



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Weathering the Storm

This April will conclude my term as Chair – what an astonishing time it has been. Despite protocols that meant I could not often visit the site, meetings by ZOOM, numerous phone calls and incredible stresses in the museum sector, our amazing site weathered the storm brilliantly this year.

On behalf of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society Board of Directors, I would like to formally thank the full and part time Society staff for all their collective efforts, hard work, passion, and dedication during the past year. 2020 proved a challenge to us all on many fronts, from the site closure in March to the loss of international tourists and most of our traditional revenue sources. There has been no shortage of hurdles to overcome. The Board acknowledges that the successes of this past year, including our steady and close community supporters, the support of our members, and the new opportunities available to the Society (an updated web site and digital presence, and new Fire Suppression system for example), would truly not have been possible without the excellent work of our staff and volunteers.

We would like to especially thank our front-line staff for their continued efforts to keep each other and our visitors safe. Coping with the realities of a global pandemic was never going to be easy and all the Society Directors appreciate the work and diligence that continues every day to combat, safeguard and rise above. Your work in building education, COVID-19 safety protocols, new cleaning processes, and new interpretive offerings have kept the site a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

The Society and Parks Canada continued building our successful partnership in 2020, supporting and helping each other during these uncertain times. We are grateful for their continued support and commitment to making the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site the best place it can be. This year, the Society and Parks Canada invested in a new Interpretive Plan for the Cannery which, once implemented, will be a whole new step in our mutual journey.

To our dedicated and caring Board of Directors and committee members, I thank you for the countless hours spent in service of the Cannery. It has been an honour to work together with you and our time spent in service of our Society has been key to achieving the successes of 2020. To the volunteer core who have continued to support the Society both onsite and through alternate means, your continued contributions are appreciated and key to our success.

I am proud and privileged to have had the opportunity to serve with such an amazing group of staff and volunteers and especially our Executive Director, Stephanie Halapija. You all have made my time at the Cannery a joy.



Kit Grauer
Chair



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A Year Unlike Any Other

2020 was a year unlike any other and different than what the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society had planned for. From the arrival of COVID-19, our site closure in March, and subsequent reopening to the public in July, there have been many obstacles to overcome. As the Executive Director, I cannot express my gratitude to our staff, volunteers, and supporters enough! The triumphs we outline in this report were only possible because of all the hard work, dedication, and rising above near-impossible situations.

Every day, our front-line staff continue to make the site a safe and enjoyable place to visit for our community. Their positive energy, dedication to our mission, and commitment to our Society and the stories of our site are without compare. Our administrative staff have worked tirelessly all year, sharing roles and responsibilities to keep our programming and activities going during staffing changes and an ever-present need to adapt. I am grateful to work with all of you every day and for the support we continue to provide each other as a team.

To our dedicated Board of Directors, volunteers, and community supporters - Thank you. You have supported the Society and our Gift Shop, volunteered your time,

brought visitors to the site, and have been a foundation of strength for our staff. Your time and support during this tumultuous year has meant the world to the team.

I am excited for all the new challenges and opportunities that 2021 will bring us, and I am confident that with our Cannery Crew and supporters, our mission will move ever forward. Here is to new beginnings and the strength of our tomorrows!



Sincerely,

Stephanie Halapija
Executive Director

SOCIETY OVERVIEW

About Us

Established in 1986, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society is an independent, non-profit society and registered charity whose mission honours the importance of Canada's West Coast fishing history.

Working in partnership with Parks Canada, the Society is responsible for the operation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. The Society endeavours to interpret the history of the West Coast fishing by sharing stories of the fishing industry and communities through exhibitions, collections, programs, and events.

In 2020, the Society had over 240 active individual and corporate members. The Society's volunteer program was put on hiatus for the majority of 2020 due to the site's closure and restrictions on events and programming. We are grateful for the more than 70 volunteers who have remained registered, and especially to those who have volunteered to help on site or from home, in activities that include site cleaning, gallery attendant, gift shop, and research.

Board of Directors

ELECTED JUNE 2020

Board Chair	Kit Grauer
First Vice-Chair	Ken Flores
Second Vice-Chair	Susan Stiene
Treasurer	Elizabeth Batista
Secretary	Ryan Garnett
Past Chair	Dave Semple

DIRECTORS

Joan Bennett
Eileen Carefoot
Whitney Enns
Jim Kojima
Peter Liu
Geoff Matheson
Everett Pierce
Ralph Turner

EX OFFICIOS

National Historic Sites
Manager
Coastal B.C. Field Unit
Parks Canada



Photographs left to right: Society staff thanks Cannery volunteers during National Volunteer Week; Board Directors Ralph Turner and Jim Kojima (January 2020); Board Directors Ken Flores, Peter Liu and Elizabeth Batista with Society member Peter Scurr at the Board Appreciation Breakfast in January 2020.

2020 SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

Navigating a Pandemic

After a great start with school and group programs in early 2020, we were met with an unprecedented situation of a complete closure of on-site operations from March to June due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With limited guidance during a completely new experience for everyone in our field, business, community, country and beyond, our time working from home during the closure was spent researching, learning, planning, and coordinating. In accordance with WorkSafe BC, and as guided by the Parks Canada Visitor Services Resumption Strategy, the Society developed a COVID-19 Safety Plan to ensure the safe return to work on site for staff and volunteers.

The Cannery Crew took advantage of the rare extended closure to do a thorough cleaning of the site, exhibits, and gift shop space. Adjustments were made to enable safe social distancing and one-way passage through the site. In the front-of-house area, plexiglass shields were

installed, counters were reconfigured, and a front greeter podium was constructed to help control the limited capacity of visitors into the site. We thank volunteers Art Nishi and Jordan Doherty for their help with the construction.

The Cannery Crew took advantage of the rare extended closure to do a thorough cleaning of the site, exhibits, and gift shop space.

On July 13, the Cannery re-opened to the public. Following the orders of the Provincial Health Officer, readjustments to our public offer were made throughout the remainder of the year; we take great pride in how our staff, interpreters, and volunteers have persevered through this very challenging period, all while maintaining the same unchanging high standards of visitor experience.



Photographs left to right: Heritage Interpreter Kayley cleans the gift shop lampshades before the site re-opened in July 2020; Heritage Interpreter Tali and Audience Engagement Manager Krystal clean and re-paint salmon models for the exhibits.





Photographs from left to right, clockwise: Head Interpreter Andrea waves from behind a new plexi shield at Front Desk; the new gift shop layout with wider spaces in the aisles; volunteer Jan cleans the gift shop shelves.

GIFT SHOP REPORT

Like all aspects of our operation, the Cannery Store was greatly impacted by COVID-19 in 2020.

The shutdown robbed us of over three months of sales. Some of our biggest customers, such as tour groups and international students, disappeared overnight and have yet to return.

However, it was heartening to see members and local customers going out of their way to support our shop once we reopened in July.

While we were shut down, we added a new online store using Square, a low-cost online commerce option. This allowed us to offer some of our unique items to the world and has also become a popular way to purchase and renew memberships. The pandemic also brought new items to the store. Face masks with various First

Nations designs by local artists have proven very popular. We reconfigured the store to allow more space for social distancing. This meant assigning less space to categories most affected by the pandemic.

While we were shut down, we added a new online store using Square, a low-cost online commerce option.

We also thank the volunteers who continued assisting us with store operations and look forward to welcoming the others back once the health situation has improved.

WELCOME

Krystal Newcombe joined the Society as Audience Engagement Manager in July.

Krystal is an Ontario native, new to BC, with a background in Cultural Heritage Management. Krystal has worked with various heritage foundations, Indigenous communities, Durham Light Infantry Museum (in the UK) and the NGO Heritage for Peace.

Krystal is very passionate about heritage sites, museums, and all things Audience Engagement, including helping visitors find new connections with their personal heritage and providing a platform for diverse voices to flourish. One of her first team projects with the Society launched



in October with *Once Upon a Haunted Sea*, an incredibly successful reimagining of our Halloween event into a month-long installation. We are very excited for her continuing and future contributions to the mission of the Society and the furthering the potential of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery to inspire and educate new audiences.

INTERPRETIVE PLAN

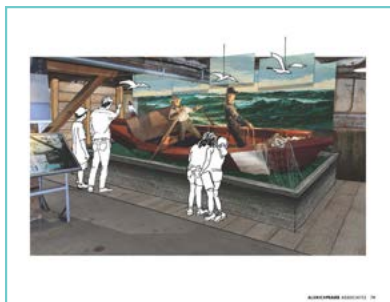
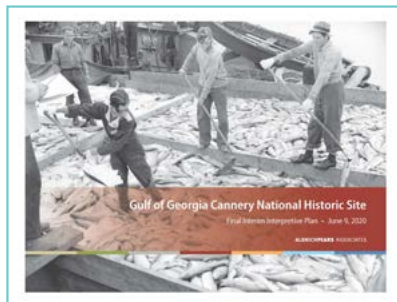
Parks Canada invested in the future of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery with the creation of a new Interpretive Plan.

A critical first step for site renewal and rejuvenation, Parks Canada staff worked with the Society's staff from the winter of 2019 to the completion of the plan in June of 2020.

Produced via contract with AldrichPears Associates, this plan outlines a total redevelopment of the Cannery's visitor experience and permanent exhibits.

The Interpretive Plan outlines the background, process, vision, and goals for the visitor experience at the Cannery, along with the design approach, implementation strategy, and next steps. The Society looks forward to working together with Parks Canada to achieve the implementation of this plan, to connect visitors to natural resources and the diverse communities that built Canada's West Coast fishing traditions and industry in exciting new ways, reaching more communities, perspectives, and stories than ever before.

Shown below: Pages from the Final Interim Interpretive Plan for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site.



PUBLIC PROGRAMS & EVENTS

From Tides to Tins exhibition

In 2019, the Society launched *From Tides to Tins: Salmon Canning in BC*—an online exhibit funded by Digital Museums Canada (formerly the Virtual Museum of Canada).

This engaging virtual exhibit uses interactive elements to share the stories and history of salmon canning on Canada's West Coast.

In 2020, the Society brought virtual to life by creating a space for our visitors to experience this online exhibition in person here at the Cannery. This new onsite exhibit space features an interactive kiosk that allows visitors to experience the website together on a big screen (even with physical distancing measures in place); colourful panels highlighting the Map, Timeline, and Working the Line sections of the website; and a fun “Cannery Manager’s Office” corner with sample questions meant to entice people to play the online “*Build Your Own Cannery*” game.



Photograph: The new *From Tides to Tins* exhibition space.

Virtual programs

The Education team worked hard to pivot our programming and offer a new learning opportunity with an online version of the popular *Machines at Work* program as we were unable to welcome school and other learning groups back to the site this year.

The new program includes an in-classroom kit of simple machines that is loaned out to school and home-learner groups, as well as a virtual workshop led by programming staff. It has been a joy bringing the Cannery to classrooms across the Lower Mainland and maintaining our commitment to education.

Originally scheduled for early May, our popular and meaningful multicultural celebration *Pull of the Net* was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, with the continued support and funding of the Port of Vancouver, the Society was able to retain the artists and performing groups originally scheduled to participate by celebrating them with a week-long online event in September. Thirteen artists, organizations, and performing groups were featured via video online for a one-week period.



Screenshots from our virtual *Pull of the Net* presentation: *Stories on Wheels* video presentation of “The Dragons Tears” (top), and artist Christine Mackenzie’s video presentation on the traditional uses and preparation of animal hides.

Holiday Installations

The Society's annual Halloween event was re-imagined into a month-long installation with a fairy-tale reboot for visitors of all ages to explore with safe distancing measures in place.

The experience led visitors through a tale into the darkest depths of the sea, to come out a hero with new knowledge and tools to help save the ocean from death by plastic monsters.

The installation proved a great success, with over 1,000 visitors over the month-long period. Due to the success of *Once Upon a Haunted Sea*, more people visited the Cannery through general admissions than in October of 2019.

The annual Steveston Festival of Trees features holiday trees decorated by local merchants and organizations. With COVID restrictions for visitation to the site, we asked voters to choose their favourite trees online and on social media, between December 1 to 24, in addition to the onsite voting available during open hours.

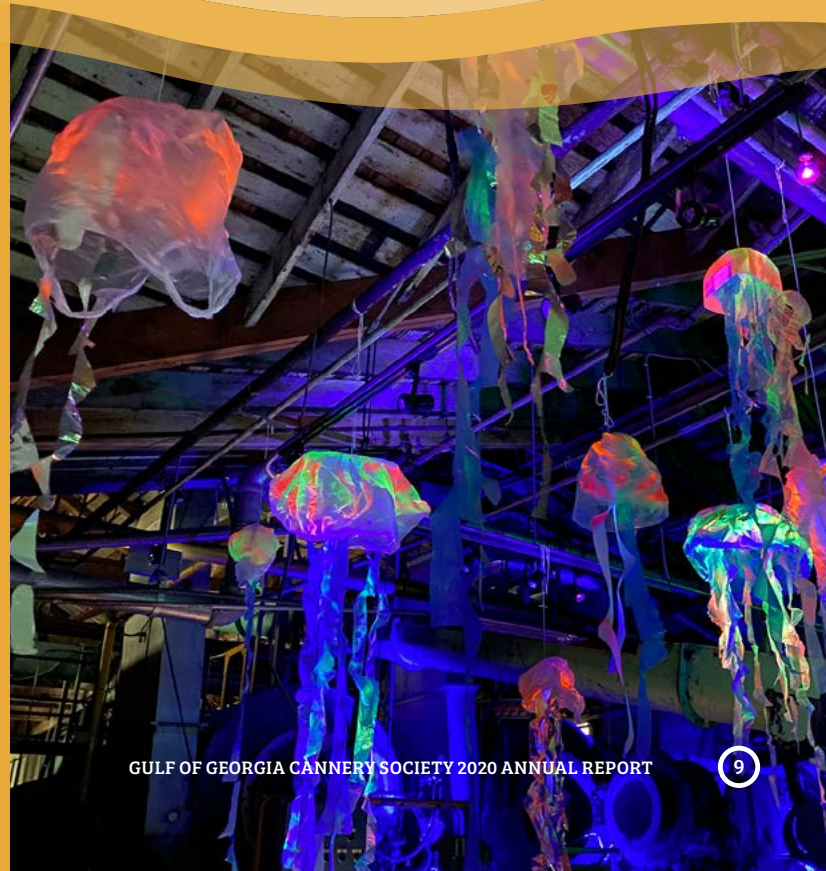
The Cannery was once again full of holiday cheer with fifteen festive trees decorated by local merchants, restaurants, and associations. The year ended with beauty, hope and light that would not have been possible without

“The year ended with beauty, hope and light that would not have been possible without the community's involvement.”

the community's involvement. The Society would like to express our gratitude to G&F Financial West Richmond Branch for sponsoring the festival this year, and to everyone who voted online and onsite.



Photographs, left to right: Trees decorated by community merchants and groups for Steveston Festival of Trees; Jellyfish made of upcycled waste materials for *Once Upon a Haunted Sea*.



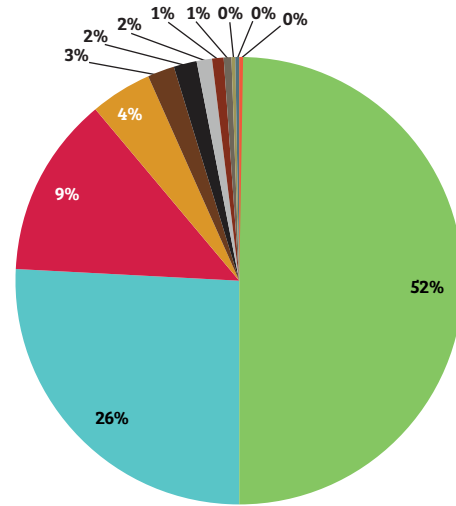
FUNDING

Overall revenue through admissions, international travel, groups (including school and special interest) as well as rentals and supplementary income dropped approximately 80% compared to 2019's revenue.

However, the fiscal challenges of this year were greatly reduced with the support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy, which allowed the Society to support our staff and work towards all our accomplishments.

Our strong Gift Shop and alternate revenue sources have also gone a long way in assisting with overall revenue loss and supporting the Society's continued operation of the Cannery.

Our partner Parks Canada has also remained an important funder for the Society and, per our contract, did not reduce any funding in 2020. Parks Canada also provided further support via three paid summer student positions. We thank them for their continued support of the Society and our team.



FUNDING

PARKS CANADA CONTRACT	\$500,000
CANADIAN EMERGENCY WAGE SUBSIDY	\$250,626
GIFT SHOP SALES	\$85,507
GENERAL ADMISSIONS	\$40,215
PARKING/RENTAL	\$29,466
OTHER REVENUE	\$23,130
GRANTS	\$15,000
SPONSORSHIPS	\$10,500
GROUP ADMISSIONS	\$9,133
MEMBERSHIPS	\$4,178
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$1,801
DONATIONS	\$664
\$970,220	

2020 SUPPORTERS

GRANTORS

Province of British Columbia, Government of Canada – Canada Summer Jobs Program and New Horizons for Seniors Program

SPONSORS

G&F Financial West Richmond Branch, Port of Vancouver

MEDIA SPONSORS

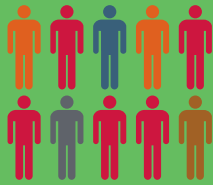
Steveston Insider, Tourism Richmond

DONORS

Ron Hyde, Jack Dlugan, Anne & Ed Ikeda, Tomoko Kakehi

2020 IN REVIEW

2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges. Yet we are grateful for the successes that we were able to celebrate despite the difficult year. Here are some highlights.



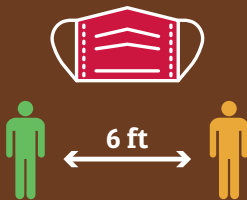
MORE THAN 11,000 ADMISSIONS

Despite a 3-month closure, cancellation of all group bookings and special events, over 11,000 visitors – many of whom were locals who discovered the site for the first time – visited the Cannery.



50+ NEW SOCIETY MEMBERS

Many local families became new Society members and repeat visitors to the site.



2 COVID-FRIENDLY INSTALLATIONS

Special events were cancelled this year, but two of our annual celebrations were re-imagined with COVID-safe protocols and were welcomed by the local community.



1 NEW ONLINE PROGRAM

With no on-site school programs allowed, the Society swiftly created a virtual option, much to the appreciation of the schools which had previously enjoyed field trips to our site.



#1 NEIGHBOURHOOD IN METRO VANCOUVER

Steveston Village came out on top in a fun competition among 192 municipalities gathering the most votes online as “Best Neighbourhood.” The historic sites of Steveston and our waterfront location were considered major factors in the win.

LOOKING FORWARD

2021 will be a year of ongoing change and continuously moving parts. However, the Society is excited to continue the important work outlined in our 2020 Strategic Plan.

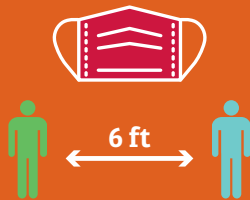
Despite the inability to predict growth in visitor numbers and other traditional annual plan goals, there is a lot to look forward to as we embark on a new year.

From new educational offerings, continuing to build on past successful events, redefining the visitor experience in our site, and a new exhibition, there is much to look forward to in 2021 for the Society, our site, and our community.



ONE NEW EXHIBITION

Waves of Innovation: Stories from the West Coast



TWO COVID-19 SAFE 'EVENTS'

With the continuation of Once Upon a Haunted Sea and Festival of Trees



ONE NEW SCHOOL PROGRAM



SUSTAIN VISITATION AT 2020 LEVELS



SUSTAIN OUR GIFT SHOP SALES AT 2020 LEVELS



Photograph this page: View of the Cannery from Steveston Harbour
Annual Report cover: Tanabe + Photography



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