

Engineers initiate drive for Alaska Highway honor

MM 24, 1995

Want road designated as international historic landmark

DAVID CLEMENTS
Sterling News Service

Dawson Creek

construct it," said Ken Johnson, of the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering (CSCE).

"That, combined with where it was constructed, going into a region that was almost totally uninhabited, and thirdly, the maintenance of that construction make it worthy of a nomination hands down," he added.

The CSCE and its southern counterpart, the American Society for Civil Engineering call themselves "learned societies", Johnson said.

Their purpose is to keep civil engineers abreast of innovations in their field.

Construction

Construction of the Alaska Highway to support the Allied war effort began March 3, 1942, and was completed just over eight months later on November 15.

There are 133 bridges and 8,000 culverts built on the route. More than 27,000 U.S. army engineers and Canadian civilians built the highway as a supply route to Alaska.

The engineering societies have dedicated 20 international projects as landmarks.

These include the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, the Panama Canal and the White Pass and Yukon Railway.

The nomination will have to be approved by the history committees and the boards of both societies.

Should the Alaska Highway be honored, plaques will be placed in Fairbanks, Alaska, and in Dawson Creek.

The Alaska Highway could soon be recognized as an engineering feat on par with the Eiffel Tower and the Panama Canal.

Two groups of engineers have nominated the 2,446-kilometre-long route, built in less than a year, to be named as an international historic civil engineering landmark.

Time-frame

"I think what really sets it apart was the time-frame it took to

Festival

a success

ESTHER OOSTERBAAN

For the Alaska Highway News

Fort St. John

MAY 19, 1995

The Peace River North Festival held in Fort St. John in April was a great success. Lots of talented students from all over our area — and some from even further away — played, sung and danced to their hearts' content. The level of some of these young performers is truly astounding.

Here are the results of the music section of the festival:

Strings — Special Achievement Awards: Michael Dickout and Max Thompson. Recommended to participate in the B.C. Festival of the Arts: Joscelyn Hannaford (competitor) and Michael Dickout (observer). Adjudicator was Mrs. Sarah Woodman from the Prince George Symphony.

Winds — Special Achievement Awards: Vanessa Fallin (flute) and Stephen Koshurba (oboe). Both were also recommended to compete in the B.C. Festival of the Arts. Adjudicator was Mr. Lann Lieurance from Dawson Creek.

Voice — Special Achievement Awards: Ashley Okrainec and Hannah Berg. Recommended to compete in the B.C. Festival of the Arts: Stephen Barradell and Mallory Smith. Adjudicator was Donna Thiessen from Fort St. John.

Piano — Bach/Baroque Class Awards: Penny Block (Junior); Wendy Giesbrecht (Senior).
Classical/Sonatina Awards: Jesse Irvine (Junior); Ailene Iloreta and Kristy Fallin (Senior).

20th Century/Canadian Class A: Krista Francoeur (Junior); Justin Best (Senior).

Concert Class Award: Jillian Best (Junior); David Thiessen (Senior).

Romantic/Impressionistic Class A: David Thiessen.

Duet Class Award: Jillian Best and Kristy Kop.

Popular/Gospel Class Award: Tina Elias Bertrim and Jillian Best.

Quick Study/Sight Reading Award: Jared Giesbrecht.

Adjudicator's Awards: Kristy Koop and Kirsten Pedersen (Junior); Josh Lam (Intermediate); Rebecca Lam (Senior).

Recommended to compete in the B.C. Festival of the Arts: Rebecca Lam and David Thiessen.

Adjudicator was Mrs. Carmen Bartell from Grande Prairie.



FUN FOR ALL —

MAR 24, 1995

Peace Gallery North volunteer Samantha Godwin removes some of the local art work by area children who participated in the Kids Fun For All competition. The next exhibit to be displayed at the gallery is called Images and Objects and includes local work selected to compete in the juried Images and Objects art show later this year in Kamloops.

Museum fundraising targets upgrade

FORT ST. JOHN (Staff) — The North Peace Historical Society has launched a full scale fundraising drive in the hopes of raising the nearly \$1.3 million needed for the Fort St. John—North Peace Museum expansion.

The society currently has \$175,231 banked towards the expansion project which has a projected budget of \$1.3 million.

In an effort to breath new life into the fundraising effort, the society has recently hired a consultant to promote and raise money for the project.

Fundraising projects currently on tap include a drop-in bingo April 2, annual yard sale June 17 and pancake breakfast during the North Peace Fall Fair from July 28-30.

MAR 20, 1995

In addition, the society and Peace Gallery North are also hosting the British Columbia Museum Association conference this September under the theme "Town and Country. Issues Facing Rural and Urban Museums."

Specific topics haven't been confirmed, but may include funding museums in the '90s and political correctness at the expense of historical fact.



DAZZLING DANCE —

The Northern Dance Theatre dazzled the audience Friday and Saturday night with the presentation of Extravaganza '95. In this colorful number from Walt Disney's Aladdin all 47 dance students participated. Members from Northern Dance Theatre will compete in the Peace River North Festival later this week.

Fort St. John on the leading edge with Cultural Centre

Imagine a quaint street, one that you and some friends "discovered" by accident one day. You have returned many times because it's so enjoyable to stroll along the sidewalk taking in the special atmosphere. It's a picturesque street, you agree, with unique shops and a flavor all its own.

Imagine what it would feature. Perhaps some trees or shrubs would be scattered about, with a few benches strategically placed along the walkways.

There might be a theatre, an art gallery, and a bookstore (a used one might be more interesting).

Some rooms would be rented out to teachers of art, dance and similarly creative pursuits, while other facilities would draw merchants and politicians to forums of discussion and debate.

Of course, there would have to be a sidewalk cafe where all could gather to talk, argue or just rest and observe.

Sound delightful?

Would it surprise you to know that we have just such a "street" in Fort St. John?

It's called the North Peace Cultural Centre and while it's all under one roof, it really does resemble a quaint little street.

It takes some imagination but the potted trees are there, as are the benches.

The theatre is magnificent, the meeting rooms are constantly in use, and the gallery draws some

Publisher's Notebook



BRUCE LANTZ

very fine exhibits. Special events happen there frequently.

The library is just like a bookstore (except you can read without buying) and The Cultured Cafe is really a sidewalk bistro, complete with tables and chairs out where the "sidewalk" might be.

If this seems an odd way of looking at things, so be it. But being new to an area means you can look at things in new ways, with a unique perspective.

At the same time it's possible to "discover" things that local folks sometimes take for granted.

One of those things just might be our Cultural Centre.

After a start hindered by some controversy, the Cultural Centre is going great guns.

More and more people are taking in the library, art gallery, theatre, meeting rooms, cafe and a wealth of recreational classes offered by this dynamic facility.

It is being used by arts groups, schools, charitable groups, industry, government and families.

Even a wedding was held in the centre's theatre recently.

Manager Ian Forsyth says

centres which combine facilities in this manner will "become the norm, not the exception" in the future, and he's right.

Land is precious, space is at a premium and money is hard to come by.

Communities seeking economic efficiencies and not wishing to waste precious land are beginning to understand the wisdom of housing several compatible facilities under one roof.

In this sense Fort St. John is on the leading edge.

We have a facility which is the envy of much larger communities and one we should use with pride.

But more to the point, the North Peace Cultural Centre is rapidly becoming the hub of this city and those who do not make use of it are missing the boat.

The centre is now nearly booked to capacity, with something going on there virtually all the time.

And they are planning well ahead, with the gallery, for example, booking exhibits now for 1997.

As the reputation of this first-class facility grows, the calibre of performers and artists it draws will grow too.

So, as seen through the eyes of a relative newcomer, the centre has much to offer - through the day, at night or on weekends.

It's an asset to the community and to the region, and if you haven't dropped in to check it out, you're really missing something.

See you there.
Oct 2, 1995

Bruce Lantz is the publisher of the Alaska Highway News.

Cultural Centre focus of attention at conference

FORT ST. JOHN (Staff) — Fort St. John's own cultural centre was the focus of attention at one of Friday's sessions of the British Columbia Museums Association conference held here last week.

The centre, which is home to the library, an art gallery, theatre, meeting rooms and recreational classes, was held up as a model for the future.

"The idea of combining facilities will become the norm not the exception," said North Peace Cultural Centre manager Ian Forsyth.

Having "everything under one roof" is one of the strengths of the centre, he added. "It prevents a lot of duplication and we get a lot of cross pollination."

The different facilities within the

building often work together to present programs to the community as well, added Forsyth.

For example, the library and gallery are currently presenting a German Days event which includes films, art and other activities.

The centre is used by a variety of arts' groups, schools, charitable groups, the gas and oil sector, various levels of government, families and more.

The centre has become as much a community centre as it is a cultural centre, said Forsyth.

Despite the controversy which



surrounded the building of the facility (two failed referendums) just about everyone within the community will use the centre at some

point or other.

"We still have people who refuse to walk through the doors but they're getting fewer and fewer".

"My philosophy is, there is no easy was to get these sort of building done. There is no easy birth," said Forsyth.

Another strength of the centre is its ability to "demystifies the word

culture, people don't think of it as elitist."

One weakness of the centre is its design.

"Right now we are at capacity. It's difficult to expand. Now that we are splitting at the seams what do we do? ...I have no answer for that," said Forsyth.

The BCMA conference attracted about 100 people to the centre for the conference.

The annual event, which wound up Saturday, attracted about 90 people from across the province.

Many of the participants had praise for the conference and the centre.

The conference was co-ordinated by Peace Gallery North and the Fort St. John - North Peace Historical Society. SEPT 25, 1995

Museums conference begins today

ANNA MILLIGAN
Staff Writer

Fort St. John

Eleven very diverse and dedicated people make up the council of the British Columbia Museums Association.

Their expertise comes from small galleries such as Peace Gallery North to large institutions such as the B.C. Royal Museum.

Together with the BC Museums Association secretariat they provide everything from advocacy to education and training for the museum and gallery community.

This week the BC Museums Association is holding its annual meeting at the North Peace Cultural Centre.

"The BCMA has been around since 1957. We have a very strong

foundation that's stood the test of time," said president Buddy Williams.

The council is very pro-active and very focused, added Williams.

Although today is the first day of the conference the council met all day Tuesday to discuss their goals and objectives.

Today in pre-conference training the public and BCMA members will participate in a discussion called Perceptions and Persuasion which will feature a panel of distinguished guests.

Thursday morning students from across School District 60 can learn



TOWN & COUNTRY:
ISSUES FACING RURAL
AND URBAN MUSEUMS
IN THE '90'S.

about career opportunities from representatives from the BCMA.

At noon Bill Barlee, Minister of Small Business, Tourism and Culture is scheduled to speak to the association.

President Buddy Williams will open the conference at 1:30 at the NPCC and at 2:30 p.m. the opening plenary will feature Ken Mather of the O'Keefe Historical Ranch who will talk about small institutions.

Other sessions Thursday include

Funding in the Future and Crossing the Line.

Artist Herbert Siebner will make his keynote address at 7:30 p.m.

A VIP reception will follow at Peace Gallery North with the opening of the Siebner exhibit.

Anyone from the public is invited to participate in the BCMA conference, said Williams. Registration is held daily the cultural centre at 8:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Half-day registrations are available for \$45 and a person can sign up on-site.

"This community is very supportive in bringing us here," said Williams giving praise to program chair April Ingham from Peace Gallery North. Donna Kylo from the local Museum acted as Local Arrangements Chair for the five-day conference and members of the community served on the Conference Committee.

SEPT 20, 1995

Nagler performs for kids and parents

ANNA MILLIGAN
Staff Writer

Fort St. John

Eric Nagler might be known as a children's performer but he feels a desire to make his show as much fun for the parents as for the little ones.

"A lot of entertainers play just for the kids. I felt there was an audience there, an entire audience that I have a responsibility to entertain, including the parents," said Nagler.

The 'family' entertainer will be on stage Wednesday night at the North Peace Cultural Centre for one show only beginning at 7 p.m.

There are less than 100 tickets left and it is expected those remaining tickets will sell quickly.

If you are coming to the show be prepared for a party. Nagler

encourages everyone to bring along their own instruments, homemade or otherwise. If you don't have any grab a couple spoons from the kitchen cupboard.

Nagler is know for a program he developed called "Home Made Music" which was used in schools and libraries throughout the 1970s. The Canadian entertainer even has a home video called "Making Music With Eric" which shows parents and children how to build and play homemade instruments.

He is also a studio musician who specializes in unconventional instruments including the carpenter's saw, washtub bass and his own



Eric Nagler

invention called the "Sewer Phone". He also plays some more conventional instruments such as the banjo, mandolin, autoharp and fiddle.

He's also a TV star. He appears regularly on The Elephant Show along with Sharon, Lois and Bram and he has his own weekly show Eric's World.

Last week he began the "long tour" of the year which started with a breakfast TV show in Calgary. He will be coming to Fort St. John from Prince George and his north western tour will include a few other centre such as Edmonton and Slave Lake. He expects to be home in early October.

SEP 19, 1995



contributed photo

LIGHT-UP —

The above children are among the many who came out to the North Peace Cultural Centre on Saturday to take part in the centre's annual Christmas Tree light up. During the preceding week, children and adults had been invited to help decorate the tree by dropping by with a store-bought or hand-made decoration. *Dec 19, 1995*

School district bands excel in Christmas Concert

Three hundred members, ranging from Grade 6 students to adults, came together on Tuesday evening in the North Peace Secondary gym for the annual Christmas concert.

The four concert bands, Beginning, Advanced, Junior and Senior are directed at their different levels by instructors at the three secondary schools. Monika MacKenzie (Dr. Kearney), Bruce Johnson (Bert Bowes) and Linda Langille (North Peace) teach, encourage and work with the 300 members of the district band. However, there is more to the education of the students than learning the mechanics of their chosen instruments.

"The students undergo a comprehensive program," said Bruce Johnson, School District 60 Band Coordinator. "It's quite extensive. They learn theory, ear training, and listen to quality music from different cultures and historical periods. We're not just teaching the technique of playing."

Included in the three hundred members are more than twenty

community adults who participate in all band levels. "Music is a lifetime skill," said Johnson, "not just something to make school more fun."

In addition to the local concerts the District Band will hold during the 1995-96 year, including the district tour in March, the Junior band will travel to Vancouver in April. The group of 80 musicians will be performing for the Annual B.C. School Trustees Association Conference. Our district's band is the only one to be performing at this event.

Unfortunately, Johnson feels the facilities available have not kept pace with the bands' growth and increasing skills. "The facilities are poor, especially with the number of kids," Johnson said.

However, despite cramped facilities, all four bands gave a tremendous performance Tuesday night. The North Peace gym was crowded with proud parents and other community members who turned for the annual Christmas concert.



Tania Wilson photo

CHRISTMAS CONCERT —

The Junior Band French Horn players, conducted by Bruce Johnson, were among many young participants in the Christmas Concert at North Peace Secondary School on Tuesday evening.

DEC 6, 1995

Museum display area will nearly double when expansion complete

TANIA WILSON

For the Alaska Highway News

Fort St. John

The need for a new expanded museum facility in Fort St. John is becoming crucial, as the North Peace Historical Society is suffering a severe shortage in space.

The plans for the expanded museum provide for a nearly doubled display area. There will be 11,000 square feet of floor area added to the museum in the form of a two story building. There will be provision for further expansion when it becomes necessary.

By increasing the display area, many items currently in storage will be on display. This will lessen the need for storage space. The Historical Society has been forced to store items in approximately five locations around the city, because of the shortage of space, according to Museum curator, Donna Kylo.

"There are many people who are holding onto items that are not part of the museum collection because we have no room to store them," said Historical Society President, Larry Evans.

Construction of the new museum is estimated to cost \$1.5 million, said Evans. From ground breaking to completing the landscaping, it should take six months to construct, once the funds have been raised.

Once the museum is completed, Kylo anticipates that she will need only one additional part-time employee to assist her.

The Historical Society is still seeking letters of support from the community for the project. These letters would be very helpful in securing a BC21 grant from the provincial government.

"We would like BC21 to grant us one-third of the bottom line cost," said Evans.

"We have received only eight

letters of support so far," said Donna Kylo. "And those are from the larger organizations such as the Regional District and City Council."

BC21 is a body attached to the provincial government which provides grants for public enterprises such as the expansion and construction of recreation facilities, museums and playgrounds. The Historical Society hopes to use this grant to begin its expansion, based on the architectural plans.

The Fort St. John Chamber of Commerce and Tourist Information Centre are presently located in the museum building. Trudy Eklund, Executive Manager of the Chamber of Commerce, said they have not made any decisions about the Chamber's future location, whether they will still be located in the museum building or not, once the expansion is completed.

Benefit concert should be a success

JAN 20, 1995

JACK PHILPOT
for the Alaska Highway News

Fort St. John

As often as people complain that it's difficult to be famous in one's home town, the folks in Fort St. John set about disproving the lament.

The upcoming Darren Almond Memorial Travel Foundation benefit concert featuring Due North with Peter Priebe and special guests Wendy and the Bugs with James Oldenberg in addition to extra special guest Nolan Murray from Branson, Missouri gives every indication of being a huge success.

Presented by the Alaska Highway News, Cable 10 and CKNL Radio, the concert goal is to add about \$1000 to the Foundation's coffers.

Two and a half dollars from every ticket sold will go directly to the Almond group and a full house will guarantee a nice paycheque for the locally based charity.

The brainchild of local entertainer Peter Priebe, the benefit follows on the heels of a

similar event which featured Tom Cole and his band Cole Cole Heart just prior to Christmas.

"Nolan Murray is such an incredible talent," says Priebe, "that when he agreed to fly in to help with the album we're recording as Due North out at Moberly Sound with James Oldenberg...well it was an opportunity we just couldn't pass up. Originally our plan was to record 12 bluegrass standards for sale at the festivals we've been playing at, on CD and cassette, but that might change because Nolan has at

least two more songs he has written and thinks we can use. I recorded two of Nolan's country pieces on the mini-album I did a couple of years ago in Donnie Thompson's studio in Langley. He's a very good writer and he has

lots of connections all over the place...he's got sessions credits with everybody, I think, including Pat Conroy and Gary Fjellgaard."

The country and bluegrass concert is set for Jan. 28 and tickets are on sale at the box office at the Cultural Centre.

Pete Priebe has quite a following in Fort St. John but not many fans know much about his current work with Due North.

Rusty Trask is a superb banjo picker and an excellent singer while old time fiddler Allan Berge lends an interesting touch to the group along side mandolinist Bill Luciw. Newcomer Jim Zwick plays a mean Martin guitar and Priebe is an accomplished stand up bass man.

Priebe's vocal talents make Due North quite special.

As good as these bluegrassers may be, they are pedestrian when compared to Nolan Murray and guitarist James Oldenberg.

Either one is worth double the \$14 ticket and should not be missed.

**The
Upcoming
... benefit
concert...
gives every
indication of
being a huge
success**



CULTURAL COOKIN' —

Participants in the ArtSpace Japanese cooking class learned from the very best — students from Japan attending Northern Lights College. Kentaro Kojima, left, and Michiko Oguma prepare a traditional dish using cabbage and shrimp called Okonomi - Yaki. The cooking classes are held Mondays at North Peace Senior Secondary School.



FRENCH FUN —

Tania Wilson photo

French actor and magician Marc Tardif visited and entertained French students at North Peace Secondary School Friday. The Quebec City resident travels all over Canada performing, but this was his first visit to Fort St. John.

NOV 20, 1995

LOCAL

ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS, FORT ST. JOHN, B.C.

Theatre students need building space

FORT ST. JOHN — The musical theatre class at NPSS is gearing up for this season's production of South Pacific which will open at the Cultural Centre Dec. 1. This is the same group that performed Oklahoma, Fiddler on the Roof and My Fair Lady, which played to packed houses in recent years.

By way of preparation, the group of students, including two stagecraft classes, is in immediate need of a space to build, hammer, paint, saw and generally build the show.

The space could be an empty warehouse, truck bay, store, garage,

or any other large space.

The NPSS musical theatre group is seeking responses from the community. They require the space as soon as possible and would be finished no later than Nov. 25. The classes would have to access the space during school hours and possibly on weekends, always under teacher supervision.

If anyone has a space to offer or can provide any assistance, please contact Daniel Vecchio at North Peace Senior Secondary, 785-4429 and leave your name and number.

SEPT 18, 1995

— Contributed



PROUD DANCERS —

The North Peace Highland Dancers, taught by Jennifer Lindsay, pose with their winnings from the Prince George Dance Festival. Sixteen dancers won a total of 55 medals, seven trophies and six scholarships over the two-day festival.

*(Photo submitted)
APR 7, 1995*

Artists work depicts North Peace

1995

ANNA MILLIGAN
Staff Writer

Fort St. John

Four local artists' impressions of the North Peace will be on display at Peace Gallery North next week.

Symphony of Color II will open Monday night featuring the work of Susan Wuthrich, Beth Ardill, Helen Smith and Ethel Rutledge.

The artists have many things in common, including a love of art and a passion for this corner of the country, yet each has their own unique style.

All are self-taught and have been painting for a number of years. Three of the four artists were part of a similar show two years ago called *Symphony of Color*.

This year's show will include a number of paintings of the Peace River which are always popular.

"We can't keep up with the demand," said Wuthrich.

Each admits the beauty of this country is what inspires them. Each has a particular passion whether it's the colors of the fall season, the delicate flowers of spring, or the overwhelming beauty of the sunrise or sunset.

Besides their passion for painting the four friends have more in common.

"We've all lived here all or most of our lives," said Wuthrich.

"And we're all basically farm people."



This abstract painting by Helen Smith, left to right, Beth Ardill, Ethel Rutledge and Susan Wuthrich will be for sale by silent auction at the opening of Symphony of Color II Monday night at Peace Gallery North. The four artists will have a variety of landscape and wildlife paintings on display from June 12 to July 7 at the gallery.

Ardill and Wuthrich are mother and daughter and Smith and Rutledge have been friends with them for many years.

On opening night the foursome will hold a silent auction for a special piece of art they created

together. The abstract work bursts with color and holds many images within its frame. There will also be four door prizes of four separate paintings, one by each artist.

The open house will begin at

7:30 p.m. and everyone is invited. Visitors will get a chance to meet with all of the artists but one. Wuthrich will be travelling south to visit her first ever grandchild — another source of inspiration perhaps?

DOP