

# Vancouver Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

ISSN 0042 - 2487

Vol. 45 No. 6

March 2006

### Whose park is it anyway? Race and Remembrance in Stanley Park

*March Speaker: Jean Barman*

About some topics in Vancouver's history, we know that we know very little or nothing at all. About other topics we think we know a lot, and it is only when we start digging, as Jean Barman did while researching *Stanley Park's Secret*, that other histories emerge.

No part of Vancouver is more taken-for-granted than is Stanley Park. We



rejoice in the park as a natural place and are grateful to the city fathers who secured the peninsula for a park almost as soon as Vancouver came into being in 1886. We overlook, or perhaps don't want to know, all of the ways in which Stanley Park has served some people's interests more than others'.

Stanley Park was from its beginning managed and manipulated to the advantage of a minority. Its creation was intended to benefit land promoters, and one of the very first acts following its acquisition was to lease the most accessible part of it to leading city businessmen for 40 years for exclusive athletic facilities. Nature has repeatedly been modified, and monuments authorized to exalt fairly narrow constituencies within the city. While we permitted everyone to visit Stanley Park, jobs were repeatedly limited to whites. Race and remembrance have been joined, the result being an urban park that reflects some of us far more than others.

This month's VHS talk is intended to encourage all of us to look not just once but twice at what is around us each time we visit Stanley Park. Whose park is it anyway? And whose park do we want it to be?



Jean Barman writes about British Columbia history as well as general history. Her many credits include *The West Beyond the West*, *Constance Lindsay Skinner: Writing on the Frontier*, *Sojourning Sisters: The Lives and Letters of Jessie and Annie McQueen*, *Maria Mahoi of the Islands*, *Good Intentions Gone Awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist Mission on the Northwest Coast*, with Jan Hare. Other recent publications include *The Remarkable Adventures of Portuguese Joe Silvey*, *Stanley Park's Secret: The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi*, *Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point*, and *Leaving Paradise: Indigenous Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, 1787-1898*, coauthored with VHS executive member Bruce Watson. She has received numerous awards for her publications and was in 2002 elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

*FAR LEFT: Homes near Brockton Point (CVA); LEFT: Agnes and Tim Cummings near their Stanley Park home, early 1950s; ABOVE: Jean Barman.*

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 23, 7:30 pm in the Vancouver Museum

## PREZNOTES

### Waking up Rip

I've been thinking about Rip Van Winkle lately. In case you've forgotten the story by Washington Irving, Rip was a Dutch settler in New England's Hudson River country. A rather lazy fellow, he went for a stroll one summer afternoon, lay down for a nap – and slept for twenty years. Slept through a revolution, in fact: he fell asleep as a subject of King George III and woke up as a citizen of the new United States. It took him a good while to grasp what he'd missed while he slept.

It leads me to reflect... If I were just now awakening from a twenty-year nap, what revolutions would astonish me? On a world scale, here, in reverse order, are my top three, No. 3: the disintegration of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War. No. 2: the incredible shrinking (flattening?) of our world through digital instant communication – the Internet, cell phones and all that other stuff that still befuddles me. My No. 1 is a revolution that all of us are just waking up to: the sobering realization that that after two centuries of cheap energy from fossil fuels, the party's over and we've got to stop poisoning our planet – now! Those are my top choices. What are yours?

And what about Vancouver? How has it changed since 1986? For me that's a tougher question, since I didn't move here until 1997. But one twenty-year comparison is very vivid in my mind. In 1986, I visited Vancouver (twice, in fact) to enjoy Expo 86, that utter delight adorning the north shore of False Creek where, scant years before, had sprawled the grimy rail yards of the CPR. Today, Expo too has disappeared and the False Creek skyline bristles with steel and glass condominium towers. A change for the better? Perhaps.

But at this local scale, you, not I, are the experts. How would you rank the revolutions our city has seen during a Rip Van Winkle nap? I hope you'll think about it. You might even want to chat about it with other VHS folks, say, around the tables at our luncheon on Incorporation Day.

**Paul Flucke, President**  
**Phone (604) 732-7742**  
**e-mail: paulflucke@shaw.ca**

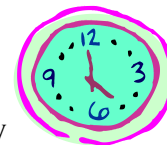
## HELP WANTED for VHS Executive Positions

The wages aren't great (none at all, in fact), but the non-monetary rewards are tremendous: lively discussions, on-the-job training, loveable co-workers, and the satisfaction of helping to keep the Vancouver Historical Society alive and well.

We're talking about three or four positions on the VHS Executive, which will open up this spring. Qualifications include VHS membership, an interest in Vancouver history, attendance at Executive meetings, and willingness to take on occasional tasks between meetings. Extensive knowledge of Vancouver history is *not* required, but we guarantee you'll learn a lot!

The Executive meets in the Vancouver Museum boardroom at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of each month except July, August and December. Terms are for one year and begin in June. The current Executive functions as the nominating committee, and nominees will be elected at our Annual General Meeting on Thursday, May 25. To volunteer or find out more, please contact VHS President Paul Flucke (phone 604-732-7742; e-mail paulflucke@shaw.ca).

## Just a Few Days Left



There are just days left and even they are quickly passing. If you haven't already bought tickets to our annual Incorporation Day Luncheon, there are only days to do so.

This year's luncheon is very special because we are celebrating our 70th anniversary as a local historical association.

This special anniversary Incorporation Day Luncheon will be held on Sunday, April 9th at the University Golf Club, 5185 University Boulevard, at 12 noon.

Music will be a special feature of the program. William Bruneau and David Gordon Duke will speak about their book, "Jean Coulthard: A Life in Music." Jean Coulthard was a Vancouver composer, whose music is played in concert halls around the world. Musical entertainment will be a part of their presentation. A vocalist, with accompaniment, will perform some of Coulthard's compositions.

Tickets for members and friends are \$30.00 each. You can still get your tickets at the March 23rd VHS meeting, or you can order them from Elizabeth Hawkins, 3626 West 1st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 1H2 (Tel: 604-737-8045). Please enclose a cheque to the VHS with your request for tickets. Please remember however, deadlines are fast approaching and the mail might not be fast enough.

The luncheon is a great way to meet other members of the Vancouver Historical Society. Enjoy the company, the entertaining presentations and a terrific Sunday lunch. We hope you will join us for this very special anniversary.

## Coming Up...

### Adjudicators Wanted for Regional Historica Fair



The Historica Fair is a national program that involves more than 100,000 students in communities across Canada. Students create projects on aspects of Canadian history and present them at school or community based fairs. Select projects advance to provincial or regional fairs, with one project from each region advancing to the national fair in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This will be the third year for the Vancouver Regional Historica Fair.

The community partners are the Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Maritime Museum, Vancouver Historical Society, Vancouver School Board, the Historica Foundation and the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia.

For the third time, the Vancouver Historical Society has again contributed \$500 to the Historica Fair from the Research and Publication Fund.

Visit the Historica website at [www.historica.ca](http://www.historica.ca) and the Vancouver Regional Fair website [www.vancouverheritage-fair.ca](http://www.vancouverheritage-fair.ca) for more information, and to see examples of past projects.

Organizers of the Regional Historica

Fair are looking for enthusiastic history buffs to assist with the adjudication of Canadian history projects created by elementary students. The projects will be on display May 5 and 6th at the Vancouver Museum and Vancouver Maritime Museum. Volunteer adjudicators are needed for Friday, May 5th from 9 am-4 pm. Lunch will be provided. No prior adjudication experience is necessary, just a passion for sharing history with others. You will work in teams examining projects, interviewing students and providing feedback. Fairs are intended to be non-competitive in nature. They are designed to support student growth and to celebrate the achievements of all participants by showcasing students' ideas, ingenuity, creativity and enthusiasm. VHS adjudicators from previous years have found it a rewarding experience.

The information session for adjudicators will take place on April 20th at the Vancouver Museum from 7 - 9 pm. Please contact Jamie Purves, the Vancouver Regional Heritage Fair Coordinator, if you are interested in participating or would like more information. Phone 604 788-8064 or e-mail: [fair@vancouvermaritimemuseum.com](mailto:fair@vancouvermaritimemuseum.com)

## Discover the East Kootenays

The British Columbia Historical Federation is holding its annual conference from May 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> in Kimberley this year. Application forms for this conference, hosted by our eastern B.C.H.F. members, can be found in the latest edition of *BC History* or can be downloaded at: [www.bchistory.ca](http://www.bchistory.ca).

The 3-day conference, entitled "Rocks, Walks, and Talks," will be a wonderful opportunity to brush up on East Kootenay history. Enjoy Kimberly's Bavarian theme. Be sure to take the 15-mile ride

on the Bavarian City Mining Railroad, which links downtown to the Kimberley Alpine Resort. It's a breathtaking ride, climbing over 300 vertical feet. Passengers will hear about Kimberley's mining history as well as getting a view of the old Sullivan Mine.

There is much to see and do in this part of the Province including historic Fort Steele and Marysville Falls, so we hope to see many VHS members at the conference.

## Upcoming VHS Speakers

### Winter/Spring 2006

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. Admission is free. Talks are held at the Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park), at 7:30 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month.

• Thursday, March 23, 7:30 pm  
***Whose park is it anyway? Race and remembrance in Stanley Park***  
- Jean Barman

Jean Barman will speak about her book on a few First Nations families who lived near Brockton Point in Stanley Park until they are forced to move.

• Sunday, April 9, 12:00 noon  
***Jean Coulthard: A Life in Music***  
- William Bruneau and David Gordon Duke

(Incorporation Day Lunch to be held at the University Golf Club, 5185 University Boulevard.)

• Thursday, April 27, 7:30 pm  
***Railroading a Renegade: Great Northern Ousts John Hendry***  
- Frank Leonard

• Thursday, May 25, 7:30 pm  
***The Dunbar History Project***

## Thank You!!

to the nine VHS members who made donations totaling \$375 during January and February. Donations (above and beyond membership dues) bring you a tax receipt and help us balance our budget.

## Welcome A New Member

Dr. Clinton Lee of Vancouver

## February Speaker - Rex Wyler

### Greenpeace

Rex Weyler, whose 2004 book *Greenpeace* tells the story of this Vancouver-born ecological crusade, spoke to the Vancouver Historical Society on February 23. It's astonishing that Greenpeace has been active on the world scene now for more than 30 years.

Mr. Weyler devoted most of his talk—off the cuff and without notes—to the reasons Vancouver was the place where Greenpeace was born. There were many inspirations, including an already strong peace movement embodied in groups like the B.C. Voice of Women, End the Arms Race, Quaker groups, Unitarians, Doukhobors, Menonites and others. Allied with that was a unique Canadian appreciation and respect for nature. Back in the late 1960s the environmental group SPEC (Scientific Pollution and Environmental Control Society) was founded in Vancouver by Gwen and Derrick Mallard and Dr. Alfred Turnbull from SFU. Then the Skagit Valley group came together to save that valley from flooding caused by plans for power generation by Washington state-based industry, while in east side Vancouver a group of Strathcona citizens organized to stop the construction of a freeway through their neighborhood.

These people and groups helped to inspire Greenpeace. The mix of U.S. expatriates, particularly war resisters (including himself), brought the American peace and social justice movements together with Canadian sensibilities. The mix of cultures in Vancouver—Canadian, American, Asian—gave

the mix a worldly quality.

The dock front with boats and sea culture gave Greenpeace its ocean-going ideas and capabilities.

Three Winnipeg journalists who migrated west—the astonishingly articulate Bob Hunter and Ben and Dorothy Metcalfe—gave Greenpeace its early public profile and helped transform a small group of citizens into a global voice for change. Ben Metcalfe—on his own initiative in 1969, at a cost of \$4,000—placed twelve billboards around Vancouver announcing: “Ecology? Look it up! You’re involved.”

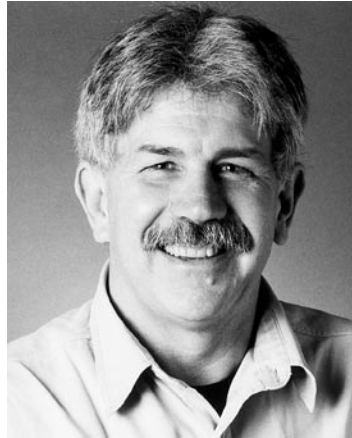
And, in August 1969, when the United States announced a one-megaton nuclear bomb test on Amchitka Island, in the Aleutians, Vancouver happened to be the closest large city with a public that rose up to protest the bomb tests. The strong labor movement marched with pacifists and hippies, American draft resisters, Québécois youth, Buddhists, Quakers, Unitarians and

women’s groups.

And finally, the first live captured whale, Skana, was held in the Vancouver Aquarium. Dr. Paul Spong came from New Zealand to study this whale, and his experiences with her inspired him to launch the movement to save the whales, which succeeded in making Greenpeace a household name around the world.

It’s a long, detailed and important story, and Rex Weyler’s book tells it in detail. He was there.

*Chuck Davis*



ABOVE: Rex Wyler

### Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2005 - 2006 (elected May 26, 2005)

#### EXECUTIVE:

President  
 Vice President (Research Service)  
 Treasurer (Vacant)  
 Secretary (Membership)  
 At Large (Newsletter Mailing)  
 At Large  
 At Large (Historica Fair)  
 At Large  
 At Large  
 At Large  
 At Large

Paul Flucke  
 Wayne Norton  
 Paul Flucke (pro tem)  
 Elizabeth Hawkins  
 Barbara Coles  
 Chuck Davis  
 Imbi Harding  
 Jim McGraw  
 Jack Spibey  
 Mary-Lou Storey  
 Bruce Watson

#### OTHERS:

Program Chair  
 Webmaster  
 Info Line  
 Archivist  
 Newsletter Editor

Charles Hou  
 Donna Jean MacKinnon  
 Nancy Stubbs  
 Elizabeth Walker  
 Jim McGraw  
 email: [jmcgraw@direct.ca](mailto:jmcgraw@direct.ca)

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Vancouver Historical Society Information Line: 604-878-9140  
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC, V6B 3X6  
 Website: [www.vcn.bc.ca/vhs](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/vhs)