



The St. Vital Historical
Society Inc.
2017

This entitles the bearer to full membership
rights in the Historical society.

Name: _____

Good until December 31, 2017

It's that time of the year again. If you have not received your 2017 membership card, see illustration, it means this will be the last copy of *The Historian* you will receive.

We hope you will remain a member of good standing in the St. Vital Historical Society by sending in your \$15 membership fee. The money goes a long way to preserve the history of St. Vital.

The

HISTORIAN

Newsletter of the St. Vital Historical Society

600 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2M 3L5

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The last surviving member of the Winnipeg Grenadiers taken prisoner Christmas Day 1941, George Peterson, 96, lays a wreath during a commemorative ceremony Dec. 4 at Brookside Cemetery. About a dozen St. Vital residents defended Hong Kong against

the Japanese Imperial Army and the Grenadiers were forced to surrender when they ran out of ammunition. Sgt/Major John Robert Osborn VC lost his life Dec. 19, when he jumped on a grenade to save the lives of several men. (Bob Holliday photo)



These shelves used to line the walls around the 1939 Fargo fire truck. They were among the many objects stored in the back of the bay, but are now the walls of an expanded display area as the Museum continues to get back to normal operations following a long construction period.

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SVHS mettle tested severely but survived

BOB HOLLIDAY
President

The St. Vital Historical Society saw considerable changes during 2016 and, as 2017 unfolds, is on the doorstep of achieving a higher level of preserving the rich and storied history of the second-oldest settlement in Winnipeg.

During the past year, SVHS volunteers and directors reclaimed some space and slowly putting their own stamp on the area formerly occupied by the Winnipeg Paramedic Service. Volunteers have tidied the back end of the bay, which held a vast amount of goods during construction.

For the second straight year, the Annual General Meeting was held in the 102-year old fire station and not in the lobby of McElhoes & Duffy or St. Mary's United Church.

The boardroom is now located in the former paramedics' living quarters and is hooked through Wi-Fi to the front office. Even with a small repeater located at the back of the first bay, the signal sometimes is weak, but we soldier on. In the next few months the back office should be hard-wired which will not only give a strong signal, but will allow for the use of a computer server which will let more than one person use programs such as archiving.

Your board had hoped to purchase new computer equipment, through a New Horizons for Seniors grant. Unfortunately, the application was rejected. Had the application been approved, the SVHS would have conducted basic computer classes for seniors.

Your directors are also awaiting word on an application to the Winnipeg Foundation. As part of the application process, I attended a student symposium sponsored by the Winnipeg Foundation where I spoke to five groups of students, each for eight minutes.

The students graded each presentation and the marks

will be used to grade each application.

Our thanks goes to Councillor Brian Mayes for his help in extending the time limit on our Community Incentive Grant. The SVHS was granted \$15,000, of which \$10,000 was spent before the three year time limit. Under CIG, the SVHS receives 50 cents from the City for each dollar spent for display purposes. The councillor is also responsible for the expanded quarters.

The expansion has not been easy, as city bureaucrats continue to place obstacles in our way. The latest was a lack of heat in November as the boiler was replaced, even though it was known the boiler was obsolete and need replacing over a year ago.

We were given a week's notice to remove belongings

from a basement room, the same room we were faced to vacate in May when a crew was hired to spray fire-retardant on the ceiling.

(Please see Page 4)



Colleen Mayer (MLA St. Vital tries her hand on a 100-year old washing machine during a visit.



A portion of the agricultural display at the St. Vital Museum.

The spray job should have been in August 2015, but those in charge of the renovation overruled the City building inspector and only sprayed half the basement. That meant we not only had to vacate the new area but also had to move artifacts and cover shelves in a newly cleaned room and jam things back into another recently cleaned room.

After consultation with the contractor workers, the artifacts were moved out of the way next to the walls, but the bureaucrat was still not satisfied and wanted the goods removed. Our question was: To where?, since the back storage room is without shelving, which was supposed to be rebuilt by the City following construction completion.

While we are thankful for the expanded quarters, it would be helpful if we were consulted about changes and not just ordered out by faceless bureaucratic project managers who do not visit the building.

A big thanks to Julian Roberts, of the city real estate department. Since his appointment about a year ago, he has visited the museum several times. He has kept us informed as much as possible of any changes.

Misinformation from bureaucrats almost bankrupted our organization. In August 2015, we were informed we would have occupancy of the basement by the end of September so summer student Laura Garinger was retained to work alongside Jenna Klassen. Well, we didn't get the basement as promised but we could not renege on our promise to Ms. Garinger who was kept on at a cost of almost \$500 a month or \$5,000 in total.

My thanks goes to the directors who volunteered their Saturdays to keep the museum open during June, July and August. The shortened hours were due to the Canadian Museum Association rejection of our Young Canada Works application.

In October, I met with the executive director of Heritage Winnipeg, Cindy Tugwell concerning how YCW positions are awarded. Like the SVHS, Heritage Winnipeg was denied a position.

Both of us were informed that lack of money was to blame, but of 77 positions awarded in 2016 to Winnipeg organizations, 24 went to north St. Boniface-based institutions — 11 to St. Boniface University alone. It would appear that the same organizations receive students each year and the question is why, especially when some receive more

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than one. Each year the St. Boniface Historical Society receives three positions, while government-funded organizations such as the St. Boniface Museum receive at least one. The St. Boniface Museum receives \$400,000 annually from the City of Winnipeg. The St. James Museum also receives funding for three students each year.

I also question why small museums such as ours have to compete with those that already receive millions of dollars from various levels of government. We have to compete for students with the Manitoba Museum, Winnipeg Art Gallery (which received six positions) and even the Assiniboine Park Conservancy. While worthy organizations, all have full-time staff to write applications.

Tugwell is on Mayor Bowman's task force looking into city funding of arts and culture. There are apparently 49 museums in Winnipeg. Under the current Museums Board of Winnipeg, there are no criteria for what defines a museum. I supplied Tugwell guidelines used by Manitoba Heritage. The SVHS receives \$3,150 yearly from Heritage Manitoba.

At the November meeting, your Board voted to endorse Heritage Winnipeg as the administrator of the Museum Board of Winnipeg.

On the bright side, in the next couple of weeks I hope to be meeting with Warren Nightingale, vice-principal at Glenlawn Collegiate, concerning setting up a program whereby students earn credits through projects at the Museum. For instance, GCI has a great audio-visual program. Students could shoot vignettes that could play on our TV, and even put together vignettes that could be shown at other schools, seniors homes, and at the St. Vital Agricultural Society Fair.

Students could also research the rich history of St. Vital. During my presentation to the Louis Riel School Division in 2015, trustees were surprised to learn that the division offices (located in the former Norberry School) is situated on the land once owned by Ambroise Lepine, who was Louis Riel's adjutant-general, and later owned by early settler Frederick Hulton.

Glenlawn has a wall of honour featuring the names of graduates who went on to bigger and better things. Student could also search our records for other distinguished grads.

As well, GCI has a graphic arts class that could help the SVHS design posters, etc.

One of the challenges facing the SVHS is repainting the

doors and windows of this historic building and signage. To gain the greatest exposure, I would suggest the doors be festooned with "St. Vital Museum" in large letters. Several visitors have noted the lack of signage.

In the near future, a second alarm keypad will be installed at the doorway leading to the boardroom. This will be my donation to the SVHS as I have selected this organization as my chosen charity.

There was a change of alarm companies this year. Tyco (ADT) was too expensive. We receive the same coverage from AAA, for half the cost.

Six directors have stepped down or did not stand for reelection for various reasons: Paul Gentes; Lea Girman; Jolene Klassen, Chris Zaste and the Berthmans, Don and Judy. We are sorry to see them leave and want to thank them for their service. We want to wish Chris Zaste all the best as he embarks in his chosen field of history. Chris joined us a summer student and then became a director. He has finished his graduate studies in history and is now off to bigger and better things.

The new executive board is made up of: Bob Holliday, president; John Kendle, vice president; Joanne Phillips, secretary; Jeff Whyte, treasurer; Directors are: life-long St. Vital resident, Maurice Allard; Kerry Pedrick and Jim Fuller.

Jenna Klassen is still our Saturday employee. She is in her first year of graduate studies. Working with the board, Jenna has made a tremendous difference in the operation of the St. Vital Museum.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the dedication of five people: treasurer Jeff Whyte, who is at the museum Wednesday and Saturday mornings; Leon St. Onge and Dave Reimer, who have done so much work on the fire truck; Mariska Maguire who is here every Saturday to continue the arduous task of cataloguing; and Vanessa Russell who attends Wednesday and Saturday to keep the place spotless.

I would like to thank former MLAs Nancy Allan, Christine Melnick and Theresa Oswald for their past support and look forward to working with newly-elected MLAs Colleen Mayer (St. Vital), Rochelle Squires (Riel) and Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River).

Here's to another successful year of preserving the rich history of the second oldest settlement in Winnipeg: St. Vital.

Have a Happy New Year.



Have a safe and Happy New Year

Working with you in St. Vital



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Brian Mayes
City Councillor - St. Vital Ward

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Magna Carta print on permanent display at St. Vital Museum

In 1215, at a place called Runnymede in the United Kingdom, King John signed perhaps the most important document to mankind: the Magna Carta, which is still the basis for rights and freedoms in Canada, the UK and yes, even the USA. A print of the English translation of the Magna Carta is now hanging in the St. Vital Museum, purchased at the Salisbury Cathedral, home to one of the four remaining originals. Group tours are available by calling 204-255-2864 or emailing tours@svhs.ca

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There are still a few 2017 calendars available at a cost of \$5 each, or three for \$10. The calendars — chock full of photos depicting early life in Winnipeg's second oldest settlement — are a major fundraiser for the St. Vital Museum, which is not funded by any level of government.

Calendars may be picked up any Saturday between 930 a.m. and 4 p.m. at 600 St. Mary's Road. The entrance is at the rear.

Brigham Young student seeks family history

An American student is hoping a member is able to help trace her ancestry. Susan Arnold-Cutler, who studies genealogy at Brigham Young University in Utah, hails from Reseda, California, sent the following message to the St. Vital Historical Society Face book page.

"Hi St. Vital Historical Society. I found a couple of newspaper clippings while visiting an Uncle (sic). In the articles it referred to my Grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Arnold and one of their daughters Violet Arnold, leaving for Los Angeles. Can someone help me with some genealogy in this area, names of newspapers that I could actually find the original (the name of newspaper was cut out) and or vital records court house? My name is Susan Arnold- Cutler. My grandparents were George and Lily Arnold. It appears (they) settled (in) St. Vital Winnipeg, Canada."

There was no date attached to the clipping, but hopefully someone will recognize the Arnolds and contact the office at svhs@svhs.ca or call 204-255-2864.



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