



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 5276, Station B, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4

Autumn 2013 Newsletter

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CITY COUNCILLOR'S UPDATE

By Ben Isitt

I hope you had a relaxing summer. With the approach of autumn, things are back in full swing at Victoria City Hall. There are a number of major issues being discussed by your City Council. Here is a summary to keep you in the loop. As always, I welcome your feedback, ideas and questions. My contact information can be found at the end of this article.

Crystal Pool

You may have heard that City Council is beginning public consultation on options for the Crystal Pool. This facility provides important recreation in our community and receives more than \$1-million in public funds annually. Is this a reasonable contribution of tax dollars for community recreation and wellness? Should the city explore alternatives to reduce or eliminate this annual subsidy? Should the subsidy be increased to expand recreational services in our community?

In terms of the physical building itself, there are many views on next steps. Some people believe the current pool is adequate and that an ongoing maintenance program is sufficient. Others support a major renovation of the current facility to update the pool's plumbing and pursue an addition to accommodate a family change room and expanded fitness facility. Yet another view favours demolishing the building and doing away with a public swimming pool, or alternately building a new pool, possibly with a private-sector or non-profit partner.

My personal view is that the City should give strong consideration to refurbishing the existing pool, as Oak Bay and Esquimalt did with their pools to accommodate expanded fitness and family-oriented facilities. Costs could be contained by retaining the existing building and pursuing grant opportunities from senior levels of government. I believe partnering with external organizations to operate the pool may look good on paper, but would likely result in increased costs and reduced access for residents, particularly people on fixed incomes. Maintaining a City-operated public swimming pool seems to be a reasonable investment in public health and wellness for BC's capital city.

Open Government and Web-Casting of Council Meetings

Beginning in September, Victoria City Council meetings will be “web-cast” -- available for viewing live on the Internet and also retained as archived videos for viewing at any time. I strongly support this step. I think it will provide for greater transparency and accountability between elected officials and the public. I would encourage you to continue attending City Council meetings in person when you can, and also viewing “web-cast” Council meetings on a regular basis at www.Victoria.ca. Please provide feedback to me and all city council members (by email at councillors@victoria.ca) on the proceedings in our Council Chamber. Your feedback has a positive impact on decisions affecting our community.

Another area of improvement in the direction of “open government” is the expansion of the City’s records management and freedom-of-information function as a result of the recent Organizational Review. A new manager of records management will be hired, with resources allocated to proactively disclose City records to the public and process freedom-of-information requests in a more timely way. Increasing transparency contributes to better decision-making, since the public has greater opportunities to provide oversight and feedback on the activities at City Hall.

Budget 2014

This month, City Council begins preliminary deliberations on the 2014 Budget. The recent Organizational Review and analysis by the City’s management team identified \$500,000 in annual savings, which have been implemented, helping to meet the objective of holding any tax increase at no more than 3.25% annually. This may seem like a large increase, but it requires a reduction in expenditures due to annual growth in fixed costs such as electricity, fuel and contractual obligations with employees.

I strongly support providing cost-effective local government, which can be achieved without eliminating services that residents value and which contribute to our quality of life. To this end, I have submitted a resolution for City Council’s consideration to explore cost-shifting with the existing City budget resources, in order to expedite progress on quality-of-life “green infrastructure.” Traffic calming, cross walks and bicycle lanes have been identified as priorities by residents in multiple surveys, and I believe the City should prioritize capital spending on this kind of infrastructure to make our neighbourhoods more liveable and improve walking and cycling connections between neighbourhoods.

Another priority of mine for the 2014 Budget is Parks Planning, including options for expanding greenspace in Rockland, which has one of the smallest areas of parkland of all Victoria neighbourhoods. By partnering with local landowners and leveraging funds from the city’s Parks Acquisition Reserve Fund, the City can advance the Official Community Plan objectives of greenway connections and parkland expansion in Rockland and other neighbourhoods.

Ben Isitt is the City Council liaison to Rockland. He welcomes your feedback, ideas and questions by telephone 250-882-9302 or email Ben@Isitt.ca.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR’S RECEPTION



Eighty-five Rockland Neighbourhood Association members enjoyed the hospitality of the Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, for an afternoon reception again this July.

This reception has become a regular event and is a very

enjoyable way to meet new neighbours and chat with both the Lieutenant Governor and the directors of the RNA. The board of the RNA would certainly like to extend our thanks to Government House for supporting this event.

The reception is also our way of reconnecting with our lapsed members. An invitation to a soiree at Government House catches one's attention! We were rejoined by 17 previous RNA members, as the event always creates a flurry of membership renewals when past-members suddenly remember they missed the RNA annual February AGM membership renewal. The RNA was able to add nineteen new members as well, so the event was definitely a success from a membership perspective.

We would like to thank Jeremy Brownridge, Adrienne Dunton, Heidi Elliot and James Hammond of Government House for their assistance with this event.

Bob June, Social Director, RNA

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT RETURNS TO CRAIGDARROCH CASTLE

Once the long days of summer have come to an end and the last evening cruise ship passengers have been welcomed to the Castle our efforts turn to entertainment and events. Every October Craigdarroch Castle stages theatre performances and for the second year we present Giggling Iguana and Launch Pad Productions "Dracula ~ The Blood is the Life". According to Giggling Iguana's Ian Case its going to be "creepier and scarier" than last season's sold out presentation. Performances start October 23rd and run until October 31st.

On the educational side of things, we continue with our four part lecture series on the Dunsmuirs that began with last year's presentation by Professor Raymond Dumett of Perdue University. Join us November 22nd for the 2013 lecture to be delivered by Dr. Charles Maier on daughters Jessie Sophia and Henrietta Maud Dunsmuir's marriages in the broader context of Belle Epoque Anglo-North American aristocratic matchmaking.

Christmas at Craigdarroch - Building on the success of events and performances at Craigdarroch means listening to our visitor's and members. In December we will be bringing back Jason Stevens' successful one-man version of A Christmas Carol, the same version that Dickens took on the road in the 1800's. Our popular school tours will continue and we'll add some new events in response

to requests for more evening activities when the Castle is decorated for Christmas. Details on Christmas programs will be available on the Castle's website at the beginning of November..

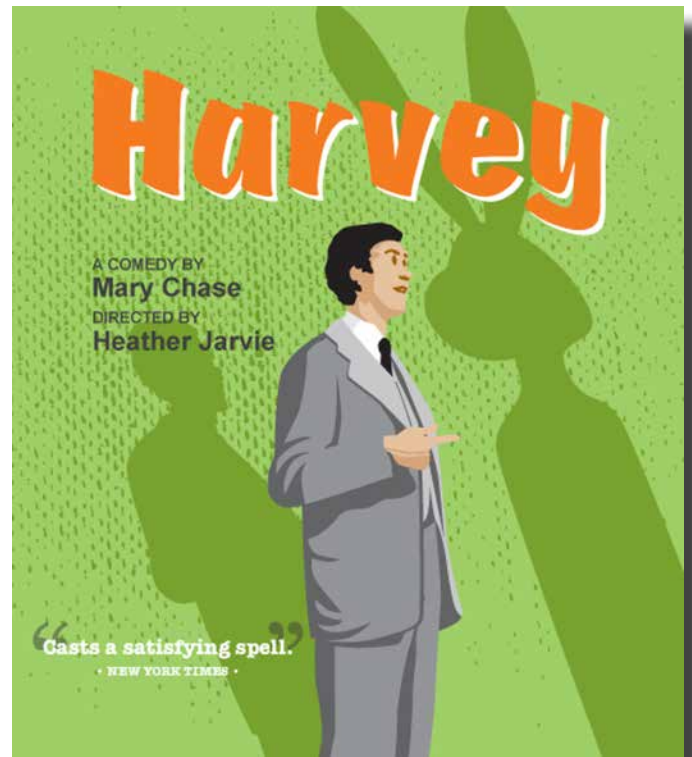
Information and tickets available online at www.thecastle.ca or by phone 250.592.5323 ext. 34

85 SEASONS OF LANGHAM COURT THEATRE

The first show of Langham Court Theatre's 85th Season, Harvey by Mary Chase starts on October 3rd. Harvey is the story of disarming Elwood P. Dowd and his friendship with a giant white rabbit that only he can see.

"A show for the entire family, from kids to grandparents. By the end, you too may want to see that rabbit."- The New York Post.

For more information, see the theatre's website : www.langhamtheatre.ca





Join us on November 6, 2013

Grace Lutheran Church, 1273 Fort Street

7:00 pm

Title: A Bird's-Eye View of Victoria, and the Mystery of Annie Ross

A talk to the combined Community Associations of Rockland, Fernwood and Fairfield/Gonzales, by Nick Russell, heritage researcher and author of *Glorious Victorians*.

Bird's-Eye Views were very popular in North America during the 19th Century, long before aerial photography was invented. Like many communities, Victoria encouraged them as a great way of promoting the town. City Council sent dozens of the prints all over the world, to show the city's prosperity.

But Annie Ross's take on the Bird's-Eye View was very different: Although new to Canada, she painted an enormous aerial watercolour, showing hundreds of Victoria's buildings in minute detail.

But what happened to that painting? Where did Annie Ross get the skill, and where did she come from?

Nick Russell briefly describes the evolution of Bird's-Eye Views, then shows details of Annie Ross's amazing painting, emphasizing her views of Rockland, Fernwood and Fairfield. He also tracks Annie back several generations. She left no descendants in Victoria --but he shares some interesting details from conversations with a great-granddaughter.

ROCKLAND HERITAGE

by Helen Edwards

I am a curious person and often think about things as I walk around my neighbourhood. Although Sir James Douglas School is not in Rockland, many of the children of Rockland attend it. As a former Sir James Douglas School student I have always wondered what was on the location of the old shingle annex, now used by the Fairfield/Gonzales Community Association. I spent my grade one year in that building and was very familiar with it. Just walking into the building now brings back memories of the giant-sized Dick and Jane book that my classmates used to learn to read. As my grandfather had taught me to read at age 3, I was allowed to read regular sized books and remember sitting cross-legged on the floor with a storybook in my hands. I also recall the snowball fights we had that winter and the games we played on the glacial rocks just behind our classroom. I knew there had been at least one residence in that location as we found pottery fragments when a massive Gary Oak tree came down in a storm in the 1970s. I knew the annex had been built in 1919, so decided to see what had been there before then.

The City of Victoria issued a building permit on January 6, 1908 for a one-storey brick dwelling at 1324 Fairfield Road to W. H. Smith. An examination of the 1908 City Directory shows that there were indeed 2 residences on this site – 1 at 1324 Fairfield owned by William H. Smith and one at 1330 Fairfield Road owned by Albert P. Smith, his son. Both are listed as gardeners.

The first mention of the Smith family is in the 1903 City Directory where we find a listing for William Henry Smith of W. H. Smith and Sons with a gardening business somewhere between Cook and Moss Streets. At that time he was living at 189 Yates Street. By 1904, William shows his occupation as gardener at the cemetery and his residence as 167 Cook Street. By 1905, he is living at “Fairfield Road near Moss.” After 1908, when presumably the second house was built, the listings continue the same until 1913, when the 1324 address disappears from the directory.

By 1915, Harold Pellett is living at 1330 Fairfield. He worked as a janitor at Sir James Douglas School, virtually at his back door. This would have been very convenient in case of emergency. Unfortunately, Harold did not live very long at this location, as he died of tuberculosis on January 31, 1918. His widow Nellie continued at the residence until the house was presumably demolished and the shingle annex was constructed.



Both families are representative of the western migration of the populace. William was born in Prince Edward Island in 1876 and married Grace McCoubrey there in 1866. The couple had 8 children. After she died, he moved to Victoria in 1887 where, he married Catherine Hunter who produced 2 more children. Catherine died on January 16, 1909 and William married Barbara Mary Reid Smart on September 20, 1910; they had one child. On the other hand, Harold Pellett was born in London, England on March 22, 1879. By 1901, he was serving aboard SS Ophir in the Suez Canal. Later in the year, this vessel conveyed the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (the future King George V and Queen Mary) on their tour of the British Empire. The visit was scheduled to open the new Federal Parliament in Melbourne, Australia, but the royal party also visited Gibraltar, Malta, Ceylon, the Straits Settlements, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada. Harold immigrated to Canada around 1907. He married Nellie Lawton on June 16 1908 in Victoria; they had 3 sons and 2 daughters.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

To spur interest in the activities of the Rockland Neighbourhood Association and to attract new members, we have recently established a page on Facebook.

Check out <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rockland-Neighbourhood-Association/444293285610322> and “Like” us to receive future updates.

AT THE ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA

THE SISTERS OF ST. ANN

Date: July 18, 2013 - December 8, 2013

Guest Curated by Carey Pallister, Archivist, Sisters of St. Ann Archives, with Michelle Jacques | Drury Gallery

In 1858, a small group of Sisters - the Sisters of St. Ann - traveled from Quebec to establish a convent in Victoria. They also established institutions of education, notably St. Ann's Academy, which is recognized as one of the first schools in BC to offer an art program. The Sisters recognized the potential of art education to ready students for both the spiritual and practical aspects of life, and from 1873 until the Academy closed in 1973, the Sisters offered classes to students and the broader community. In 2011, 18 paintings from the Sisters of St. Ann were transferred to the AGGV in celebration of their important legacy as artists and art educators. Nurturing the Creative Spirit is an intimate exhibition that features paintings, drawings and ceramics by the Sisters and their students.

RNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS – 2013-2014

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RNA Email Server List

Would you like to hear more about events in Rockland? Please join the neighbours list through the RNA website at www.rockland.bc.ca.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

Is there a building in Rockland that you would like to know the history of? Do you have an old photo that needs identification? Let me know at heritagelady@gmail.com and I will see what I can find.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The Rockland Neighbourhood Association Newsletter is published during the year. It is distributed electronically to all members. Submissions from members on issues of interest are always accepted and photographs are particularly welcome.

Deadlines for the next issue is:

November 15, 2013

All submissions should be sent to Newsletter Editor, Helen Edwards at heritagelady@gmail.com.



PHOTO CREDITS:

p.1, courtesy Ben Isitt

p.2, Helen Edwards

p.4, courtesy Nick Russell

p.5, Hallmark Heritage Society Archives

p.6, Helen Edwards