

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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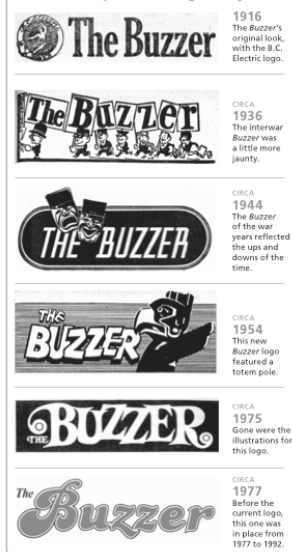
Almost 94 Years (and counting) of The Buzzer

May Speaker: Jhenifer Pabilano

(Due to unforeseen circumstances, our previously advertised talk on the PNE has had to be postponed- ED)

If you've ridden public transit in Vancouver anytime in the past nine decades, then you've seen *The Buzzer*. Named for the signal telling the

Buzzer nameplates through the years...



operator you wanted to disembark, *The Buzzer* has been the pamphlet-sized newsletter published by Vancouver public transit agencies since 1916.

Developed

by George Kidd, the general manager of the B.C. Electric Railway Company, *The Buzzer* was meant to keep people informed about public transit. It was also intended to foster rider loyalty to B.C. Electric streetcars in the face of competition by 'jitney' operators (private citizens who patrolled streetcar routes and offered rides for five cents). The first issue was published on June 2, 1916. And

though jitney service was abolished in July 1918, *The Buzzer* became a mainstay of Vancouver's public transit system, no matter how much transit itself changed.

The Buzzer is a unique window into the past. Each issue speaks to everyday people about what affects them in the moment. Recognizing the need for levity in dark times, a bold headline in a February 1917 issue announced, "Latest War News," and then added in much smaller print, "will be found in the daily papers; *The Buzzer* is reserved for talk about the weather." And respecting the solemnity of the occasion, a January 1936 issue was dedicated to the passing of George V only a few days earlier.

For anyone interested in transit history in Vancouver, *The Buzzer* is the tally-sheet of change!

For example, the May 18, 1951 issue reminded folks the conversion of Dunbar-West Broadway to trolley coach service would begin the following Monday. The conversion cost more than a million-and-a-quarter dollars, including 35 new trolley coaches at \$25,000 per vehicle, approximately 5.3 miles of two-way trolley coach overhead and poles, plus special loops and other enhancements. The Buzzer even had a long running

series of cartoons between 1954 and 1976, drawn by the late Bob Banks.

Jhenifer Pabilano will speak on the long history of *The Buzzer*, probably North America's longest-published transit newsletter. She will also highlight the many wonderful



historical tidbits that *The Buzzer* has published, mirroring the history of Vancouver.

Jhenifer began writing and designing *The Buzzer* in January 2008, and as of March 2009 became more the editor-in-chief, working with colleague Jennifer Despina to put the publication together. She is the main blogger on the Buzzer Blog (www.buzzer.translink.ca).

Scott Anderson

Next Meeting: 7:00 PM, Thursday, May 27 at Museum of Vancouver

Preznotes

This will be my last PrezNotes. Having fulfilled my promise to take the helm for three years, I will be stepping down as President of the Society at the AGM when a new President will be taking over. I will continue to sit on the Board and contribute to this very vibrant organization. I wouldn't miss that for anything.

It has been a great pleasure serving you and working with such a productive and effective Board of Directors. They are the ones who are to take full credit for bringing the Society to such a vibrant position. It is really because of them as well as the volunteers working on the periphery, that we have capacity audiences and our projects come to fruition. As well, if it weren't for the interest of our members, we would not have people to help spread the story of Vancouver's history.

I personally feel a great fondness for the city as my grandfather first came through in 1887 when there were still ashes on the ground, choosing to settle his young family in the real city of Victoria before returning here in 1900. Although my grandfather and grandmother had passed on before I was born here, I heard countless stories of the early history of the city from many other family members. Still, I always felt there was much more to learn. That is why I joined the Society in 2003 and I can say that every day I have learned something new.

It has also been a lot of fun and I hope to contribute to this vibrant organization for many years to come.

All the best of luck to the incoming board and new President

Bruce M. Watson, President

Parking at Museum of Vancouver

Please note parking is no longer free at the Museum of Vancouver. If you are attending the monthly Thursday evening meetings, there is now a charge of \$5 to park in the museum's lot. Tickets allowing parking must be bought at on-site machines and then displayed on your car's dashboard.

Luncheon a Great Success

A very well attended VHS Annual Incorporation Day Luncheon took place on Sunday April 4th at the University Golf Club. Representing the City of Vancouver, acting Mayor, COPE Councillor David Cadman expressed his appreciation for the historical interest and work that the Society is doing. Also represented were the Archive's Les Mobbs, and the Museum of Vancouver's Joan Seidl. Performing his annual traditional role, former VHS president Len McCann rang the bell of the *Robert Kerr*, the same bell which had rung furiously during the fire of 1886 guiding people through the smoke to the refuge of the vessel in the harbour.



VHS Director Chuck Davis (left) presents award to Daniel Francis

The featured speaker was historian Daniel Francis, author of more than two dozen books as well as the *Encyclopedia of British Columbia*. He captivated the audience with his observations and insights into the career of

L.D. Taylor, from his book *Mayor Louis Taylor and the Rise of Vancouver: LD. Landing in Vancouver in 1896* Taylor



VHS President Bruce Watson (left) makes presentation to Larry Wong

was fleeing a financial scandal in Chicago. After putting down roots here, he became the most elected mayor in the city, serving seven times between 1910 and

1934. A journalist and entrepreneur, L. D. was responsible for building the not immodest Sun Tower and promoting public

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Luncheon Continued from Page 2

works such as the airport at Sea Island. Known as the friend of labour, he paradoxically opposed labour militancy and left-wing movements. After an investigation by police of wrong doing, of which L. D. was cleared, his reputation was tarnished and he was soundly defeated by Gerry McGeer in the election of 1934, and although he sought public office several times after that was never again elected.

Much to speaker Daniel Francis' surprise and delight, he was awarded the Society's Award of Merit for 2010 "for his significant contributions to the history of Vancouver and British Columbia through his prolific writing both in print and on the internet." Also receiving a second 2010 Award of Merit was the VHS's own Larry Wong "for his considerable efforts to instill a wider appreciate of the contributions of Canadians of Chinese ancestry to Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada."

*Bruce Watson and Jean Mann
Photos: John Madden*

VHS Annual General Meeting AGM Starts at 7:00 PM, Half-Hour Prior to May Talk

Our AGM will be held starting at 7:00 PM, Thursday, May 27 a half-hour before our scheduled monthly talk. Reports will be presented and elections for a new Executive will take place.

In its role as Nominating Committee, the current VHS Executive is pleased to submit the following full slate of nominees for the 2010-2011 Executive to be elected at our May 27, 2009 Annual General Meeting.

President	Scott Anderson
Vice President	Bruce M. Watson
Treasurer	Paul Flucke
Recording Secretary	Jean Wilson
Director	Chuck Davis
Director	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Jim McGraw
Director	Jean Mann
Director	Larry Wong

All terms of office are for one year beginning June 1, 2010. Additional nominations will be accepted at the AGM provided that the nominee is a current VHS member and is present.

Upcoming Speakers & Events

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). Special events may be held at other times for which there may be a fee.

Watch this space for news of our 2010-2011 series of talks, scheduled to begin in September.

Looking for Treasurer-in-Training

The VHS is looking for a new Treasurer-in-training who is prepared to take over the role starting May 2011. Paul Flucke, who as current Treasurer, has diligently and very effectively guided the VHS in that role for the past decade, has agreed to stay on for one more term to train a replacement. Starting 2011 the new Treasurer will be expected to commit to a minimum of three years to ensure continuity. Some of the duties for the Treasurer are:

Daily, weekly and/or monthly

- Record renewals and new memberships for processing by Membership Secretary
- Issue donation receipts, make bank deposits and pay bills
- Prepare and present monthly statements at monthly Executive meetings
- Invoice outlets for DVD sales

Annually

- Prepare year-end report for AGM
- Prepare annual tax return and GST refund
- Prepare BC corporate filing
- Invoice Institutional subscribers

If you are interested in serving in this position to ensure the Society's healthy continuity, please let us know through the info-line (604-878-9140), e-mail us (info@vancouver-historical-society.ca), write us (P. O. Box 3071, Vancouver, B. C., V6B 3X6) or buttonhole one of the Executive at our monthly meetings.

Women on Ice

Last Month's Speaker: Wayne Norton

Wayne Norton's April 22nd talk on Women's Hockey drew in several enthusiastic descendants of the Vancouver Lady's Hockey Club. As well, VHS member Leslie Clauson brought along a photograph (see insert) of a relative, a uniformed Betty Hinds, who was part of the Vancouver Lady's Hockey Club as well as the Vancouver Amazons. For Leslie, this was a "eureka" moment for she was able — through Wayne's illustrated lecture — to place the date of the photograph and Betty's role in the decades of the rise and fall of Women's Hockey in Vancouver and British Columbia. (Leslie's story will appear in the next newsletter.)

For those of us not directly connected to women's hockey it was a fascinating and entertaining evening. In the beginning of his research, which had been launched through a grant from the Vancouver Historical Society, Wayne had to scrounge around for a title and so pressed into service the wicked wit of Chuck Davis who presented him with quite unusable titles like "Goals and Dolls", among others. At one point during the Power Point presentation all eyes were riveted on one particular player in a 1917 long dress uniform of the time and with a face that was identical to Wayne's causing Wayne to flatly deny that it was him in drag.

That the West End became a natural wellspring of talent for the then "unladylike" stick wielding team of the Amazons was a natural given that at that time, apartment buildings were being built specifically for the single West

End women working downtown. As well as the giant Denman Arena was situated nearby. The Amazons triumph in 1918 over the more ladylike Vancouver Lady's Hockey Club was long lasting. With a constantly changing roster throughout the 1920s along with teams like the Fernie Swastikas, Victoria Kewpies, and Seattle Vamps, the Amazons went on to participate in Western Canadian Championships held at Banff.

Women's hockey had disappeared by the late 1930s, skipping a generation only to re-emerge in the 1960s. However, the existence of early women's hockey is not high in the public's consciousness for Wayne noted that a recent TV commentator cheerfully pointed out the "pioneering" women hockey players of the 1980s. Such

commentators and others would do well to read Wayne's book, *Women on Ice: The Early Years of Women's Hockey in Western Canada*, Vancouver: Ronsdale Press, 2009.

Bruce M. Watson



Betty Hinds of the Vancouver Amazons

Vancouver Historical Society Leadership - 2009 - 2010 (Elected May 28, 2009)

EXECUTIVE

President	Bruce Watson
Vice President (Programs)	Larry Wong
Treasurer	Paul Flucke
Recording Secretary	Jean Wilson
Director	Scott Anderson
Director	Chuck Davis
Director (Memberships)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Jean Mann
Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster	Quasar Data Management
Archivist	Elizabeth Hawkins
Info Line	Barbara Coles

CONTACT INFORMATION

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