



# The Lamplighter

Dec. 14, 2020

## Museum Solar Panels Make Season Brighter

Thanks to generous local donors, the Oliver & District Museum has a new addition: a pole-mounted solar panel array to help provide electricity in the Museum and Fairview Jail.

The solar array was installed in the Museum's Heritage Garden on Nov. 12th by Swiss Solar Tech Ltd., and has been entirely funded by generous private donors.

This makes the Museum the second of our buildings to now run partly on solar power. You may remember that in 2019, solar panels on the Oliver Archives helped offset utility costs. The Heritage Society was searching for a similar solution at the Museum, but installation costs had put the project on hold until local benefactors came through. This year \$11,000 was raised for the initiative.

The pole-mounted system was chosen because none of the roofs at the Museum site were suitable, and to protect the integrity of the Museum as a heritage building. The panels are bi-facial, meaning they catch and utilize sunshine both from above and from below as it reflects off the ground. Currently, plans are to add an interpretive panel to the pole to incorporate it seamlessly into the Museum's outdoor displays.

ODHS president Vance Potter described the panels as being "a very nice early Christmas present," a bright



*This bi-facial solar panel array now helping the Museum*

spot in a year marked by reduced visitation and revenues for museums. And that present will keep on giving.

The panels will offset costs for the next 25 years, allowing the ODHS to put more funds towards exhibits and collections care. Rock crush and a feature stone for the base have also been generously donated by HaVen Landscape Supplies. To all of these community-minded donors: a huge and heartfelt thank you.

### *Winter Closure & Hours*

**Dec. 21st to January 4rd, the Museum & Archives will be closed for the holidays.**

**Before and after this period, the Museum is open Tuesday - Friday: 1 pm—4 pm.**

**Archives hours remain Tuesday—Friday: 10 am—1 pm.**

## Meet our Staff: Intern Brenden Studer

Our new intern Brenden started work in November thanks to the Young Canada Works: Building Careers in Heritage program. Be sure to stop by and say ‘hi’ when you visit the Museum. In this issue, we’ll get to know Brenden!



Brenden Studer

*My name is Brenden Studer. I currently live in Kelowna, but I was born and raised around Fort St. John, B.C. I have a bachelors degree in history from the University of British Columbia- Okanagan, and a masters degree in heritage management from the University of Kent and the Athens University of Economics and Business, for which I studied in Greece.*

*I have been interested in history since I was young and since I graduated from high school, I wanted to work in museums. I have over a year of experience working at the Fort St. John North Peace Museum and Historic Hat Creek near Cache Creek. I am looking forward to gaining more professional exposure to archival work, as I intend to return to school next year to pursue a masters degree in Archival Studies at UBC. The opportunity to learn about and research the history of the South Okanagan and gain knowledge about another region of B.C. is very exciting to me.*

*My research interests include the First and Second World Wars, Canadian history (especially different regions in B.C.), modern European history, and the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. My hobbies in normal times include going to trivia and karaoke nights. My hobbies now include doing personal research, expanding my knowledge of history through documentaries and history articles, watching and following hockey when it is on, and playing tabletop and video games with friends.*

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## Federal Funding Bolsters ODHS During Pandemic

The ODHS has received a much-needed boost this year from the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) administered by the government of Canada. The Emergency Assistance Fund, a new temporary component of the program, seeks to support museums and heritage institutions facing the financial strains of



Young Canada Works program logo

reduced visitation and lowered, uncertain revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic. Museums across B.C. have been hard hit by the pandemic’s numerous financial impacts, from restrictions on tourism to having to give up in-person events to increased financial pressures facing visitors. The ODHS too has seen a significant drop in admissions, memberships, program revenue, and even gift shop sales this year. The MAP funding assistance is welcome news that will help make up shortfalls in 2020 revenue as well as employing local contractors for maintenance work, extending a

student contract to continue artifact cataloguing, and replacing peeling text panels in the Fairview Jail.

In addition, the ODHS has received added support from the federal Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works programs, which provide funding for students and recent graduates to get work experience in museums. These grants allow the ODHS to continue employing students and interns who are vital to completing collections work such as data entry, research, and special projects. The grants funded a 5-month internship position this winter as well as supporting us to hire for our regular summer positions and one student position for the fall and winter. This last position had a more flexible timeframe than in previous years and is allowing us to complete critical newspaper scanning as part of our Oliver Chronicle digitization project.

We gratefully acknowledge this crucial support from the government of Canada, which is already being put to good use in our buildings, exhibits, and collections work.





## Community Foundation Grant Funds Outdoor Signage

The ODHS has been awarded a grant of \$2004.80 by the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan-Similkameen for the purpose of designing and installing weatherproof signage for its outdoor Museum artifacts. The artifacts, which are located in the fenced portion of the Heritage Garden, currently have no signage and there is no information available about them outside. Instead, visitors have needed to ask staff for information about the industrial items, which include mining, agricultural, and irrigation objects from Fairview and Oliver. The artifacts are stored outside to keep them on permanent display and due to their large size and great weight.



*These large Museum artifacts will soon have new signage.*

The signage will allow visitors to obtain information about the artifacts even when no staff are on-site, such as after hours and on holidays. The two large signs are expected to be installed by the end of March 2021.



## Heritage Assistant Hard Work and Talent Yield Results

This summer we were fortunate enough to have two outstanding Heritage Assistants working for us thanks to the Young Canada Works Program: Oliver locals Abby Teigen and Michaela Mills. During the summer they completed several projects that allowed the museum to stay active and relevant in the community despite the COVID-19 restrictions.

For National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21st, the students interviewed Jeremy Crowe and Taylor Baptiste, who both work at Southern Okanagan Secondary School as Indigenous Education Advocates. Jeremy is a member of the Lower Similkameen Indian Band and Taylor is a member of the Osoyoos Indian Band of the

Okanagan Nation. Afterward, Abby and Michaela wrote a thoughtful summary of the interview largely focusing on the experiences of both interviewees as members of Indigenous communities.

Throughout July and August, Abby and Michaela worked on creating a self-guided video version of our Downtown Heritage Walking Tour since we could not offer in-person tours. They added to the tour content and then filmed, added narration, and edited the video to create a high-quality tour that goes above and beyond the previous version. Their video is available on the ODHS website and on our YouTube channel.

As part of the museum's push to go digital, Michaela created an instructional video on how to tie three types of knots and make your own rope to complement the Museum's "Scouting in Oliver" exhibit. Abby created a local history scavenger hunt for social media. The students assisted with a large-scale inventory of maps at the Archives, helped with weekly "What is it Wednesday" social media posts and helped write biweekly articles for the Times-Chronicle. They also helped to update over 300 artifact records in our database! We were very fortunate to have such talented and efficient help this summer and we thank Abby and Michaela for all of their excellent work this year.



*Michaela and Abby inventory archival maps*

## Oliver Chronicle Scanning Underway at Archives

The project to digitize every Oliver Chronicle newspaper in the Archives is well underway, with over 760 issues having been scanned so far. As each issue is between 6 and 14 pages with an average of 8 pages, an impressive 6,080 pages have been scanned at this time, and work is continuing thanks to our hard-working contract staff member Rachael Dowden. Each page is saved in .TIFF file format at 300 dpi resolution. The new large-format flatbed scanner provides clear images, and scanned physical newspapers are being stored in acid-free boxes while the digital files

are stored in two external hard drives purchased with funding from the B.C. History Digitization Program.



*Rachael Dowden scanning newspapers*

## Programs, Tours, and Meetings Adapt to Online Format



*The new expanded tour can be found on YouTube*

This year certainly threw us a curve as we adapted to nearly a year of COVID-19 restrictions. For the Museum and Archives, this meant moving to digital programs and events as much as we could and trying many new things. This started with producing a virtual tour of our “Deep Roots” permanent Museum exhibit, complete with a voiceover by curator Veronica Parkes. This comprehensive tour is available both on our website and on our brand new YouTube channel.

Next we increased our presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, offering behind-the-scenes looks at our activities and new content for those unable to visit the buildings. A short video series was produced showing what happens to artifacts after they’re donated. Weekly “What is it Wednesday” posts featured artifacts from the Museum’s collection and asked people to guess their identities.

We also launched a brand new “Learning Activities” page on our website, featuring history and science lessons and activities such as “A Fairview Story,” “Water Ways,” and “Build Your Own Exhibit.” Our Heritage Assistants and intern added even more content to this page.

Since we were unable to host in-person events this fall, we made those digital as well. Instead of a Halloween party, this year we offered a series of 6 Halloween-themed, family-friendly craft videos on Facebook for those who wanted to get into the Halloween spirit at home. Similarly, last November we encouraged visitors and school groups to hang a poppy on the Tree of Remembrance at the Museum building. This year we created a virtual Tree on our website, allowing people to share online about why Remembrance Day is important to them. Our friends at the Oliver branch of the Legion helped to spread the word about this virtual option for sharing memories. And this month we are offering another series of short online holiday craft videos.

Our board meetings have been held online over Zoom since the spring, and we even hosted our first-ever online AGM on Oct. 22nd. We are pleased to report that there were no technical difficulties during the meeting.

Moving forward we plan to continue to offer online resources and activities and to stay engaged with the Oliver community. We look forward to a new year of sharing and celebrating in fun, innovative ways until it is safe to gather in-person again.



## Plant Translation Partnership with Syilx Language House

Over the last year we've been working with the Syilx Language House in Penticton to produce an interpretive plant guide for the Museum's Heritage Garden and to create signage showing the names of the plants. This work has now been completed and we are happy to announce that the plant signs, complete with Nsyilxcen, English, and Latin names, are now gracing the native and introduced plant species in our garden. When you next stop by the Museum, be sure to take a walk around the grounds and find the colour-coded signs scattered throughout the garden. You can



learn the names of native plants in their original language and read about their history and use in our plant guide, available at the Museum by request.

We are incredibly



*One of the new plant signs with English, Latin, and Nsyilxcen names*

grateful to S̓ímla?x̓w̓ Michele Johnson at the Syilx Language House for all her help in translating the plant names. The signage and guide could not have been completed without her dedicated help and willingness to share knowledge. Thank you.

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## Oliver Ambassadors Enjoy Tour & Historic Fashion Exhibit



*The 2020 Oliver Ambassadors pose for a picture outside the Museum*

In September, we were contacted by the Oliver Ambassadors Program about leading their ambassadors on a tour and creating an exhibit to go along with their fall pageant.

Every year the ambassadors take a local history test to see how well they know the history of Oliver. This year their tour of the Museum and Fairview Jail came after that test, but in the future, we will be a yearly stop for them in preparation for this component of their duties.

As requested, we also set up a miniature exhibit in the Venables Theatre lobby. The exhibit is entitled "Head to Toe," and features fancy dress history, particularly hats and shoes from our collection spanning the 1920s to 1960s. This exhibit was designed to

accompany the Oliver Ambassadors' "Glam Through the Ages" Pageant which took place at the beginning of October. The "Head to Toe" exhibit will be displayed at the theatre lobby until December.

## Scouting Exhibit A Success

This year we partnered with a group of retired Boy Scouts and Scouts Canada leaders to commemorate 110 years of Scouting in the South Okanagan. As part of that celebration we offered the colorful “Scouting in Oliver” exhibit at the Museum. This temporary exhibit ran from the beginning of June to the end of September and was well-attended even with COVID-19 restrictions in place. This exhibit featured first-hand experiences from local Scouts and Scoutmasters, the history of Oliver Scouts going back as far as the 1930s, and artifacts such as uniforms, campfire blankets, and badges from local Scouts. A 360° tour of the exhibit was also offered on our website for those who were unable to visit in person. We had very positive feedback from those who attended.

## Window Restoration Complete

Another milestone project was completed as the restoration of the Museum’s 1924 original wood windows finished July 24th. Gerry Plante’s Carpentry did outstanding work stabilizing and repairing the wood. The project ended with the repair of some damaged porch components. The results are a building that will be preserved in spite of weather and heavy sun for the next decade, with monitoring and repainting as needed. The restoration also helps protect the Museum interior, as weather-stripping and new caulking will prevent drafts and temperature fluctuations which put artifacts at risk.



Repainted porch woodwork

[www.oliverheritage.ca](http://www.oliverheritage.ca)

### Museum



**Location:** 474 School Avenue

**Mail:** PO Box 847 Oliver BC

**Email:** [curator@oliverheritage.ca](mailto:curator@oliverheritage.ca)

**Phone:** (778) 439-3100

**Summer hours :** See website for details.

### MEMBERSHIPS

You can become a member of the Oliver and District Heritage Society by purchasing an annual membership (\$10 per person) conveniently on our website ([www.oliverheritage.ca](http://www.oliverheritage.ca)) or in person at either the Museum or the Archives.

Members will be added to our mailing list, which will keep you updated on important local and regional heritage information. Members also enjoy discounts for archival services, copying, and special pricing in our gift shop.

### Archives



**Location:** 430 Fairview Road

**Mail:** PO Box 847 Oliver BC

**Email:** [info@oliverheritage.ca](mailto:info@oliverheritage.ca)

**Phone:** (250) 498-4027

**Hours year-round:** Tues-Fri 10am-1pm

**We wish you a safe and happy holiday and look forward to seeing you in 2021!**

Support for the Oliver and District Heritage Society generously provided by:

