email: [history@trail.ca](mailto:history@trail.ca)  
Website: [www.trailhistory.com](http://www.trailhistory.com)

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, East Trail.



## An Interesting Enquiry—*from the Archives*

Recently, I received an email from a gentleman in England who was searching the death of his wife's grandfather, Frederick George Oxer. This fellow, by the name of David Thompson, knew that "FGO" (as he called him) emigrated to Canada in 1930 to work in a place called Trail. Family legend has it that FGO was killed in an automobile accident in Trail around 1931, and buried in the Rossland Cemetery in an Oddfellows Grave.

Firstly, I wanted to confirm that FGO did, in fact, die in Trail in 1931. I searched the BC Vital Stats website and found a Frederick George Oxer, who died May 31, 1931 in Sullivan, BC. This through me off. I immediately thought about the Sullivan Mine and the Kimberley area, thinking perhaps the death certificate contained misinformation. Before jumping the gun too quickly, I checked the cemetery records for Trail's cemeteries. No one by the name of Oxer was listed. Subsequently, I telephoned Joyce Austin at the Rossland Museum and Archives. I had her run a search in the Rossland Cemetery, where an Oxer

did appear, however no grave site could be located.

Both Joyce and I began searching the local newspapers (her the Rossland Miner and I the Trail Daily Times) for any report on the accident itself. Funnily enough, both papers contained articles, the Trail Daily Times featuring the accident on the front page.

It seems the car in which Mr. Oxer and several companions rode skidded off the road at *Sullivan Creek*, near Birchbank. Things then began to make sense.

I copied the articles and sent them to Mr. Thompson via email. The next day, I received the scanned photos shown below. These photos were sent to the family just after Mr. Oxer's passing. The top left is Mr. Oxer outside a hotel; the top right being the Rossland Cemetery; the bottom left, of course, being the Trail Smelter, and the bottom left, as written on the back of the photo, "the Crown Point Stag Club on the shores of the Arrow Lakes, May 31, 1931." This just happened to be the day he died. Quite an interesting coincidence! It seems the group was returning to Trail from an outing at the Arrow Lakes. Only Mr. Oxer was killed in the accident.

I did search the Rossland Cemetery to try and locate Mr. Oxer's grave, however I could not. Many graves are unmarked or poorly maintained.

Needless to say, this enquiry certainly peaked my interest, as it did Mr. Thompson's family in England, who had, up until now, relied solely on "family legend" for information on their grandfather's passing.



*These photos were sent via email by David Thompson, whose wife is the granddaughter of Frederick George Oxer, who died in Trail in 1931.*