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June 2020 Newsletter

1. National Indigenous History Month

June was National Indigenous History Month, and June 21 was National Indigenous Peoples Day. Indigenous Tourism BC set out to encourage tourism industry members (including our Society) and stakeholders across the province to recognize, reflect on, and celebrate the rich culture, heritage, important achievements and outstanding contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples across Canada, and although we are all temporarily handicapped by the current pandemic, we invite you in retrospect to take the time for such reflection.

2. Our Presentation to the Board of the Cariboo Regional District (CRD)

In view of the difficulty our Society members have been facing — by no means unique to us — in communicating with each other, and thus carrying on business, we requested, and were granted an indefinite postponement of our presentation to the Board of the CRD which had been scheduled for July 10th.

The CRD has been a staunch and invaluable supporter of our project since its inception back in 2004, and the continuing interest in, and support of our efforts is hugely appreciated by all our member Bands and their representatives to our Society. We very much hope that when life returns to some degree of normalcy, and it again becomes safe to gather in person, the Board's invitation will be renewed, by which time we will have more definite and encouraging news to share about our progress.

3. The Exhibit Design Process

As noted in last month's Newsletter, we have been conducting an ongoing search for the funding that would enable David Jensen and his outstanding team to move to the next phase of its exhibit design development work. That search has involved approaching several private foundations whose focus we realize is on areas that don't necessarily include our project. We have been guided by the principle that if nothing is ventured, nothing can be gained. Our applications have clearly been given careful consideration, but during the past month we have learned that two more of them have been unsuccessful.



Our best hope continues to be that a second and successful application to the *Investment Readiness Program* in September will allow David's team to resume work early in 2021.

4 The History of Our Project – Continued

Last month we left our readers at the point where our five member Bands had formed the Northern Secwepemc Cultural Society, and were hoping to supplement the Bands' financial contributions with the outside funding that would enable *Busby Perkins + Will* to proceed with its feasibility study.

It is important to note at this point that when the Soda Creek Band and Esk'etemc First Nation joined the group, each of them agreed to match the financial contributions made earlier by the other three Bands. For the following 10 years, all Bands made equal contributions regardless of their respective populations.

Once the new Conservative Federal Government had by late 2006 completed its review of numerous funding programs, we renewed our applications both to *Western Economic Diversification Canada* and to the *Federal Department of Canadian Heritage*, and succeeded in obtaining more than \$210,000 that enabled us to move forward with the feasibility study and with other aspects of the overall project.

Busby Perkins started its work in May 2007 and submitted its final report in January 2009 – a very comprehensive document that proposed the construction of a large centre envisaging a substantial staff complement. Both the cost of construction and the annual cost of operating the centre would have presented a challenge to our member Bands, even if the report had not been presented to us at the same time as the world economy was being thrown into crisis, and the Society members decided (a) that the proposal was beyond our means and (b) that it was therefore unnecessary to submit it to our member Bands.

During 2009, the Society became aware of plans by *Thompson Rivers University* to construct a relatively small octagonal Gathering Place on its Williams Lake campus, and a visit to the site when the building was nearing completion, inspired the Society's members to think about a very much smaller building than that proposed by the *Busby Perkins* consulting team.

In December 2010, the Society invited expressions of interest from B.C. architectural firms for the design of an approximately 3,000 square foot replica of the *TRU Gathering Place*, and by the January 2011 deadline we had received responses from 23 firms. Comprehensive reference checks carried out by our members,



resulted in the short-listing of five firms and the request for proposals by the end of April. In June 2011 the Society members selected the firm of *McFarland Marceau Architects Ltd.*

In July 2011 *McFarland Marceau* submitted a proposal for a conceptual design which was accepted by the Society, subject to obtaining the necessary funding. The funding having been secured, the architectural team led by **Marie Marceau** and **Craig Duffield** produced a conceptual design report that was enthusiastically endorsed by the Society's members, and presented to its five member Band Councils all of which approved it with equal enthusiasm.

In retrospect we ought not to have been surprised by the remarkable way in which Marie and Craig captured the wishes of our members and their Band Councils. Their success was based on considerable experience in working with B.C. First Nations on a variety of projects, coupled with the ability to listen and to grasp what was being articulated by our members. For any of our readers who may have visited the *First Nations House of Learning* on UBC's Point Grey campus, you can be reminded that it was designed by **Larry McFarland** relatively early in his career, and both he and Marie Marceau have earned numerous awards for their later work on First Nations projects.

On the assumption that we will all be somewhat restricted in our activities for some further time to come, we will leave our historical account at this point so that there will something left to be told in one or two later editions of the Newsletter.

5. Best Wishes to our Readers for Continuing Good Health

It seems as if British Columbia has fared better than most other Canadian provinces and better than all states of the USA, but our future nevertheless looks to be precarious, and the need for us all to take adequate safety precautions remains obvious. In those circumstances we wish all our readers the very best in safeguarding yourselves and your loved ones, and we look forward to us all emerging on the other side of the pandemic in good health.



Notes to the Reader

1. If you would prefer not to receive future monthly Newsletters, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.
2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to grahamleslie@shaw.ca.