

ABOUT THE MUSEUM  
The Sneewips Heritage Museum began as a repository after Westbank First Nation achieved self-government in 2005. As our collection grew, we transitioned to the public sphere by opening our doors as a museum on June 14th, 2014. Five years later, we moved and re-opened our space on February 1st, 2020. Through all of its changes, our museum continues to provide a protected place for sqilx culture and heritage.

Our museum allows the public to experience the collections, histories, and oral stories of the sqilx people from a sqilx perspective.

Kelowna  
Museums  
Alive With Our History



# ANNUAL REPORT

## KELOWNA MUSEUMS SOCIETY

# 2023

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 • 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

Dear Members,

It is my pleasure to address you as the President of the Kelowna Museums Society. At this time, I would like to express my gratitude, entertain some reflection, and address our upcoming year.

First, I want to thank all our members, both established and incoming, for helping to keep this society vital, inclusive, and welcoming. As a board and an organization, it is our privilege to put on the exhibitions and programming that foster personal participation, stimulate curiosity, and engage the senses with the cultures, histories, and possibilities of the Okanagan region. We could not do this without the support of our members, and of course our wonderful staff.

This past year was my first as President and it was a year of change. Sadly, we said goodbye to our outgoing Executive Director Linda Digby. We will miss Linda and all the qualities that she brought and wish her well in the new adventures that life will bring her.

But with change comes opportunity, and it is with great pleasure that we welcome our new Executive Director Jillian Povarchook. For those of you who have not had the opportunity to meet Jillian, I encourage you to share our welcome. Jillian has joined us after extensive experience with the Museum of Vancouver and holds a Master of Museum Education. Not only does she possess exceptional talents for the role but is also from Kelowna and shares our passion for our community.

It is under this exciting new leadership that we look forward to the development and changes to our exhibitions and programs while maintaining our core values. Jillian has only been with us for a few months, but her fresh perspective and passion is already bearing fruit. We are excited to host the Royal BC Museum's *Dinosaurs of BC* exhibition and look forward to our continued work with our valued Indigenous partners. The future of our organization is bright, and I look forward to the opportunities that will arise and to serving you, our members.

Thank you / wa'y limlæmt,

**Colin Flannigan**

PRESIDENT OF THE KELOWNA MUSEUMS SOCIETY

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In August 2023, after a decade of leading KMS through significant transformation and navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Executive Director Linda Digby departed her role. We are grateful for her leadership and many contributions during her tenure. During the search for a new executive director, Amanda Snyder, Curatorial Manager, and Chris Butt, Finance and Operations Manager, provided exceptional leadership, ensuring the continued smooth operation of KMS.

Despite a year of transition, our team delivered two impactful temporary exhibitions and numerous public and educational programs in 2023. These offerings fostered meaningful participation for the public, ignited a passion for discovery, and brought the Okanagan's rich tapestry of cultures, histories, and possibilities to life.

KMS acknowledges the crucial role of our funders. We are particularly grateful to the City of Kelowna for their major contribution. We extend our sincere thanks to the Government of British Columbia and Canadian Heritage for their continued support. Limlāmt to our syilx partners who continue to be so generous with their time, patience, and knowledge. Finally, we recognize the invaluable contributions of our legacy donors, individual and corporate supporters, donors, members, and volunteers who fuel our mission.

As the new Executive Director, I'm deeply grateful for the warm welcome I've received from the dedicated staff, volunteers and Board of Directors at KMS. Their commitment and collaborative spirit are truly inspiring. I look forward to working alongside this exceptional team and collaborating with our community to achieve many years of success together for KMS.

All good things,

**Jillian Povarchook**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE KELOWNA MUSEUMS SOCIETY





## EXHIBITIONS

In the OHM's feature gallery, the year began with the chance to see the travelling exhibit *Chief Dan George – Actor and Activist*, which was created by, and on loan from, the Museum and Archives of North Vancouver. *Extra! Extra! I Read it in the Record* was created in-house, and gave visitors a look back at stories from the Orchard City/Kelowna Record, which was published by the Leathley brothers from 1908-20. The exhibit allowed visitors to gain insight as to what was important to locals at the time. Some stories were very different from what we see now, while others were surprising similar. Finally, an exhibition that was years in the making in partnership with the Kelowna Italian Club came to fruition. *La Nostra Famiglia Italiana* showcased the rich history and legacy of the Italian community in Kelowna that all began with the arrival of Giovanni Casorso and Carlo Guaschetti 140 years ago.

A project led by the Canadian Mental Health Association was on display, and gave the public an opportunity to see poetry, writing and photos from the *Serendipity* 'zine. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds and their shared work helped to open dialogue about some complex social issues that members of our community are facing. A second special project that was on display was artwork created by participants that attended UBCO *Queerstory* – a KMS partnership that included a live podcast recording and other discussions.

Two of our travelling exhibitions – *Waterways: Past, Present and Future* and *BATS: Out of the Darkness* – were shown at various locations throughout the valley and beyond.

*Serendipity 'zine and artwork on display*

*Alana, Elizabeth, Megan and Marshall check out Marvin the Museum Marmot - the interactive children's component of the Extra! Extra! exhibit*

*Amanda places an archival ledger while installing La Nostra Famiglia*

## COLLECTIONS & CONSERVATION

2023 saw permanent positions created for a staff member in both conservation and collections – congratulations Megan and Elizabeth!

Our repatriation efforts continued, with staff members from Sncəwips Heritage Museum coming to look over our collections, and pieces returning with them.

The collections committee accepted 43 new donations, with several highlights being a wild turkey, a set of carvings, items from Central School's Heritage Classroom, and over 300 pieces (not counting the archival materials!) from Terry Brunette. Throughout the year, over 2,400 objects were catalogued and entered into the database.

In the conservation lab, four public projects were completed and a workshop on tear repair and custom encapsulations was held for staff from our own museums as well as Westbank's. All kinds of artifacts came into the lab for cleaning, ranging from an autoharp to a gymnast's leather tumbling belt, to Japanese knives and outdoor signage from Beau Sejour Vineyards.

Collections and conservation staff played an integral role in the development and preparation of our feature exhibitions. Object selection, cleaning, and design of display cases were just a few of the areas in which this dynamic duo assisted.

*Amanda and Megan preparing to move specimens to the new deep freeze  
Megan performing tear repairs on a delicate fan  
Elizabeth photographing objects before they go on display  
Amanda (right) and a recently donated wild turkey*





## ARCHIVES

This year saw the undertaking of several major projects in our archival spaces.

Our Archives Intern organized and accessioned a large donation of records from the Myra Canyon Trestle Restoration Society. Prior to their dissolution in 2022, the group spent 30 years overseeing safety upgrades, trail maintenance, and post-firestorm trestle rebuilds on the historic Myra Canyon section of the KVR.



Archives staff spent two days a week for two months in Central School's Heritage Classroom, sorting through books and other teaching materials dating from the late 1800s to the early 2000s. In 2023, the space was closed to tour groups and the Central Okanagan Retired Teachers Association decided to donate the display materials to community museums and archives in order to return the space to current Central School staff and students.

Staff worked hard on the old wine shop storage at the Laurel Packinghouse, cleaning, building shelves, and moving material from open storage spaces into this one. In past years, the room has been used for a number of special collections projects, and now we are pleased to have an additional permanent and dedicated archives storage area.



This year, a second full time, permanent archives position was created. Allison works out of the Vince Bezeau Military Library and Archives, and these additional hours increase our ability to keep up with the responsibilities and workload of both the KPA and the VBMLA.

*Megan organizes bound newspapers in a new storage space*

*Allison reshelving boxed materials in the KPA*

*Tara and Megan after a day sorting through materials in the Heritage Classroom*

## OKANAGAN MILITARY MUSEUM

This year visitors to the Military Museum were offered a variety of interactive experiences. The exhibition-turned-trivia-game *ArtiFACT or ArtiFICTION: OMM edition* was carried over into 2023 and continued to be a hit with guests of all ages. A new program called *Museum Impossible: Spy Academy* became popular as well, with families and small groups solving riddles and puzzles to become Allied spies.

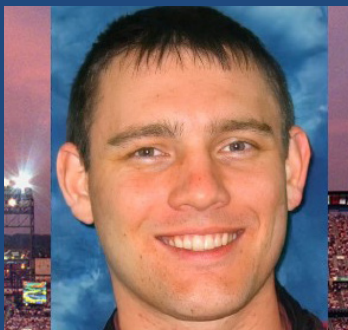
The KMS partnered with the Organization of Military Museums of Canada for their annual museum studies course. Classes were held at UBCO and featured tours of the OMM and OHM by 85 participants from similar museums across the country.

Community members had several opportunities to engage with museum staff off-site in 2023. In July, around 300 visitors to the Okanagan Military Tattoo Expo – including a large number of cadets – stopped by our display to learn about military efforts during the 2003 Okanagan Mountain Park Firestorm. Throughout the Remembrance season, 327 students visited the Field of Crosses and then the museum. The Field of Crosses is an annual, KMS-led project in which 227 white crosses are erected in City Park, with each representing a local member of the Armed Forces that has passed. The Remembrance Day open house at the OMM saw over 145 visitors come through the door to pay their respects.

Online presence was kept up year round with a regularly published blog on the OMMS website, as well as content on various KMS social media accounts.

*Firestorm display booth at the Okanagan Military Tattoo*  
*Field of Crosses set up in City Park*  
*Marshall delivering a program to a group of cadets*





Clayton Miller • Athlete  
 Jim and Karen Bates • Builder  
 David Bingham • Builder  
 Cliff Serwa and Doug Mervyn • Bennett Special  
 Recognition Award  
 Team Canada Wheelchair Curling • Team



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

In 2023, the KMS welcomed the newest class of inspirational inductees into the Central Okanagan Sports Hall of Fame. Join us in honouring:

**Clayton Miller** - a top Canadian skeet shooter at international events, two-time national champion, Olympian, and Pan American Games bronze medalist.

**Jim and Karen Bates** - a couple instrumental in forming the Kelowna Running Club, Apple Triathlon and Ski-to-Sea race. They brought the 1988 World Championship Triathlon to Kelowna and helped raised over \$100,000 with their women's charity run. They have also assisted with the telemark and nordic ski clubs.

**David Bingham** - involved in coaching and administering multiple sports in SD23 and the province since 1975. He was honoured in 2004 by BC School Sports for his service and contributions, and in 2013 his KCS 'A' boys were provincial champions.

**Team Canada Wheelchair Curling** - this team, including locals Gerry Austgarden and Sonya Gaudet, competed in the national championships in 2004. They were picked for the Paralympic team after 8 months of trials, and won gold in Italy, 2006.

**Cliff Serwa and Doug Mervyn** - these two first attempted to ski to the top of Big White over 60 years ago. They started Big White Ski Resort, which has grown into a destination for both recreational visitors and those competitive athletes, at the local to the international level.

## EDUCATION & PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

In 2023, 200 school programs and 109 public programs were delivered to over 8,000 visitors. That works out to an average of six programs a week throughout the year!

Our commitment to providing ongoing opportunities to learn about syilx/Okanagan language, land and culture shaped much of our year. Our relationship with Wildrose Native Traditions flourished, with programs such as *The Truth Shows Itself*, and the *náḵwulamən* series – including the *syilx Traditional Plant Use Walking Tour* and *nsyilxcən For Everyone* – continuing to grow in popularity. The team attended Sncəwips Heritage Museum's Siyaʔten Festival, sharing a display of Okanagan animals and their nsyilxcən names. On TRC day, more than 300 visitors came by the OHM to engage with staff, volunteers and Wildrose Native Traditions. Once again, all proceeds from the day went to the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society.

This year the Okanagan Regional Heritage Fair returned to in-person presentations. Three of the forty student entrants won a trip to Prince George and a chance to represent the Okanagan in the provincial fair!

We co-hosted our first pride event with UBCO, recording a podcast for *Okanagan QueerStory* in front of a live audience. Walking tours were back, with *Downtown Scoop* seeing some updates to compliment the *Extra! Extra!* exhibit, and the *Tombstone Tours* and spooky special *When Death Comes Knocking* being resurrected, much to the delight of participants.

Kids couldn't wait to celebrate their birthdays with us, and for all visitors, we were pleased to offer tours in French in addition to those already run bi-weekly in Spanish.

*Marshall and visitors to the Siyaʔten Festival*

*KMS volunteer Sasha with Alana, interacting with a visitor on TRC Day*

*Sofia hosting a birthday party for some young visitors*





## LAUREL PACKINGHOUSE

2023 was a year of continuous growth. Rentals and programs have returned to near pre-pandemic levels, with the Packinghouse once again a hub of activity.

Many successful public events ranging from seasonal markets and festivals, to community awards and events have enlivened the space. Fundraising groups have been in, dedicating their time to helping those both close to home and farther afield. Social events including weddings, celebrations of life, and holiday parties have once again become a mainstay.

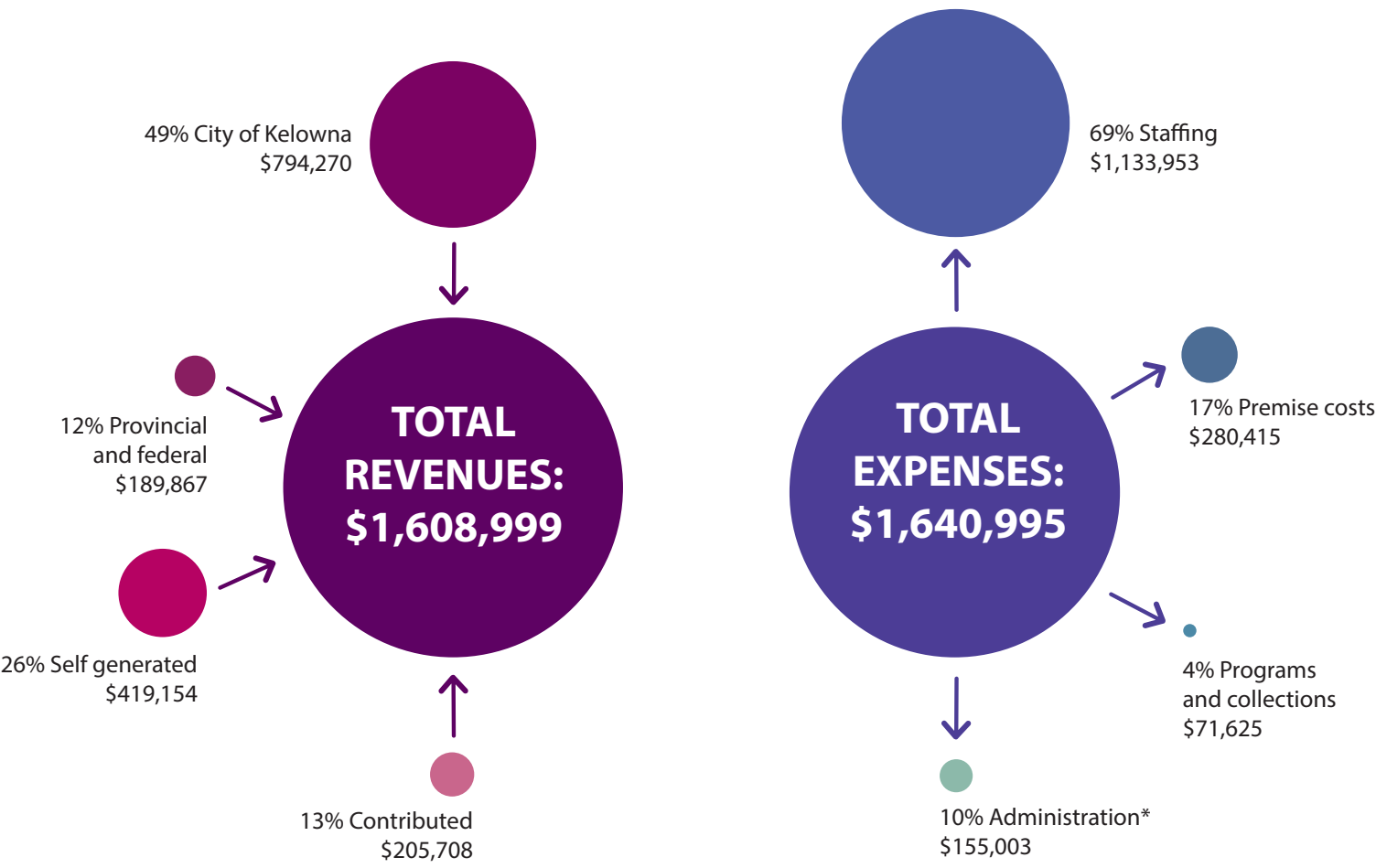
The education and programming team has been making great use of the entire space. Family programming in the Laurel Square, tours of the Okanagan Wine and Orchard Museum for school kids and specially booked groups, as well as focussed programming in the rental hall are highlighting this beautiful heritage space both inside and out.

The community showed their love at the 2023 Best of Kelowna Awards. With a nomination in the Best Event Rental category, and winning golds in Best Wedding Venue and Best Building in Kelowna, the Laurel has proven to be a well known space that's appreciated by many.



*A little visitor explores the Okanagan Wine and Orchard Museum  
Allison presenting Archives Dive for UBCO students  
A group of nsylxcan for Everyone graduates in the Laurel Square*

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



*\*Includes amoritization  
All numbers rounded to nearest \$ or %*

## THE YEAR IN OTHER NUMBERS

200 classes  
experienced KMS  
field trips

That's 6,093 kids,  
teachers and  
chaperones!

8,267

people joined in on a  
KMS program in 2023!

109  
public programs  
were delivered

to 2,174 participants  
from our community  
and beyond

37 people  
volunteered their time  
to help make KMS great!

369 OHM hours | 378 OMM hours  
262 KPA hours | 117 Education hours  
1,000 COSHoF hours

2,126

hours gifted to us  
by our volunteers

21,644  
walk-in visitors came  
through the doors of  
our museums

OHM • 15,692 | OMM • 4,142  
OWOM • 1,810

37%

increase over 2022

2,400+ combined  
content interactions,  
3,400 Instagram  
followers and  
800 Facebook link clicks

6,200

reached with social media

**In 2023, the KMS continued to connect people and place, bringing our history to life.**

**Thank you to our board, volunteers, and all of our other supporters  
who generously gave us their time and have helped us connect generations!**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023**

**Colin Flannigan**, President  
**Howard Hisdal**, Past President  
**Miah Olmsted**, Secretary and VP  
**Trinda Wager**, Treasurer and VP  
**Shaun Campbell**  
**Bill Wang**  
**Ying Zhu**  
**Christine McWillis**, ex-officio

### **VOLUNTEERS 2023**

Gary Athans	Archie Morrison
Ayda Baradari	Wayne Moore
Jane Bowering	Joachim Nierfeld
Lorne Buna	Cathie Pavlik
Gordy Charles	Kirk Penton
Matt Cherille	Randy Prost
Brian Cuthbert	Alexander Rousseau
Abreen Dhaliwal	Heather Semeniuk
Mike Dornian	Sharon Shepherd
Wolfe Engman	Michelle Sommerville
Kelsey Fisher	Bill Stephens
Rachael Fleming	Isla Tasker
Jacqui Frehlick	Aidan Tomalty
Shannon Grant	Nishat Tasnim
Bob Hayes	Ryan Watters
Warren Henderson	India Williams
Sasha Johnston	Ken Wilson
Bogdan Khomulenko	Shelley Yurko
	Nassim Zand

## STAFF 2023

**Linda Digby**, Executive Director  
**Amanda Snyder**, Curatorial Manager  
**Christopher Butt**, Finance & Operations Manager

**Tara Hurley**, Head of Archives  
**Sarah Cipes**, Archives Associate  
**Allison Wardle**, Archives Associate  
**Megan Butchart**, Archives Intern  
**Sarah Jane Gibbs**, Archives Intern  
**Elena Plotnikoff**, Archives Student, Archives Intern  
**Megan Fisher**, Conservation Associate  
**Elizabeth King**, Collections Associate  
**Rachel Maschek**, Collections Student  
**Keith Boehmer**, Military Historian  
**Jasmine Marshall**, Exhibitions Coordinator

**Solange Massicotte**, Head of Programming  
**Alana Firedancer**, Indigenous Engagement Coordinator  
**Erik Beardmore**, Programming Associate  
**Marshall Bond**, Programming Associate  
**Sofia Grael**, Programming Associate  
**Nick Paquin**, Programming Intern

**Valerie Maltese**, Laurel Booking Coordinator  
**Shelley Weber**, Laurel Enterprise Coordinator  
**Annie Beserekien**, Event Attendant  
**Sarina Bouvier**, Event Attendant  
**Maria Buncekova**, Event Attendant  
**Reid Gratz**, Event Attendant  
**Chandra Manzo**, Event Attendant  
**Rose Maunder**, Event Attendant  
**Lori Stokes**, Event Attendant  
**Amy Wright**, Event Attendant



**Mallery Barnett**, Web & Social Media Associate  
**Teresa Boehmer**, Visitor Attendant  
**Maria Garcia**, Museum Services Associate  
**Nancy Ross**, Bookkeeper  
**Ryan Wong**, Museum Facilities Associate



