

MUSEUM

Winter Break

As of February 5th, the museum is open for visitors after winter break. January is a down time used to get work done in and around the museum. In early January we moved a new storage container on to the property. This now gives us some very necessary storage space for pieces in the collection that are not currently in use. The floors in the entry and in the theatre have been replaced with the help of generous donors. Some of the displays have been tweaked and the museum has been given some spit and polish.

Night at the Museum

Our fundraising movie nights will resume in February. Again, the night will be the last Wednesday of the month. The fall movies were a hit and two out of three were sold out! Great fun was had by all.

February – In the spirit of the Olympics, *Cool Runnings* about a Jamaican bobsled team is the feature. Based on actual events.

March – *Kinky Boots*. Another great English comedy. Based on a true story.

April – *The Milagro Beanfield War*. A great David and Goliath movie.

May – *Little Miss Sunshine*. This is a heartwarming comedy about a dysfunctional family...who doesn't have one?

June - TBA

Please email to reserve your seat for one or all of the movies. Doors open at 6:30 for snacks and beverage. Admission is by donation. *We reserve the right to change a movie. If there is a change, you will be notified in advance.*

Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program

We have had two of our largest fundraising cheques from Thrifty Foods in the last few months. We appreciate all of you who take the time to load your cards to help us to fundraise in this manner. Please, keep eating! For anyone who shops at Thrifty Foods and would like to help we can issue a card to you at the museum.

**NOTICE OF THE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
For the
Shawnigan Lake Historical Society**

Time: Thursday, March 4 at 7 p.m.

Location: Museum office

Everyone welcome

SHAWNIGAN PLACES

The Elsie Miles School grounds, with its longstanding tradition of serving as the Village playing fields, have been an integral, public use area for the community of Shawnigan Lake for well over seventy years.

Rumours that the owners of the property (heirs to the Finlay Estate) were going to subdivide the four acres met with swift community action. Concerned, the Shawnigan Lake School Board bought the property, in 1938, as a potential school site. This also ensured that the playing fields were preserved for the community.

For more than a decade after the purchase, the fields remained undeveloped. Community events and large picnic excursions by island companies, including David Spencer Stores and BC Electric, continued on the site.

In 1946, all of the small school boards, including Shawnigan Lake, were amalgamated into the Cowichan School District and, in 1951, Shawnigan Lake Elementary School was built on the village site. This school replaced the original Shawnigan Lake Elementary which, in turn, became *Mary Queen of the World Catholic Church*.

In 1950, The Shawnigan Improvement District was formed to provide a taxation process for firefighting costs. Shortly thereafter, a new firehall was built on part of the school grounds. The original two bay firehall was eventually expanded to include three bays with an office, and a social area, for the volunteer firemen.

When a new firehall was constructed in the 80s, the Shawnigan Lake Historical Society transformed the old firehall into a museum. The museum opened in 1983.

In 1958, BC celebrated its centennial as a British Colony. The event was marked by



a large celebration in the community of Shawnigan Lake. A cement slab, again on the school property, was built to commemorate the event and aptly named *Centennial Park*. The slab was marked for tennis. Curbed edges allowed for flooding of the park for ice skating. *Centennial Park* is still in use and will feature various entertainment groups for the upcoming Canada Day Celebrations.

In 1974, Shawnigan Lake Elementary School was renamed to honour Elsie Miles. Miss Miles taught in the area for more than forty years and had been the principal at Shawnigan for thirty-two. The village school was recently retired by the school district.

Coming full circle, the school grounds are currently part of a purchase negotiation between the CVRD and the Cowichan Valley School District. This important acquisition follows with tradition and, finally and legally, will preserve the

Village playing fields for the community of Shawnigan Lake for the future.

Note:

The CVRD is conducting a second community survey regarding the level of support for acquiring the Elsie Miles property. Follow the link below:

<http://www.cvr.bc.ca/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=185>

Many heartfelt Thank Yous!

-Rona, Cobble Hill donated carpet for the theatre and it is now installed. This will make a huge difference to the sound quality and to the cleanliness of our lovely theatre.

-Garth Harvey donated the funds to acquire a steel storage container. This allows us to store on-site (a huge benefit) and not pay to keep a storage unit elsewhere.

-Andrew Poland, who owns trucks and cranes, donated his crane and employee to lift the 3000 pound container over the school fence and into our back yard.

-John Neubauer, owner of United Carpet in Duncan donated a piece of quality linoleum for our front entry. Again, this not only looks great but eliminates the mess from the old crumbling, concrete floor.

-“Berber” Bob Stepler was instrumental in securing the lino from United Carpet and he laid both floors in early January.

-Darren Cole provided the amazing appetizers for the fall movie nights. The food added much to the ambiance of the evenings.

-All of our members! It is a requirement of a society to have a membership. Thank you to all of our members for supporting the Shawnigan Lake Museum.

-All of our volunteers! There is a great group of people who help at the museum with varying commitments. In particular, Garth Harvey, Robin Legarff and Grant Treloar go above and beyond. These volunteers are at the museum countless hours every week and are willing to do anything that is necessary. Without them, it would be impossible to run the museum.

What a great community we live in!!

DID YOU KNOW?

The Shawnigan Garage is on the same site as Alexander’s Garage. Originally, the garage faced south as the Shawnigan Road did not exist. Norman Alexander opened his garage in 1925.

A history museum is a benefit to any community. However, it is essential to enlist the support of the community to ensure its ongoing success. We thank our members and volunteers who are already involved and encourage new members and volunteers to come forward. We welcome new ideas and new faces.

“If not you, who? If not now, when?”
Talmud

Please share this newsletter with friends, family or anyone who might be interested in the history of Shawnigan Lake. Contact us:

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