



ANNUAL REPORT

KELOWNA MUSEUMS SOCIETY

2020

Okanagan Heritage Museum | Okanagan Military Museum
Okanagan Wine & Orchard Museum | Central Okanagan Sports Hall of Fame

MISSION

The Kelowna Museums Society provides the public with educational exhibitions and programs that foster personal participation, stimulate curiosity, and engage the senses with the cultures, histories, and possibilities of the Okanagan region.

VISION

To inspire a community to be alive with its history – connecting people and place.

VALUES

Inclusive • Authentic • Responsive • Inspiring

OVERVIEW

The Kelowna Museums Society (KMS) operates the Okanagan Heritage Museum, Okanagan Military Museum, Okanagan Wine and Orchard Museum, Laurel Packinghouse, and Central Okanagan Sports Hall of Fame. In addition, the KMS operates the Kelowna Public Archives, Vince Bezeau Military Library and Archives, Ursula Surtees Regional Conservation Lab, and Laurel Packinghouse event rentals.

The Kelowna Museums Society operates on the unceded traditional territory of the syilx/Okanagan people.



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I reflect on 2020, I think about the early days when COVID-19 sounded like a distant problem, and how we came to realize it was everywhere, including our own homes. As a society we came to recognize that we are truly one planet.

Change was dramatic. We rode the wave, but the stress took its toll. Many of us struggled with loneliness, fear, grief and financial hardship.

Like everyone else, we at the Kelowna Museums have wondered when and how will this end. What will people need from their museums on the other side? Will they seize the chance to engage with community spaces and face-to-face programming, or will they prefer to connect electronically?

Whatever the next few years hold, we will respond with creativity, dedication and service, just as we have during the pandemic.

I would like to express my appreciation to our Executive Director and the entire staff for their commitment, determination and professionalism to stay relevant during our shutdown. In addition, I am grateful to our Board of Directors who continued to volunteer their expertise, passion and time. Through their strategic planning and committee work they make us a stronger and more sustainable organization.

Thank you to the City of Kelowna and our other donors and funders. Together we make it possible to share unique stories of people and place with the world.

Thank you / way' limlæmt,

Tom Fellhauer

PRESIDENT OF THE KELOWNA MUSEUMS SOCIETY



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The things we accomplished in 2020 were not the things we had intended to accomplish. The challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic demanded completely new goals. It presented questions for which there were no ready answers. Along with the rest of the world, we pivoted and lurched forward in a new direction.

The path emerged with each step while the ground shifted beneath our feet. We closely followed and responded to directives from the Provincial Health Officer and on March 12, we cancelled a record-breaking line-up of programming and events. On March 18, we closed our doors and implemented new work-from-home protocols. On June 13, following a great deal of research and preparation, we carefully re-opened the doors to the Okanagan Heritage Museum. The Okanagan Military Museum followed on July 4. The Laurel Packinghouse, however, remained closed.

From the beginning of these unprecedented changes, staff re-imagined museum practice as we responded to the emerging needs of the community. Staff leaned into the challenge and mastered new tools for delivering museum services. Their commitment fills me with gratitude and pride.

In addition, our Board of Directors continued to bring their best to Kelowna Museums while dealing with disruptions to their own lives. For this I thank our President and every member of the team.

Thank you to the City of Kelowna and donors for their sustained support, and to our provincial and federal governments for their enhanced support during this crisis.

History was made in 2020. As caretakers of history, science and human legacy, we invite you — our members, donors, volunteers, partners and participants — to stay in touch with your museum. Join us on location or in digital spaces. In doing so, we hope you feel a deeper connection to past, present and place.

Thank you / wa'y limlāmt,

Linda Digby

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE KELOWNA MUSEUMS SOCIETY





EXHIBITIONS

The exhibitions team was as busy as ever in 2020! They installed four feature exhibitions in the Heritage and Military Museums, began an overhaul of the Wine and Orchard Museum, and continued work on the Laurel Square. When the doors closed to public, the team updated elements of the Sports Hall of Fame and other permanent galleries. Before reopening in June, staff transformed the Heritage and Military Museums into engaging, COVID-safe spaces with modified interactives and new wayfinding signage.

Hockey – More than a Just Game and *Our Living Languages* were travelling exhibitions from the Canadian Museum of History and the Royal BC Museum, respectively. KMS staff augmented both displays with local stories and content. *Hockey* drew many visitors from our sports-loving community, while *Living Languages* explored a variety of themes relating to BC's Indigenous languages. Staff were grateful for the opportunity to work again with the Syilx Language House and Sncəwips Heritage Museum.

Bats: Out of the Darkness was created with the help of many passionate community partners. The display raises awareness of BC's bats, the troubles they face, and what individuals can do to help. *Bats* is a travelling exhibition, with rentals already booked into 2022, and with inquiries coming from as far away as Mississippi!

This year, KMS interns had the opportunity to plan and install small displays. Some of the year's themes included pollinators, Tilley's Bottleworks, and the popular 'staff picks' case.

A special display case of fan collectables in Hockey - More than Just a Game
Jasmine and Amanda with a mock-up of the Bats exhibit walls
Gallery view of feature exhibition Our Living Languages

COLLECTIONS & CONSERVATION

In 2020, 500 objects were donated to the KMS collections. Students, volunteers and staff made over 2,500 entries into our digital database. Many of those objects were already catalogued, but not easily accessible because they were not previously in the database.

COVID allowed us to take a more in-depth look at our collections. One of the summer students added most of our First Nations artifacts into the database, giving us a better understanding of what is in our collection, and what might be a better fit for other institutions.

Partnering with the Snc̓əwips Heritage Museum and Penticton Museum and Archives, we created and delivered a series of webinars, supported by a grant from Canadian Heritage. These online workshops helped keep the community connected and provided learning opportunities for museum professionals.

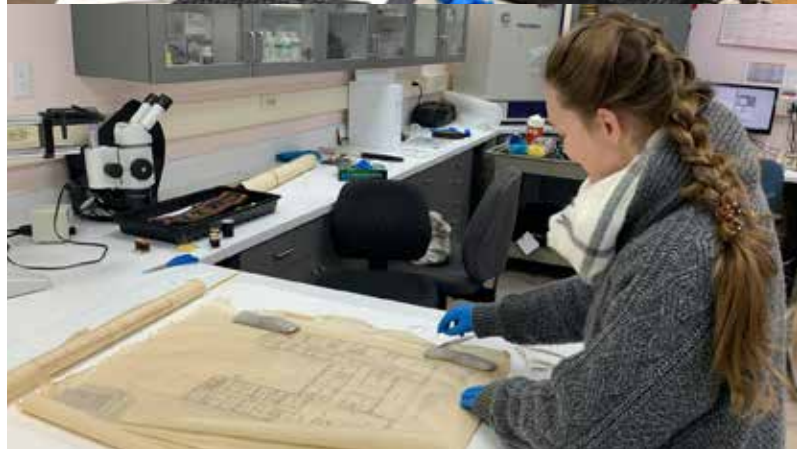
We hosted a conservation intern and two summer students, giving them hands-on, practical experiences that they will be able to carry with them and use in the future. Among other tasks they took on, one worked at the OMM cataloguing artifacts in the backlog, and making the collection more organized and accessible.

Our conservator was entrusted to repair eleven family heirlooms, with two of the projects coming from repeat customers.

Nikki stabilizes a fragile textile

UBCO students create 3D images of collections objects

Anastasia does a conservation treatment on a historic map





ARCHIVES

In early 2020, the Kelowna Public Archives saw 26 in-person researchers make use of its available resources. More than one hundred SD23 students enjoyed the *Archives Dive!* program. In March, with COVID restrictions in place, in-person research appointments moved to online research appointments, where the archivist helped researchers find answers to their inquiries through video calls and shared screens.

Staff started actively collecting stories, objects and photos to document the pandemic as soon as it hit BC. We invited the public to contribute their experiences; they shared deeply personal stories and engaging photos which are now preserved in the KPA.

The archives received a donation from the Capital News consisting of 347 bound editions ranging in date from 1960 to 2014. This is an important collection of community memory.

With the aid of summer students and interns, a large-scale storage reorganization project began at the Vince Bezeau Military Library and Archives, which will improve efficiency and access for staff and researchers.

“The work that I’ve done in the archives has been extremely gratifying and full of personal growth and opportunity. Not only is it beneficial to the functions of the archives, but also will help future researchers by making items easier to reference and access.”

- Josie K., Practicum student, summer student, intern



Students Josie in the KPA and Sarah in the VBMLA

Staff visit the Pandosy Mission to collect at-risk objects for safe winter storage

Tara moves a pallet of the Capital News donation to its new home

OKANAGAN MILITARY MUSEUM

To mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the Okanagan Military Museum installed a new exhibit called *Sub Hunter: Commander C. A. King*. It profiles the Okanagan's ace submarine hunter during the Battle of the Atlantic, which was the longest campaign of the war. This seasoned seafarer led young, under-trained sailors into battle against both natural elements on the sea, and the German submarines that were intent upon sinking the ships carrying supplies from North American ports to Britain. Videos, social media posts and virtual programs centred around the exhibition and made it accessible to local and international audiences.

The OMM was able to participate in several live programs in 2020. Once again, the Field of Crosses project in Kelowna's City Park was executed in partnership with the Rotary Centre and Okanagan Military Museum Society, with support from the BC Dragoons and the local Legion. Staff helped plan and support the installation, and provided educational materials for teachers. The annual Remembrance Day open house was another success, as visitors and their bubbles were offered a more personalized experience through pre-booked, guided tours.

"Your efforts fanned the embers of my lifelong interest back to life. For that I will be forever grateful and I am in your debt."

- Donald Nunns

*Keith, during the filming of In the Navy: Okanagan men and women in blue
Feature exhibit - Sub Hunter: Commander CA King
The Field of Crosses under a dusting of snow*



CENTRAL OKANAGAN SPORTS HALL OF FAME *...to honour and inspire...*

In May, the tough decision was made to cancel the year's media event and induction ceremony. With so much uncertainty as to how long the restrictions on gatherings would last, the committees felt it would be best to postpone nominations and event planning, and wait until we can all celebrate safely together.

While the museums had to close their doors to the public in the spring, exhibitions staff did a complete overhaul of the display cases in the Sports Hall of Fame

gallery. New space was created to accommodate the artifacts we anticipate receiving from future inductees.

The Central Okanagan Sports Hall of Fame committees can't wait to come back in 2021! They will be announcing their newest class of inspirational and hardworking inductees, and will share the athletes' accomplishments with the community that supported them in achieving their dreams.

Amanda making changes to the Sports Hall display cases



EDUCATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

The Education and Public Programming department delivered a variety of virtual and in-person programs, engaging students and members of the public.

April brought about a quick pivot to virtual programming. The team began to deliver virtual field trips when classes could no longer visit in person. Instagram Live and YouTube videos were produced, and are now part of the KMS YouTube channel. With our close partners in SD23's Indigenous Education department, we transformed classic programs, like *Salmon*, *Saskatoons* and *Storytelling*, into virtual presentations.

"...We had a FABULOUS VFT today... It was so engaging for everyone, and the owl dissection was very interesting. Thank you for providing such a wonderful program. I am often reluctant to book virtual field trips, but this one was amazing!"
- Laura McEwen, Grade two teacher, Mar Jok Elementary

Public offerings included the *Downtown Scoop* walking tour, various cemetery tours, the exclusive *White Glove Experience* in the Okanagan Heritage Museum and our "slightly spooky" Halloween tours. A four-week language workshop — *nsyilxcən for Everyone* — sold out, and was a pilot program for Cultural District professionals. Participants were delighted to learn new words and phrases in *nsyilxcən*, and take their new knowledge into their workplaces. The ongoing series *nà?kʷulamən: What We Do*, presented by Wildrose Native Traditions, is more popular than ever as people continue their Truth and Reconciliation journeys, and look to us for ways to increase their knowledge.

An evening tour group at the cemetery on Casorso Road
A student is interviewed by Global Okanagan at the Heritage Fair
Participants on the syilx Traditional Plant Use walking tour





LAUREL PACKINGHOUSE

2020 began on a high note, with more than two hundred events already on the calendar by early spring. February, in particular, was filled with high-profile, community-focussed events. In March, the doors closed, and though staff had to respond to a multitude of cancellations and postponements, renters were generally positive about the KMS response to COVID-related policy changes.

“You have been amazing from the moment we booked back in December 2019 and we will never have enough good things to say about the Laurel Packinghouse. We are so grateful for how understanding and generous you and your team have been during this challenging process.”

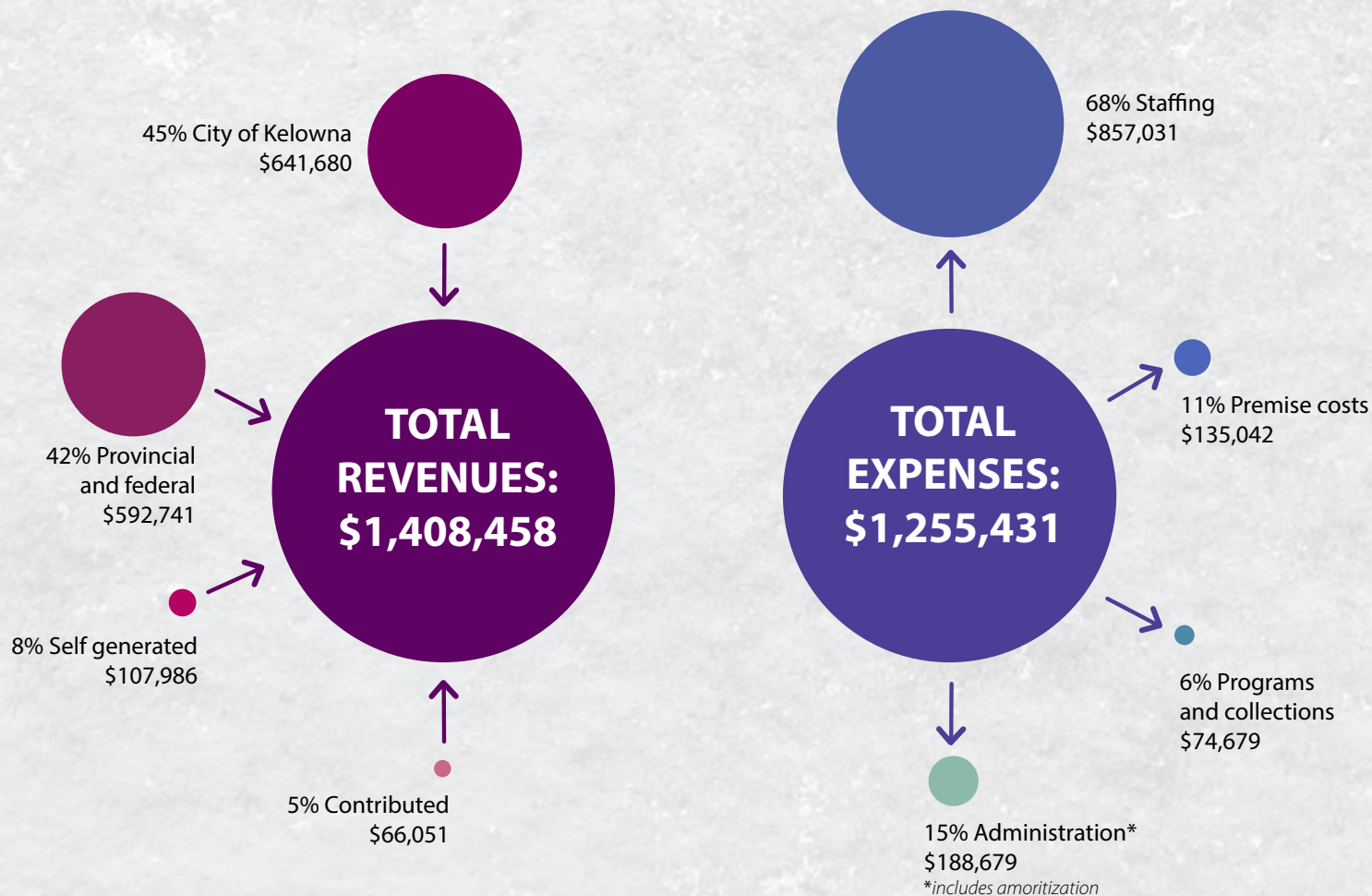
- Nicole and Tyler (renters who had to cancel their event twice)

Despite the lack of rentals, the Laurel was still abuzz with activity throughout the year. Revitalization of the Okanagan Wine and Orchard Museum began in earnest. The galleries were completely dismantled and planning was in full swing as designs and content for the new exhibits started to come together.

Throughout 2020, the Laurel Square also underwent further development, including building a pollinator ‘hotel’ and creating an oversized ‘Codling Moths and Orchard Ladders’ game. City partners made planting a garden full of indigenous and drought-tolerant plant varieties possible. The Square represents the work of many community partners, and is an important addition in terms of public enjoyment, public perception of the KMS, rental options, programming opportunities, and positive interactions.

*Staff from Sierra Landscaping planting the Laurel Square garden
Holly fills the pollinator hotel with material for our insect friends
Nikki moves the packing line to its new space in the OWOM*

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



MUSEUM VISITATION

2020
At a
Glance



5,134 Walk-in visitors
to our museums

4,800 Guests at Laurel
Packinghouse rentals

Participants in 92
public programs **1,590**



Social media
followers reached

9,883

Times our 25 Instagram Live
videos and the Winter's Night
Lantern Tour were viewed

3,691

152
In-person
curriculum
programs

+ **271**
Zoom curriculum
programs

= 9,356
total participants reached
with curriculum programs

The KMS continued to connect people and place, and to bring our
history to life through both in-person and virtual experiences.
We reached 34,454 people in 2020!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020

Tom Fellhauer, President
Carol Zuckerman, Past President
Howard Hisdal, Vice President
Colin Flannigan, Secretary
Stuart Grant, Treasurer
Hussein Keshani

Maggie O'Neill
Miah Olmsted
Bill Wang
Simon Schofield
Christine McWillis, ex-officio

STAFF 2020

Linda Digby, Executive Director
Christopher Butt, Finance & Operations Manager
Amanda Snyder, Curatorial Manager
Nikki Bose, Curator of Collections
Tara Hurley, Archivist
Jasmine Marshall, Exhibitions Coordinator
Jen Garner, Head of Programming
Shelley Weber, Laurel Enterprise Coordinator
Keith Boehmer, Military Historian
Krista Lokseth, Museum Services Coordinator
Maria Garcia, Museum Services Coordinator
Adam Cornford, Education & Programming Assistant
Allison Wardle, Education & Programming Assistant
Kyla Smith, Education & Programming Assistant
Victoria Severinski, Bookkeeper
Mallery Barnett, Web & Social Media Coordinator
Ogi Iordinov, Maintenance Assistant
Ryan Wong, Museum Assistant
Teresa Boehmer, Visitor Assistant
Jillian Evans, Event Assistant
Jamie Jackson, Event Assistant

Laura Mabee, Event Assistant
Laurie Miller-DeLeurme, Event Assistant
Nick Kucher, Event Assistant
Erik Beardmore, Event Assistant
Corinne Snapes, Event Assistant
Sarina Bouvier, Event Assistant
Tiffany Rowland-Acton, Event Assistant
Anastasia Bell, Conservation Intern
Gillian Bernas, Conservation Intern
Holly Brant, Curatorial Intern
Briann Audet, Student, Museum Technician
Josie Kotowski, Archives Intern, Practicum and Summer Student
Sarah Gibbs, Student, Archives Technician
Sarah Ulichy, Student, Archives Technician
Alex Rousseau, Student, Collections Technician
AJ Westwood, Student, Collections Technician
Sam Fleming, Student, Education & Programming
Pat Kennedy, Manager of the Central Okanagan Sports Hall of Fame



VOLUNTEERS 2020

Briann Audet
Patty Balfour
Rock Bates
Sarina Bouvier
Karen Bowen
Jane Bowering
Lorne Buna
Rolli Cacchioni
Gordy Charles
Jennifer Charles
Matt Cherille
Brian Cuthbert

Robin Digby
Hema Douglas
Lorraine Drdul
Emily Fairweather
Rachel Fleming
Jacqui Frehlick
William Forester
Shannon Grant
Bob Hayes
Warren Hendersen
Lorraine Hladik
Tamara Joel

Elizabeth King
Sharon Leveque
Mike Lewendon
Charles MacGrath
Andrew McKellar
Doug Manning
Morgan Marshall
Wayne Moore
Joachim Nierfeld
Randy Prost
Cheryl Purdey
Betty Robinson

Morgan Ryder
Heather Semeniuk
Sharon Shepherd
Bill Stephens
Isla Tasker
Walter Viita
Ryan Watters
John Weber
AJ Westwood
Lorne White
Jack Wilson
Ken Wilson

Thank you to our volunteers, who so generously gave us their time!

Kelowna Museums

Alive With Our History



We want to thank all of our supporters who, over the years, have helped us connect generations.

Kelowna Museums Society is a Biosphere Committed Entity



BIOSPHERE
committed entity



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