

# Vancouver Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

ISSN 0042 - 2487

May 2012

Vol. 51 No. 8

# Vanishing Vancouver

May Speaker: Michael Kluckner

Why is it that some cities visibly retain a sense of history, accommodation and sustainability no matter how old they are? You walk down the street and you can sense history and livability. Some cities, particularly in North America, reinvent and transform themselves every decade or so because of a variety of factors: the limitations of space and the pressing needs of growth during booming economies, developers' need in the name of progress to create profit opportunities, the dominance of the automobile, the lack of an embracing aesthetic, etc. On the other hand, some cities retain their heritage by default, slow economic growth, street widths, and block and building sizes that don't have to be readjusted to accommodate a new reality. Vancouver carries a little of each. Perhaps the city's founding mythology of instant modernity (or replaceable heritage) began in 1886 when the city

burned down and was instantly rebuilt.

For the cynic, is Vancouver's new "EcoCity" just an update of the "making way for progress" slogan that began destroying historic Vancouver a half-century ago during boom times?

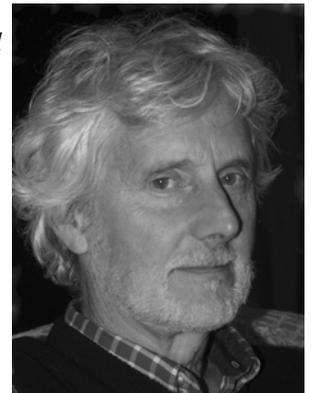
However, forty years ago heritage-minded people leaped into the fray to question the city's development and loss of heritage.

Artist, historian and raconteur Michael Kluckner's second *Vanishing Vancouver* once again puts Vancouver's heritage front and centre.

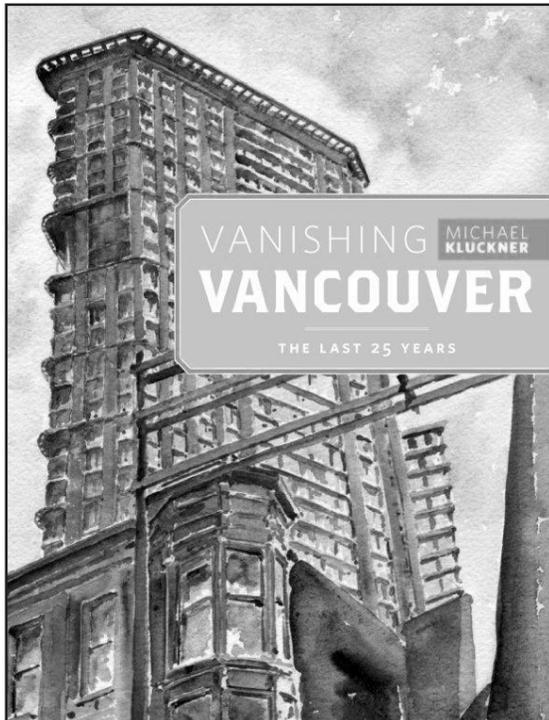
The text puts the trends of Vancouver's recent narrative into a historical context, focusing on the evolution of Vancouver's historic houses, apartments, gardens, shops and theatres, analyzing why some of them have been better able than others to adapt to changing times.

"Heritage," which was the main theme of the original 1990 *Vanishing Vancouver*, is just one of the themes in the new book. Others include affordability and sustainability, as the author records and explains the "vanishing" aspects of the city scene. Kluckner also reflects on legacies and memories of Vancouver heritage and the attempts to keep them alive and relevant in the rootless 21st-century city.

Michael Kluckner is the author and illustrator of about 15 books. Two of them, *Vanishing Vancouver* (1990) and *Vancouver Remembered* (2006), won the Vancouver Book Prize. He recently returned and settled in Vancouver after several years overseas and more than a decade on a Fraser Valley farm. He was the founding president of Heritage Vancouver in 1991 and served as chair of the Vancouver Heritage Foundation and Heritage Canada.



Artist and author  
Michael Kluckner



Next Meeting: 7:00 PM, Thursday, May 24, 2012 at Museum of Vancouver

## President's Notes

Last year at this time I wrote about adjudicating the annual Heritage Fair, and of engaging the minds of the future with the relevance of the past. This year I was honoured to choose two young scholars to receive the Vancouver Historical Society Award: certificates of achievement and copies of Chuck Davis' History of Metropolitan Vancouver. The award is for the outstanding history project, and runner-up, whose topic is within the municipal boundary of the City of Vancouver.

The 2012 award winner was Luke Mantle for Commémorer le pont commémoratif (Ironworkers Memorial Bridge), and the runner up was Jayzar Ong for Queen Elizabeth Park Flower Garden.

Mr. Mantle is a Grade 5 student from General Gordon Elementary. Dressed as an engineer, he described the circumstances leading up to the tragic events of June 17, 1958 from the perspective of John McKibbon, the junior engineer whose calculation errors factored into the collapse. His explanation was aided by a video, including an animation of the sequence of the collapse, using illustrations from the report published by the Royal Commission that was charged with determining the cause. And though Mr. Mantle used few primary sources in his research, I was unable to find fault with the sources he used (which included historian and VHS member Eric Jamieson's Tragedy at Second Narrows).

Mr. Ong is a Grade 6 student from John Henderson Elementary. In addition to aptly explaining the royal connection to Queen Elizabeth Park, his display included a colourful and meticulous re-creation of a portion of the gardens in model form. It was both creative and informative.

Janet Morley and the Heritage Fair organization are to be thanked for the continuing success of this wonderful program. The excellence of the presentations are a credit to the teachers involved. And to be sure, all the participants are to be congratulated.

*Scott Anderson, President*  
*sanderson@vancouver-historical-society.ca*

## April 15th Incorporation Day Luncheon

*Photos by Kellan Higgins*



Vancouver Historical Society Award of Merit winner, educator and writer Charles Hou and his wife, Cynthia.



Keynote speaker, CBC Archivist Colin Preston entertains the luncheon attendees with his film presentation.

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## Welcome New & Returning VHS Members

Gordon Doan  
Janice Graf  
Carol MacMillan

Erin McHugh  
Lana Okerlund  
Harley Rothstein

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## Thank you VHS Members and Friends

We thank the VHS members and friends who have generously contributed \$125 in March to the Vancouver Historical Society.

## Motoring In Vancouver continued from Page 4

Car Company. In 1929, the site was finally taken over by a non-automobile related business — Growers Wine Company Limited — that would be there for many years.

As the signs say, B.C. Motors was the distributor of Premier, Lexington, King 8 cars and Federal and Denby trucks, all U.S. models. Federal Trucks were built from 1910 to 1959 while Denby trucks lasted until 1931. Premier Motor Manufacturing was an Indianapolis, Indiana-based company that made cars from 1903 to 1926. Lexingtons, also assembled in Indiana, were built from 1910 to 1927. Kings were built in Detroit from 1911 to 1923. Starting in 1916, all King automobiles had V8 engines and so were called King 8s.

Although all of these cars had their steering wheels on the left, drivers in B.C. drove their vehicles on the left side of the road until July 1, 1920 when the province followed the prevailing North American practice of driving on the right. Coastal parts of the province including Vancouver and Victoria would follow suit on January 1, 1922.

*Jim McGraw with additional research by Andrew Martin*

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## Earlier Time for VHS May Talk

Please remember we hold our Annual General Meeting on Thursday, May 24th. To allow time for the reports and Executive Board elections, the AGM will be held starting at 7:00 PM, a half-hour before our scheduled monthly talk.

In its role as Nominating Committee, the current VHS Executive is pleased to submit the following full slate of nominees for the 2012-2013 Executive to be elected at our May 24, 2012 Annual General Meeting.

President/Treasurer	Scott Anderson
Vice President	Robert McDonald
Recording Secretary	Kellan Higgins
Director	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Michael Kluckner
Director	Eve Lazarus
Director	Jim McGraw
Director	Florence Sung
Director	Bruce M. Watson

All terms of office are for one year beginning June 1, 2012. Additional nominations will be accepted at the AGM provided that the nominee is a current VHS member and is present.

## Upcoming Speakers

*The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. The talks are free and are held at the Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park) at 7:30 PM on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August, December).*

Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012 - 7:30pm

### **Indigenous History of the Vancouver Area**

*Speaker: Rudy Reimer*

A few thousand years ago, the first human settlements were being created in what we know today as Greater Vancouver. A member of the Squamish Nation, Assistant Professor in Native Studies and Archaeology at SFU, our speaker will give us a snapshot of longtime places and spaces. He will offer insight on how we should view and acknowledge these concepts of settlement, resource sharing and everyday living on a broader everyday scale.

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012 - 7:30pm

### **Vancouver Noir**

*Speakers: John Belshaw and Diane Purvey*

In the 1930s to the 1950s, the rain-slicked streets of Vancouver were the setting for crime, decay, repressive liquor laws, juvenile delinquency, cynicism, gangsterism, alienated fast talking men and women of questionable virtue, murders and murder plots. Our speakers examine this fascinating period through period newspaper photos and news accounts.

Thursday, Nov. 22, 2012 - 7:30pm

### **British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas**

*Speaker: Derek Hayes*

A favourite speaker is back with us to unveil his latest work: *British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas*. How is a historical atlas different from a regular atlas? While a traditional atlas contains detailed topographies and geopolitical landscapes, a historical atlas chronicles history through all that plus old maps, charts and photographs, accompanied by explanatory texts or essays.

# Motoring in Vancouver



Photo: S. Thomson (photographer), City of Vancouver Archives AM1535-: CVA 99-5159

Although the European-centred Great War would continue for at least another eight months, some Vancouverites in this photo are interested in new cars. On a sunny February day in 1918 — 94 years ago — it looks like there may be potential customers at B.C. Motors Limited. The dealership was on the northwest corner of West 15th Avenue and Granville. The City of Vancouver’s southern boundary at the time is just a block away at West 16th Avenue.

While difficult to tell if the photo is posed, it seems interesting that two people are simultaneously pointing to features of the cars and two bystanders are staring at the camera. The portly gentleman on the left appears to be pointing out something about the motor to perhaps a potential customer. The other, with his foot on the running board, is pointing to the dashboard of the sportier car

although the woman appears to be looking to something beyond the windshield. Note the area in front of the building is wood-planked instead of paved.

The earliest available records show there had been businesses associated with cars on this corner since at least Tudhope Motors in 1913. The Ford Motor Company (probably a dealership) occupied the site from 1914 to 1917 when B.C. Motors took over for just one year. In 1919, Hemphill’s Motor School was established here and would last until 1922 although it changed its name to Hemphill Trade School in 1922. The site was then vacant until 1925 when Van Motors opened. Ross Motors was there in 1926 and Diana Moon Motor Sales in 1927. Diana Moon wasn’t a person but a car marque. The Diana Motors Company was a short-lived subsidiary of the Moon Motor

**Continued on Page 3 top left**

## Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2011 - 2012 (Elected May 26, 2011)

### EXECUTIVE

President	Scott Anderson
Vice President (Programs)	Bruce Watson
Treasurer	Kristen Wong
Recording Secretary	Jean Wilson
Director (Memberships)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Kellan Higgins
Director	Jean Mann
Director	Robert McDonald
Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw

### APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster	Quasar Data Management
Archivist	Elizabeth Hawkins
Info Line	Bruce Watson
Newsletter Mailing	Margaret Dinwoodie

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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