



An Update from the Nanaimo Branch

Greetings from the Nanaimo Branch! One of our priorities this year has been to increase the profile of the Branch, with hopes that increased membership can further spread the ASBC message of heritage conservation. A media blitz from Duncan to Courtney regarding our lecture series has resulted in an increase in membership and attendance at our monthly lectures. In addition, we have started a monthly silent book auction with titles that were donated by Simon Fraser Archaeology Press and the University of British Columbia Press. To date, over \$100 has been raised to use towards Nanaimo Branch heritage conservation educational programs. We hope to continue this fundraiser as it has generated much interest from the membership and the general public as well, giving us all the opportunity to own some great books for a great price.

The hard work of Nanaimo Branch members had also been realized at the end of 2006 as the City of Nanaimo has finally made plans to link the archaeological information contained in the Provincial Heritage register with their planning and permitting geographical information systems (GIS). In the past, archaeological and significant historical sites have inconsistently been flagged during the permit application process. And as a result, some significant historical buildings and sites have been impacted or destroyed. Case in point: the Crace Street School, one of the oldest schools in British Columbia, actually appears on the City of Nanaimo Heritage Register but was demolished with little recognition of its heritage status. It was our goal to have a check put in place so that this would not happen again. Much lobbying was done, particularly by ASBCNB member Colleen Parsley, to ensure that archaeological and other heritage sites were flagged during the permitting process, allowing another check by City officials during development. Now the City's heritage planner must approve all demolition permit applications before they are passed. There are also plans to link the areas of archaeological

potential described in the Nanaimo Official Community Plan with the development and planning databases as well, acting as another check and balance for heritage conservation against development. ASBC Nanaimo Branch members are attending these OCP meetings to ensure that heritage issues are not forgotten.

We are also gearing up for our 6th Annual "Discover Archaeology" Program that will take place in June in partnership with the Vancouver Island Regional Library (Harbourfront Branch). We are revisiting a previous theme of "The Dead Do Tell Tales" that was organized in 2005 but was poorly attended due to demolition in the Nanaimo downtown core. This successful public outreach program has seen over 500 visitors in its 5-year history and we hope to continue to bring hands-on programs to the public. We have also been asked to bring the program to Frank J. Neigh School in May, as part of their Grade 7 archaeology unit. I am looking forward to this event because it is really the children whom we must teach the importance of heritage conservation. By instilling a respect for the past early on, it only bodes well for the future.

We hope you can join us!

**Julie Cowie, President
ASBC Nanaimo Branch**