

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP 1972-1975

May 22nd Speakers: Geoff Meggs & Rod Mickleburgh

Dave Barrett was born in 1930 into an East Side Vancouver family of reform-minded leftists. No doubt shaped by the inequities of the time, his parents' views as well as religious principles from his Jesuit university training, Barrett was a product of his environment. Starting a career as a social worker, he was elected to the Provincial Legislature in 1960 under the old CCF banner. In 1972 he was elected the 26th Premier of British Columbia.

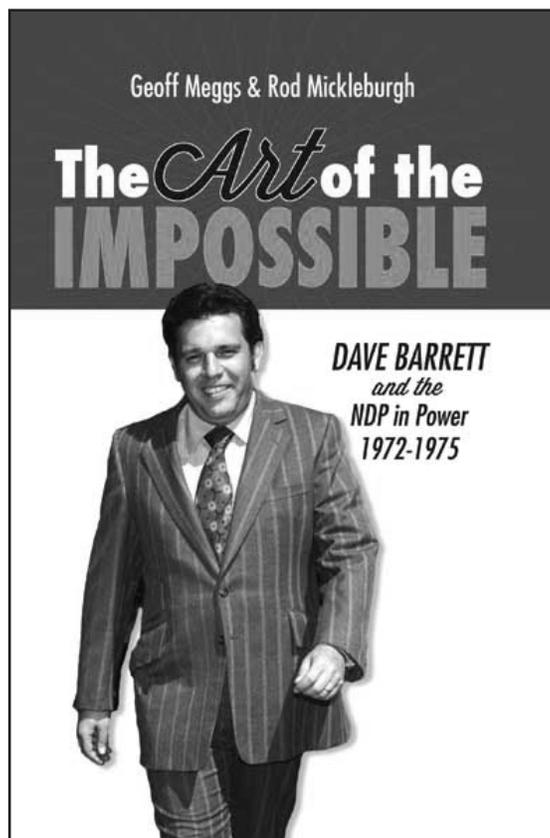
An orator by nature, Dave Barrett didn't suffer fools gladly or always walk in lock step with his party. Caring, charismatic and uninhibited, he had long running battles with labour and feminists.

Once in power, Barrett sensed that his term could be short and so he charged forth with a damn-the-torpedoes style in what was to be a one-term revolutionary legislative blitzkrieg.

Consequently, to his long term supporters he was a breath of fresh air but he struck fear into his opponents who were still supporting the long-in-the-tooth elder W.C. Bennett's populist Social Credit Party reign.

One of Barrett's most lasting legacies

was the Agricultural Land Reserve which flew in the face of B.C. land owners who felt that it was their time-given right to make money through



real estate. His inability to properly articulate long term compensation for the land did not stand him in good stead even with his supporters.

The legislative non-stop roller coaster included, amongst many, the formation

of ICBC, expanded provincial parkland and a return to full Hansard transcripts of legislative proceedings. There was also the creation of the modern Labour Relations Tribunal, B.C. Ambulance Service, free prescription drugs for seniors and even the banning of pay toilets.

At a time when people like Chile's Salvador Allende were being punished for their social reforms, there was always a fear of a backlash here. And backlash there was — B.C. style. The Fraser Institute was formed espousing free market views. Under growing opposition fed by increasing negative media coverage, Barrett and his NDP provincial government were voted out of office in 1975.

Still, Dave Barrett's legacy, which has shaped the character of the Province, continues today.

Geoff Meggs was a communications director to former Premier Glen Clark and is currently a Vancouver City Councillor. Rod Mickleburgh, formerly a senior writer for *The Globe and Mail*, is a veteran of the West Coast press corps.

Bruce M. Watson

AGM starts at 7:00 p.m.; Talk starts at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 22, 2014 at Museum of Vancouver

President's Notes

This year at its Incorporation Day Luncheon, the Vancouver Historical Society presented Awards of Merit to two individuals who have contributed significantly to the cultural life of Vancouver — Joan Seidl and Les Mobbs. Both retired as the directors of important civic historical institutions in 2013.

Joan Seidl served as the Museum of Vancouver's Curator of History from 1992 to 2008 and Director of Collections and Exhibitions to 2013. Her exhibitions included *City Lights: Neon on Vancouver* (with John Atkin); period studies such as *The 1950s Gallery*; a challenging look at Stanley Park in *The Unnatural History of Stanley Park*; and the very successful exhibition of Vancouver's *Man on the Street* as revealed through the photographs of Foncie Pulice. UBC geographer Cole Harris has described Joan as an ingenious explorer in museum displays of the "social meaning of ordinary things." Her career featured an enthusiastic and determined commitment to the task of expanding our understanding of Vancouver's past.

Les Mobbs became Vancouver City Archivist and Director of Records and Archives for Vancouver in 2007 after a distinguished professional career that took him from his native Kamloops to positions in the British Columbia Provincial Archives and several senior managerial posts at the National Archives of Canada. His rich administrative experience proved invaluable in giving leadership to the superb Archives staff as they developed strategies for adapting new electronic technologies to the task of managing historical records. Of particular interest to most users is the new online database that allows researchers to make high resolution reproductions of photographs, and the elimination of permission fees for the reproduction of records from the Archives' holdings, including photographs.

Vancouver is fortunate to have as the keepers of historical memory two such fine, publicly-funded institutions as the Vancouver Museum and the Vancouver Archives. The city has been doubly blessed to have found creative leaders such as Joan Seidl and Les Mobbs to manage them. Thank you Joan and Les for the great work.

Bob McDonald, President
bobmcdonald@vancouver-historical-society.ca

Election of Executive at May AGM

In its role as Nominating Committee, the current VHS Executive is pleased to submit the following full slate of nominees for the 2014-2015 Executive to be elected at our May 22, 2014 Annual General Meeting:

Robert McDonald	President
Michael Kluckner	Vice President
Scott Anderson	Treasurer
Kellan Higgins	Recording Secretary
Elizabeth Hawkins	Memberships
Eve Lazarus	Director
Jim McGraw	Director
Florence Sung	Director
Bruce Watson	Programs

All terms of office are for one year beginning June 1, 2014. Additional nominations will be accepted at the AGM provided that the nominee is a current VHS member and is present.

As this is the AGM, please note the meeting for members will start a half hour earlier at 7:00 p.m.

Text of 2014 VHS Awards of Merit

The following is the text of the citations awarded to Les Mobbs and Joan Seidl (see President's Notes column at left):

"Presented to Les Mobbs for his achievements in making the rich collections of the City of Vancouver Archives open and accessible to all.

Presented on the 6th day of April, 2014 celebrating the 128th anniversary of the City's Incorporation."

"Presented to Joan Seidl for her work in developing the Museum of Vancouver's extensive collection and presenting it creatively to the citizens of Vancouver.

Presented on the 6th day of April, 2014 celebrating the 128th anniversary of the City's Incorporation."

Both citations were signed by Robert A. J. McDonald, President and Kellan Higgins, Secretary of the VHS.

Welcome New VHS Members

Edward Biggs & Deborah Rydo
Pat Day & Family
Dzoara Lopez Garcia

B.C. Historical Federation Conference

An exciting series of activities and events have been planned for this year's British Columbia Historical Federation's conference. Being held Friday and Saturday, June 6th and 7th in Surrey in partnership with the Surrey Historical Society, everything will be taking place in Cloverdale, Surrey's historic centre.

As usual, there will be something for everyone. On Friday, there will be a genealogy orientation at the Cloverdale Library. Also that afternoon, Surrey archivist Ryan Gallagher presents a multimedia program exploring the history of Surrey. There is also an option of taking a bus tour to historic Stewart Farm and Crescent Beach. A walking tour of the historical core of Cloverdale will be conducted by Roger Bose, a descendant of one of the early pioneer farming families in Surrey.



Saturday is another full day of activities including a presentation by VHS member, writer and historian Henry Ewert on the B.C. Electric Railway, the interurban that connected Surrey with New Westminster and Vancouver. There will also be an opportunity to ride one of the interurbans with a visit to the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway. A visit to Surrey's newest museum, the B.C. Vintage Truck Museum, will be a must for vintage truck fans or for anyone wishing to rekindle memories of the vehicles of the past.



With the centenary this year of the start of World War I, a special presentation will be held by local author and historian Warren Sommer examining the remarkable story of how Canada and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission have honoured the fallen of World War I.

The conference will close with the traditional awards banquet. Visit the B.C. Historical Federation's website at <http://bchistory.ca/conferences/2014/index.html> for details. You can also call **Ken at 604-855-9822** or **Barb at 604-535-9090** for more information.

Upcoming Speakers

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. The talks are free and are held at the Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park) at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August, December).

Thursday, September 25, 2014

The Other Western Front — British Columbia and the Great War

Speakers: Mark Forsythe and Greg Dickson

In the summer of 1914, Vancouver and the Province were in a recession. When war was declared in August, men of British ancestry were the first to enlist, but as the recession continued, many others signed up in order to get work. Premier McBride, an ardent imperialist, led the charge to defend empire, and purchased two submarines to help defend the Pacific Coast. We opened our own submarine factory in Burnaby before the war was over. Just some of the interesting stories Mark and Greg will share along with accounts from CBC listeners about the way the war touched their families.

Thursday, October 23, 2014

The History of the Vancouver Police Museum, Morgue, and Important Cases

Speaker: Robert Noon, Director of the Vancouver Police Museum

Once the site of the Coroner's Court, the city morgue and autopsy facilities and the city crime laboratory, the Vancouver Police Museum is North America's oldest police museum. Over 20,000 documents, photographs and artifacts dating from the mid-1800s come to life in interactive displays, while 12,000 elementary and high school students a year learn the secrets of forensic science to solve crimes. Special displays focus on the still unsolved 1947 "Babes in the Wood Murders," the 1959 autopsy of movie legend Errol Flynn, and the 1965 "Milkshake Murder" that sent a CKNW disc jockey to prison for life.



Peek into the Past

with Jim McGraw



Photographer: Stuart Thompson, City of Vancouver Archives CVA 99-5031

Perhaps you recognize someone in this photo taken on May 9, 1939, 75 years ago this month. These are the craftsmen, construction workers and others who were putting the finishing touches on the new Hotel Vancouver on Georgia between Hornby and Burrard.

The official opening is just 16 days away on May 25th. One of the first guests will be King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on May 29th. The Royal Couple in the midst of a first ever Canadian tour by a reigning monarch, would arrive at the Canadian Pacific Railway's Cordova Street station on the morning of the 29th. They would only stop at the hotel to refresh themselves without staying overnight. That evening they would travel to Victoria.

When the hotel opened, it was jointly owned and managed by the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways with each company alternating management every year.

While signs during construction advertised it as "The British Columbia," the name "Hotel Vancouver" was chosen. The building became the third to carry the name, after two earlier Canadian Pacific hotels on Georgia between Granville and Howe.

Although construction was started by the CNR in 1929, the Great Depression delayed the hotel's completion and forced the railway to partner with its rival, the CPR.

While today during its 75th anniversary year the hotel is undergoing renovations to its main floor dining room and lounge, the refurbished former Panorama Roof on the 15th floor is temporarily being used. This legendary venue was where Dal Richards and his orchestra played for 25 plus years. Although now surrounded by taller buildings, the view from the "Roof" is still magical, especially when the room lights are dimmed and the lights of Vancouver around and below you start flickering on.

Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2013 - 2014 (Elected May 23, 2013)

EXECUTIVE

President	Robert McDonald
Vice President (Programs)	Bruce M. Watson
Treasurer	Scott Anderson
Recording Secretary	Kellan Higgins
Director (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Michael Kluckner
Director	Eve Lazarus
Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw
Director	Florence Sung

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Archivist	Alexandra Allen
Info Line	Jeannie Hounslow
Newsletter Mailing	Margaret Dinwoodie
Tour Coordinator	Jo Pleshakov

CONTACT INFORMATION

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