

**Manager's Report**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**13 April 2023**

It's hard to believe that this will be the twenty-fifth report to an AGM that I have given. Some days, I admit, I feel every one of those twenty-five years - but most of the time it seems as though the time has flown by.

This past year is no exception. It has been a very busy one, and as usual I feel like I'm not yet ready for last summer and here it is time to get ready for next summer.

Some highlights:

The logging arch returned! After two years of reconstruction, wheelwright Brian Reynolds hauled it back here early last April, and Wayne Harris and his Clydesdales pulled it through the Blossom Fest parade in May. It's not very often that we steal the show in the parade, but we sure did last year!

Phoebe Amendt joined us as our Museum Educator, hired through a BC Arts Council project grant. As David notes, she was working largely remotely, travelling from Trail once a week to access the collections and working the rest of the time from home. She has developed several new school programs, bringing our total number to eighteen different programs, aligning with the provincial curriculum from Kindergarten to high school.

In response to Covid and changing school district rules around field trips, we have developed school programs that can be delivered in a variety of settings: at the Museum, in classrooms, around the community, and virtually. We were one of the few local organizations that was offering school programs during Covid, and as a result we saw participation rise from a typical 6-8 classes per year to 35 two years ago and 41 last year. The rush has slowed this year, as other offerings return to normal, but looks like it will normalize out at considerably higher than pre-Covid days. The Reconciliation Project that David mentioned is an important part of our school programming, and I'm happy to say we have secured funding from BC Arts Council to continue that partnership for another year.

Visitation in general was also up considerably last year - not just in comparison to the two Covid summers, but in comparison to previous years as well. May, July, and September 2023, for example, were the busiest those months have been in a couple of decades; June and August were comparable to our busiest years. Some of that may be a reaction to Covid, as people were eager to be out and doing things again, but it was very good to see nevertheless. Visitation over the winter months, while always much slower than the summer, has also been steady and often much above typical years, so we may see continued high numbers this season as well.

We've continued to build on our community partnerships, working with schools and seniors groups as well as events and organizations, Ktunaxa Nation Council, and local and regional government. Most

recently, we have begun working with the centennial committee of the Town of Creston to plan a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Town's incorporation next year. We are often able to use our collections and resources to help our partners achieve their missions while also raising the profile of the Museum and demonstrating our importance to the community.

Our collections continue to grow, still at a rate of approximately one donation every week, and those donations might consist of a single item or dozens of them. Helen and Rosanne are still doing a fantastic job of cataloguing all of those, and we have several volunteers working in the archives as well – now that we have our new shelves and space to put things, we're finally able to tackle the backlog of uncatalogued archival materials that has accumulated over the last few years. We are evaluating the options for a new collections-management software to track both the archives and objects collections, as our old Microsoft Access database is nearing the end of its functionality. The options we're considering most favourably will also enable us to put the entire collection online.

Access to the collections for various purposes remains an important part of daily work, whether it's for our own internal use such as exhibits and programs, or in support of the community and the public. David mentioned a couple of recent instances where we have been able to provide other organizations with information they needed to ensure their continued functioning.

The last few months have focused on our 40 Years, 40 Voices project, which brings together stories from people whose stories we have not told in the past. Very big thanks to Brenda, who has been working tirelessly to connect with new members of the community and support them in telling their stories. Alyson Small, only recently back from maternity leave, has been researching the historic cultural communities in the Valley and creating presentations to include in the exhibit. The exhibit will open on Blossom Festival weekend.

Looking ahead to this summer, we're excited to be able to bring back a fairly typical schedule of seasonal events. Our school programs are booking up quickly; Kids' Day will be back on the last Saturday in June; we have History About Town Week scheduled for the middle of July; and the Junior Curators' Club for the latter part of August. We're registered for the Columbia-Kootenay Culture Tour on the last weekend in July, and will be participating as usual in the Bird Festival, Blossom Festival, Canada Day at Canyon Park, and the Fall Fair.

Like David, I would like to thank all our volunteers who have made all of this possible. I very much appreciate all you have done, not just this year but over the past twenty-five years, to support me and the Museum.