



The Murphy Equipment

This large collection of antique belt-driven machinery came to us from Maury Murphy. He and Tony Holder acquired it from a mine in the Invermere area. They set it up in Maury's carport, where they used it to build or repair anything that needed building or repairing on their fruit ranches in Erickson. Maury was the superintendent of the Erickson Irrigation District for many years, so he likely used the equipment to keep the community's water system running, too.

The collection includes a metal-working lathe, drill press, and metal shaper. When set up for use, each of these machines is connected to an overhead driveshaft using belts and pulleys, which in turn is connected to an electric motor that powers the whole system. All of the drive system, and many accessories – cutting tools, drill bits, gear sets, etc. – were donated along with the larger machines. Most of the equipment was manufactured between 1915 and 1939; Maury purchased it in 1969.

What's Next?

Jeremy Piva donated the crew and equipment to move the equipment to temporary storage here (*thank you, Jeremy!*). We'll tarp it to protect it from the weather, and include the question of how and where to display it as part of the strategic planning process the Board is undertaking this winter.

How Can You Help?

We've already identified half a dozen options for long-term storage and display, and there may be more. Identifying them all and deciding which one is best is definitely something we'll want member input on – so if you have ideas, please let us know, and we'll be inviting you to weigh in on the final decision over the next several months.



Collections Database

We have upgraded our collections management database!

This is how we keep track of what's in the Museum and Archives collection – who donated it, where it is, what we know about its history and use. We were previously using a Microsoft Access platform that...well, let's just say it had its challenges. After extensive research and support from our unofficial IT guy Todd, we made the switch this summer to CatalogIt. We're still learning all of the ins-and-outs of using it, but so far, we're loving it!

What's Next?

We have some data clean-up to do – CatalogIt handles some types of information differently than the processes we were using before. There are a few objects and a *lot* of photographs in the database that don't have images associated with them, so we'll be doing a fair bit of digitizing, too.

Once we've got that done, we launch the database publicly so our collections can be searched and viewed online! We're hoping to be there within the next year.

How Can You Help?

How are you with computers and data-entry? We have a (quite lengthy, honestly) list of database and data-entry tasks that need to be done. Most of them are fairly straightforward, though admittedly very repetitive. Some, like inventorying an exhibit or digitizing photographs, need to be done on-site, but because CatalogIt is all online, some of the tasks can be done at home. We'll just get you set up and comfortable with using the platform, and then you're good to go! Let us know if you'd like to help with this.



THE CRESTON
MUSEUM

Mini-Exhibits

This space has felt a little (okay, a lot) unfinished for years, until Vicky took it in hand this fall. A quick trip through the collection storage areas looking for objects that fit a certain theme; a little dusting, sweeping, and mopping; a couple of hours to move things in and set them up...and voila! A glimpse into the world of raising children, and several objects out of storage and on display for the first time in years (including the wonderful wicker baby carriage that always gets a lot of attention).

What's Next?

There are lots of corners and shelves and odd little spaces throughout the Museum that are either under-utilized or could use a bit of a refresh. There are also lots of potential community spaces where local history could be featured (Vicky had another exhibit at the golf course this summer, for example). We're working on tackling these as the opportunity arises.

How Can You Help?

Got an idea? Noticed a space that could be used a bit better? Is there a community issue or anniversary that needs to be recognized? Maybe you've seen something in the storage areas today that you think should be on display for a while. If you've got the time and creativity to put together a mini-display, let us know!

If you're good at graphic design or layout on the computer, there are a few printed signs around that need to be replaced, too. We likely still have the original files to get you started.



Living Large

For the past two years, this space featured the bulk of our special exhibit, “40 Years, 40 Voices.” We’ve just taken that exhibit down, and now our part-time Museum Assistants Ashley and Brenda are filling the empty shelves and spaces back up. They’ve chosen the theme of “Living Large,” and are highlighting objects in the collections that relate to games, hobbies, and entertainment. This is part of a constant practice of renewing and refreshing exhibits. It’s not good for most types of objects to be perpetually on display, so periodically changing exhibits lets us better care for the collections. And – a huge added bonus – it helps keep things fresh and interesting for visitors.

What’s Next?

For every exhibit, no matter how small or temporary, we develop interpretive materials to help our Museum Host staff and volunteers talk to visitors about it. We also look for ways to incorporate the exhibit’s content into established school programs and other activities. That’s what helps us create the friendly, knowledgeable, and personalized experiences that our visitors love (check out the reviews on Facebook, TripAdvisor, Google, and other sites and you’ll see what we mean)!

How Can You Help?

Interested in being a Museum Host? This is your chance to talk to every visitor who comes in, show them around the Museum, help them explore the many ways they can – literally – get hands-on with history while they’re here. You get to interact with drop-in visitors of many ages and backgrounds, and lead more focused activities for schools and other groups. You provide a few hours a week in summer; we provide all the information and support you need!



Our Hockey, Our Heroes

Have you been up to the arena lately? Noticed the new structures being built along the walkway at the top of the bleachers? Those are display cases for a brand-new exhibit on the legacy of ice sports in the Creston Valley. We're working with a team of people to fill them up!

For the better part of a year, we've been talking to people involved in local ice sports (past and present), collecting stories and objects, and compiling them all into an exhibit. These are the draft panels we put together last spring as those stories started coming together.

What's Next?

The sixty or so objects going into the exhibit have all been moved to a temporary storage location (thanks, Skip and Len, for your help with that). Final preparation of backdrops, text panels, labels, etc. is taking place right now. We expect installation to start shortly, with a special Exhibit Opening to follow.

How Can You Help?

You could get a sneak preview of the display by helping us install it! This will involve a fair bit of lifting, but most things aren't too heavy – hockey jerseys, skates, that sort of thing. Let us know if you'd like to help, and we'll keep you posted on the date and time.

Also, we've designed the exhibit in modules – sections that focus on a specific person or team, that can be easily swapped out in the future as we receive objects and photos that reflect a different story. So keep an eye out for things that could possibly go into the exhibit at some point!



Cataloguing

These two tables always look a little...chaotic. That's because it's where newly donated objects tend to land while they're waiting for Helen and Rosanne to catalogue them. We receive a donation of objects and archival material almost every week...we're at 45 so far this year.

Some of those donations consist of a single object, like the silver tray presented to Wes Black by the local Hospital Board. Others are considerably bigger – like the collection of photos, memoirs, and newspaper clippings Bill Stowell sent us, related to his parents' time at Tye in the 1940s. It's a fantastic collection, but it takes a lot of time to catalogue!

What's Next?

Cataloguing new acquisitions is only part of the collections-management job. We're also always tackling these tasks:

- Reorganizing objects to store similar ones in the same bin or shelf
- Updating bin labels as new objects get added to them
- Conducting inventories, condition assessments, and research
- Removing objects from the collection that have no connection to Creston, that are duplicates, that get broken or deteriorate, etc
- Gathering/returning objects for use in exhibits and programs

How Can You Help?

Helen and Rosanne have the cataloguing of new objects pretty well handled – but if you want to help behind the scenes, consider volunteering for one of the other collections-management tasks on the agenda. It means being able to work in the storage areas (upstairs and often dusty), lift boxes and bins, go up and down ladders, and probably use the database (we can provide training and support on that one!).



Accessible Washroom?

This is the only washroom in the Museum itself and it is not wheelchair accessible. The narrow space and the step up to the toilet makes it difficult for anyone with mobility challenges. Two other washrooms on the property are more accessible, but they are in different buildings that are not always open to the public. (Plus, this washroom has really old plumbing that sometimes gives off a smell that is, shall we say, less than pleasant.)

Washrooms are just part of it – we’ve also noticed accessibility challenges associated with thresholds, gravel pathways, and narrow doorways.

What’s Next?

We’re undertaking an internal accessibility audit to help identify exactly where the biggest issues are, and what we need to do to address them. Planning a renovation of the washroom is definitely on the list! There will be plenty of smaller things we can do to improve, too. The washroom is likely to be a bit more of a long-term project, but we’ll be tackling the smaller tasks before the end of April.

How Can You Help?

Got construction experience? We’d love your guidance helping figure out what is even possible with the washroom, and what kind of a budget (and fundraising) we’re looking at.

With four main buildings, several smaller ones, and an acre and a half of property, some help with the accessibility audit would be great! After that, if you feel comfortable installing little ramps to help with our high doorsills or tackling similar minor construction/repair tasks, we’d love to have your help!



Steam Locomotive

This little steam locomotive has been sitting here, welcoming visitors to the Museum and helping direct them to the main entrance, for nearly thirty years – and after all that time exposed to the weather, his cab was falling apart. Jim, Skip, Vince, and Bruce took on the job of rebuilding him this spring, giving his boiler a fresh coat of paint while they were at it.

What's Next?

The largest objects in the collection naturally tend to be the most noticeable ones, too, so keeping them looking (and, in some cases, running) good is always on the to-do list. We'd like to tackle the well-boring machine up by the Carr Building. Derry the Model T needs an engine-rebuild if we're going to keep him running for parades. Critter (that's our Massey Harris tractor) should get some mechanical attention. And, of course, maintaining larger objects stored and displayed outdoors is an ongoing task – the logging arch, for example, needs a yearly treatment with linseed oil to keep the wood from drying out.

How Can You Help?

Lots of ways:

- Plan maintenance and restoration projects, from preparing to-do lists to figuring out budgets
- Fundraise for bigger projects, either through seeking cash donations or arranging contributions of materials and equipment
- Grab a hammer, wrench, sander, or whatever tool is needed and join in the projects we take on!



Heirloom (and other) Gardens

This garden got started when two things happened at more-or-less the same time: one, the Community Seed Bank was looking for a place to put a publicly-accessible garden that could help showcase what they do; and two, we had a tree fall down and leave this little corner empty.

Each spring, volunteers like Pete and Alta ruthlessly yank out the out-of-control oregano and sage to manageable levels, and maintenance man Jarrett whacks the elderberry down to stumps to keep it from taking over completely. Then we get seeds and plants from the Seed Bank and plant a little showcase vegetable garden here.

What's Next?

We'd love to be able to do more here in terms of helping preserve heirloom varieties – from protecting against cross-pollination to harvesting the seeds – and helping visitors learn more about these activities. We've also talked about pollinator gardens, xeriscaping, native plant gardens, and other ways of using our lovely gardens and grounds to illustrate sustainable gardening techniques.

How Can You Help?

For starters, if you've got a green(ish) thumb, feel free to lay claim to one section of the gardens and maintain it! We have an irrigation system that takes care of most of the watering, but we definitely appreciate you taking on the planting, pruning, weeding, and deadheading. And if you're interested in taking the lead on one of those broader projects while you're at it, we'd love to hear about it!



Strategic Planning

Since taking office in February, the Board of Directors (Jason, Jim, Brenda, Todd, Vicky, Len, and Ron) has been working hard to make sure the Museum is heading in a good direction. Among our initiatives:

- Board governance training! Every Director has taken an online course through BC Museums Association
- Bylaws and policies review! As we learned a year ago, there are some areas of the bylaws that definitely need strengthening and clarification – and some of our policies haven't been updated in decades. This is ongoing work, and we'll keep you posted on it.
- Pathways program! This is a program, supported by BC Museums Association among others, to help arts/culture/heritage organizations better integrate equity and access into their work. We've signed up and start the year-long program in January.

What's Next?

We have just received funding through Columbia Basin Trust's Non-Profit Advisors program to do a Strategic Plan that will guide the Museum's work over the next several years (the first strategic plan this organization has ever had). That process also begins in January.

How Can You Help?

Give us feedback today – what are we doing that you want to see more of? What are we missing that we should start doing?

Next, be sure to renew your membership and join us for the Annual General Meeting in April. For sure, we'll have bylaw revisions that will need to be adopted, and we'll be presenting the Strategic Plan for your approval.