

# The City of Richmond Archives

# ARCHIVES NEWS

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Shades of things to come? Nellie Gracan gets a lift from moving into the "new" Municipal Hall in 1957. CRA photo 88-18-51

## UP-DATE: TOWN HALL HISTORY

The on again - off again status of plans for a new City Hall for Richmond always attracts attention from City staff and the public alike. When the design stage finally does get going it wouldn't be a bad idea to

reflect on what role our Town Halls have played in the past as we decide what kind of building is wanted for the future.

Volunteer/researcher Mary Keen's history of Richmond's Town Halls is nearing completion. Look for booklet publication and a display in the autumn.

## NEW GUIDE TO HERITAGE RECORDS

The Archives has produced Heritage Documentation: a Guide to Heritage Resource Records at the City of Richmond Archives to assist those interested in researching heritage structures and sites in Richmond. Caitlin Webster, a graduate student in UBC's Master of Archival Studies program, researched and wrote the guide as part of a practicum at the Archives.

The Guide features an introduction which examines definitions of "heritage", an introduction to the Archives resources and procedures, and features selections from the Archives finding aids that are specific to heritage structure and site research. Included are descriptions of various records produced for the Richmond Heritage Advisory Committee by architectural and historical consultants.

Ms. Webster's research included examining Council Minutes and Bylaws for heritage references. The resulting chronological listing of Council actions is a most valuable summary for the researcher.

Stop by the Archives to pick-up a complimentary copy of this new guide.

## **CCA GRANT FOR RAD CONVERSION**

On Wednesday June 28 Raymond Chan MP presented the City of Richmond Archives with a cheque for \$ 6,852.00 from the Canadian Council of Archives under the "Control of Holdings" grant program. This funding will assist the Archives in implementing newly developed Canadian descriptive standards for records, Rules for Archival Description or RAD for short.

The project, funded jointly by this grant and the City of Richmond, will create RAD compliant descriptions for over 90 metres of City records. Series descriptions and file level entries will be added to the Archives descriptive database to provide faster, more convenient and more efficient searching for particular files. This will improve public access to these records.

## **WHERE AND HOW DOES THE ARCHIVES GET ALL THAT STUFF?**

People are often not too sure just how the Archives acquires records. It all starts with a decision that certain records are important or useful enough to justify special care in ensuring their safety. One way to get a handle on this process is to

think about various papers that come into your home.

If your home is like mine, the TV Guide probably is seen as very important while it is current but not to be kept for future reference, whereas kid's school work, old love letters, banking records, all are kept various lengths of time based on how important they are to us. The records you value most end up in a "safe place" where you can access them when needed.

While this process can be done informally at home, the complexity and volume of records generated by city government requires a more systematic approach, something called "records management".

The Archives is working with the Records Management section of the City Clerk's office toward development of "records retention schedules" for City Records. This means that for every series of records the City creates there will be a pre-approved time-table stating how long the records are kept in the active office, how long they should be in semi-active storage at the Works Yard Record Centre, and when they are ready for final disposition. For records of long term value and usefulness the final disposition means transfer to the Archives; for low value records which have served their purpose, final disposition means recycling or confidential destruction.

For the City of Richmond, "schedules" make manageable the large task of separating the useful records from those that have served their purpose - separating the TV Guide from the insurance policy. And for the City the "safe place" is the Archives.