

WINTER 2008

# Heritage Here

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## CHC NETWORKING CONFERENCE



*Mission Mayor James Atebe, who opened the conference, with Sue Morhun (left) and Pamela Copley.*



*Bob Parliament making a point.*



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## PROVINCIAL HERITAGE STRATEGY

On 4 September 2008 a contingent from the Maple Ridge Heritage Commission and the Historical Society attended a workshop hosted by the BC Heritage Branch. This strategic planning session was held in the council chambers of the District of Kent in Agassiz and was one of nine held around the province. The purpose of the workshops was to help create a heritage strategy for the province.

The Mayor of Kent, Lorne Fisher, welcomed us, and then a series of speakers, including Bernadine Jonker, Judith Cook, Richard Linzey, and Bob Parliament, led us through an examination of what heritage is and why it is important to our future. They described aspects of the Provincial Heritage Strategy and the role of Regional Heritage Planners (RHPs) in assisting local governments across BC. The intention is to build local heritage conservation capacity and to share information with local governments about provincial funding opportunities that might be available. The funding is designed to support the planning and development of sustainable conservation programs.

The types of activities the RHPs want communities to focus on would involve:

- Promotion of heritage awareness and conservation;
- Advice to local governments on heritage planning options;
- Building heritage capacity within communities;
- Implementation of the National Historic Places Initiative;
- Participation in heritage conservation projects;
- Review of applications to the Community Heritage Planning Program;
- Training;
- Building new partnerships; and
- Outreach across BC.

Workshop participants were divided into groups and then led through a series of questions designed to help define what heritage is and why it is important to communities in these modern times.

It soon became clear that heritage is more than pictures and artefacts gathering dust on a shelf, and we talked at length about the different “whats.” They also include, for instance, natural places and landscapes, because they feed the soul of a community, as well as “hidden landscapes” that may include First Nations sacred places, which have an intangible importance (and it is a question whether they should be recognized on a map because they might be vandalized).

Other heritage assets may be parks because of their ability to mature and adapt to a changing community, and transportation routes that include rivers, trails, rails, and trade routes. Agricultural buildings, landscapes, implements, and methods on one hand are a direct connection to our past, and



on the other show us how what was old is new again as we desire to live closer to our food through programs like the “100-mile diet.”

We talked about original neighbourhoods, which were micro-communities developed before efficient transportation. They often have an identity that is easier for newcomers to understand. Maple Ridge has many “villages,” and often a historic post office signalled a neighbourhood’s coming of age with a sort of legal status. And there are the place names to consider, which become touchstones to the past, either to the First Nations or to white pioneer families.

Also part of heritage is the diversity in people and immigration patterns that had profound influences on neighbourhoods and entire communities. It is in this context where the stories of the many people belong who contributed to our “modern” history with their varied ethnic backgrounds and their expectations of a “new” country with limitless opportunity. Some of these people have become glorious eccentrics, whose stories add so much texture to every community—from Maple Ridge’s Billy Miner and his robberies, John Ruskin’s utopian society, to more modern eccentrics like David Alexander and his treasures. All of these memories, stories and people make up the historical DNA of any community.

Heritage is also the historic events that shape the future of communities, as well as artistic resources and traditions that help tell the stories and keep them alive over many centuries.

To support these aspects of heritage we need to protect photographs and documents in adequate archival facilities, and we need museums where we can have accessible archives so that the public can have the tools to learn about our communities.

Industrial sites and resource extraction patterns, from both First Nations and modern settlers, are also part of heritage, and last but not least, archaeology, which helps interpret the past where no written records are available.

Exploring these topics, we became aware that each community’s historical preservation needs are different, but there also is a common thread that connects us and can help weave a tapestry of our shared regional and provincial history. And we share many challenges in trying to complete the evaluation, planning, and implementation cycles that will strengthen historical preservation in the future. Some of the challenges include:

- Political will in a time of many economic challenges;
- Operating funds—capital can sometimes be easier to come by, but as soon as you build something you have to staff it;
- The grant system puts things on a year-to-year footing when we need stability in order to do long-range planning;
- Public will and interest is a challenge when you don’t have an accessible archive or, as in Maple Ridge’s case, sufficient museum space;

- In many communities critical archives are at risk because of poor infrastructure;
- Unthinking development that wipes out heritage resources;
- The information highway is not well connected to heritage, and many mid-size and smaller communities aren’t well served with technology;
- Putting our best face forward for 2010 and the tourism bubble that will follow.

It wasn’t all doom and gloom though, because just by hosting this series of “Harvesting History” workshops the Heritage Branch is demonstrating a significant amount of political will. As always we will have to be persistent to ensure this momentum is not lost.

Time will tell if this program will make our historical conservation capacity more robust, but the exercise was quite valuable on its own merits and will at least provide some focus for our local endeavours.

—Craig Speirs

## CHC NETWORKING CONFERENCE



Mission CHC Chair and conference organizer Val Billesberger and Don Luxton.

Next page: (1) Maple Ridge CHC members attending Networking Conference (foreground l.t.r.): Sarah Hossack, Jim Connor, Sheila Nickols, Lynne Probyn, Jacqueline Mulcahy; (background) Fred and Helmi Braches. (2) Lisa Codd talking about heritage in Burnaby; (3) Heritage BC’s Rick Goodacre in front of the microphone.

All photographs courtesy Gerhard von Rosen (GaiaPix)



## CHC NETWORKING CONFERENCE

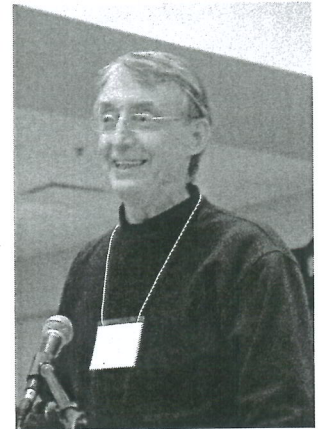
On 29 November 2008 the District of Mission sponsored a one-day conference for Community Heritage Commissions (CHCs) at the Heritage Park Centre in Mission, the first of its kind. The conference was organized and hosted by Mission's CHC and received some funding from Heritage BC.

Of the province's over 40 CHCs, quite a number were represented, including some from as faraway places as Kamloops and Nanaimo. Although the individual CHCs may vary in what they do on a day-to-day basis, they all have in common that they advise municipal councils or regional boards on heritage matters. This conference provided an excellent opportunity for networking and listening to presentations on some community and regional case studies as well as setting up a CHC.

Among the speakers were Lisa Codd (a former Maple Ridge CHC member, now Curator of the Burnaby Village Museum); Heritage Consultant Sue Morhun; Stephen Mikich, Senior Planner, District of West Vancouver; Denise Cook, Heritage Consultant and Landscape Architect; and Don Luxton, Heritage Consultant. At the conclusion of the conference Bob Parliament (Community Heritage Officer, Heritage Branch) chaired an open forum that addressed questions handed in by participants.

Maple Ridge CHC members attending the conference were enthusiastic about the results of the proceedings and hope that this was not the last CHC networking conference.

—Helmi Braches



## Events + Projects

### HERITAGE AWARDS PRESENTATION

FEBRUARY 19TH — EVERYONE IS WELCOME

This year's Maple Ridge Heritage Awards will be presented on Thursday, February 19th at 7:30 P.M. at St. Andrew's Heritage Church, 22279 116th Avenue.

Reception with refreshments to follow. Piano and vocal stylings of THE ROBINAIREs will be the entertainment for the evening.

"A Legacy of Learning: The Heritage of Education" is the theme of Heritage Week 2009, which will be from February 16 to 22.

