



SOUTHERN ALBERTA PIONEERS FOUNDATION

Southern Alberta Pioneers' Memorial Building • 3625 4th Street SW Calgary Alberta T2S 1Y3 • Phone 403-243-3580

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[Foundation's Website](#)

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President's Message

It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I present my SAPF report.

An agreement with the Calgary Foundation to establish **The Southern Alberta Pioneers** was signed on July 4th. I consider this a milestone for the SAPF as, over time, it will virtually guarantee annual disbursements that can be used at the discretion of the Board. Having said that, from a Foundation perspective, care and maintenance of the Memorial Building is high on the list.

Shawn Hendry and Brian Rogers will provide more information in their reports.

The Building Report and Life Cycle Report

Without pre-empting John Hutching's report as Chair of the Memorial Building Committee, at our last Board meeting there were a number of updates. Rentals were top of the list in terms of revenue generation, and we were blessed with a very good response.

Security for the Memorial Building was discussed along with a conversation related to potential and real issues on the grounds. We are lucky to be working with Sarah Papineau who is our Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator (NPC).

Other items that were discussed were:

- the reliability and functioning of the front gate;

Dexter Nelson,
President
Southern Alberta
Pioneers Foundation
— 2023-2024



- the irrigation being turned off temporarily due to City of Calgary emergency water restrictions;
- continuing to work with Johnson Controls related water valves; and
- any maintenance and updates as required.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Gabrielle Leah in terms of 'being there' to manage bookings and making rentals successful. And for doing the gardening all summer. It's a huge effort keeping the gardens planted, weeded, watered and cared for.

Thanks to John Hutchings, Dan Shaw, Jeff Hill, and Dylan Viste, we can be sure our treasured Memorial Building is currently and will continue to be in top shape.

This wraps up my SAPF report and I want to thank everyone for making the Foundation successful.

THIS NEWSLETTER CAN BE READ AT and PRINTED FROM <http://pioneerbuilding.ca/newsletter.html>

Memorial Building Committee Report

by John Hutchings, Building Committee Chair

Building Committee Members 2024

John Hutchings (Chair)	403-613-9798	sap.office@pioneersalberta.org
Dan Shaw	403-861-3000	danshaw1959@gmail.com
Jeff Hill	403-225-2397	jeff.hill@shaw.ca
Dylan Viste	403-854-8978	DCViste2202@gmail.com

There is not a lot to report due to efforts spent on the Life Cycle Project and due to some work not being done due to the water restrictions and the extreme heat we experienced this summer. Most of this unfinished work is painting doors, fences etc. Hopefully, we can complete some of this work this Fall.

Rentals

So far, we have 53 rentals days booked in this fiscal year (June 2024 – May 2025).

We had a very busy summer rental season and looking forward to a busy fall and Christmas party season. We have already booked 34 rental days for the 2025-26 fiscal year including 21 in August of 2025.

Not only are rentals vital in keeping the building financially afloat, but they also satisfy the lease requirement that state that our facility must be accessible to the public at least 50% of the time. We would like to have more rentals during our slower winter months, such as corporate conferences, retreats, etc. If your company is looking for such a venue, the Memorial Building is an excellent and unique location. Members receive a 20% discount on the rental rate. Please call



Rental Agent: Gabrielle Leah—403-807-0550

Gabrielle Leah at 403-807-0550 for any rental enquiries. Also, if you are going to visit the building other than Historic Mondays, please contact Gabrielle to be sure that the building is not occupied with renters that day.

Front Gate

After the last service call, Gateworks found that the V-belts need to be replaced along with the home targets for both operators as they are missing the sensor that connects to the chain. This is scheduled to be done soon.

Water Restrictions and Irrigation System

The irrigation system was inspected and started up on April 24th.

Stage 4 Water restrictions were imposed in late June meaning no outside watering was permitted, so we shut off the outside water supply. Stage 1 restrictions were implemented during July / August where we could water the lawn twice a week. When the Stage 4 restrictions were again imposed on August 26, the outside water was again shut off. We'd like to thank Dan Shaw for hauling water in from his acreage; this saved our flower beds.

Johnson Controls

During the annual inspections last fall the following deficiencies were identified:

- Missing signage on three control valves and one test and drain valve
- Five-year Internal Obstruction Investigation
 - Three check valves

- Internal condition of the sprinkler system piping
- Installation of a 2" block valve in order to isolate the firewater fluids
- Fire Department Connection (FDC) Hydrostatic Testing

This work will be done soon.

Barbeque

Our Barbeque requires upgrades, especially the bottom plate where it is corroding. Two steel plates, 21.5" wide X 46.75" long, 1/4" or 5/16" thick is required.

Also, the grill grating should be replaced, but this is not urgent.

Front Deck Shading

Last year we installed sunshades along with 4 x 4 wood columns to support the shades. This system proved ineffective; therefore, we have abandoned this system and bought two more umbrellas, giving us three. The wood columns have been removed. Thanks go out to Dan Shaw for his work on this initiative.

Phone Landlines

The building has two landlines: one for the fire alarm, the other for the 403-243-3580 phone. These lines are being converted from copper to fibre. Telus did some initial work on May 9 and came back on June 3 to complete the process.

2023-24 Life Cycle Project Committee Report

by John Hutchings, Life Cycle Project Committee Chair

The 2023-24 Life Cycle Project is now complete. It came in on time and on budget and was very successful.

A key milestone date was achieved, which was to have the work virtually completed before June 15, 2024.

The work was managed by Three Peaks Group (TPG) and executed by Chalmers Conservation Ltd. (CHC) who specialize in heritage restoration projects.

The project started out slow and was hampered by a cold rainy spring but, with a combination of sound Management by TPG and CHC and some reduced scope of work, everything came together at the end to the delight to all who were involved.

The project was funded by grants from the City of Calgary (75%) and the Province of Alberta (25%).

The success of this Project would not be possible without the efforts of the following people:

- SAPF Project Committee: Brian Rogers, Dan Shaw, Shawn Hendry, David Mackie, John Hutchings
- TPG: Jason Moroz, Project Manager
- CHC: Ashley Thomson & Leslie Gurevitch, Project Managers
- City of Calgary: Sarah Papineau, Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator

Project Prognosis

As with every construction or refurbishment project, not everything goes as planned; this project was no exception. The following Scope of Work items describe what went well and what went not as well as expected:

- Scope – Repair and refinish timber log walls on the building perimeter.

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- This work went very well as the scope was based on 10% of the logs being repaired; the actual number was about 3%.
- The amount of re-chinking (putty) between the logs was also a lot less than planned.
- Scope – Repair the stone mortar on the chimney structure.
 - This work went very well with no issues.



Eavestrough fabrication

- Scope – Replace the gutters and downspouts.
 - This work went well except for the downspout on the north-east corner of the building that could not be installed overhead of the sidewall due to an underground natural gas line in the vicinity.
- Scope – Replace 12 windows on the original building: North, South and East Elevations.
 - This work was better than expected as the glass on the two large windows on the deck did not need to be replaced, just the casing had to be refurbished.
- Scope – Refinish the hardwood flooring surface located in the History Committee office.
 - This work was very successful.
- About a third of the flagpole stone structure was removed and rebuilt, although the flagpole itself was not replaced.
- The stone pillars on the front gate had similar issues with the top third of the structure being rebuilt. The metal cap on top was extended to fully cover and protect the structures from water intrusion.



North wall of main room



Scaffolding and window replacements on East wall



South facing Ladies Room



Flagpole demolished before restoration and finishing touches



Ben Kaganov of Kag's Welding on the ladder just under the gate



Front gate pedestal repairs



Stone Mason Martin puts finishing touches on the gate pedestal

Building Structural Integrity Study

by John Hutchings, Building Committee Chair

Separate to the Life Cycle project (see Page 3), an engineering study is currently being conducted on the structural integrity of the Memorial Building. The following is a brief outline of this work.

- The May 2022 quote we received from Chalmers Heritage Conservation Ltd. noted that the centre portion of the building roof is sagging and proposed that an engineering study should be completed to determine the integrity of the roof.
- The City of Calgary's Engineering Consulting Program (ECP) can conduct this study at no cost to SAPF upon application.
- The application to ECP has been completed and signed by David Mackie on April 12, 2023, and was submitted, along with the motion that was passed in the April 2023 Board meeting.
- An approval letter dated May 2, 2023, was received from the City.
 - The City, through the CCG will pay 100% of the engineering costs.
- The City has engaged the firm Morrison Hershfield (MH) to undertake the study.
- On May 24, 2023, MH did an initial site visit.
- On June 1, 2023, we received a "comfort letter" from MH indicating that the building is safe and not in imminent danger of collapse.
- On July 11, 2023, Morrison Hershfield conducted an initial 3D scan of the building trusses.
- On November 7, 2023, a second 3D scan of the building trusses was conducted.
- On March 4, 2024, we had a third 3D scan of the building trusses.
 - This was done when a snow load was on the roof.
- The next scan was scheduled for July 2024 with the final report and recommendations prepared at the end of July 2024.
 - At the time of this report, this scan has not been completed but hopefully it will be done this fall.



COULD YOU DONATE A WAGON WHEEL OR TWO?

Gabrielle really would like to make the memorial building even more beautiful and she thought some wagon wheels that are still intact would make great decorations around the building.

So we are asking our members to rehome 1, 2 or more wheels if you have them. Contact SAPD at 403-243-3580 or sap.office@pioneersalberta.org

Southern Alberta Pioneers and the Memorial Building

by Margaret Buckley

The Southern Alberta Pioneers first home was in Fort Calgary House, which was built and located on the Stampede Grounds in Calgary. However, as the city grew, it was decided that a new location and building was needed, so the City of Calgary Council led by Mayor Donald McKay gave the Pioneers the present location for the present building.

In 1983, our Board of Directors decided that an upgrade to the building was much needed to adequately serve the members and their activities.

The main entry was crowded and small. Upon entering, the cloakroom and chair storage area were in the southeast corner with the Men's and Ladies' bathrooms next to it.

The staircase to the basement was about six feet from the front entrance with the cloakroom about four feet to the right of that. On the north wall, in the present location, was a door to a lean-to porch with an exit door on the west end. This porch had been an add-on after the original building was built. There was no heat in it making it usable in warm weather only.

The Ladies' Association who met at the building enjoyed tea parties; therefore, we installed some cupboards, a counter, and a stove in this area, and they used it as a kitchen. We also installed electricity but no plumbing, so the ladies had to fetch water from taps in the ladies' bathroom to use in electric kettles. The ladies also enjoyed lovely China dishes and goodies that came from some members' homes.

The decision of the 1983 Board of Directors was to update and fix the building and to resolve some problems to make the site more suitable for modern uses. The big

problem was going to be cost!

We had a great Treasurer who had looked after our accounts very well and was extremely reluctant to allow us to drain the \$40,000 fund we had in the Bank. There was no Foundation at that time. So, we tried to raise funds for this big project.

But there was just no way we could make enough to start the project with our bake sales and fundraising activities. So, the Board Members suggested other strategies. From the vault, I checked the histories and notes of the past Presidents and found out that, when the Men's Association received a land grant from the City, they asked their members for donations to build the building and were very successful.

I presented the Board a letter I wrote for our Pioneer Members outlining what we wanted to do, how much it was going to cost, and asking for a \$50 donation. At first, the Board dismissed "my soliciting letter" but relented when we had no success with our other ideas. The membership replied and we made enough money to do the renovations. We were truly amazed at the support.

The two Board members who got involved were Edweena Mair and Bob Brewster. Bob dealt with the main building part and Edweena dealt with the planning and shopping for anything we needed to properly stock the kitchens and bathrooms, etc. She would dicker with sellers about the price, and they generally gave in to her.

The outside entry to the building was a small, uncovered porch with the stairs facing south. One would enter the building straight into the main room, very close to the top of the stairs to the basement.

On the right was the door to the cloakroom. When the entrance was crowded, we were afraid someone would fall down the stairs, so we built on an enlarged outside deck and redirected the inside stairs to descend from the north end of the room instead of the south end.

The porch kitchen on the north was removed and a new entrance from the parking lot built with stairs straight from the driveway up to a modern kitchen and downstairs to a kitchen and a back entry to the basement. We also installed a small emergency exit at the west end of the basement.

Upstairs, the furniture was removed, the sofas were sent for recovering, and the floors were refinished. But removing the taxidermy heads and pictures off the west wall revealed damage to the wall. I consulted with Bob Savignac in Cochrane, who established Moose Mountain Homes and was interested in Historical buildings, etc. He told me that the logs were rotten because of three big spruce trees that had been planted right up against the west wall. The trees got cut down, Bob cleaned up the rot, saved what he could, and injected a preservative in what was left of the original logs. He then installed new logs on top of the restored wall. Finally, all the logs inside and out were cleaned and re-varnished.

The only events that took place in the building in 1983 were the Annual General Meeting and the Christmas Party, which let our members see the renovations.

The carpet that was on the main floor came out of Government House in Edmonton. Mr. Don Robertson, a longtime member, bought the carpet at the Government House Auction of furnishings during WWII but,

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because it was so large, he lent it to SAPD. We tried to buy it from Mr. Robertson, but he would not sell it to us. Years later, when the carpet started to show signs of wear, a very dedicated member, Dora Graham, gathered some women together and, using colored felt pens, filled in all the worn areas, which lasted for years. Eventually, Mr. Robertson sold the carpet to us for \$5.

Much later, while still on the Board and working with Don Edge preparing for the Stampede Parade, we talked about the rug because of its historic significance. After learning that the Director of Historic Sites wanted it, we rolled it up and Historic Sites came and got it. That rug is now in the Provincial Museum in Edmonton because of its history in Government House going as far back as the 1930s. Odd to think that our old rug is in the Provincial Archives.

When we took down the taxidermy heads to be cleaned and labelled, we also researched the donors, then had plaques made to attach to the heads. They certainly needed some TLC and continue to be very beautiful.

In later years, another Board added the front closed-in porch for coats, and the office room for much needed room and space.

With the upstairs done, we moved downstairs. The walls had been lined with plywood and varnished. Over the years, they had turned a light green with age and really needed upgrading. We removed the pictures and took the old, small kitchen apart. The caretaker's apartment was in the east end, beneath the bathrooms and cloakroom upstairs.

The entrance door on the northeast end was through the kitchen so that area became a new bar, which we had never had before. The walls were redone, and we installed a much-needed emergency exit in the northwest corner. The plumbing in the caretaker's suite was upgraded and painted. Tom Hall, Vice President, supervised this improvement.

When the Memorial Building was built, we had obtained an unused vault from a bank. We cleaned the vault, reorganized it and installed proper shelving and storage. We used the vault to store all the Presidents' and Past Presidents' minutes, papers, correspondence, and everything the Association Presidents had done along with all the history of past Presidents' terms. Members could access documents in the vault, but, about five years or so later, all that history was cleaned out and destroyed. We never did find out who did that, but it was a great loss.

During construction on the building, all of the pictures were removed and restored. We credit Mr. Alex McTavish for taking care of the large photos of the Men's Association members and the historic photos in wooden frames downstairs. When other photos were left hanging on the upstairs walls in no particular order, we tidied them up so as to present them in a better manner. The job was a huge one that needed expertise and money.

More recently, I was introduced to Mr. McTavish's son who said his father put him to work making the frames for our pictures after he returned from World War II.

To restore original pictures that were curling and/or starting to fall off their backing, I contacted Onions Photography in Calgary to talk about the possibility of restoration and the approximate cost. Hilda and Bill Onions offered to help us with this professional job.

In the newsletter to the membership, we announced that pioneer pictures could be restored for \$5. Members who wished to could also adopt a pioneer who no longer had a family member to pay for that member's photo restoration. To proceed with that project, we started another fundraiser program called, "Adopt a Pioneer."

During this work, we discovered

that the large picture of the Ladies Association was missing Mrs. Pinkham's picture. We put an item in the Newsletter enquiring about it and offering a way to return it anonymously. We got it back.

The Onions discovered that the background the pictures were mounted on had been hand drawn and painted, so we decided not to change it. The glue on the back of the pictures was so old that they were all coming unglued, making removing the photos for cleaning a bit easier. Once put back together on their restored backing, the whole thing was laminated so no photos could be taken out and we put glass over the photos so there will be no environmental damage (e.g., from smoking).

A photographer had taken all six big pictures of the pioneer men and Mr. McTavish took charge of framing the originals. This originally hung in the Fort Calgary House on the Stampede Grounds where the Pioneers originally met. But, over time, some were curling, some were torn, one or two were pasted on top of each other, and some were faded. Hilda was able to restore them and mount them on new, clean backing. Fortunately, our Adopt a Pioneer project was successful, letting us hang restored pictures on our restored walls.

We took the historic photos from downstairs to the Glenbow Museum Archives and worked with the archivist in the photo area to make sure they had copies of them. While I was cleaning these pictures in Hilda's studio, I recognized a photo of the Dean House on its original location, which I learned was a very rare picture. We donated a copy of it to the Dean House upon the Official Opening of its restored building.

For her work, Hilda Onion was made an Honorary Member of the Southern Alberta Pioneers and their Descendants as a gratuity.