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Grand old lady suffers lack of suitors

By DEE FITTON

She has been around for a long time, but the grand old lady of the Burnaby Art Gallery is suffering from a lack of suitors. The gallery, which opened in 1964, has had a long and successful career, but its membership has been declining steadily over the years. In 1987, the gallery had only 135 members, a far cry from the 300 members it had in 1980. The gallery's director, Roger Boulet, says that the decline is due to a number of factors, including the fact that the gallery is located in a less desirable area than many other art galleries in the city.

But time has taken its toll. When the gallery was first established, she was one of only three on the Lower Mainland. Now, several communities have galleries of their own. New galleries, with sprinkler systems, humidity controls and high fire standards. Although the BAA kept her core of supporters, but failed to attract new members. That's what worries BAAO director Roger Boulet.

On cold days, he leaves his office on the backside of the gallery, goes to his car and turns on the heater. Sometimes as many as seven or eight of the gallery shows were on the roll. But time has taken its toll. When the gallery was first established, she was one of only three on the Lower Mainland. Now, several communities have galleries of their own. New galleries, with sprinkler systems, humidity controls and high fire standards.

"It's the only way I can keep my feet warm," he said. On another recent morning, he found a refugee from the deserted third floor of the gallery in his office. "It's a little scary to walk into your office in the morning and find a bat in your out-basket," he said. "And there are rumors this place is haunted. Several people have told me they've actually seen old Mrs. Ceperley walking around the house."



MEMBERSHIPS... at the Burnaby Art Gallery haven't kept up with the times



HERITAGE VILLAGE... Dash the lack of Sober sets the holiday spirit with a welcoming Christmas wreath

Assessment Act change worries tax collector

With a few perturbed words in B.C. Assessment Act could now provide a means for the province to raise more money. The proposed change was introduced by a B.C. Court of Appeal in September that a section of the Assessment Act is inoperative and that no portion of an incomplete structure can be assessed for taxes until the building is finished.

Several major Burnaby developments now under construction are slated for completion in 1984. A bill by the tax exempt cities Victoria changes the act, he said. Among them is the multi-million-dollar Quince development on Canada Way, the Project 200 housing enclave in Simon Fraser Hills (which will be ready for occupancy by next spring) and the \$20-million Polygon building which will house the Greater Vancouver Regional District headquarters in Metrotown.

"The government has a stake in the matter since it collects school taxes through property assessments and could stand to lose as much as \$75 million if the act isn't amended." "These are building values that would have gone on the roll but they're coming off because of the court case," Twining said. The total amount of property affected won't be known until the revision is completed at the end of this month, he added.

Program in danger

The head of the psychiatric nursing program at the B.C. Institute of Technology says she fears that the program is in danger. The program, which was established in 1975, has been facing a decline in enrollment over the years. The head of the program, Mary Nevan, says that the program is in danger because of a number of factors, including the fact that the program is located in a less desirable area than many other programs in the city.

BCIT allows us a fair degree of flexibility," she said. "We admit students twice a year and that gives a steady flow into jobs. It also permits us to run smaller classes with more specialty teachers." "We can enroll in August. No one minds. If students fail a term, they can repeat it right away, so

should stay at BCIT because this institution has a commitment to meet the needs of the industry. Colleges tend to meet the needs of students. A move right now would be inopportune." As well, Nylen said Douglas College ran a similar program in the past, but it was cancelled by a lack of enrollment and by attrition. "BCIT allows us a fair degree of flexibility," she said. "We admit students twice a year and that gives a steady flow into jobs. It also permits us to run smaller classes with more specialty teachers."

Firemen worry over cutbacks

By DEE FITTON

Burnaby firefighters are so worried about budget cutbacks, they have dug deep in their own pockets spending almost \$8,000 to advertise their services. A glossy, two-color pamphlet was plunked on the doorstep of every Burnaby household last week, explaining just what firefighters do, listing the number of emergency calls handled and reminding citizens that fire services are paid for with taxpayers' money.

Weyen Brassington, vice-president of the Burnaby Firefighters Association, said members are deeply concerned about cutbacks. He said rumors have been circulating about a possible 25 per cent cutback in staff. Four men were lost to the department through attrition last year and were not replaced, Brassington said. "The bottom line is that it means there's one less man at every building fire," he said.

It's the first few minutes which are crucial in fighting fires, he said, and fewer men may mean the difference between losing a building or saving it. "It takes six able-bodied men to raise a 50-foot ground ladder for a three-storey building," he said. "We feel the fire department has developed over the years as a result of direct need. We can't afford to be restricted or cut back."

Ald Doreen Lawson, who is council liaison to the fire department, said no cutbacks are planned unless firemen demand wage increases. Ald Don Brown said rumors of large reductions in staff probably stem from a fire study three months ago. The study, chaired by Lawson, pointed to duplication of services by firefighters and ambulances. But Brown said the study was sent back for more information and is "probably a dead issue."

Brassington said firemen are concerned people aren't calling them first in medical emergencies. He said Burnaby is served by six firehalls which provide a three to four minute response time in most areas of the municipality. Firefighters receive yearly training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and are able to provide life-support to patients until an ambulance arrives, he said.

If the public isn't calling the fire department first, who are they calling? That's a sore point with firemen, although Brassington wouldn't comment on it. But New Westminster deputy fire chief Jack Fulton said Burnaby firemen were miffed when an ambulance answered a call from a senior citizens' residence across the street from the Edmonds fire hall earlier this year. Several of the seniors tore a strip off the firemen for not coming to their aid, "but of course, they couldn't help, if they didn't get the call," Fulton said.

Christmas Bureau strikes full gear

The elderly gentleman carries the treacle and doll buggy into the bustling Burnaby Christmas Bureau office and smiles at the reception. They are thrilled to see him. "We have a little girl whose mother said she wanted a doll buggy more than anything else," bureau coordinator Lil Wood tells the man.

He explains that he found it in the shed of a woman he had gone to see about a carpet sweeper. "It was pretty dirty and moldy, but I thought I could clean it up and bring it to you," he says. There isn't a trace of dirt or mold on the buggy now. It's navy blue plastic shines like new. But he refuses to tell us his name. "I didn't do it for that. It's enough for me to think of the look on the faces of the children Christmas morning."

The man is just one of numerous Burnaby individuals, groups, churches and businesses who each year donate food, clothes, toys and money to the bureau which then distributes them to low income families. The motorcycle toy run held by Vancouver's 13 motorcycle touring clubs last week added 500 new toys to the bureau's Christmas bag, Wood explains. Wood, who's headed the bureau for seven years now, has a crew of 30 to 40 volunteers to help sort and distribute the gifts.

Daon plans huge project

Burnaby never liked being just a corridor to the rest of the Lower Mainland, and now a major developer is going to help it build a "downtown" identity. Mayor Bill Lewarne said Thursday. Daon Development Corp. plans a massive facelift for Burnaby's Metrotown. The project, costing as much as \$450 million, may include new stores, offices and residential towers by the next century, Dewar said.

First phase of the project would involve re-development of the Kelly Douglas property with 150 million worth of commercial and office space, the mayor said. It would be completed by 1987. Part of Daon's plan for the first phase calls for a department store complex similar to the Eaton's Centre in Toronto. "It will be a beautiful domed structure that connects by skyway with the Metrotown ATRI station," Lewarne said.

"It's pretty darn exciting. We'll have a downtown identity where now we've been living on shopping centres," Lewarne said. "Burnaby will finally be considered a city instead of just a corridor—everybody passes through twice a day." Plans for redevelopment of major Metrotown parcels have been stalled by the slumping economy, but the prospect of rapid transit access and an improving business climate have revived developer interest, Lewarne said.