

the TOWNSITE HERITAGE DIGESTER



Published by the Townsite Heritage Society of Powell River

FALL & WINTER 2014

A place to rest forever

In memory of Frank and Jessie Flett

The three daughters of Frank and Jessie Flett have placed a memorial bench and plaque in the Triangle Gardens overlooking the ocean, Townsite and the mill, in honour of their parents who began their married lives in Powell River on September 7, 1927.

Frank Flett (1900-1989) was born in Victoria and came to Powell River as an employee of the Bank of Commerce (from Duncan on the Island) during the mid-1920s. Jessie Kilburn (1902-70), born in Kingsclear, New Brunswick, had been living in Saskatoon before moving to Powell River to be with her sister. Jessie was working as a stenographer in the Powell River Company office when she first laid eyes on her husband-to-be.

Frank and Jessie felt that Powell River was an ideal place to raise their family and they became very involved in many of the countless community activities, sports, and volunteer work that Powell River had to offer young, growing families.

Jessie settled into her new life as topnotch housewife and mother of their three daughters: Norma (Smith), Fran (Forsythe) and Doreen (McGuire), and in spite of Frank's alleged wishful thinking to have a son, he quickly embraced the concept of raising and loving his daughters. However, Norma (his eldest daughter) could be seen from time to time shingling a roof or working under the hood of a car with her Dad, an indulgence they both shared.

Frank became the paymaster for the Powell River Company, and later the personnel manager which he



At left are sisters Fran Forsythe (nee Flett) and Norma Smith with Rebecca Vincent (President of Townsite Heritage Society) at center. A special thanks to the City Works crew who brought in the bench just for this photo.



Three generations! Seated on Flett Memorial Bench are three generations of the family. From left are Calvin Smith (Norma's son), Doreen McGuire and Norma Smith (sisters). At right is Sean Smith (Norma's grandson).

Continued on p 2

TOWNSITE TIDBIT

BOARD MEMBERS

We thank the volunteer Board Members of the Townsite Heritage Society:

Rebecca Vincent, President

Ann Nelson, Vice-President

Diana Collicutt, Secretary/Treasurer

Directors: **Carol Regnier, Karen Andrews, Isabelle Southcott, Cindy McLean**

These volunteers are among the many who provide skills and time in support of our neighbourhood. Thank you for your contributions!

CONTINUED FROM P 1

did until his retirement in 1965. He was later retained for consultation during the development and installation of #10 paper machine.

An interesting history shared by the Flett sisters was their Viking bloodline. Their grandfather, James Flett, sailed from the Orkney Islands in the north of Scotland, all the way around the horn to Victoria, BC in 1849. Upon seeing his future in the new frontier, James sailed back to the Orkney Islands, later returning to Victoria with his new bride. They raised a family of four, with Frank being born in 1900. The rest, of course, is history!



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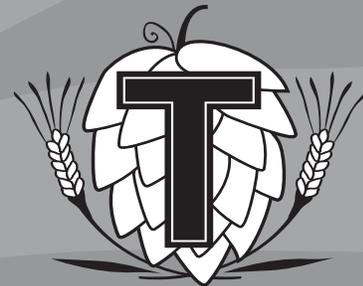
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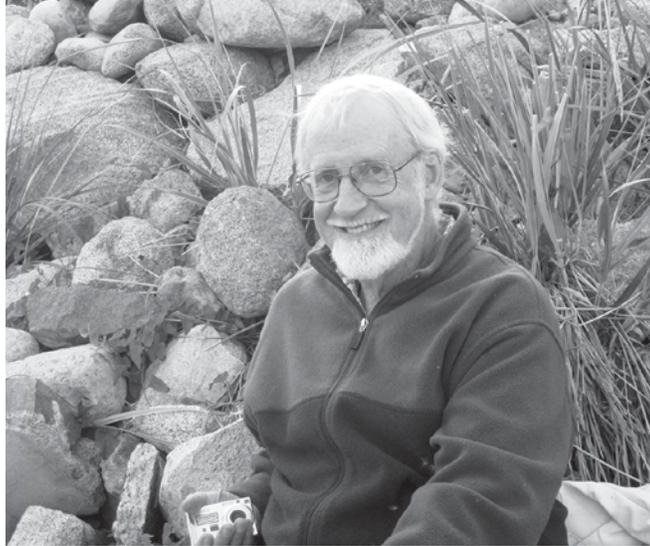
David Moore

A Townsite advocate

By Ann Nelson

We often talk about the dedicated crusaders in the “renaissance” of the Townsite, but tend to assume that these will all be the obvious stakeholders who own property or do business in the National Historic District. Not necessarily so. The untimely passing of one of our most passionate crusaders for the preservation, restoration and betterment of Townsite has really made me aware that there is another kind of stakeholder: the philosophical or emotional one.

I first met David Moore in 1981 when he took up the duties of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) officer for CMHC in our District, working out of the newly restored Regional District office, where I was employed as the accounting clerk. It was then located in the Manager’s house on Managers’ Row and we quickly discovered that we shared a passion for the elegant architecture of the Arts & Crafts houses in Townsite, as well as shared experiences with trying to better the housing available for families with few resources, whether in Northern Alberta or here on the coast. Over the years, David consistently put his energies where his mouth was, working within the framework of the RRAP program to put families into safe, warm, healthy homes while doing his best to preserve the inventory of original buildings in Townsite and the rest of the district. His appreciation for the character of our Townsite homes is reflected in many of the features incorporated in the home he built for his family on their property south of town, and in the numerous architectural designs he was commissioned to create for other Powell River homebuilders.



When the Townsite Heritage Society was being formed in 1989, David was one of the founders and motivators, serving on the Board and as a “consultant” for many years before the increased time spent serving the RRAP district on the Island, along with the Powell River program, made it impossible to commit the same time

and energy as before. Even working from a home office on Weldwood Road and commuting regularly to the Island, David retained his commitment to the projects undertaken and the progress made by the Society in “kick-starting” Townsite’s renaissance. In his kind, quiet way, he was an indefatigable activist and advocate.

Over 10 years ago, when the future of the Rodmay Hotel was in serious jeopardy, David became the Chairman of the active group formed to save and restore Townsite’s oldest commercial building.

Photo courtesy of Wendy Twomey

In addition to providing the necessary leadership to formulate a vision and a strategy for the heritage hotel, he also led by example, putting in countless hours of scraping, sanding, building, varnishing and research into the evolution from the original footprint and floor plan, to the present. He only left that project in the hands of others when his health began, suddenly, to fail.

David will be missed not only for his advocacy and gentle activism throughout the community, but for having been one of the kindest, most genuinely engaged and loving persons one could ever be privileged to meet or work with. He clearly had discovered what so many of us are still struggling to embrace: courtesy, kindness, love, respectfulness... they’re all inexhaustible, because the more one invests, the more one is repaid and replenished.

Robert Dufour

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Paint-Up 2014

Gendron's thrilled with results

Fred and Shirley Gendron of 6362 Oak Street successfully finished painting their house after winning this year's Paint Up campaign. Shirley was ecstatic when she found out they had won and was over the moon with the finished results. She couldn't say enough with regards to the help and support she received from Kalli in the paint department at RONA.

The photo at right shows the 'after' house, but clearly, black and white really doesn't do it justice. We recommend you drive by the Gendron house to see the gorgeous new colours for yourself—look for the RONA sign out front.

The Paint Up winners received a package including 20 gallons of CIL paint donated by ICI Paints. Powell River RONA Building Centre provided all of the application products needed to do the job. For homeowners interested in applying for this program, watch for our announcement in the Spring 2015 Digester.

We also thank Powell River RONA Building Centre for their generous and continuing long-term sponsorship of our Townsite beautification program. Your support has showcased yet another heritage home in our beautiful Historic Townsite.



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High mileage, still rolling

Heirloom pram, many memories

We wish to thank Rita D'Onofrio of Wildwood for donating the pram (pictured) to Henderson House Museum. It once belonged to Charlie and Florence MacLean who lived in Powell River, but Florence told her children that when she was a little girl living in Nova Scotia she used to push her baby brother around in it! Charlie and Florence used the pram while raising their children—Dale, Bonnie, Roger, David and Paul.

The pram travelled to Los Angeles 35 years ago with their daughter Dale, and she used it for her children before it rolled home to Powell River. After Florence and Charlie passed away, Cam Rourke (their grandson/Bonnie's son) and his wife Daniella (Rita D'Onofrio's daughter) moved into Charlie and Florence's home and there was the pram!

Rita acquired the pram for Henderson House when the MacLean family decided to part with it, and now this darling heirloom is on display after its travels of more than



80 years, and memories of the MacLean descendants it has lulled to sleep.

Cozy addition

Donation enhances our museum

The Townsite Heritage Society would like to extend sincere appreciation and thanks to the Tyler family for their generous donation of a 1920s heirloom Axminster weave type reproduction Persian rug. Originally belonging to Jake's father, it was passed on to Jake and Janet where the rug was well cared for and loved for many years in their home. We are very fortunate to have this beauty warming up our main room with its timeless pattern and tones. Thank you all.



Jake and Janet Tyler with the 1920s Persian rug they and their family have donated to Henderson House Museum.

A thank you to the Powell River Museum

We wish to thank The Powell River Historical Museum for their ongoing support and the loan of a number of antique items for display at Henderson House. The Mason and Risch piano, radio, wind-up gramophone, and floor lamps all receive well-deserved attention, as does the old wringer washer with its copper tub. The antique trunks have been placed throughout the house and will hold miscellaneous artifacts for people to discover and enjoy. Thank you for sharing your collection.

Book winners

In the last edition of *The Digester* (April 2014) we announced a draw for anyone joining or renewing their Townsite Heritage Membership whereby they would be entered in a draw. The prizes? Copies of the book, *People of the White City*, a history of early Powell River and the mill by Emma Levez. Two books were awarded: congratulations to Kim Friedel and William Hainstock. Enjoy your new books.

A profound thanks to Powell River Living

for sponsoring the very successful Tea & Tarot in Townsite, a most unique fundraiser benefitting Henderson House Museum.

2014 Home & Garden Awards

The Townsite Home and Garden awards have a long history. Originating in 1917 with a Garden Contest sponsored by the Powell River Company, the awards help to encourage and recognize the efforts of keepers of well-maintained homes and gardens.

This year the Society is once again partnered with RONA, Springtime Garden Centre and Mother Nature to present gift certificates and a plaque or framed certificate to each winner at the reception held in their honour. And the winners for 2014 are...



HOME AWARDS

Grand General Award

Corrine Anderson

5777 MAPLE (TOP LEFT)

Grand Heritage

Not awarded this year

Most Improved

Mark & Allison Leja

5612 MAPLE (BOTTOM)

Most Improved Runner-Up

Dona Gaudreau

5450 LABURNUM (BELOW)



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Best Mixed Border ④

Peter & Pauline Robinson
5503 MAPLE

Best Containers ⑤

Robert Lawson
5460 LABURNUM

Most Improved Garden ③

Ken & Dianne Maynard
5453 MAPLE

Best Kitchen Garden

Mathew & Ashley Hull
6328 POPLAR

Best Kitchen Garden

(Runner-up) William McKinnon
5354 LARCH

Spring Fling

Don & Sharon Cairns
5736 MAPLE

Best Garden Structure ②

Debra & Leo Zagwyn
6315 SYCAMORE

Best Outdoor Living Space

Cameron & Theresa Reid
6475 LAUREL

Best Commercial Garden

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City Motors changes hands after 33 years

Burt and Marg MacLean hand keys to proud new owners

Welcome Rob Mastrodonato and Julie Wizinsky, and Happy Retirement Burt and Marg MacLean!!!

City Motors was established 88 years ago in 1926 by Charlie Long to sell “new-fangled motorcars,” and back in those days cars were so new that City Motors had to teach their customers how to drive.

But let us talk about Burt MacLean’s 58-year history with City Motors. Burt came to Powell River from Nova Scotia in 1956 as a VERY young man who was still outgrowing his clothes. His brother Charlie MacLean (wife Florence) who was already living in Powell River and working for City Motors, helped Burt to land a job there. His first job? Changing tires, and he would work for very long hours, starting in the morning and often continuing into the wee hours of the following morning if there were a lot of tires to change. City Motors changed all the tires for the mill at the time, quite a job.

As time went by, Burt apprenticed as a Ford mechanic under Kenny Macken (Macken and Knowles purchased City Motors in 1928). He continued to work at City Motors when it was sold to Pete and Ebe Raimondo in 1967. In 1981 when the Raimondos were ready to sell, Burt was still working there as a mechanic. He and Marg decided it was time to step up and buy the business. Marg quit her job as a practical nurse to work beside her husband... for the next 33 years!

Talk about history repeating itself

Rob Mastrodonato’s history with City Motors began 29 years ago when he worked for Burt as a gas jockey in 1985 and apprenticed under him right out of high school in 1986–90. Upon receiving his mechanic’s licence in 1991, Rob moved to Burnaby to begin his mechanical career, but he told Burt that when he returned he would want to buy City Motors. Rob met Julie who was from

Vancouver and when the time came, he kept his promise: he moved back to Powell River with Julie and bought the business.

Rob has a vision for City Motors that he and Julie would like to bring to the Townsite—of a good old-fashioned community and family oriented business. One could reflect upon this vision as a historic restoration project of the philosophy of “The Garden City Principles,” the concept upon which our

Townsite was founded. We look forward to the unveiling of Rob

and Julie’s enhancements over the months to come.

While very few can lay claim to a 58 year working career at the same business like Burt, Rob and Julie’s history is in the making and we anticipate their presence in the Townsite for many years to come!



New owners Rob Mastrodonato (left) and Julie Wizinsky toast previous owners, Marg and Burt MacLean as City Motors changes hands.

Delicious fundraiser

It was a successful three days of selling blackberry shortcake for the Townsite Heritage Society starting with the Street Party on August 15 and followed by Arts Alive in the Park. This is our most important fundraiser of the year and we could never do it alone! Our sincere appreciation to the following supporters and businesses who help make this possible:

Quality Foods, First Credit Union, Wind Spirit Gallery, St David & St Paul Anglican Church, Rocky Mountain Bakery & Pizza. And we won't forget all our hard-working volunteers in the kitchen, at the sales booths, our blackberry pickers... and of course, all the blackberry shortcake lovers in the community.

Thank you to everyone!

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Triangle Gardens update

Who could have guessed all those many years ago, when the newly formed Townsite Heritage Society decided to salvage and resurrect the old Triangle Gardens, what we would have today. Originally a holding nursery for shrubs awaiting their turn to be incorporated by the Company's gardeners in new landscaping, it was an attractive and welcoming feature of everyday life in Townsite.

After the sale of the Mill to MacMillan-Bloedel in the 1950s and the divestiture by M & B of all the Company houses and parks, it quickly turned into a typical north-west coast jungle of blackberries and other fast growing plants and was less than welcoming except to vagrants and vermin!

The reclamation project quickly grew into more than just quelling the jungle and grooming what was left of the ornamental plantings, and it became a labour of love for our revered Dr Dirt (aka Dr Andy Davis) who developed flower beds and rock gardens and paths.

Keeping all this lovely Garden looking lush and green, however, was becoming more and more arduous: constantly hauling water hoses and sprinklers up and down and across the bank, and having to "steal" water from the houses above.

In 2005, Dr Dirt launched his very own campaign to raise the money to have an in ground sprinkler system

installed on this piece of City green space which the Society has maintained all these years, and through his fundraising donations and a bike-a-thon with his wife Susan, the Society was finally able to commission the dream watering system from Mr Green-Up this summer. Hallelujah, no more dragging of hoses around, no more "missing" hoses and sprinklers, and a lovely green welcome to Townsite for us all every time we come home or introduce visitors to our National Historic District!

So very many thanks are owed to Dr Dirt and his long-suffering friends and clients for their donations, the City of Powell River Parks staff for their planning assistance and advice, the Engineering/Public Works staff for our new, dedicated water service, and to everyone else who has contributed to bringing this dream to life... enjoy!

SUCCESS WITH 1ST ANNUAL PLANTER SALE

Thank you to everyone for their support earlier this summer in purchasing the hanging baskets and planters. The Society was able to raise \$750 from this event. You can count on us having another Planter Sale just in time for Mother's Day. Watch for an announcement in the 2015 Spring/Summer Digester.

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Full page: 7.5" x 10"	75.0 in	\$ 140

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www.PowellRiverTownsite.com

**Okay, we may need to look it up for you, but it is a good place to start!*

The Townsite Heritage Digester

The Digester is published by the Townsite Heritage Society of Powell River. It is distributed to every household and business in the Historic Townsite, current members of the Society who reside outside the Townsite, and to selected locations around Powell River. Submissions and suggestions should be sent to the attention of THS Coordinator.

Townsite Heritage Society

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We're here to help you!

Drop by the THS Office at 6211 Walnut Street, or get in touch with us at 604 483-3901 or thetownsite@shaw.ca. We have photo albums, reference books, maps, paint chips, suggestions, and a wealth of stories to share.

Hours: Tuesday to Friday, noon–4 pm.



Membership & Volunteer Form

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E-mail us at <thetownsite@shaw.ca>  [townsiteheritagesocietyofpowellriver](https://www.facebook.com/townsiteheritagesocietyofpowellriver)



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Or I can: _____

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