

Shawnigan Lake Museum

Box 331 – 1775 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road, Shawnigan Lake, BC
www.shawniganlakemuseum.com T: 250-743-8675

Dear Members,

~ The following is an article I wrote for the Shawnigan Focus' June 2016 edition, but was unintentionally truncated, so Lori suggested I include it with the July article. This article serves as a sneak peek for my upcoming Summer Series presentation on the 20th of July. ~

Many will know the name Bruce Hutchison as a Canadian author who spent a large portion of his life in his summer home on Shawnigan Lake, but many more will not. This is one of the great tragedies of Shawnigan as he certainly knew this town despite only being a summer resident. He first visited in 1908, and his passion for this area would inspire his writing for the next eighty years. Hutchison wrote fifteen books and thousands of articles and within them beats the living heart of Shawnigan. He created various characters from his lifetime of experience who served as the voice for the author's love and concern for his country and the people who lived in it.

In his unique style that I have come to think of as Romantic Cynicism, there is an ever present passion for a life that he condemns. This is clear in the characters he creates to voice these opinions. It is apparent he does not care for their actions, but despite himself, admires them. Of the many characters, three in particular demonstrate the particular trichotomy of the 20th century that captivated Hutchison so completely. The first, and perhaps the most ethereal is Archie, the last true woodsman, and the scope through which Hutchison laments the passing of an age that has gone, and perhaps never existed at least not as he imagines it. He is withered of body in his advanced age, but full of the vigour of the earliest woodsman to venture forth into the wilderness that was Shawnigan Lake. Though only a drunkard and a shadow of his former self his wisdom, wrought from years of experience is invaluable to those who would hear it. In this way he is the

Upcoming Events

June 22

Jim Ward will present his Pioneer Landowner Map which depicts original owners of each major block of land in the southern part of the Cowichan Valley.

July 6

Chris Ruttan, in his own words, "I am a rank amateur fossil hound and rock picker upper who just happens to have been very lucky in the areas and rocks I have picked up. The collection that I have to talk about for the 6th of July is a collection of Jurassic fossils from a narrow section of that portion of the Mesozoic and is unique so far on Vancouver Island since no other deposit of Bajocian fossils have been found to date. This thin sliver of sedimentary rock though distorted and faulted still has recognizable fossils in it and in some places dense collections. I'm keenly interested in all things natural and I'm an avid back country skier, climber and hiker.

perfect character to highlight the values of the beginning of the 20th century.

The next character stands on the turning, or perhaps the breaking point, of the march of progression of the last century. Dubbed Horace Snifkin, he is a detestable sort of man with a stubborn outlook but weak convictions whom Hutchison seems to envy for his naiveté. He represents those of Hutchison's own generation who gave up the life of their parents and youth to adopt the modern age's gospel of comfort and convenience. Not that he begrudges them. Hutchison frequently references the folly of his own way of life, but seems content to majestically slip below the waves with that forgotten age as a good captain of old would. With a lifetime spent suffering as a hardworking Canadian, Snifkin is both the best, and worst, of a life of the country in the changing times he "lived" in.

Finally, the character that Hutchison (perhaps fittingly) named Dick. A young professional man, utterly lacking in respect for nature or his fellow man. Content to destroy the work of many centuries for the sake of a new two car garage, he is the stand in for the younger generation of new residents of Shawnigan that he worried might never appreciate the true beauty of, in his words, our "humble kingdom of sanity".

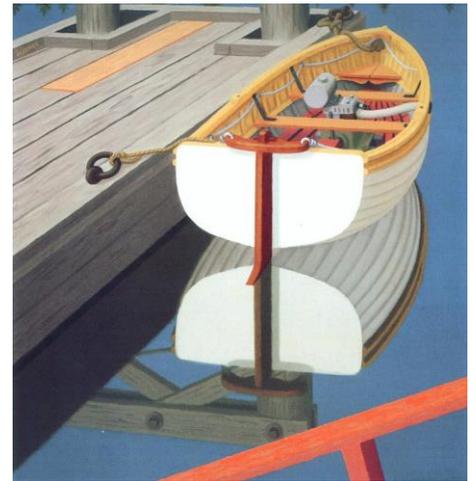
None of these characters are beyond reproach, nor are they entirely reprehensible. Each presents his own value to this town, and he appreciates, as I do, that the Shawnigan Lake that we know and love would be incomplete without all the parts that make it what it is. Each has a unique value as a part of the irreplaceable spot we call home.

Owen Cook

P.S. We would once again like to remind everyone of our Smile Card program. As we continue to build upon our Community Corridor, we will need you all to eat your hearts out this summer!

Facebook – [Shawnigan Lake Museum](#)

Twitter – [Shawnigan Museum](#)



In the Gift Shop

E.J. Hughes art prints

We have lots of choice in canvas and blockmount images. There are a limited number of unframed prints and framed prints as well. There is a catalogue of what is available on our [website](#).

Green Branches

If you have not already, come pick up a copy of our community history book, *Green Branches and Fallen Leaves*, compiled in 1967, to celebrate the Canadian Centennial. It is an excellent resource, and a fascinating read for anyone interested in Shawnigan.

Shawnigan Lake Mugs

We have a great selection in our gift shop of mugs featuring brilliant photos of Shawnigan Lake from long ago.