



The Vancouver Historical Society Newsletter

Preserving and promoting the history of Vancouver since 1936

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Thursday October 24th, 7 pm, at the Italian Cultural Centre and on YouTube

Burning History: Uncovering the Role of Fire in BC

Liz Toohey-Wiese is a settler artist residing on the homelands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. She is a graduate from the MFA program at NSCAD University, and completed her BFA at Emily Carr. She has taken part in solo and group shows across Canada, and has taken part at artist residencies at various locations such as the Sointula Art Shed, the Caetani Cultural Center, Island Mountain Arts, Artscape Gibraltar Point, and the Klondike Institute for Arts and Culture. Deeply interested in the history of landscape painting, her paintings explore contemporary relationships between identity and place. Her most recent work explores the complicated topic of wildfires and their connections to tourism, economy, grief, and renewal. Liz is a faculty member in the Fine Arts department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.



Liz Toohey-Wiese



continued below

ish Columbia's (BC's) diverse ecosystems. Far from being uniformly bad, they maintained a patchy mosaic of forest and non-forest succession stages. These ensured resilience to future disturbances. However, recent increases in the frequency and severity of



PHOTO: LAURA SAIMOTO

Come join us this month at the beautiful Italian Cultural Centre at 3075 Slocan Street, just east of Nanaimo on the Grandview Highway. There's free parking for those in cars; by transit, take the #7 Nanaimo bus from the west side/downtown, or the SkyTrain Millennium Line to the Renfrew Station, either just a 5-minute walk from the Centre.

Burning History (continued)

wildfires indicates that the nature of fire, and its interactions with ecosystems, are changing in novel ways.

Baron's presentation explores the ecological role of wildfire in BC and its interactions with human history. She shows how activities in the past are shaping our current experiences and thus creating on-going environmental histories. Using examples from tree-ring research, documentary records, archival photographs, and Indigenous oral histories, with a specific emphasis on the 20th century, Baron explores the importance of historical records for understanding the patterns we see today.

A Postdoctoral Researcher and an incoming Assistant Professor in Fire Ecology at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Okanagan, Jen Baron works at the intersection of science and historical research. She aims to understand how the legacies of colonization, fire suppression, and fuel accumulation have shaped fire regimes. That's the first step to restoring fire-adapted ecosystems and landscapes. Jen holds a BSc in Environmental Sciences from Western University and was previously an instructor in Masters of Geomatics and Environmental Management Program at UBC Forestry. She also works as a Fire Effects Monitor on prescribed fire operations in southeastern BC.

We hope to see you at the Italian Cultural Centre for this special double-lecture and exhibition. Our first foray there in February 2024, when Laura Saimoto spoke on the history of the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood, was a resounding success. We will return to the Museum of Vancouver for the November lecture.

-John Belshaw

Do we have different values today compared with those in this 1947 display? Today it might say "Fires Destroy Biodiversity." Back then it appears to have been about sport and, presumably, food supply.

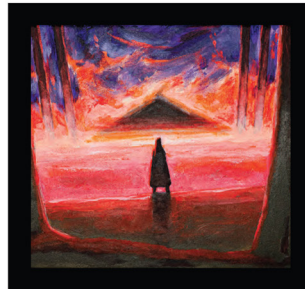


Title: Head Office Exhibit at Invermere Labour Day

FIRE:

Creation and Destruction

In partnership with: Sculptors' Society of BC (SSBC) and featuring 6 Indigenous Artists



September 19 - December 31, 2024

Featuring 6 Indigenous artists:

Angelo Cavagnaro, Autumn Christopher, Aaron Rice, annie ross, Debra Sparrow, and Onikamow Tapwew.

Featuring 21 SSBC member artists and 2 individual artists:

Amin Balaghi, Suzy Birstein, Kathi Bond, Wei Cheng, Ken Clarke, Lauri Copeman, James Fletcher, Claudine Gevry, Bruce Kleeberger, Georgina Lohan, Laurent Maynard, Michelle McCutcheon, Beverly Patterson, Parvaneh Roudgar, Linda Schmidt, Bill Thomson, Cliff Vincenzi, Louise Weir, Debra Wilson, YouRen Yan, Gennadiy Zhukov and individual artists Eleanor Hannan and Catherine Nicholls.



Jak King, Grandview historian

Jak King, the Grandview historian and activist, died peacefully with medical assistance on July 3rd at the age of 74 after a long illness. He was the author of three books including *The Drive: A Retail, Social and Political History of Commercial Drive to 1956*, published in 2011. He spoke to the VHS about it in 2012.

He had an extraordinary focus on his own neighbourhood near Commercial Drive and developed a unique micro-geography that lives on in the [Grandview Heritage Group website](#) as the Grandview Database, a searchable historic catalogue of about 5,000 properties in the area, about 1,200 of which no longer exist. It is a downloadable pdf file that can be searched to find, for example, the names of occupants, using sources as diverse as the Canadian censuses and Board of Works correspondence. His other posts on that website include a series of “100 Years Ago Today” stories of people and businesses, regular updates on the businesses on The Drive, a history of its food businesses and cafés, and, in collaboration with other members of the group, a photo essay on the neighbourhood.

Jak wrote about himself shortly before his death: “A Londoner, I grew up in a strongly union family: my grandfather, a railwayman, was involved in the General Strike, and both his sons -- my uncle Alf who eventually became mayor of Brentford, and my Dad -- though professionals, were active supporters of the Labour Party. As a very small boy I remember folding brochures for campaigns, and labour matters were always on the agenda when we visited my uncle. By my mid-teens, I was a member and volunteer at both the local Labour Party and a Transport Workers Union office. It was the mid-1960s and Harold Wilson’s white hot technological revolution was leading us all to the labourite paradise....”

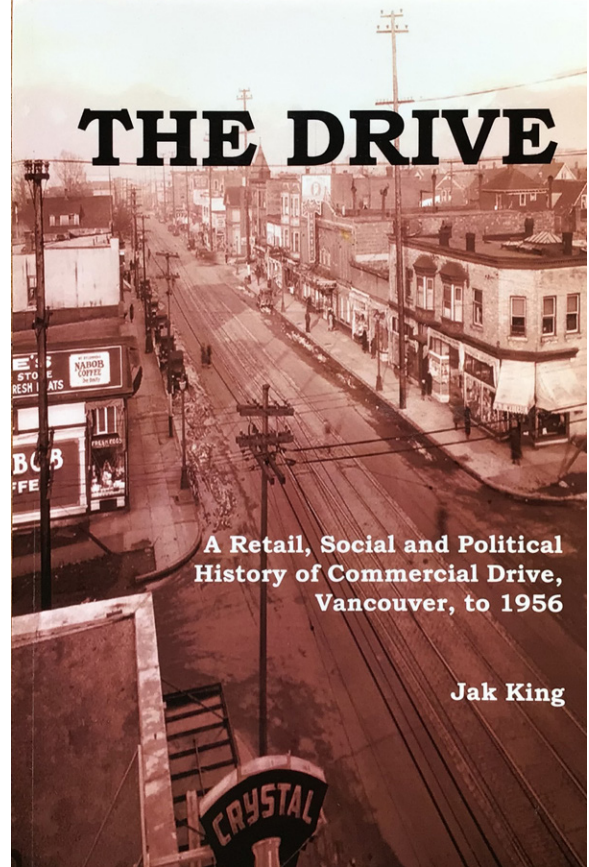
“I was enrolled for a course in History at Manchester University where I was taught how to research. But I dropped out after the second term; lured by the open road, I became a wandering hippie. After two years on the road, I found a job in the UK film industry working on movies around the world, including six months in Stewart, BC, for “Bear Island” in 1978. I fell in love with BC and decided to stay. I worked on various movies and TV series here, in Spain, Morocco, Kenya, and Jamaica until I retired in 1990. I had been a writer throughout my life, and I was offered a position as Marketing Director for a small company in Vancouver where I stayed until I was retired again in 2010.”

About 50 people attended his memorial service at the Canucks Family Education Centre at Britannia on September 7th.

–Michael Kluckner



Grandview historian Jak King and his first book, published in 2011. He subsequently wrote an activist’s account of the tortured community planning process called *Battleground Grandview*, published in 2016.



The Glen Hospital at the corner of Salsbury and Napier, a block east of Commercial Drive, in 1932, a photograph attributed to Stuart Thompson. Built as a home by Australian property speculator J.J. Miller (one of the founders of the Vancouver Exhibition, today’s PNE), it was restored 35 years ago as the centrepiece of a townhouse complex. (City of Vancouver Archives photo AM1535-: CVA 99-4174)

How to pronounce “Burrard”

In April, the Infoline received an email from Paul Heath, inquiring about Captain Burrard and Vancouver. His mother, Rita Burrard had been invited to take part in celebrations in Vancouver in 1986. She was a descendant of Captain Burrard. *səlilwət* is the *hənqəmihən* (Hun’qumyi’num) name for Burrard Inlet and Indian Arm, and is the place from which the *səlilwətaɬ* (Tsleil-Waututh) people derive their name.

Jan Fialkowski wrote back with the entry in Elizabeth Walker’s *Street Names of Vancouver*, information on the bridge and the bust of Burrard on the prow of one of the boats (the other being George Vancouver), and the [BC Government page on Burrard Inlet](#), originally called Burrard’s Channel.

Examined by Captain Vancouver in June 1792, and named by him [Burrard’s Channel] after his friend, Captain Sir Harry Burrard, Bart, RN, who was an acting lieutenant with Vancouver on the *Europa* in the West Indies, 1785. Born 16 September 1765, eldest son of Lieutenant Colonel William Burrard, and entered the navy in 1778.

It’s interesting that Captain Sir Harry Burrard never saw ‘his’ inlet. He wasn’t a crew member on Vancouver’s voyage here. He had [an impressive career](#) and died at age 74 in 1840. And of course, Vancouver died at age 40 in 1798 only 8 years after his voyage to the Pacific Northwest.

Jan wrote: “Paul Heath and his wife Angie were amazed at how prominent Burrard as a name was in Vancouver although I told him that we could stop any number of people on the street and I doubted any of them could tell us who Burrard was.

“He was also intrigued at how we pronounced *Burrard*.”

Herbert Beeman, author of the poem, was the first clerk and assessor for the Municipality of Point Grey, then worked in real-estate and insurance and for the board of trade prior to his death in 1931.

His wife, Elsie Machin, was a community worker, church leader, librarian, and organist for St. Mary’s Church; she was the daughter of James Edwin Machin, the notably erudite second librarian of the Vancouver Public Library.

Elsie Machin and her sister-in-law ran a kindergarten in a tiny cottage at the northwest corner of 42nd and Macdonald in Kerrisdale, at the back of the family lot which had its main house and frontage on 41st. All the buildings from those days have been demolished.

(Information from City of Vancouver Archives Add.Mss.54 “Beeman” file, and from *Vanishing Vancouver*, 1990)

That final matter was the subject of a poem by Herbert Beeman from about 1920 called, appropriately, “**How to Pronounce Burrard.**”

On Prospect Point in the evening glow
Of the sunset’s mirrored glory,
I glanced above where an ancient crow
Was telling a bedtime story.

Perched on a bough, this jolly old bird
Recalled – for a young relation,
What a hundred years ago he’d heard
And seen from his lofty station.

“June, ninety-two, Ah, then I was young
As I sat in this tree in the gloaming.
A queer sort of fish, with fins outflung,
In from the sea came roaming.

“I know better now, for the fish was a boat,
And the fins were the oars to move her.
There jumped ashore in a bright blue coat
A man they called Captain Vancouver.

“I flew quite near as he spoke to the mate,
Or, as sailors say, came furrard,
He’d name the place I heard him state
For his friend Sir Harry Burrard.

“Now I’m getting old and my hearing’s hard,
So it may be I’m mistaken,
But you’d better look out if you say Burrard
Or George from his grave will awaken.”



Herbert Beeman and Elsie Machin Beeman, photos from CVA

Looking Back, Looking Ahead



From the 1930 Marshall Wells catalogue

We look forward to working with Kwantlen Polytechnic University student **Francesca Sainsbury** on our 2024 practicum project -- historical and heritage organizations of Vancouver. **Dr. John Belshaw**, the VHS program director, will be her supervisor.



Dr. Lindsay Gibson, who is the VHS's Director (Educational Outreach), presented at a Historical Thinking Summer Institute at the Canadian War Museum in 2017. An interesting Q&A with him appears in the current issue of *BC History Magazine*. You can [subscribe to it by email](#) to receive its four issues each year for \$25.

And don't forget the upcoming fundraiser on October 17th for the [Friends of the City of Vancouver Archives](#). Tickets are on [Eventbrite](#). The subject is the original Pan-tages Theatre, with hosts John Atkin and Tom Carter.

Upcoming VHS Event

November 28, 2024, at the Museum of Vancouver
Untold Tales of Old British Columbia

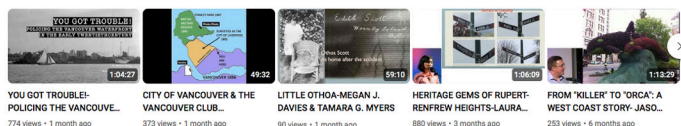
By Daniel Marshall, the author of the bestselling 2018 *Claiming the Land: British Columbia and the Making of a New El Dorado*, will speak on his new book.

Welcome New Members

Carol Goldsmith Elsie Jang
 Peter Vaisbord

Renew your membership online at
www.vancouver-historical-society.ca

Watch videos of our past lectures on our YouTube Channel



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