Sam Waller Museum

# Past & Present

Our town is pushing the edge of creativity to continue to operate, educate and inform since the mandated public health order to close all non-essential services. Measures to keep everyone safe and stay home have made organizations think differently. Outside the box…outside the jar…coloring outside the lines….and bringing content directly to us in our homes. Creative thinkers allow businesses and organizations to continue to operate, find a source of revenue, educate, reminisce and share with you and others.

In conversation with the Sam Waller Museum, the director and curator are finding ways to bring their programs to your home through social media. Sharain Jones, director, is proud of the way that the staff of the museum are presenting and sharing the museums’ collections with the public. The *Mainly Manitoba* exhibition is an art exhibit that allows Manitoba artists to showcase their talent. Sharain explained “The museum staff have been posting 2 pieces of artwork from this showcase daily”. She was excited to see the positive response with over 100 new visitors to their on line presence. She said that the site is visited from past residents and current residents of his area.

The museum is sparking interest in the art collection as well as the historical component of this area. “Throwback Thursdays” is another museum program designed to share facts and photos about the history of this area. Recently the museum shared an information piece on their Facebook page that is so relevant today. The post states:

“On October 27, 1918, the first case of the influenza pandemic was reported in The Pas. Over the next 6 months nearly a quarter of the town’s population would fall ill with 344 recorded cases and 23 deaths. There are many lessons from the 1918 influenza that can be applied to our situation with Covid-19.”

The message goes on to say that technology has dramatically changed. Prior to 1920 radios were not commonplace in most homes. Information was relayed by word of mouth and newspapers. Today we rely on many additional sources, such as various social media, television, paper, radio and of course, word of mouth. We have so many sources of communication at our fingertips, but we also have to sift through fact and fiction.

While scrolling through Throwback Thursday posts, I found one that sparked my interest, since I reside in the valley. Even more so, living on the river bank. The Carrot Valley flood of 1948. The story goes that the carrot valley flooded overnight when a levee broke. The flood destroyed that years’ harvest and farmers had no option but to move their livestock to high ground. Local resident, Murray Harvey remembers that the flood water came right up to the bottom of the Rivilan’s hill on 3rd street. He recalls that water flowed all along the edge of town where Halcrow is now and that the entire valley was under water. Thanks to a system of dams, dykes, and drainage canals the town and valley have been protected from another flood disaster.

Each year we are reminded of the strength of the river and the power of nature to rise water and wash away earth. Re carving our environment and possibly creating a deeper respect for Nature. Recognizing its strength, it’s softness, and its ability to continuously shift, build and rebuild this planet.

There are many other behind the scenes activities going on at the Museum. Curator and Archivist, Katherine Patterson, has been digging deeper into the past of artifacts within the collection. She currently is working on identifying and cataloging bird eggs that may be from the 1800’s. We can look to our past (our history) to find dialogue for the present.

Sam Waller Museum’s arm extends farther into community Cultural and Arts programming. The museum staff have been closely involved in maintaining a sense of community. From Culture Days involvement, to community beautification projects, to Arts Workshops, numerous craft days, past involvement with Home Routes. The list goes on. Last summer the museum designed and hosted a 1950 themed tea last summer which attracted many fine costumed ladies to the event. They are a building full of rich history, artifacts, a space within for arts & craft programming, and also a photography studio. Secrets beyond but within our imagination.

Just because the physical doors are closed should not stop you from a visit. You can continue to engage with the museum through a visit to their online presence. I did, and was drawn into a past and present world. “Whether you like history or not, there’s no denying the impact it leaves upon us.” (The Passage of Time)

Once the doors reopen, make it a priority to visit this community gem. In the meantime, you will have to be content with following them online.

Enjoy your day! Make Shift Happen.