

# Langley Heritage Society

{Winter 2017}

Langley Heritage Society  
P.O. Box 982  
Fort Langley, B.C.  
V1M 2S3

*"Providing the window into the past to preserve Langley's heritage for today and tomorrow"*

## President's Message - Winter 2017 {By Fred Pepin}

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and that the New Year will bring good health, happiness and less conflict.

To cancel our traditional Douglas Day dinner was a difficult decision, but ticket sales did not satisfy the expectations of the caterer. We will be consulting with our members for your views on planning another event during the winter time period.

I will be doing the annual Murrayville Bus Tour for the Langley Centennial Museum on February 20. If you or a friend wish to join us, please phone the Museum at 604-532-3536 for tickets.

This past November 11, the Langley Heritage Society participated in the ceremonies at all four of the cenotaphs in the City and Township.

We are sponsoring students from seven Langley schools, paying for admission and transportation to the Museum. This initiative is very popular and is helping to raise awareness and attendance at the Museum.

In co-operation with the schools and the Museum, the Society sponsored the first Heritage Fair in Langley last spring. We were encouraged by the enthusiasm and quality of the entries, and will be continuing our sponsorship this year.

We hope the wintery conditions we have experienced lately will not deter you from attending our monthly meeting at Milner.

Fred Pepin  
LHS President

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## Want to Know More?

Langley Heritage Society  
is now online!

Go to [www.langleyheritage.ca](http://www.langleyheritage.ca)  
for society news, membership  
information, photographs, project  
updates, and more.

To contact the LHS, please email us  
at: [info@langleyheritage.ca](mailto:info@langleyheritage.ca)

# Looking at Langley History: Pihl Family Of Aldergrove {By Maureen Pepin}

A creamery in Denmark was the site of a romance that had a deep impact on a settlement half way around the world. Morris Rasmus Hanson-Pihl was the youngest son of a Danish family. Danish tradition decrees that the youngest son should take the mother's maiden name, which was Pihl. Morris, born on September 5, 1875, met Christina Jensen in the creamery where he was a steam engineer, and married her in 1900. By 1906, the Pihl family had grown to six and so emigration seemed a chance to better their lot. Christina's oldest brother Fred, a stevedore, lived in Bellingham, Washington, and he invited the Pihl family to come to stay with him. The family bought 80 acres on LeFeuvre Road. Morris found work at Aldergrove's Fernridge Cedar Shingle Mill as a steam engineer, while Christina stayed home, oversaw the farming, and tended her family of ten children - Alfred, Marie, Harvey, Mabel, Olaf, Morris, Axel, Dan, Margaret, and Ester.

Forty acres of adjoining land was bought and logged with four ox teams, the logs being hauled to the Aldergrove Mill. It would sometimes take two cases of stumping powder to split one of the giant Douglas fir tree stumps. The trees were so large that one tree would supply all the fuel for the family for the winter.

The family had a large garden, eight or nine cows, rabbits, and a chicken barn for 200 Leghorn chickens for eggs. They sold milk, butter, and home-made bread via the New Westminster Market. Morris was chairman of the Fraser Valley Milk Producers Association. They also shipped shingle bolts via the BC Electric to New Westminster. Morris became the first mail carrier in the Aldergrove area in 1913.

Christina developed blood poisoning in 1917 and spent some time in the hospital in Lynden, while the thirteen and fourteen year old sons looked after the household. In 1932, Christina contracted smallpox and died. Morris rented out the farm and went to live with his son Alfred in New Westminster. He died in 1962.

Alfred Pihl was born in 1901 in Denmark and moved to Aldergrove in 1908. Exciting events from his early days included observing the burning of a Hindu neighbour and visiting the Sikh temple in Abbotsford. When Mr. Dragan was lost on a hunting trip, the neighbours and the older boys went out in parties to look for him. When they found him, his body was laid out in William's machine shop and guarded at night to prevent rats from eating the body. Alf started working at age nine and took over the household duties when his mother became ill. He worked as a logger, butcher, farmer, and mill worker. He also was in charge of taking the mail to the "Milk Train" and picking up the mail from New Westminster. Alf was chairman of the Fraternal Order of Eagles and ran the Mothers' Day program for forty years. He and his wife, Grace Mallory, retired to Chilliwack.

Material taken from "The Place Between" Vol 1, p. 267.

# Heritage Social Lunch

You are invited to a Heritage Social Lunch on Saturday, February 18, 2017 at Milner Chapel.

11:30am–12:00pm – SOCIETY INFORMATION SESSION

The New Societies Act comes in to being in November 2018 and the directors have been busy revamping the By-Laws to comply. The Constitution will remain the same. The proposed By-Laws will be sent out to the members before this meeting for review. Sharon Johnson will discuss the new act and how it affects the society and she will answer any questions at that time.

12:00pm–12:30pm – HERITAGE WEEK UPDATES

February 13–18 is Heritage Week, and the Committee is working on arranging some of our local heritage partners to provide a short update on their plans.

12:30–2:30pm – HERITAGE SOCIAL LUNCH

Following the speakers, a light lunch will be served. This will be a time to visit and socialize with fellow members. This lunch is complimentary, but we would appreciate an RSVP to [info@langleyheritage.ca](mailto:info@langleyheritage.ca) if you plan to attend.

There will be more information about this at our next Program Meeting on Tuesday, January 24th, at Milner Chapel. Questions? Please email us at: [info@langleyheritage.ca](mailto:info@langleyheritage.ca).

## Dinner in the 1950s in Canada {Contributed by Maureen Pepin}

Pasta had not been invented. It was macaroni or spaghetti. Curry was a surname. A takeout was a mathematical problem. Pizza? Sounds like a leaning tower somewhere. Bananas and oranges only appeared at Christmas time. All chips were plain. A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining. Brown bread was something only poor people ate. Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking. Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and it was never green. Cubed sugar was regarded as posh. Chickens didn't have fingers in those days. None of us had ever heard of yogurt. Healthy food consisted of anything edible. Cooking outside was called camping. Seaweed was not a recognized food. Prunes were medicinal. Surprisingly muesli was readily available; it was called cattle feed. Pineapples came in chunks in a tin; we had only ever seen a picture of a real one. Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling water and charging more than gasoline for it they would have been a laughing stock. Finally, three things that were never on/at our table... elbows, hats and cell phones. *Quoted from T. Sarkery, email, November 3, 2016.*

# Station Life: How Much More Snow Can We Get?

{By Diane Simpson}

If you ever lived in northern Saskatchewan in 1946, you might well have thought about this. The snow just came down every week it seemed, until the drifts were so high the horses and sleighs had difficulty getting into town at all, and usually you went home with groceries and supplies for neighbours as well. There wasn't a municipal snow plow that could handle the amount of snow that winter.

The huge snow plow that was on the front of the daily train had not been able to get through the drifts on this particular branch line for two weeks, and the stores were running quite low on some groceries. Families stocked up on a lot of food in the summer, picking saskatoon berries, chokecherries, wild raspberries and canning beans, peas, and any vegetables left in the garden. By February, though, even these stocks ran low.

The school was occasionally closed when many children couldn't get there, and one week my brother and I had been indoors for quite a few days. One day when Mom had really had enough of our pranks and mess of toys, she just told us to "get your parkas and ski pants on, and go out to play. Make angels in the snow or something – blow the stink off you". We got the message and were soon dressed, out and wandering around, charging through the drifts. We decided to go up to Charlie Vickar's store to see if there was any licorice pipes left, so we headed over there. The store was small, but warm and cozy, with one or two of everything a family could ever need stacked on shelves up to the ceiling, even coyote traps.

We found licorice pipes with our pennies, and were soon chewing happily away when the door opened again. When I looked, I was absolutely amazed to see two huge Mounties with fur caps that almost covered their ears, and fur coats that almost covered their ankles. It was unusual to see them any more than perhaps every three months. Brian and I left because the little store had suddenly got quite crowded and no one liked to get too close to the pot-bellied stove that just blasted out heat. We were wondering how these Mounties got there, but were too shy to ask. Out we went to find out for ourselves and were absolutely amazed to see a glimpse of a "Bombadeer" a little way out in a pasture. (We called everything on skis by that name, but it was likely a Fudge Snow Sedan). I had heard of them, but never seen one up close. We got as close as we could and wondered how you stopped a machine that looked like a little airplane with no wings, a propeller, and skis. It didn't take long to realize that you didn't stop it! You just shut off the engine and coasted until it stopped.

These snow machines and more recently, the Bombardier types, were well designed to deal with snow conditions in the north, in the army, and all over the world, I feel lucky that my brother and I saw one of the first ones in that area. They are still used on large farms and ranches on the prairies for checking livestock and fences in the winter. I doubt you'd ever have found one in Charlie Vickar's store though!

## Your Invitation To Share Knowledge

The Township of Langley and Heritage Advisory Committee invites you to participate in the process of developing a context statement and thematic framework for Langley.

A context statement is a narrative document that explores the major thematic events involved in the historical development of the area. A thematic framework further breaks down the themes identified in the context statement into examples of local heritage sites and places of interest. Together they provide a summary description of Langley's formation over time.

As part of the public engagement process for the project, several workshops will be held on key topics to obtain input from stakeholders. We need your broad knowledge of Langley's past to accomplish this task, and cordially invite you to join one or more of the following discussions:

Langley's Built Heritage: Wednesday, February 15, 1pm-4pm

Natural and Cultural Landscapes: Friday, February 17, 9am-12pm

Agriculture: Wednesday, March 1, 1pm-4pm

Sports and Recreation: Thursday, March 2, 9am-12pm

The Arts in Langley: Thursday, March 2, 1pm-4pm

Please register in advance by contacting Shirley Johnson, Community Development Division at 604-533-6152 or email [spjohnson@tol.ca](mailto:spjohnson@tol.ca). Further details will be provided upon registration.

## Canada's 150 Let's You Get In For Free!

In celebration of Canada's 150th birthday, Parks Canada is offering its Discovery Pass free of charge. Just go online to Parks Canada and order your free pass. For all of 2017, this pass gives you unlimited opportunities to enjoy National Parks, National Marine Conservation Areas and National Historic Sites across the country - including the local Fort Langley National Historic Site.

- You only need to order one pass for your group or family if you are all travelling together. A 2017 Discovery Pass is valid for everyone arriving in the same vehicle at a national park, or arriving together at a marine conservation area or historic site.
- The Discovery Pass is only accepted at national historic sites which are operated by Parks Canada.
- Activities such as tours or parking that normally carry a separate fee may not be covered by the Discovery Pass.
- Camping fees are not included with the Discovery Pass
- Validity Period: January 1st, 2017 to December 31st, 2017.

# Remembrance Day 2016

Langley Heritage Society once again participated in Langley area Remembrance Day ceremonies. Wreaths were laid by LHS President Fred Pepin at Aldergrove, while board members Dave Buckley (Murrayville) and Mark Forsythe (Fort Langley) also presented wreaths. Thanks to a financial contribution from LHS member, Bill Marr, Murrayville's cenotaph will be cleaned and restored. *Photograph on the top left is LHS Director, Dave Buckley, laying a wreath at the Murrayville cemetery on behalf of the Society. The top right and bottom photographs are of the Fort Langley ceremonies and were taken by director Mark Forsythe.*



## Students Film Local History

The Langley Heritage Society has enlisted a younger generation to tell the stories of the community's built heritage. Students at Brookwood Secondary School have produced two videos highlighting the Fort Langley CN Station (circa 1915) and the elegant Wark/Dumais House (1890). Both structures were saved by the Langley Heritage Society and are among eight restored properties with caretaker tenants living in them. The Canadian National station harkens back to an era when rail was king, central to life in the Fraser Valley; today it is one of the most visited sites in Fort Langley. The video describes the station's history and how Langley Heritage Society volunteers restored the building. Wark/Dumais House was home to Langley's first reeve or mayor, Robert Wark, and later, to Albert Dumais, whose family operated a successful dairy farm. Son, Ernie Dumais, was born in the house, and is featured in the video describing life on the farm in the 1940s and 50s. Today Wark/Dumais House is an historical centrepiece on the campus of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, which sits on the original farmland. Brookwood grade 12 students filmed, edited and narrated the first two videos. The school's TV and video production program has received numerous awards for its work over the years. The next two LHS buildings to be profiled: Michaud (1888) and the Dixon House and Barn (1916 - 18). Links to the videos can be found on the main page of the Langley Heritage Society website: [www.langleyheritage.ca](http://www.langleyheritage.ca). The Langley Heritage Society appreciates the excellent cooperation and collaboration with students and staff at Brookwood Secondary School. The Film and Television program is led by teacher Robert French.

*The photograph below is Ernie Dumais standing in front of the house that he was born in.*



## Langley Heritage Society 2016-2017 Speaker Schedule

Members' meetings occur  
on the fourth Tuesday  
of each month at 7:30pm  
at historic Milner Chapel,  
located at 6716 - 216th Street.

Stay for social time, coffee &  
refreshments after.

January 24, 2017

Brian Antonson

Whistle Post West: Railway Tales  
From BC, Alberta, and the Yukon

February 28, 2017

Susan McCaslin

Han Shan Poetry Initiative to save  
Blaauw Eco Forest in Glen Valley

March 28, 2017

Jane Lempke

Chilliwack History

### **Save The Date Annual General Meeting**

Date: Friday, April 28, 2017

Location: Fort Langley  
Community Hall

Guest Speaker: Warren Sommer

Topic: Langley During WW1

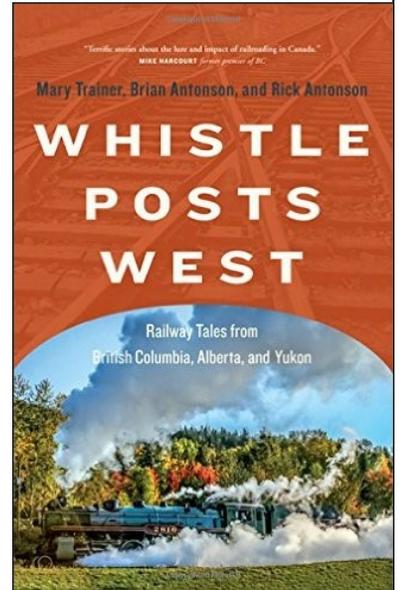
## Upcoming Programs

{January 24, 2017}

### **Brian Antonson & Railway Tales**

We are excited to invite you to the first speaker's presentation of the New Year. Our speaker, Brian Antonson, is the co-author of *Whistle Posts West: Railway Tales from British Columbia, Alberta and the Yukon*. Everybody has a train story. Whether it comes from a distant relative who worked on the railways or from a family train trip that formed a lasting impression of the Canadian landscape, trains inspire a sense of wonder and nostalgia.

They are embedded in the history of Canada as a whole and western Canada in particular, and for generations they were how most people travelled and saw the country. *Whistle Posts West* presents a compelling array of stories that illustrate how and why the railways continue to capture our imaginations. From the heartbreaking to the humorous, from the awe-inspiring to the absurd, this fascinating collection of railway tales from BC, Alberta and Yukon is sure to please. Brian retired from his long-time position as head of the Broadcast and Media Communications department at BCIT. He also co-authored the bestseller, *In Search of a Legend: Slumach's Gold*.



## Supporters & Suppliers

The Langley Heritage Society wishes to express our gratitude to supporters who contribute to our projects.

We endorse the following businesses:

Bob McPherson, electrician (604-530-8715)

Terry Tokiwa, plumber (604-533-1983)

Robertson Plastics (604-533-4055)

Charlie Ness, plumbing/renovation (604-626-2911)

Dave at DJ Hockin Painting & Decorating (604-850-8520)

Nufloors (604-533-4231)