



E-NEWS

SPRING 2019



GVMA #15255



ANNOUNCING OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!

Steve Fleck

Greetings,

I am thrilled and humbled to have been named Executive Director of the GVMA. In recent months it has been my pleasure to meet, and work alongside, so many people who love history and culture. My wife Tanya and I moved to Vernon in June 2018, after living for three years in southern China, and we love it. We plan to make this our forever home.

My life is dedicated to learning and working with people. As a result, it has been filled with teachers and mentors who have taught me about leadership, management, and helping others reach their potential. I look forward to being part of the Museum and Archives team and a committed member of the greater Vernon community.

We want to be active partners in the healthy development of diversity and culture in the region. Please come in and meet our team or share your ideas. Together, we shine.

Sincerely,

Steve Fleck



GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK, DENISE MARSH

After more than six years as the GVMA's Marketing Coordinator, Denise Marsh has accepted an exciting new opportunity at another local cultural facility, the Okanagan Science Centre. Denise has been the quiet force behind past editions of this newsletter, as well as the majority of social media and promotional postings by the museum. She orchestrated a variety of much-loved community events, including the Grandparent and Grandchild Dance in February of 2018, for which she received the "First Runner Up Family Event" award from the Winter Carnival Society. We want to congratulate Denise on her new position, and thank her for her dedication to the museum.

We will miss you!

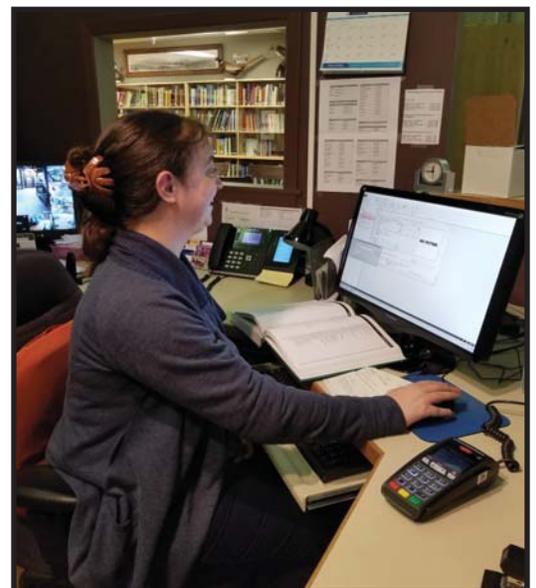


WELCOME MARKETING AND EVENTS COORDINATOR, LISA RAMSEY

A self-described event planner at heart, Lisa Ramsey is thrilled to be coming onboard as the museum's new Marketing and Events Coordinator. She has planned a number of successful community events during her career, ranging from intimate activities to large-scale functions. She has also honed her marketing skills, and keeps up to date with different channels of communication and forms of media. She looks forward to becoming involved with the GVMA community, and organizing events that will allow the museum to continue providing quality programming and exhibits, and reach new audiences. The staff and board are pleased to welcome her onto the team.

A MUSEUM SUCCESS STORY

Towards the end of 2018, Community Futures of the North Okanagan arranged a volunteer position for Chelsea Gisborne at the museum. After hearing how much she was enjoying her time here, Community Futures was able to arrange funding under the Neil Squire Society so that Chelsea could become a part-time employee. As the museum transitions from the current building into the new cultural centre, we hope to expand our relationship with the Vernon community, as well as with visitors from outside the city, and reach new audiences. Chelsea has been a true asset in this mission, as she is unmatched in her ability to engage visitors, and particularly excels when working with children. Chelsea has a warm and welcoming personality, and has brought vivacity and diversity to the museum's team.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

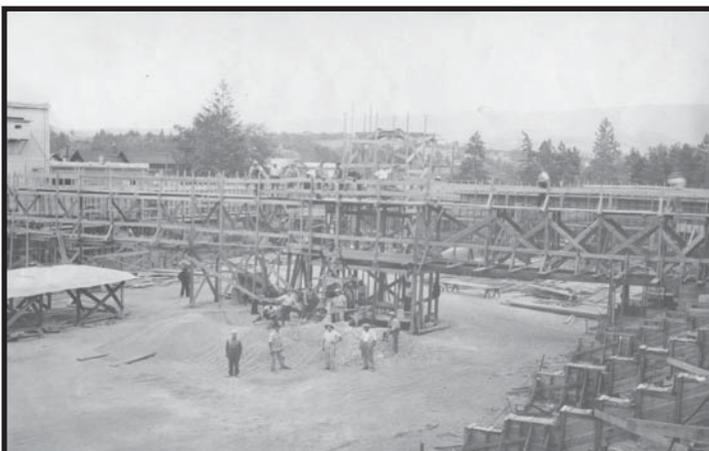
Looking Back at Vernon's Civic Arena: The Interior's First Artificial Ice Facility

Barbara Bell, Archivist

The question of a proper arena for Vernon became an issue in 1933, when the original structure dating to the turn of the century was torn down. Many of the community leaders were opposed to such a project due to the depression economy, but a committee was formed to canvas the community and they found to their surprise that most people were in favor of building a new ice rink. The \$25,000 arena by-law passed by a substantial majority, and when a second by-law was needed for an additional \$22,000 in funding, it received almost unanimous approval.

Construction started in July of 1937, with rotating crews of unemployed men, plus skilled workers as required. Plans for the new arena called for the use of laminated trusses for the roof, thus eliminating the need for supporting posts. Each truss was made up of three thousand individually pre-fabricated units, an ingenious new method of construction credited to consulting engineer Charles T. Hamilton of Vancouver. At the time, the arena was the largest timber truss project in Canada. The walls were of foot-thick concrete, and a total of five miles of pipe to carry the freezing brine was laid down on a two-foot thick cinder bed, and covered with two inches of sand. The arena was situated next to Inland Ice so that their compressors could be used to pump brine 140 feet across the lane and into the arena piping, at the rate of 800 gallons per minute. Forty-five 1,000 watt wall lamps with reflectors were installed above the playing surface alone, and positioned in such a way as to eliminate any possibility of shadows being cast on the ice. The new Vernon Civic Arena was a 'state of the art' facility.

A total of 2,600 people from all over the Okanagan Valley attended the opening ceremonies on January 6, 1938. Special bus runs were arranged for those attending from out of town. The Kelowna to Westbank ferry made extra trips, and the CNR train scheduled additional runs between Vernon and Kelowna, including one at 11:30 p.m. to take people home after the evening's festivities. The opening celebrations included a broom ball game between the Kinsmen and the Rotarians, displays of figure skating, speed skating, and barrel jumping, as well as music by the Kildonnan Pipe Band, and a professional hockey game between the Vancouver Lions and the Spokane Clippers, with a winner's purse of \$100. A dance at the National Hotel Ballroom followed at 11:30 p.m., extending the festivities into the wee hours of the morning.



Vernon Civic Arena under construction, 1937
GVMA #4848



Vernon's 'state of the art' arena, circa 1940
GVMA #7847

Over the years the civic arena was home to many different hockey clubs, including the Vernon Canadians, local heroes of the 1950's and Allen Cup winners in 1956, and more recently the Vernon Lakers/Vernon Vipers, champion hockey clubs in the British Columbia Junior "A" Hockey League, and the Centennial Cup series.

An increasing need for more ice space culminated in the construction of the multiplex (Kal Tire Place) in 2001, followed by the addition of a second new ice surface, twinning the multiplex, in 2018. Impassioned debate over the future of the iconic civic arena ended with a decision by the city to demolish the structure. Tribute was paid by the community on January 6, 2018, exactly 80 years to the day after the original grand opening, with a special commemorative celebration reflective of the 1938 programming. Demolition began in October, and the site currently sits empty.

RECENT DONATION

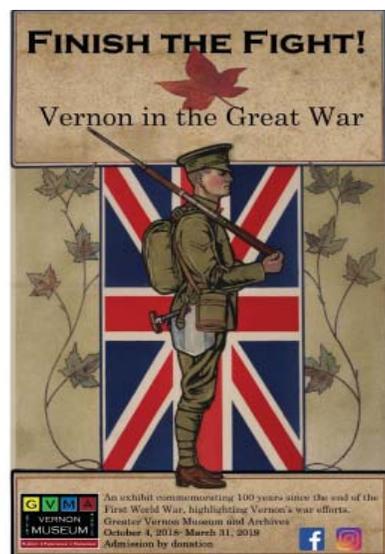
2nd CMR Leather Saddle

Jesslyn Jarvis, Registrar and Assistant Curator

Marked "2CMR," this leather saddle is a recent donation to the Greater Vernon Museum and Archives' artifact collection. The 2CMR refers to a military unit – the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Vernon's 30th BC Horse and an independent squadron of Horse from Victoria amalgamated to form the overseas unit called the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles. They went overseas in June 1915.

In England, the regiment became part of the Mounted Rifle Brigade in the 2nd Canadian Division and was sent to the trenches in France. During its service, the Regiment took part in a number of battles including Ypres, Somme, Vimy Ridge, Cambrai, and Passchendaele. By the end of the war, they had won ten battle honours but lost 686 men.



In 1919, after armistice, the 2nd CMR returned to Canada and were demobilized, but their history and traditions carried on with the formation of the British Columbia Mounted Rifles in 1920 (an amalgamation of the 2nd CMR and the 30th BC Horse). This unit was renamed the British Columbia Dragoons in 1929.

The saddle is currently on display at the museum in the "Finish the Fight!: Vernon in the Great War" exhibit, open until March 30, 2019.



FEATURE PHOTO

Mission Hill Airport Enhancements

Liz Ellison, Digital Archivist

In the May 12, 1938 edition of the Vernon News there is an interesting photo of some of the enhancements made to the Mission Hill Airport.

Improvements to the airfield were made under the direction of Doug Kermode and seventeen members of the Vernon Junior Board of Trade. The group made excellent progress in 'marking' the ideal landing field. Ninety old truck tires were sunk flat in the ground with the centres filled with asphalt, and the surface painted white. As more tires were collected, they would be laid on the airfield.

Those in the photo taken by Russell Hamilton, are, left to right: Archie White with the paint can in his hand, President-elect Charlton Smith with paint brush, Doug Kermode pointing out the site for the next tire, Charles East, and Nick J. Carew with a broom in action.



Another interesting trick: In March, 1938 coal dust was spread over the snow on the runway when a plane from San Francisco landed at the airport.

FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Education Committee Meeting

Steve Fleck, Former Education and Outreach Coordinator



Steve Fleck with students from Okanagan Landing Elementary School.

On Tuesday, January 15, 2019, the GVMA hosted an open house to discuss the future of the Museum's education and outreach programs. The group included past and present GVMA board members, representatives from other local cultural organizations, His Worship Victor Cumming, Mayor of Vernon, and Sheldon Louis from the Okanagan Indian Band Council. Steve Fleck, the former GVMA Education and Outreach Coordinator, moderated the discussion.

To set the stage, the group addressed issues of change in education, technology, globalization, environment, as well as local demographics and economic development. Participants had opportunities to discuss issues among themselves, share ideas with the larger group and post notes to boards that were collected as feedback at the end of the night.

This is a cross-section of topics, ideas and perceptions from around the table:

The present museum displays are predominantly focused on the history of European settlement and development in the region. It is difficult and costly to change the permanent displays. However, educational programs and events can bridge cultural and demographic divides by creating spaces for people to tell their stories and share unique perspectives. This is especially important as we grow our relationships with the Okanagan Indian Band and strive to include people from cultures around the world.

In order to engage the widest possible range of community voices, the museum should evolve beyond its walls. Events and activities involving the museum can take place anywhere in the community, to provide opportunities for place-based learning. This involves developing new relationships with existing non-profit cultural organizations and businesses. But it also means finding partners and looking for ways to engage people who are not part of any formal group. A great example is our tourist visitors – especially those who might not normally consider a visit to the museum.

We concluded the meeting with a question: how can the museum attract more people and groups to participate in activities connected to culture and local history?

There were a number of suggestions from the group. But most of the ideas were based on finding places of natural overlap with real needs and interests of other groups. To this end, the museum should look outward, and seek firsthand information about trends in local, national and international subsets of interest. In order to thrive, it is important to break out of an isolated silo mentality. In short, we cannot expect people to get involved unless we are willing to learn from, and with, them.

When it comes to the nature of our activities and events, the group suggested the museum should increase opportunities for interactivity. Technology was an obvious option for those using smartphones and social media. In addition to virtual and augmented reality, technology allows participants to contribute to discussions, add their creations, and become part of an exhibit or community project.

Interestingly, there is also a push-back from technology discussions that remind everyone that people want to get out of their homes and away from their screens to do things with others. The museum can attract people to participate by offering opportunities to create, play games, debate issues and celebrate diversity in community spaces in and outside our walls, with other cultural partners.

A Call to Action

The Museum is seeking members for our new Education and Outreach Committee. The committee will meet monthly for one evening and provide guidance for programming and event planning to support learning and awareness of history and cultural development in our region. The committee will be chaired by the GVMA Education and Outreach Coordinator.

On Wednesday, March 20, at 7:00 PM, the GVMA will host a meeting for people who want to join the Education and Outreach Committee. We are looking for people from a diverse backgrounds who can make a 3-5 hour monthly commitment to help shape the future of museum programming.

Please RSVP to Steve Fleck if you intend to join us for the meeting.

Email: steve.fleck@vernonmuseum.ca

Office Phone: 250.550.3150

Mobile Phone: 778.212.7182

RECENT EVENTS

The Christmas Tea

December 15, 2018



December's Christmas Tea was another great success thanks to the hardwork of gift shop and events coordinator Jean Manifold. Attendees dined on a variety of sandwiches and delicacies, while sipping tea and enjoying the smooth vocals of entertainer Sally Evans. Several lucky individuals walked away with door prizes donated to the museum by a variety of local shops and businesses. The afternoon was culminated with a moving performance of *Silent Night* that had nearly everyone singing along.

Thanks to Sally and Doug for leading the afternoon's program, to our donors for their generosity and community spirit, to museum staff and volunteers for ensuring the event's success, and to all of our guests for attending this fundraiser and supporting the museum.



Family Pirate Party

February 10, 2019

Our Family Pirate Party was a swashbuckling good time. We had an incredible turnout, with dozens of families from across the Okanagan participating in an afternoon of pirate-themed merriment. Despite running a high fever, entertainer Kiki the Eco Elf spent two hours singing, dancing, and entertaining the crowd.

Children, from toddlers to preteens, joined in the fun, while adults snapped photos from the sidelines. The highlight of the afternoon was a treasure hunt, which saw the little pirates collecting jewels hidden all around the museum and winning prizes. Special guests Beacon the Beaver, Jopo the Jester, and the new Silver Star Royalty added further magic to the afternoon.



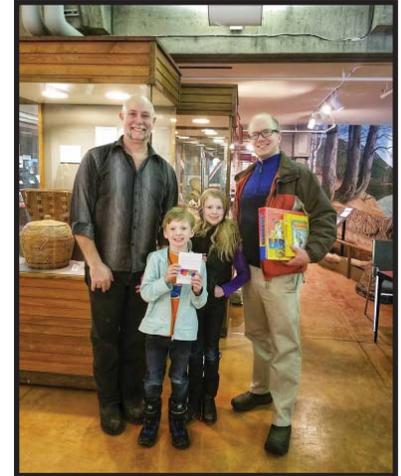
Thank you to the Winter Carnival Society for this unexpected honour!

Family Games Day

February 16, 2019



Thanks to a grant from the BC Museums Association, in partnership with the Government of British Columbia, and the hardwork of former Education and Outreach Coordinator Steve Fleck, we were able to offer a free games day on the Saturday of Family Day weekend. Over twenty people of all ages turned out on a snowy afternoon to play games, enjoy healthy snacks, win prizes, and participate in a museum-themed scavenger hunt.



The afternoon was very well-received, and Fleck hopes to make this a recurring event. In fact, with money left over from the grant, the museum was able to purchase some board games to be housed permanently onsite. Visitors are invited to come out anytime we are opened to play games with their friends and enjoy the museum's peaceful atmosphere.

Congrats to Rollen Lee and family for winning a \$100 gift card to the Galaxy Cinema!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sandra Semchuk at the GVMA

March 26, 2019



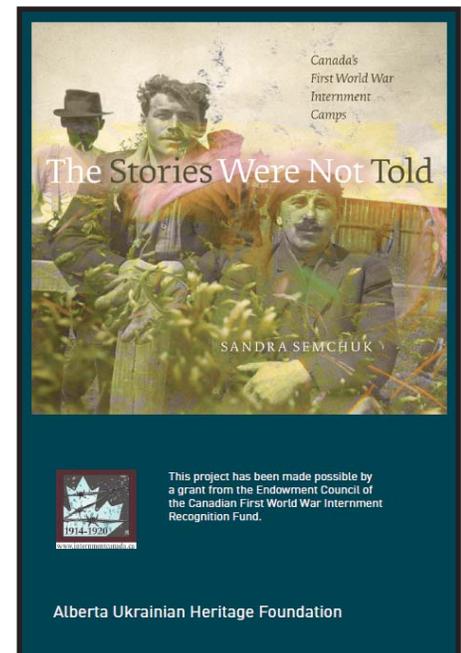
UNIVERSITY of ALBERTA PRESS

University of Alberta Press has published an important new book by Sandra Semchuk, a photographic, text, and video artist, and the winner of a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts (2018). Semchuk will be touring Canada in the coming months to create a discussion around *The Stories Were Not Told: Canada's First World War Internment Camps*.



In *The Stories Were Not Told*, Semchuk highlights Canada's internment operations during the First World War, in which many immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, and the Ottoman Empire were unjustly imprisoned as enemy aliens.

Semchuk will be hosting a presentation, book sale, and signing at the Greater Vernon Museum and Archives on **Tuesday, March 26, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**. This is a free event, and everyone is welcome.



"Using photography, cultural history, and personal history, Semchuk presents this largely unrecognized event as part of the process toward reconciliation and healing." - Emil Yereniuk

NEW AND UPCOMING EXHIBITS

Exploring Social Justice

April and May

The next exhibit being installed in the temporary gallery space will be an exploration of four significant social justice issues, with local, national, and international connections to past and current affairs. The exhibit will feature a special focus on historical injustices committed in the City of Vernon. Topics addressed will include:

- Internment
- Home Children
- Immigration
- Land Pre-emption



Group photo of a family of men, women, and children who were interned at the Vernon Internment Camp between the years of 1914 and 1920. GVMA #9062

The official opening for this exhibit will take place on **Friday, April 5**, from **7 to 9 pm**. This will be a 19+ event, as alcoholic beverages will be offered. The exhibit will then be opened to all members of the public starting Saturday, April 6. Everyone is invited and welcome to participate in this open and honest discussion.

Ogopogo Pop-up Exhibit

March and April



“My mother was an earwig, my father was a whale...”

This month's pop-up exhibit features the history of the Okanagan's very own Loch Ness Monster, with a variety of artifacts, newspaper articles, and alleged photographs of the mythical sea creature. Are you a believer or a doubter? Come in to the museum to find out.



Could this be Ogopogo? Photo taken by Bill Steciuk in Kelowna in 2015.

Many thanks to the following contributors for their continued support of the Vernon Museum and its In-Spot Museums.