

Touchstones Nelson – Countdown to the Celebration Inside the Box

Last week's column described the spaces that have been created as a result of the transformation of 502 Vernon St. to the new Touchstones Nelson. What will be found filling those spaces, come October 14?

On the main floor, the two galleries present the ARK project. ARK was chosen as the name because a museum, archives and art gallery is a literal ark, preserving and presenting the creative and historical heritage of a community.

The *ARK Exhibition* in the larger gallery is a juried exhibition of the work of 22 local artists. They were asked to reflect on the inspirations they receive from living in the Nelson area. Their artworks, created specifically for this show, are remarkably varied and provide intriguing insights.

The smaller gallery focuses on the changing identity of Touchstones Nelson's home. *Metamorphosis* is a photographic exhibition of 20 images by local resident Karen Redfern that document the physical transformation of the building. Karen spent over a year navigating her way through a construction zone to capture these stunning images.

Also on the main floor is the gift shop, stocked with local artwork, books and lots of Touchstones products with the distinctive new logo – from lapel pins to mugs and water bottles. Be the first in your circle to proudly wear a Touchstones toque (winter is coming!).

Upstairs on the second floor are the museum exhibits, including seven permanent modules. *First Peoples*, *The Long Ago Landscape* introduces the Sinixt and Ktunaxa nations. *European Exploration* tells stories of early explorers drawn here by fur and gold. *Hidden in the Rocks* relates Nelson's beginning as a mining hub. *Iron Rails in the Kootenays* explores the transportation connections from 100 years ago, and *Chaos and Opportunity* tells the story of the river taking the town. *The Queen City* offers an eclectic and enjoyable overview of Nelson's colourful human history. And *The Culture in Our Midst, Nelson Today* explores why we thrive as a vibrant community.

The adjacent small theatre presents three locally produced films on hydroelectric development and its influence on the Kootenay area. And in the Hume Hotel Audio Theatre, push a button and hear a first person story of a historical or contemporary character.

The Shawn Lamb Archives on the lower floor will open in November. During the Grand Opening that space will be used for a fabulous children's program. Other events for the weekend of October 14 and 15 are coming together very well. Next week, more details on those.

Touchstones is seeking volunteers right now to clean up house. Please contact Stephanie Fischer at 352-2293 or projectmanager@touchstonesnelson.ca.

One event that does require advance registration is ‘Hats, Handbags and Gloves,’ a high tea luncheon especially for seniors. Sittings are at noon and 1:30 pm and after each, seniors will be escorted down to Touchstones for a tour. Pull out your gloves, handbag and hat, and call Brenda at 352-6241 or Lucy at 352-7078. Reservations close October 10.

For more information, check out www.touchstonesnelson.ca.