

Annual Report

2019



WORKERS
HISTORY MUSEUM
MUSÉE DE L'HISTOIRE
OUVRIÈRE

A year in review

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENTS' REPORTS	P. 3
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	P. 7
EVENTS ATTENDED	P. 8
PROJECTS.....	P. 12
YOUNG CANADA WORKS 2019.....	P. 15
PAT MCGRATH SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT	P. 15
OTHER NEWS.....	P. 15
IMAGE COLLECTION.....	P. 16
2020 EVENTS.....	P. 16

PRESIDENT'S REPORTS



2019 began with a Board Retreat on the 6th of January. We reviewed the challenges and opportunities before us. It was well attended, and productive. Among the significant issues addressed were a fundraising strategic proposal from the Fundraising and Membership Committee; and the perennial problem of how to continue meaningful projects with a small, if dedicated, cadre of active members.

The F&M proposal was referred to the Board for adoption and implementation. Some felt we should have made more concrete steps at the Retreat; others felt that Museum governance guidelines were being correctly applied. This led to the second issue: we have to be careful not to have too many tasks left to too few people, as one of the consequences can be burnout. The Board was subsequently seized of the issue.

February was highlighted by an interesting and valuable initiative from a volunteer who had previously been active in the 2017 signal box/ neighbourhood history joint project. Francesca Brzezicki met with Treasurer/Communications Committee chair Barb Stewart and myself. She offered to draw up a contact list for Anglophone universities in Canada with programs relevant to our work, and draft outreach materials. This was substantially completed before she found full time work some months later. Thank you, Francesca!

March brought an end to my term as President on a very high note. I accepted an award from Mayor Watson on behalf of WHM at a ceremony on Heritage Day at City Hall. We were recognized as the Heritage Organization of the Year. Special thanks go to David Dean and André Mersereau for their work behind the scenes in having us nominated. It is a tribute to all of the Board members and volunteers that we have had since our inception, so take a moment to savour that!

I believe that I left the WHM on a solid institutional, program and financial footing, and thank Wilbray Thiffault for stepping up to replace me. I left to devote more time to finishing uncompleted projects, and thank everyone for their continuing support in that respect.

Arthur Carkner



À l'assemblée générale du 11 mars 2019, nous avons pu pourvoir à tous les postes du conseil d'administration, sauf à celui de la présidence. Arthur Carkner n'a pas voulu renouveler son mandat, afin de pouvoir se consacrer entièrement aux multiples projets qui lui tenaient à cœur. Incapable de trouver un candidat à la présidence, j'ai proposé mes services – n'étant pas pris par ailleurs – au conseil d'administration à sa réunion du 25 mars dernier et, le 17 juin, le conseil m'a nommé président du WHM-MHO.

Avis à tout futur président : durant cette période le WHM-MHO a très bien fonctionné sans président (e). Ce qui démontre que les postes de secrétaire et de trésorier(e) sont plus importants. Posez-vous la question : est-ce que le WHM-MHO aurait pu se passer d'un trésorier(e) ? D'un(e) secrétaire ? J'invite donc tout futur président à faire preuve d'humilité.

Au nom de tous les membres, je remercie le conseil d'administration, les bénévoles, les employé(e)s qui font une contribution importante à l'histoire ouvrière de la région et même du pays. Nous abordons les grands enjeux du mouvement syndical, les grandes batailles telles la formule Rand, la lutte contre le harcèlement sexuel, l'obtention d'avantages sociaux pour les conjoints de même sexe. Nous traitons également des conditions de travail et des outils dont les travailleurs se servent au quotidien. Le thème du calendrier de 2020 est « *Working in Ottawa - Ottawa au travail* ». Nous rappelons à tous et à toutes les

réalisations de pionniers comme Cal Best. Nous poursuivons nos projets, notamment : la traduction vers l'anglais du livre sur la grève de Buckingham de 1906, l'histoire orale des employés de l'entreprise E.B. Eddy, une pièce de théâtre sur la grève de Sudbury, un documentaire sur la marche des sans-emploi à Ottawa en 1935 et un livre sur la décision de la Cour suprême dans l'affaire Bonnie Robichaud et le harcèlement sexuel.

Je terminerai ce court rapport par une énumération de mes activités à partir de juin 2019 :

- 1) représenter le WHM-MHO au dévoilement du monument « la Chaise vide de Liu Xiaobo » au siège social de l'Amnistie internationale, le 13 août 2019,
- 2) représenter le WHM-MHO à la réunion annuelle du *Capital Heritage Connexion Patrimoine de la Capitale*, le 3 décembre 2019,
- 3) rencontrer Karen Lynn Ouellette, présidente de *The Historical Society Of Ottawa*, ainsi que Ben Weiss, pour discuter d'une collaboration éventuelle entre nos deux organisations, le 14 janvier 2020,
- 4) poursuivre une initiative de mon prédécesseur, Art Carkner, soit la campagne financière de fin d'année connue sous le nom de *President's Year End Challenge / Défi de fin d'année du président* et
- 5) présider les réunions du conseil d'administration.

Wilbray Thiffault

At the Annual General Meeting on March 11, 2019 all of the Board positions except President were filled. Arthur Carkner did not run again in order to work on several projects that needed to be finished. Unable to find a new president, I offered my services at the Board meeting on March 25, 2019. On June 17, the Board named me president.

Some advice for a future president: during this period the WHM-MHO functioned very well without a president. This demonstrates that the positions of secretary and treasurer are more important. Ask yourself this question: could we really do without a treasurer or a secretary? I therefore invite any future president to be humble.

On behalf of all the members, heartfelt thanks the Board of Directors, the volunteers and the employees who make an important contribution to the history of workers in the region and across Canada. We cover the union movement, the great battles like the Rand Formula, sexual harassment, benefits for same-sex couples. We also cover working conditions and the tools workers use while at work. The theme of our 2020 calendar is "*Working in Ottawa / Ottawa au travail*". We talk about pioneers like Cal Best. The work continues with the following projects: translation into English of a book about the strike in Buckingham in

1906; oral histories by the EB Eddy company workers; a play about the Sudbury strike; a documentary about the march of the unemployed workers to Ottawa in 1935; and a book about Bonnie Robichaud's Supreme Court decision on sexual harassment.

I conclude my short report with a list of my activities since June 2019:

- 1) Representing the WHM-MHO at the unveiling of the monument "*Liu Xiaobo 'Empty Chair'*" at the Head Office of Amnesty International on August 13, 2019;
- 2) Representing the WHM-MHO at the annual meeting of *Capital Heritage Connexion Patrimoine de la Capitale* on December 3, 2019;
- 3) Meeting with the president of the Historical Society of Ottawa, Karen Lynn Ouellette, and Ben Weiss to discuss possible collaborations between our two organizations on January 14, 2020;
- 4) Continuing the initiative of our previous president, Arthur Carkner, with the financial campaign of the President's Year-End Challenge;
- 5) Chairing the Board of Directors' meetings.

Wilbray Thiffault

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

**Arthur Carkner until March
Wilbray Thiffault from June**

Vice-president:

Robert Allen

Secretary:

Paul Harrison

Treasurer:

Barb Stewart

Members-at-large:

**Penny Bertrand
Christine Goneau
Phillippe Trottier
Robert Hatfield
Ed Cashman**

Institutional members:

**David Yazbeck
Richard Weintrager**

Trustee:

**Peter Cormier
Heather Stevens
Linda McLaren**

EVENTS ATTENDED

January

- PSAC National Capital Regional Council meeting

February

- Heritage Day at City Hall
- Union of Taxation Employees Local 70010 Annual General Meeting
- Union of Taxation Employees Local 70001 Annual General Meeting

March

- WHM AGM March 5
- Union of Taxation Employees Presidents' Conference

April

- WHM Trivia Night
- PSAC National Capital Region Health and Safety Conference
- Union of Taxation Employees Local 70004 Annual General Meeting
- Genealogy Fair at Ben Franklin Place hosted by the Ottawa Library

May

- *Never Forgotten* avant première launch
- Union of Taxation Employees Local 70030 Annual General Meeting
- CKCU interview about the Wong Brothers
- 1919 100th anniversary storytelling evening at Centrepointe Theatre

June

- PSAC NCR Regional Convention – 2 days
- Council of Heritage Organizations in Ottawa AGM – Ottawa

August

- Liu Xiaobo Memorial Unveiling at Amnesty International headquarters

September

- UTE Presidents' Conference – Ottawa – 2.5 days
- WHM Trivia Night

November

- Canadian Labour International Film Festival (CLiFF)
- Ontario Federation of Labour convention – Toronto - 4 days

December

- Capital Heritage Connexion in Ottawa - Gathering of the Council – Ottawa
- Launch of our documentary at Carleton U – *Women at the Bargaining Table*



Mayor Jim Watson, Barb Stewart, Arthur Carkner and Bob Hatfield at Heritage Day



Linda McLaren and Barb Stewart at the Genealogy Fair at Ben Franklin Place



Avant Première launch of *Never Forgotten* and panel discussion with moderator Arthur Carkner, John Anderson, Susan Rab OSSTF teacher, Juan Bello filmmaker and Greg McGillis



1919 Winnipeg General Strike storytelling evening with Ruth Stewart-Verger



Wilbray Thiffault attended Liu Xiaobo Memorial unveiling



Our CLiFF event in November at 233 Gilmour watching our joint documentary with Carleton University *Women at the Bargaining Table*



Panel discussion at official launch of *Women at the Bargaining Table* documentary held at Carleton University

Producer Martha Attridge Bufton, Pat Finn, Sylvia Gruda, Valerie Swinton, Jill Vickers and producer David Dean

PROJECTS

On-to-Ottawa Trek / Never Forgotten

We held an avant première screening of *Never Forgotten* in English on April 20th at the Arts Court theatre followed by a panel discussion. The event was well attended and the discussions afterwards were interesting.

Work continued during 2019 to get the script translated and make contacts about French actors to do the narration. Juan Bello, the filmmaker, also worked on dividing the documentary into several chapters for use in classes. The final version will be released in 2020.



E.B. Eddy

The exhibition at 251 Bank Street was extended once again, until January 31, 2020.



Work and disability

Over the past several years, our summer students have done research and conducted interviews of various people in preparation for working on a documentary video on workers and disability. Work will begin in earnest on it in 2020.

Pride Video

Work was restarted on finalizing our same-sex documentary. Unfortunately, we were not able to get it completed in 2019 but we will see it released in 2020.

2020 calendar

Many of the images and stories chosen for this calendar relate to earlier projects of the Workers' History Museum whose mandate is to tell little known stories about workers and working life in Ottawa:

Ottawa 2017: Capital History Kiosks (January, April, May, September, November) a WHM project in collaboration with the Carleton Centre for Public History, Chapter One Studio and artist Ross Rheaume. Researched by Carleton University MA in Public History students supervised by Professor David Dean. You can learn more about each of these stories at the Centre for Public History's portal: capitalhistory.ca. The images and stories for February, May, and July were researched by WHM volunteers Jane Harkness and David Dean.

Bank Street: Ottawa's Main Street (March, June, October, and December) a WHM project in collaboration with the Carleton Centre for Public History and Know History, researched by Emily Keyes.

Shoemakers and Cobblers: (August) part of an ongoing WHM oral history project about changing working lives in Ottawa.

Thank you to Caroline Forcier-Holloway, Sharon Argue, Denise Steeves and Denise Chong for allowing us to use their photos

Thanks to our sponsors: Union of Canadian Transportation Employees (UCTE); Union of National Employees (UNE); Union of Taxation Employees (UTE); National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE); Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU); Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); AGR Insurance Brokers Inc; and the City of Ottawa the 2020 calendar has been a success.



CALENDRIER
2020
CALENDAR

**WORKING IN OTTAWA
OTTAWA AU TRAVAIL**

Linemen at Work
Credit Photo: City of Ottawa Archive MG039-11-089

Monteurs de ligne au travail
Credit photo : Archives de la Ville d'Ottawa, MG039-11-089.

YOUNG CANADA WORKS

The Workers' History Museum was again fortunate to receive funding from Young Canada Works (YCW) for the hiring of one summer student. Meg Oldfield is a student at the University of Ottawa.

She worked on our 2020 calendar. She compiled about 165 photos, mostly from Library and Archives Canada, showing a variety of different types of workers and shops, including blacksmiths, farmers, nurses, and housewives. She was able to find quite a few photos from the Ottawa Valley that depict different industries there like mining and cheese-making. Information was also found about the Jewish community and research was started on a second comic book about the Jewish street pedlars. All of this will be very useful to us.

PAT MCGRATH SCHOLARSHIP

Our 2019 winner of the scholarship was Katharine Clark, who is working on her Master of Science in Statistics degree at McMaster University in Hamilton. She submitted a photo taken from the Niagara Escarpment overlooking the steel mills in Hamilton. This photo highlights the importance of the steel industry to the landscape and community of Hamilton. Steel makes up a large part of Hamilton's economy. Anyone in Hamilton either works in a steel plant or knows someone who does. The steel workers of Hamilton have a long and important history in Canada. They have integral ties to the beginning of the labour movement.



OTHER NEWS

In late August, we were notified that 25One Community was folding but our lease agreement would continue without changes with the owner of the building at 251 Bank Street. We have continued with them for now as our lease is good until January 31, 2021.

IMAGE COLLECTION

In September, image archivist Paul Harrison reported to the Board on the status of the Museum's growing collection of currently over 3,000 images. He demonstrated the Photo Supreme software used to catalogue the holdings, highlighting its robust search capabilities and flexible categorization system that can be modified and expanded "on the fly" while making entries. The software also recognizes PDFs, so almost 1000 historical works from journal and other sources, and that might be valuable for researchers, have been added as well.

While focussing on historical images of workers and organized labour organizations in Ottawa, those featuring industries, workplaces and workers anywhere in the world, and in modern periods, have also been acquired when opportunity presents. These include those from the Museum's Chaudière and workers' monuments projects; modern industrial and transportation images donated by Paul from a past stock imagery career; high-resolution digitizations of copyright-expired photographs, postcards, "magic lantern" glass plates, encyclopedia illustrations and newspaper engravings from the 1800s; historical documents held by the museum; and 1980s Ottawa-area labour activism photos from a private donor. Also absorbed are relevant copyright-free or copyright-expired images from numerous websites, on the assumption that the source sites might not be active indefinitely.

An experienced photographer, Paul has a full suite of image-scanning and processing software, hardware and skills. Anyone possessing and willing to share with the Museum images or documents related to worker history, including from family albums, are urged to contact Paul at images@workershistorymuseum.ca.

2020 events

There are several PSAC regional and component conventions that we will be attending in 2020 including Heritage Day February 18 at City Hall in Ottawa.

There will be at least one Trivia Night and CLiFF will be back in the fall. We hope you will continue to support our events by coming out and enjoying yourself.

Here's to another great year for the Workers' History Museum!