

# **Annual Report**

**Of**



**WHISTLE STOP GALLERY SOCIETY**

**2007**

*Celebrating five years of success*

The Whistle Stop Gallery Society has been involved in a number of different projects this past year and continues to expand its mandate as an arts and cultural organization and as a key player in the Regional District arts and culture corridor.

If the proposed route to Barkerville along the Purden Lake Forestry Road becomes a reality we could see greatly increased traffic along the Hwy 16 corridor and increased sales as a result.

With the establishment of the Regional District of Fraser Fort George Five Year Cultural Plan, the Gallery is funded for five years at a rate of 25, 28, 28, 32 and 32 thousand per annum starting in 2006 and ending in 2010. Our part of the contract stipulates senior management participation in the Cultural Services Advisory Committee, annual reports, submission of a five year operating plan with a more detailed annual plan, audited financial statements and a commitment to establish a 1/3 local Gov't, 1/3 Provincial/Federal, 1/3 Society funding contribution rate.

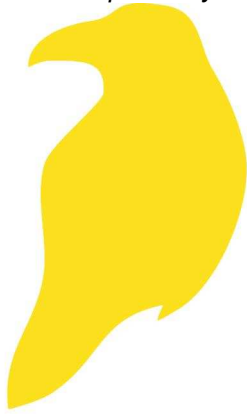
To date management has attended all of the Cultural Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) meetings in person or by phone. Finlay Sinclair is no longer our contact at the Regional District and has been replaced by Renee McCloskey. There was some transitional lag time; however we are back on track now.

In the past year I have been working with Tracy Caleroghous, (Executive Director of Exploration Place) Peter Thompson, (Executive Director of the Two Rivers Art Gallery) and Edith Hennig, (MacKenzie Museum Curator) on the marketing sub committee tasked with the creation of a brand and visual identity for the seven Regional District funded cultural organizations:

MacKenzie Museum, MacKenzie	Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George
Hubble Homestead, Prince George	Exploration Place, Prince George
Whistle Stop Gallery, McBride	Valley Museum & Archives, McBride
Valemout Museum & Archives, Valemout	

We determined an RFP to find a design firm to assist in the development of a brand name and logo for the funded cultural organizations within the Regional District. Several proposals were considered and evaluated according to a predetermined formula and we hired Concept Design (a PG design firm) and worked closely with them to develop an appropriate cultural brand.

The following is a summary of the brand and the rationale behind it. The full report is appended.



## **A GOLDEN RAVEN EXPERIENCE**

### **LOGO SYMBOLISM**

The symbol of the Golden Raven was chosen to identify cultural venues within the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George region.

The symbol's purpose is to assure visitors to enjoy a quality experience when visiting a cultural site bearing the Golden Raven designation. Only cultural venues which meet quality standards are privileged to display the Golden Raven.

The symbol of the Golden Raven was developed for the following reasons and attributes:

- Gold is the colour of value and implies quality.
- The colour gold is a reminder of the gold rush days and the opening up of the region.
- The Raven is a year-round native to the Region.
- Ravens are smart and playful birds with many human qualities. They are survivors, crafty, resourceful, and have lived alongside humans forever.
- Ravens are deeply rooted in aboriginal history and are respected birds. In assigning the gold colour to the raven it detaches it from the native heritage without losing its symbolism.
- The symbol is ambiguous enough to be applied to cultural centres of various nature.
- The symbolism is intuitive and does not require lengthy explanation. It has a high recognition and retention value and it works in any medium, dimension, and application.
- The positioning statement (tagline) identifies the cultural venue as a brand experience.

Our next project is the marketing phase of the plan and we have been working with Richard Hudson of the Community Tourism Foundation to find creative ways of maximizing our marketing budget. We have over \$35,000 in Regional District funding for the implementation of our marketing strategy and that money will be matched by Community Tourism Foundations. For a small organization such as ourselves this is a priceless opportunity for comprehensive marketing on a large scale that we would otherwise not be able to afford.

Sales have been steady throughout the year and we have had a significant increase in sales this year, partly through increased community support and partly due to the increased traffic as a result of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.

We were able to purchase a new computer and software as well as a laser printer and upgrades to our display system.

We received \$2000 from the CDP special project fund for the creation of two photo murals that depict the history of the station, these were completed under the auspices of the Robson Valley Arts and Cultural Society by Matthew Wheeler. We had an unveiling ceremony attended by members of the Whistle Stop Gallery Society, RVAC, Village Council and the public.

Our other mural project is proceeding slowly but well. We have one Mural completed, thanks to Glen Frear who has been hard at work on the Scotiabank wall and doing a fantastic job. We will have another unveiling ceremony as soon as weather permits and Glen will be giving interviews to the press for more free media exposure. We hope to have another completed this spring and one more during the summer.



The Whistle Stop Gallery participated with the Library, Chamber of Commerce and Village Council in the July 1<sup>st</sup> Celebrations – the celebrations were a big hit and the result of another successful partnership with the Library and CDP. Many thanks to Margaret Griffiths her team of dedicated student who helped make the event a success.

Our artists have had many notable successes over the past year:

Congratulations to:

- Trevor Jones on his first major gallery sale
- David Marchant for his Arts Fest 2007 winning entry.
- Glen Frear and Matthew Wheeler for their amazing work on the mural project
- Glen Stanley on his new website and continued success.
- Steffi McLean and Anne Shepard on their success at the Prince George craft fair.
- Kevin and Fran Chuipka on the success of their Itty Bitty body products.

The banners we all admired during the August 75th Anniversary celebrations were designed by our own Sheilagh Foster and we were able to be involved in the presentation of the Sir Richard McBride original painting to the Village of McBride by the family of the late Premier.

An extra thank you to Sheilagh and the other artists who created an “artist fair” on the back deck of the station during the celebrations.

In 2007 the Whistle Stop Gallery Society commissioned a young artist, Bryony Griffiths to paint pictures on all of the fire hydrants in town. Little did we know what talent and creativity this young artist would bring to the project. Having just graduated from grade 12 in McBride Secondary School, Bryony spent her summer towing her paint pots around in her little red wagon and creating one work of art after another. Scroll through the pictures and then take the McBride Fire Hydrant walk and try to spot them all!



The Whistle Stop Gallery would like to thank Darrell and Diane Roth for the great idea and for all of the organizational help.

And a big thank you to Bryony Griffith - artist extraordinaire!

In January I hired an additional staff member to help out in the Gallery. Denise Lamming has worked out wonderfully and will continue part time. All of the wages are being paid out of the RDFFG contract so the only additional cost to the Gallery is the mandatory employment related costs. These work out to much less than hiring part time staff to fill in on my days off.

I applied for and received two summer students this year. Becca Thompson was our University student and a cheerful presence in the Gallery and Jonathon Rawley was our high school student.

Our membership has increased to 71 members (from 34 in 2005) and there are many new items for shoppers to choose from.

Display space still is a concern, as we increase our membership and the variety of arts and crafts it is becoming increasingly challenging to adequately display all of the merchandise we have. Rotating main displays and creative use of stands has helped.

The landscaping around the station has added to the attractiveness of the area and the new caboose is a very nice addition.

Barb Jackson has sold the Beanery 2 to Donna Perkins and we have developed a cooperative working relationship.

The Whistle Stop website has been updated and will continue to be added to. If any artists have pictures, promotional material, etc. Please bring them in and we will put them on the site.

We look forward to 2008 – the following is our 2008 strategic plan for review.

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Of**



# **WHISTLE STOP GALLERY SOCIETY**

# **FOR 2008**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN OF: Whistle Stop Gallery Society**

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### **MISSION**

The mission of this organization is to:

- To encourage lifelong learning through the arts.
- To create an environment for vigorous artistic and cultural expression.
- To provide opportunities for diverse experiences through participation and exhibition.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this organization is to:

- To promote and encourage the creation of arts and crafts in the Robson Valley
- To provide technical, administrative, logistical and design support to artists and crafters
- To engage the community in the appreciation of the value of art and culture
- To provide a venue for the display and sale of arts and crafts

### **PRIORITIES**

In order to accomplish its purpose and mandate, the following priorities have been set for 2008:

1. Create a public art display engaging the community in the creative process
2. Market the Robson Valley as an Art and Culture hub
3. Provide art/craft education to community at large
4. Continue to encourage membership in the Whistle Stop Gallery Society
5. Develop resources to provide ongoing support to artists and crafters

**Priority No. 1:**

<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>
Public Art Display  Ongoing creation of Historical Murals  Working in partnership with Robson Valley Secondary School, artists and the community of McBride the WSG Society is going to help in the creation of a series of murals to be applied to public and private buildings.	Apply for funding Seek out partnerships Engage artists/community leaders	BC Gaming Commission/Arts Now – Legacies 2010/Village of McBride funded initiative – more funding sought	2007-2008 Ongoing
	Develop Lesson plan – hire teachers/artists – engage students	Work with new principal)	Nov. 01
	Create designs – map out plan/business partnering/targeted advertising	Ongoing throughout winter – priority given to businesses willing to contribute to project	Nov 01 08 March 01 08
	Mural application Community engagement exercises – dinners/dances encourage community support.	Canada Day Celebrations to coincide with opening	May 01 08 June 30 08  Grand unveiling July 01 08

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF: Whistle Stop Gallery Society****Priority No. 2:**

<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTION</b>	<b>ACTION REQUIRED</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>KEY DATES</b>
Market the Robson Valley as an Art and Culture hub	Create studio tours – Brochure outlining same	Engage artists and crafters to open studios for planned events	ongoing
	Artwalk in production – find better methods of display – add to brochure	Work with businesses and artists – funding required	March 2007 - ongoing
	Create and access marketing opportunities and partnerships with Northern BC Tourism/RDFFG/CSAC and CBT in order to increase cultural visibility	Matching funding	ongoing

**Priority No. 3:**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	ACTION REQUIRED	NOTES	KEY DATES
Provide art/craft education to community at large	Engage artists to provide art/craft instruction	Paid through course fees	ongoing
	Market to community at large	Partner with McBride Library	ongoing
	Continue Summer Fun Program partnering with McBride Public Library		ongoing

**Priority No.4:**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	ACTION REQUIRED	NOTES	KEY DATES
Continue to encourage membership the Whistle Stop Gallery Society	Continue to provide warm supportive atmosphere	Happy artists are Gallery artists	ongoing
	Keep membership fees low and value high – advertise locally – WOM	Gallery Artists are happy artists	ongoing
	Ongoing display and production support	Happy artists are Gallery artists	ongoing
	Communication via newsletters etc Actively seek out new artists via WOM	Gallery Artists are happy artists	ongoing

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF: Whistle Stop Gallery Society****Priority No. 5:**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	ACTION REQUIRED	NOTES	KEY DATES
Develop resources to provide ongoing	Encourage communication and sharing of information among artists and staff.		Ongoing

support to artists and crafters	Hold courses, seminars re taxes, business strategies, marketing, media etc		Ongoing
	Provide staff education and training to better assist Society members in marketing/producing/pricing		Ongoing
	Provide free tech support to Society members re brochure design, product pricing, supplies/web design and support etc		Ongoing