

Snake River Heritage Center

2014 Newsletter

THE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SNAKE RIVER HERITAGE CENTER WILL
BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE MUSEUM LOCATED AT 2295 PADDOCK AVENUE, WEISER, IDAHO.

BOARD MEMBERS

Lynn Isaacson, president
Dick Bergquist, treasurer
Jeri Kleppin, secretary
Wes Higgins
Pat Womack
Blake Coats
Pat Harberd, Board member at large

2013 President's Message Lynn Isaacson, Board President

The work of restoration continued over the year. We are getting close to finishing the second floor. All that remains is laying the flooring in the north hallway and finishing the trim. Evans Flooring completed refinishing the beautiful wood floor inside the three NW rooms on the second floor.

We applied for and received a grant from the Idaho Heritage Trust to cover part of the cost of refinishing the ballroom floor. I want to thank them and our legislators for this help. Randy Evans has agreed to do the refinishing as soon as the weather warms up. The museum will have to cover the balance of the cost between the grant and the actual cost of the work. The Board is planning exhibits to place in these rooms.

Again we had a scout do a project at the museum. Jacoby Miller cleaned out the south hallway on the third floor, washed the walls and ceiling, and painted it. This really brightened up the hallway. Many thanks to him. Another

Eagle Scout project for painting the fire escape did not come to fruition.

The LDS men are redoing the old flooring stored in the basement for use on the second floor hallway. We will use what is available of this flooring and then purchase new flooring for the balance needed.

Wade Higgins provided oversight of our facilities again this year during Fiddle Week and did a good job for which we would like to express our appreciation. He will do the same for us this coming Fiddle Week.

I would also like to recognize Denise Rasmussen and Mike Turner for their work with the youth by developing their talents through music and drama. Their use of the museum auditorium for this purpose is a very good use of this wonderful facility.

Each year we see gains in developing our museum. We get much positive feedback from visitors. Again I want to emphasize this is your museum, citizens of this area. Your feedback and help is needed to keep it going. The members of the board have served long and diligently. They deserve your thanks and support; and a thank you to the volunteers for the hours you spend.

2014 Financial review
Dick Bergquist
Treasurer, Webmaster

The museum's financial condition remains good and we have made great progress on getting back to the funds available level that we had in 2012 before we had to do the urgent repairs to the exterior walls of the clock tower, at a cost of \$22,500.00. This rebound has been made possible by the generous support of our members who continue to renew their memberships every year and several new Lifetime memberships this past year. We also continue to receive some generous donations from individuals and organizations. We cannot express enough how much we appreciate the support from all of you. Without this support there is no way the museum can succeed.

From the period of March 1, 2013 to March 11, 2014 our net income is up \$9,431.30 over last year, but this is due mostly because we did not have any big expenses on the scale of the clock tower repair last year. Also, the board has continued to try and use all funds wisely and prudently and we have had performances in the auditorium by some groups that have generated some more donations.

Grants can be a tremendous help to a museum to keep it going, but we have not been very successful in getting grants lately. If anyone has grant writing experience and would like to donate sometime to the museum to help us obtain some grants it would be greatly appreciated.

The Board of Directors is all volunteers and no funds are used to compensate them for their time. It takes lots of time to keep the museum running and we need lots of volunteers to keep it going. We invite anyone with a desire to help out to get involved by contacting a board member and we will be honored to let you help us make this the best museum around.

If anyone has a question about our financial report or questions about anything related to the

museum please contact us at info@weisermuseum.com or Ph# 208 549-0205. Also please check out our web site at www.weisermuseum.com. Please share information about the museum with your friends and family and please give us suggestions on how to make it better.

A sundial was delivered to Hooker Hall anonymously with the accompanying letter:

“To the Student Body of the Intermountain Institute:

Soon it will be time for you to have your annual May Fete. I wish to have a part in it this year by giving this sundial as a bit of memory of my former friend, Miss Slocum, in whose honor your May Fete is held. I have not been able to attend all of the celebrations, but in years past when I served on the Board of Trustees I was always at the picnics and so on, which then was the main celebration.

I wish that this sundial might be set on an appropriate base, cement probably, and placed either in front of the library or in front of Beardsley, where the sun may have full play on it, and that it might be done before May Day, so that at the celebration it might be a part of the day. It would please me very much if the dancers could ‘do’ a dance, something called the dance of the hours, to help dedicate the sundial to the memory of the hours Miss Slocum spent with us at the Institute and also to remind us of the golden hours ahead of us in this glorious time to be alive.

I prefer to do this unknown. I love the Institute and if I had sufficient worldly good I would love to give a more fitting memorial, but if this can be erected the way I have suggested I shall be very pleased.”

This article was published in the campus news in 1930. Who remembers the sundial? Anyone know where it might be now, 80+ years later?

Thanks

SRHC is indebted to the Weiser School District which has enabled the printing of this newsletter on their copy machines for several years. Their support and assistance have proven invaluable. We are grateful for this extension of their educational services in our community.

The Weiser Middle School Junior Honor Society, for more years than this editor can recount, has been the hands that have collated, folded, stapled, taped, sorted and organized the mailing of this newsletter. They have shrunk that huge task to a matter of 30 minutes once a year. Many hands have made this work light! We are obliged to the advisors and special students for their service to our museum and their community.

A Volunteer's View

By Dottie Emert

A few years ago while helping organize the picture collection at the museum I became aware that there was no vertical files for the various paper artifacts the museum had collected. The confusion during and following the museum fire had caused them to be saved and put into various boxes, many unmarked, in several of the storage rooms on the third floor, and in different drawers and cabinets in the museum office. Since that time we have managed to find, sort, and file almost all the documents, family histories, obituaries, news articles, ledgers, and a whole host of various and sundry of other "paper" artifacts that the museum had. They are now stored in the Library on the first floor.

My museum friend, and mentor, Sandra Hansen, who had helped out at the Heritage Center when it was first getting organized, and who is the curator of the Cambridge Museum, decided to find out what I kept talking about, and came down to have a look. Since that initial look Sandra has been spending most Wednesdays for the last year helping sort, label, describe, and catalog the museum's artifacts. These, too, were the victims of the confusion following the fire.

She, with me as her willing gopher, sorted three rooms of stored artifacts getting them in some sort of order so that they could be cataloged and stored properly. We then began to clear the museum office of the accumulated items that had recently been donated. With that under control we began working on those upstairs rooms, and dealing with newly acquired treasures as they walked through the front door of Hooker Hall.

Each artifact must be marked with a number, a card must then be made out with a description, the donor's name, the article's number, and where the article is stored. Lastly the article must be stored, and the card filed. During the past year we have been able to card and store over a thousand separate artifacts. We have several thousands (with an "s") more to go. It's a fun job, and one that won't run out any time soon. Come and join us – fun is in the eye of the beholder – you may find this fun.

Shot in the Arm

The proverbial "shot in the arm" was delivered to your Board and several interested volunteers. On Wednesday, March 5, "doctor" Fred Fritchman delivered the perfect medicine for us. He spent the day touring the building, answering questions, and offering suggestions for displays and decision to be made. With great sensibility and expertise he was able to inspire us and help us view the museum through the eyes of the objective visitor.

As an exhibit designer for the Idaho State Historical Society, Fred presented professional thoughts for us amateurs on the set up and planning for exhibits. He was the perfect elixir as we were struggling with new spaces in the building just waiting for displays. We hope he will approve of our efforts as we ready the building for the 2014 season. More importantly we anticipate your enjoyment and renewed interest in "your" museum.

Bits and Pieces at the SRHC

It is with pleasure that the Board members open and ready the museum for different activities. With Fiddle Week activities there were over 800 people inside our building. At other times of the year we have had graduation parties, receptions, as well as special presentations on stage. A breakfast meeting was held in the Alumni Room. Dances and special tours for 2nd graders and alumni of Weiser High School are also noted on the calendar. Recitals and Indianhead Academy graduations open our doors to many students and adults.

We are grateful for many donations and loans this past year. Reta Beecher Johnson loaned us a beautiful array of aprons with her mother and grandmother stories to accompany them. The piano from Beardsley Hall was returned home by Leah Falconer's donation. Many, many photos, articles of clothing, household goods, even a large piece of machinery have entered our domain through supporter's thoughtfulness and generosity.

Our saddles and bridles are in better shape because of some hard work by young hands. The horse 4-H group led by John and Serena Mills provided us with a service project as well as completing their requirements for research and presentation. We are most grateful for their work on the leather. Now the items are ready for our new Ranch Room waiting to be completed.

Fossils

We do not have many live artifacts in our collection. Occasionally we have had birds and flies in the building, which have been carried away. But, we do have a large selection of fossils which were once alive. However, we do not have any information or identifying labels for them. We would love to make an interesting display with someone's expert direction in this regard. Please contact us if you can be of assistance in this endeavor.

Idaho State Historical Museum

"Essential Idaho" was a once-in-a-lifetime exhibit in which our very own museum and "Tute" was highlighted. We were chosen as one of the 150 things that make the Gem State distinctive. A broom from the I.I. was the artifact chosen to tell the tale of the school which was a unique place with a great story. Rev. Paddock would have been proud of the choice made by ISHS.

Walter Johnson Exhibit

By Pat Womack

One of the displays that we are most proud of is the one commemorating Walter Johnson. For those of you not familiar with Walter Johnson, he came to Weiser and played with Weiser's semi-pro baseball team, the Weiser Kids, in 1906 and 1907. When the Washington Senators sent a scout to Weiser to recruit another player they saw Walter pitching. After returning to Washington, they sent another scout back to Weiser to convince Walter to pitch for the Washington Senators.

As they say, the rest is history. Walter pitched for the Senators for 21 years and still holds records to this day. They labeled him the Big Train because of his fast ball. Some say he was the fastest pitcher who ever played. It was even said that the balls he pitched were so fast that they were invisible. In spite of his fame those who knew him said he was a very quiet and humble man.

This last summer when Antiques Road Show came to Boise for the first time, I had the honor of taking some of our Walter Johnson memorabilia to the show. It caused quite a stir and the gentleman in charge of sports artifacts was very impressed. Even though Walter was not born in Weiser, and only spent two years here, with great pride we claim him as our own. If you haven't seen his display in our museum, plan to come and learn more about this great sports hero.

2013 Fiddle Report Wade Higgins

The third full week in June is the National Oldtime Fiddle Contest in Weiser. Fiddle Week (or as I like to call it, Fiddle Week-and-a-half) is always a busy, exciting time at the Snake River Heritage Center, "the museum". Last year, 2013, was certainly no exception.

At the museum, Fiddle Week begins in the middle of the second week in June. Musicians from around the country, occasionally, from around the world, gather to jam with fellow musicians, playing guitars, fiddles, trumpets, banjos, mandolins, pedal steel. There are even trumpets, flutes and an upright piano that make the trip nearly every year. Wandering through the various campgrounds at the old Institute, one can hear everything from bluegrass and country, to jazz and swing; all of it played at a professional level that any musician can appreciate.

Visitors and campers in 2013 included Canadians, Japanese, Australians, Germans and a very excellent ukulele player from Hawaii.

At the museum, there are approximately 100 campers that enjoy the lush green grass of the lawn and the shade of the huge old trees. Many of the campers have been coming for decades, staying in the same spot and enjoying what can truly be termed a family reunion in the shadow of Hooker Hall. There are also several food vendors and, recently, instrument makers that have been making the journey to Weiser to join in the festivities.

Steve Weill of Givens Legacy Mandolins had a good year selling his hand-made guitars and mandolins. Steve, a resident of northern Idaho, has come to the Fiddle contest several times, but has really enjoyed the atmosphere and camaraderie of the museum the last two years. Doc Huff, a banjo maker from the Oregon coast, has also found a good fit with us. In 2013, we also had Jan Silliman with her hand-painted Idaho artwork and Dan Tuttle brought his kettle

corn, to the delight of many campers and visitors. Benny's Tacos, Wayne's Smokehouse, Outlaw Coffee and Claudio's Burgers provided meals from breakfast through midnight snacks.

In 2013, the museum auditorium stayed busy. The stage was blessed with the Irish Dancers, at least two bluegrass groups, Mike Turner's drama presentations by younger performers. The Dufur Boys and Molly, as well as a clogging troop. The cloggers had a mixed reception, mostly because of the sheer volume of noise; the various jam sessions like to be able to hear themselves play. Overall, however, the programs were well-received, and attendance will grow as more groups make use of the auditorium.

Other uses of the museum during Fiddle Week include the Stickerville Sessions. These are workshops taught by professional musicians and singers that take place in and around the museum, organized by the Stickerville Association. The group also sponsored a country swing dance in the ballroom.

Guided tours of the Museum take place daily, on no particular schedule. The museum gift shop also functions as the campground office, shower check-in, and ice sales headquarters. While Fiddle Week every year seems the same in general, each year also brings its share of unique experiences. All of these add up to make Fiddle-Week-and-a-half a busy and exciting time at the museum.

Native American Display Room By Pat Womack

One of our most popular rooms in the museum is going to undergo some changes in the coming months. We are very fortunate to have two archaeologists from Weber State coming to head up the alterations and make sure the integrity of the large collection we have is saved and identified. The room will be cleaned, painted, and some much needed information will be added to the collection. Those of you who are familiar with this room will be surprised and pleased with the transformation.

Lifetime Memberships

The Board is fortified by all memberships and feels a responsibility to each member. The commitment offered is greatly appreciated.

Lifetime memberships are a lasting legacy for you and the Snake River Heritage Center. We treasure your dedication and are encouraged by your enthusiasm for “our” museum. Lifetime Members are:

Mr. & Mrs. Gish Amano, Sally Baker, Glendora Brown, Tom & Donna Butterfield, Allen & Tonya Capurro, Norma Dickerson, F. Lee & Dorine M. Eisenbarth, Lorene Kittams, Jim & Judy Grunke, Herb & Kelly Haun, Pat Harberd, Wes Higgins, Joseph & Margaret Hinson, Carolyn Hussman, Hope Jackson, Janet Koskella, Lee & Dorlene Laird, Lois Lee, Roger & Whitney Lindquist, Dale & Ginny Mammen, Ella Maisch, Wendy Martell, Rick & Barb McDaniel, Benny & Petra McDaniel, Jack McDaniel Construction, Mike & Lisa McKnight, Rick & Sandy Michael, Charles & Kathrun Mitchell, Terry & Lori Mooney, Ruth Reeves, Robert Self, Harry & Angie Soulen, Phil Soulen, Don & Yvonne Stephens, Stuart & Shawna Syme, Richard Taylor, David & Allison Taylor, Mike & Diana Thomas, William Tindall, Donald Tribble, Lorraine Trudy Walker, Ken Walston, Beverly Williams

NEW HOURS!

It was determined last fall that we would try a new schedule for the SRHC. Beginning with the weekend following Memorial Day, this summer season we will be open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. Perhaps we can catch some early birds and cooler air during those hours. As always, though, you are welcome to contact us for visitations during other times and days, if needed.

Mothers, May, and Music

The first floor of the old Tute was transformed in May for a special Mothers Day event. Volunteers had the joy of searching the clothing archives for fashions to impress the visitors. Dresses, hats, and accessories from the ages were refreshed, fitted to mannequins, and arranged with bright cloths and flowers. Spring was in the air, along with fresh flower bouquets, when the ladies and daughters arrived for the afternoon. The May Day fete was a regular event at the old Institute as it celebrated one of the founders, Jane Slocum, and her valuable character and offerings to the school. In keeping with the tradition set 100 years ago, we were delightfully entertained by extraordinary music. We were delighted by the sounds of Nathan Eliason at the piano, the Weiser Youth Symphony, directed by Denise Rasmussen, and Tori Thomas, accompanied by Between performances ladies were served drink and luscious desserts at beautifully arranged tables. This fundraiser was a delight for many, including the several volunteer assistants.

New Displays

Currently we are designing and arranging two new displays. A new area of interest highlights Frank Mortimer’s Oregon Trail Park, better known today as Mortimer’s Island by some of the older residents of the area. In its big days Frank’s dream of an amusement park became a reality in Weiser! The park maintained huge crowds for many seasons with its outdoor theatre, live and movie, dance hall, merry-go-round, baseball games, and huge picnic areas. Special trains brought revelers to the park from Boise and Council.

The “Camera room” will come alive with more signage, as well as the story of the local photographers and their work. Also to be spotlighted are the movie theatres of Weiser as researched by our local historian Ken Walston. Putting together a few creative heads is making this display a reality.

New Board Members

Introducing two who would like to serve on our Board:

Ken Walston:

I have been active in the museum for about three years, working in the photo collection, giving historical presentations and more recently planning the camera room project. I would like to take a more active part in the direction these and other projects are taking and thus being a member of the board would help me achieve that goal and allow me to provide greater assistance to the museum.

Dottie Emert:

I have been an ardent genealogist for the past twenty years taking great pleasure in discovering the family's heritage. I was privileged to participate in writing the historical biographies of the first settlers in the community of Salubria (Cambridge) which have been compiled and printed in three volumes entitled "They Came Before Us". This was a combined effort of The Heartland Genealogists, and the Cambridge Museum.

I have been volunteering at the Heritage Center for the past several years, and truly enjoy working with the artifacts donated by our community to help preserve our history and our people.

I would consider it an honor to be a member of your Heritage board.

Contact us

- If you are a grant writer as an elevator is a great need
- If you could help at the museum during Fiddle Week
- If you would like to be a summer docent on a Friday or Saturday

**Before your visit, or if you cannot visit soon, check out:
Weisermuseum.com.**