



LMS 2013 Maritime Museum and Harbour Heritage Centre Annual Report - Shirley Blackstaff

Maritime Museum on the Waterfront

Our new exhibit this year was on Marine Communication, Safety and Navigation. The early marine radiophone business was explained with photographs, advertisements and information on our Spilsbury and Hepburn Ltd. and Spilsbury and Tindall Ltd. Marine Radios and others. Our first display case shows various examples of marine safety and navigational items. All new signs were on a durable sign product.

During the winter season, the museum displays will be expanded with some newly acquired artifacts. The first step in the process is producing the archival records, research and signage. Once this work is completed, an informative quality display will be created ready for May.

If you have an interest in doing any of this type of Museum work, please let me know. Your help will be appreciated.

The Harbour Heritage Centre

This year, the **Harbour Heritage Centre** was designed and built in a large room known as Unit M, in the south end of the Expo Legacy Building. It is our second *LMS Waterfront Experience project*. The first project was the Heritage Boat displays created for our boats: Saravan and Kirkegaard in the Heritage Boat Shed, completed last year. Our 2013 project involved the help of many volunteers pitching in for a period of ten months - to clean out the storage room, repair the floor, do the electrical work, paint the ceiling and walls, paint a large mural, build the sets for the displays, restore our fishing troller, put together suitable sound effects, make slide show presentations, collect artifacts, design informational signs and displays and work on educational programs. Finally, we were ready to share our efforts with our members and our communities.

On Friday, September 27, 2013, The Ladysmith Maritime Society celebrated the opening of the new **Harbour Heritage Centre** outside and in the Expo Legacy Building. There were 120 people present to support this heritage project. Words of recognition to Stz úminus First Nation, Town of Ladysmith, LMS and community volunteers were expressed by Mayor Rob Hutchins, MP Jean Crowder, SFN representative Harvey Seymour, LMS President Barrie McDonald, Marnie Craig and others.

After the ribbon cutting, our guests, together with our volunteers: set designer, Glenna Ewing, our mural artist, Kath Stroman and our heritage committee chair, Marnie Craig led the way to the Harbour Heritage Centre and to the upstairs reception area, where Myf Plecas, a community volunteer and her team provided wonderful refreshments for all to enjoy. Glenna, who also organized our entertainment, introduced her friends, (Ross Desprez, Ray Materick and Shelley Hastings) who performed live music and song for our event.

Once inside the Harbour Heritage Centre our visitors stepped back in time, with the mural of the pristine harbour, the home of the people of the Stz'uminus First Nation. Then visitors were able to walk into scenes representative of the oyster and fishing industry. They were amazed to see our Saltair built Porlier Pass Troller located at a dock next to a repair shop and Gap store with a large photo of Coon Bay, a favourite fishing spot. The next two displays drew their attention to photographs and information showing the ore smelter on our shoreline and the transfer of coal from steam locomotive to waiting ships. The final exhibit was the detailed forest industry diorama of the Ladysmith Log Dump. It was great to hear the hum of excitement as people recalled their stories, as they personally related to the various exhibits.

During the summer, we had two adult groups (the Elder College, Gap Memories Group) and two children groups come for individualized programs that we prepared for them. They had fun and so did we.

To date, we have welcomed 200 people in, and those who signed our Guest book wrote encouraging comments.

Our plan is to include more interactive components so the Centre is truly an exploratory place where families, friends, students, elders and tourists can come to hear stories and discover the early ways of life in the harbour. We believe through sharing unique waterfront experiences one with another we will build community spirit, develop a deeper understanding of our heritage and keep our history alive for future generations.

We would like to thank our enthusiastic team of volunteers that contributed their time and skills to build this Centre. Also the artifacts and materials that donors gave us for this project were greatly appreciated. Please look at our Volunteer Book which shares the names of all our helpers and also photos recording the various stages of work. This project has been a major achievement towards our broad LMS heritage vision.

Our next step is to inspire and welcome people from both sides of the harbour to help with educational programs, events and activities that will make this Centre meaningful. We are reaching out to all LMS members and community members to set aside a little time to join us in planning and assisting with the exciting experiences that can occur in the Harbour Heritage Centre. We are working with a few volunteers from the town's Ladysmith Museum and Archives, on some cooperative educational projects, which is very rewarding.

We encourage you to think about becoming a volunteer. We need people to help with greeting visitors, creating educational kits, doing research, archival recording, restoring artifacts, planning activities and working with groups. We have had a number of requests to set up a Schedule so the Centre can be open on a regular basis. Anyone who is interested in volunteering at **the Harbour Heritage Centre**, please write your name and contact information on the forms attached to clip boards in the Welcome Centre.

Thank you. Respectfully submitted by Shirley Blackstaff, December 4, 2013