

temporary office ticked into a corner near the Cock and Bull at the south end of Main Street.

It is a unique plan both in scope and philosophy. One that is designed to give back, foster its home-base community and bring dignity and hope to scores of people who either typically face obstacles, like the handicapped, or inadvertently have run up against a wall but have much to offer.

"My goal is to bring 200 families to the community and have them fully employed," Harris said, noting that about 50 positions would be available to Oli-

located in Oliver. "I have completed negotiations to move into the courthouse building," Harris said, "the business is a done deal." He will move in by July and anticipates that everything there will be "up and running within six months."

His mandate clearly is different from many other companies, "I see too many people working in minimum wage jobs who are there because of adverse circumstances, or they have no work at all due to downsizing, or disabilities. And there are the working poor like single mothers who barely get by."

employees, one-quarter to the working poor, one-quarter to those on unemployment benefits who have lost their jobs but are skilled, and one-quarter to those who are on social assistance but are certified able to train." He believes it is "about time" that this type of opportunity was made available to give these people a chance.

Senior management staff already has been hired.

Harris, whose 86 year-old partner, Blake, he describes as a mentor, has

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NEW BUSINESS**

Virtual Museum of Canada featuring the Inkameep Day School

BY WENDY JOHNSON

It was as if the intervening years had no substance. Piping children's voices that lifted in Okanagan song in 1941 at Thunderbird Park were heard again, their clarity as strong as the day they were broadcast on radio so many years ago. Images of a one-room schoolhouse on a small Interior reserve and the teacher who connected so profoundly with his students filled the computer screen and with the click of a mouse slipped easily into the compelling aboriginal artwork that was created by small hands and eager minds during one of Canada's most oppressive eras.

These images and others will be part

of the Virtual Museum of Canada's website featuring the Inkameep Day School, its gifted students and teacher, Anthony Walsh who helped them achieve their shining potential.

Last week there was a preview of the still to be launched website when Dr. Andrea Walsh (no relation to Anthony) a visual anthropologist at the University of Victoria who is researching the story, came to show the finished product—transformed onto a CD—to Chief Clarence Louie. Accompanying Walsh were the members of the business team who designed the website.

As she explained to those gathered in the boardroom at the Osoyoos Indian Band office, "The federal government

has made it a multi-year initiative to digitize museum collections and Canadian heritage. So the Virtual Museum of Canada seemed like a very good place to put the research we've done around the day school, so that it was accessible to a larger public.

"Only so many people will be able to read the eventual book, buy the catalogue or see the exhibition. This was a way to access the information on a much broader scale."

When the collection was part of the Vancouver Art Gallery's summer exhibition in 2003, Walsh contacted the BC Museums Association and was subse-

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VIRTUAL MUSEUM**



Wendy Johnson/Oliver Chronicle

Visual anthropology professor, Andrea Walsh, and the crew of Unlimited Digital discuss their website with Chief Clarence Louie. The site featuring the Inkameep Day School is part of the Virtual Museum of Canada project. Pictured with Walsh (l to r) are Kyle McIntosh, Darren Card, Susanne Hendrickson, Wayne Clark and Louie. They started the creative work in June/July until September and then started production after October 10.

first glance it seems like i might be real, although difficult to identify.

Virtual Museum

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quently linked with the people at Unlimited Digital who worked with her in terms of developing the concept.

The team—producer and founder Wayne Clark, designers Kyle McIntosh and Darren Card and production manager Susanne Hendrickson—went to the VAG to see the drawings and integrated the themes Walsh used there into the story told on the website.

“I’d say things to them like, ‘I see this happening’ and they would reply, ‘You can do that.’ This is the relationship we developed over the course of the project.”

Louie watched attentively as Walsh walked the group through the computer site. All told it contains 400 images, 40,000 words of text, an hour of video clips and 35 minutes of audio clips from various archives and contemporary research.

“I wanted to preserve the structure of the exhibition so the text you see on the site is the text that was on the story boards on the wall of the gallery.”

The site has been structured skillfully—it will pique the curiosity of the casual browser and inspire them to explore further, but there is also enough substantial, in-depth research material included to appeal to the most ardent historical or cultural enthusiast, student or teacher.

The main pages are augmented by links to related items for easy access. For instance, the artwork features pop-ups to the Osoyoos Museum’s information on the particular piece shown on the screen—the name of the artist, the name attributed to the piece and the medium used.

“The related items bar will also have the videos that we’ve been doing with the Knowledge Network and the APTN (Aboriginal People’s Television Network).”

But the website contains more than stunning artwork. It holds the voices and the visuals of the individuals who thrived during that inspirational decade. The archival tapes Walsh located have been digitized and Anthony can be heard talking about the school’s launch. Former student Jane Stelkia can be seen walking the grounds where the little wooden school once stood, recalling the games, the Union Jack flag and cod liver oil that were a part of the curriculum.

There is an historical timeline section of all the archival documents Walsh has sifted through in her three years of work; these have been grouped together and linked to other original documents for a more thorough search. There is information on who succeeded Anthony Walsh

after he left to help the war effort and when the school was closed.

The contemporary research page takes a more in-depth approach. She notes that it focuses on the political and social contexts in which the work appeared initially as well as the ramifications of what went on in the past and what is going on in the present in terms of the art’s re-circulation.

There is an archive guide that contains the listing of all the places Walsh has been to find material and the corresponding files she utilized, should a website user wish to research the story on his own. And the related video highlights the contemporary research done, as well as Louie’s discussion about the importance of the story.

The final section contains the contemporary art education site—four on-line units for teachers to use that give a brief history about the school in Anthony Walsh’s words and talks about what happened from his perspective.

“There is a page for each lesson that takes particular pieces of art and talks about their meaning for the children and Mr. Walsh and gives a departure point for the teachers to take over the lesson. For instance, if a teacher wants to take the students to see an original piece, the teacher clicks on it to get the information and calls Leslie at the Osoyoos Museum, saying the children want to see certain artwork that corresponds to Unit 1.”

Each of the four units focuses on a particular theme that plays through the larger collection or via the information Walsh has accumulated on Anthony’s methods of teaching his students through art. And it includes ideas for teachers to use in the classroom.

Since this is a government-sponsored site, it requires translation into French, a process that will take approximately one month. Walsh and the crew at Unlimited Digital hope to have the website ready sometime in April but the official launch is expected to be June 21—Aboriginal Day. That occasion should also see the availability of a 64-page colour catalogue of the children’s artwork complete with CD insert.

Louie was very pleased with the Inkameep Day School’s website, but requested that an inclusion be made of the Okanagan language, perhaps in the form of a greeting or other manifestation.

Card agreed. “We could put it on the Home Page or layer the words over the children’s songs.”

The VMC is a partnership between Canada’s vast museum community and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Finding a building was the only hurdle he encountered, but he said it was “a small hurdle with respect to parking that needs to be addressed but [municipal manager] Tom Szalay has looked at

