

# Timelines

A Quarterly Newsletter of Nanaimo District Museum



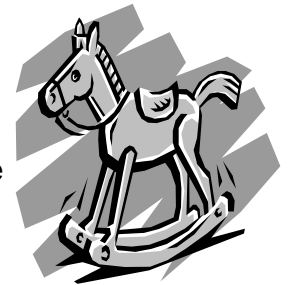
August 2001

## From the Toy Box

### Our New Fall Exhibit



From the Toy Box is a celebration of toys that were popular before 1965. It was a time when "Boomers" looked forward to the Christmas toy catalogue from the department stores. There were electric toys and windup toys, toys that could be pulled or pushed and those that required some thought. On the other hand, a fuzzy Teddy Bear might be a younger brother or sister's favourite toy.



**We need your help to assemble a great collection of toys for the exhibit. If you have a favourite toy that you think was built before 1965, call us. Toys will be exhibited in secure display cases and will be returned in early January.**

A special weekly feature of *From the Toy Box* is the "North Pole Workshop." Every Saturday in November and December, we will have hobby demonstrations in a special workshop on the Museum's second floor. If you have a hobby, or know of someone that is interested in demonstrating his or her hobby, please call us! For more information about loaning a toy or being a demonstrator, please call David at the Museum at 753-1821.

## Welcome Back No.19!

Locomotive Unveiled in Piper's Park on October 6, 2001

Protected by a tarp and occasionally cocooned in plastic wrap, the latest edition of the No. 19 locomotive is beginning to emerge. Asbestos has been removed, rust blasted, valves freed, rods painted and steel welded. The locomotive has received a series of industrial coatings that should resist rust and graffiti for at least the next 25 years.

Over at Nanaimo Sheet Metal, a new cab has been fabricated along with a top for the water tank and a new stack. Other smaller parts, either worn by rust or hastily repaired in the past by welded patches, have also been reconstructed.

Once the fabrication is completed in the metal shop, the parts are shipped to Island Truck and Auto Collision, located next to Nanaimo Sheet Metal for sandblasting and painting. Thompson Automotive Machine cleaned the many small parts

including lubricators, injectors and drive rods.

While the locomotive has revealed many of her structural secrets, her history provides rich ground for research. While Baldwin Locomotive records indicate the original name was Victoria and she arrived in Nanaimo in 1889, Robert Swanson's recollection, who happened to donate the locomotive to the city, is that she arrived here as the Columbia in 1883. We do know, however, that the locomotive in Piper's Park is the No. 19 and that she last worked in the Southfield area in the 1940s.

This winter, volunteers and staff will be developing interpretive panels about the history of the No. 19 and the railways that served the coalmines. The exhibit is scheduled to open on May 25, 2002, just in time to celebrate No.19's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Piper's Park.

# Curator's Column

# Museum Update

## Missing History

By David Hill-Turner

The email was brief and to the point: "I've got an old book about Nanaimo that might interest you." What's unusual is that the writer lived in California and he had purchased *Picturesque Nanaimo: Coal City of British Columbia* (E. Pimbury) at a garage sale in Newark, California...the 19 pages of photographs published by this local bookseller and stationer. Last week, the gentleman and his family visited Nanaimo and presented the book to the Museum.

This donation highlights a challenge faced by community museums. How do we build our collections? We are aware that many objects relating to the history of our community are stashed in garages, basements and attics of homes and businesses.

We also know that when it comes to downsizing a home, or settling an estate, families are confused about what to do with "stuff" they think is of little interest to anyone. And sometimes they are right. However, I often talk to Museum visitors who remark that they had something relating to an exhibit they saw in the Museum in a former family home. They didn't know what to do with it and so it was hauled to the landfill.

Unlike many mining towns, the grass did not grow in Nanaimo's streets after the last mine closed. New industry moved in and the population grew. If I compare our collection to being a "family album" there are about 50 years of our family's heritage missing. We need your help building our collection for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

Whether you are cleaning out your home or business, if you come across something that is connected to the history of this community, please call us for advice before hauling it to the landfill. It may just add one more link to Nanaimo's history.

Another Incredible Traveling Exhibit Coming Soon...

Reshaping Memory, Owning History:  
Through the Lens of Japanese Canadian Redress  
**Opening Heritage Week - February, 2002**

Curated by the Japanese Canadian National Museum & Archives Society  
...to YOUR Community Museum

By Debbie Trueman, General Manager

I have to begin by thanking all the *Celebration of Blue* collaborators and contributors that made the summer so colorful downtown. Our inspiration was the very well received *Legacy of Blue* exhibit here at the Museum, sponsored by the Royal Bank, which is here until September 22<sup>nd</sup>. I particularly want to thank **Joan Murphy** at the Nanaimo Art Gallery for her instant enthusiasm and partnership in creating the Blue theme and making it a success. Special thanks also goes out to the **Nanaimo City Center Association** and **Old City Quarter Association** for their support and enthusiasm. Both the **Nanaimo Port Authority** and **Tourism Nanaimo** sponsored the brochure, so thank you for that.

I am very pleased to welcome **Donna Hill** to the Museum as our new Programme Coordinator. In a very short time, Donna has become one of the team and her enthusiasm has become infectious. On the goodbye side, our summer student of the last three years, **Christine Baltzer**, leaves to return to school. We hope to see her back next summer as she has become a welcome addition each summer. Returning Bastion interpreters **Aimee Greenaway** and **Ryan Honch** also say goodbye after another great summer.

What's next, you ask? We will unveil the newly restored No.19 locomotive on Oct. 6 and we are currently planning the repair and upgrade to the Miner's Cottage in Pipers Park to take place next summer. Also in the planning stage is the redevelopment of the Upper Gallery at the Museum. This is a major project that we hope to have completed in 2004.

Next spring we will be welcoming a new and exciting temporary exhibit thanks to the Japanese Canadian National Museum. We eagerly anticipate its' arrival and look forward to our next community collaboration with **Keiko Bottomley** and the Seven Potatoes Society who have generously agreed to work with us on the exhibit and programming. Watch for details next newsletter.

On a closing note, I want to blow our own horn! As you may have heard, in this month's issue of Travel and Leisure (circulation of 5 to 6 million readers worldwide), Vancouver Island was ranked #3 in the world. The ranking was done through a reader survey. The big news for us was that we were the only attraction mentioned! Wow!

Don't forget to take in our new Toy exhibit this fall. If you have any great toys you would like to lend the Museum, from at least 35 years ago, please give us a call.