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Heritage Hall Renovation

As the Historical Society prepares for a busy new season, we would like to share with our members what we have been working on throughout the summer. The grandest undertaking of the off-season was the Heritage Hall Renovation. This major project was completed thanks to the dedication and hard work of local Boy Scout Aaron Plumb, who was seeking his Eagle Scout Badge.

Aaron assembled more than 75 of his fellow Scouts, family, and friends to assist him as he displayed his leadership abilities, a key component of the Eagle Scout requirement. When Aaron, son of George and Mary Plumb, contacted the Society early in the summer, his plan was to give Heritage Hall a facelift. The original plan included washing windows, painting the steps, and sanding the front doors. Thanks to the adaptability and untiring efforts of Aaron and his team, much more was accomplished.

At the request of Board Members and staff present, the initial plan evolved into the beginnings of a major renovation. By the end of the day, the old theatre seats had been removed, the worn carpet and linoleum ripped out, a temporary closet and wall torn down, and the back wall of the stage painted. Thanks to the efforts of Aaron and his team, Heritage Hall is well on its way to more closely reflecting its original character and purpose.

While much has been accomplished, your Society now faces the challenge of completing this renovation. This will include refinishing the hardwood floors,

removing the existing stage, and investing in supplies and equipment that will enable the Society to share Heritage Hall with the community.



Before



Volunteers hard at work



The impressive result



President's Message

Welcome back to a new season at the Museum! A lot is happening this season and we want everyone to take advantage of the many exciting activities and help us celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our State. The Staff and Volunteers at the Museum have had a busy summer. We also had a Special Project by Aaron Plumb, as part of completing his Eagle Scout rank. I hope you all read the great article about it on the front page of our newsletter.

The Museum will open on Thursday, September 15th to start our new season for 2011-2012. We will have a special Opening Event (Family Fun Sunday) and Model Railroad Exhibit Debut on Sunday, October 2, 2011. We will showcase a special Arizona Centennial Exhibit – a model railroad display. Look for the special story on page 4 of this newsletter!

The excitement at the Museum continues with the First Annual "Hot Wings for History" fundraiser on Sunday, October 9th. (Information and details are on page 5). Come join the fun with us.

If you are ready to start Fall cleaning (thoughts of cooler weather), the Historical Society is planning a huge community yard sale in December. If you have donations please call the Museum Office (information on page 7) and then come do some Christmas shopping!

We have scheduled a Docent Training session on September 6th at the Museum. Our Docents are a vital part of keeping our doors open. We need more Docents! Please call Dee or Ashley at the office and volunteer if you have a few extra hours each month. You will have a chance to learn more about the Casa Grande Valley and meet and greet new people to our area.

I will close with one last thought . . . we need members so watch for a Membership Drive as we reach out to our community. Think of your friends and relatives who are missing out on a wonderful experience with the Casa Grande Valley Historical Society.

See you at the Museum soon!

Gloria

MEMBERSHIPS APRIL-AUGUST 2011

Corporate Memberships

Silver (\$100)

Arizona Water Company
Casa Grande Valley Fine Art

Individual Memberships

Benefactor \$500+

Patricia Norris & Craig Ross

Sustaining \$100 +

Dr. Geta LeSeur Brown
J.K. Hammer
Gene Lehman
Bertha Lyon

MEMORIALS APRIL-AUGUST 2011

In Memory of Pat Hancock Gardner
Marlene Self

In Memory of Alma Hooper
Steve & Nancy Daley

In Memory of Cecil Robson
William Robson

FROM THE ARCHIVES

by Kay Benedict

WOMAN'S CLUB OF CASA GRANDE COLLECTION

If you hear loud shouts of glee coming from the upstairs Archives at the museum, don't be alarmed. It's only Kay Benedict, museum archivist, celebrating. She has finally completed processing the Woman's Club of Casa Grande Collection, which she has been working on for years, off and on.

The Woman's Club was organized and affiliated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1914, and built their clubhouse in 1924. During all those 97 years this club has been accumulating records that tell the story of their many activities—minute books, pressbooks, scrapbooks, letters, photographs, and literally thousands of newspaper clippings.

For years the Historical Society has been collecting bits and pieces of the history of this organization. Then in 2006 the few remaining active members of the Woman's Club recognized times had changed— younger people were finding new and different ways to serve their community. The women decided it was time to disband the organization. And, as they have always done, they did it right. One of their first concerns was the building on Florence Blvd. that has added so much character to our town since it was built in 1924. The City of Casa Grande was willing to take the building, maintain it, and continue its usefulness. It now serves as a meeting place for events, groups, classes, etc., as it has from its beginning.

The club offered the contents of the building and its records to the Historical Society to add to their already sizable Woman's Club Collection. It was a very welcome gift, but it presented many problems to the Society in terms of storage, processing and acceptance. After researching and learning what we could about the process, we developed guidelines and limitations for acceptance, use, and processing the material.

Our final guidelines of what to accept and make part of the Historical Society collections were based on such things as limitations of the Historical Society staff, facilities, and resources for long term preservation of the records, the importance of this group to the development of the community, and the prominence of the people in its leadership.

Deciding what to do with the wonderful collection of approximately 80 years of annual scrapbooks was one of the hardest decisions. We knew we lacked the facilities and staff to handle this amount of records of the activities, projects, events, teas, officer installations and all the minutiae of this active, vital organization.

Several of the very early books and some of the following years were kept intact as samples. The rest were examined, very significant photographs, projects, and events materials were removed and catalogued separately, and each year's projects, programs, events, and activities were recorded. We felt this would be a record of concern by the community at large at any given time.

So after many hours of sweating over a hot computer and piles and piles of papers, this wealth of material is available for use by researchers, historians, and anyone else with a legitimate reason to search the material. No wonder Kay is shouting with glee.

We hope we have adequately recorded, recognized, and preserved the history of an organization that was one of the basic building blocks of this community.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Historical Society needs
contributions for the **Bake Sale**

taking place on

Sunday, October 9th

during the

Hot Wings for History Cook-off.

Please drop off your

donated baked goods at the museum on

Saturday, October 8th between Noon and 4pm.

All proceeds go directly to the
Historical Society.

Volunteers are also needed to
help run the Bake Sale.

Call 520.836.2223 if you're
interested!



Artifact of the Month

By Dawn Snell

The museum is continuing its Artifact of the Month display this year. Last year volunteer Deb Miller did a fine job selecting items that are not usually part of our exhibits and highlighting a different artifact each month. She has agreed to continue and for October she has chosen to show several lanterns. For November, in honor of Thanksgiving, the topic is dinnerware. And for December, musical instruments will on display. Be sure to stop by your museum each month and see items from the behind the scenes collection.



This railroad lantern, donated by Bob Barnes, was used by "Red" Black who worked locally as a signal repairman for the Southern Pacific Railroad for 25 years. Several other lanterns will be on display.

This square serving bowl is part of the collection donated by long time residents, the Trekells. The bowl and other pieces of dinnerware may remind you of china used at your family Thanksgiving dinner.



Among many other things, Christmas means music. This cornet is part of the musical instrument exhibit planned for December. It was donated by Mildred Loebel whose husband was the director of the first municipal band in Casa Grande in 1930.



Longtime volunteer Deb Miller continues to select and install the Artifact of the Month exhibit in the Museum lobby each month. In honor of the new railroad exhibit, this first display of the season will feature various lanterns from our collection. Thank you, Deb, for your continual dedication to the Museum.

A New Exhibit

In honor of the Arizona Centennial, the Society is pleased to announce a new temporary exhibit to the Museum. Longtime patron and former Board member Art Carlton, along with Helen Smith, have designed and installed a model railroad exhibit in the Garrett Room. Art and Helen are the President and Vice President respectively of the Bruce C. Smith Model Railroad Foundation, which they created in memory of Art's mentor and Helen's late husband.

The model they have designed for the Museum will feature prominently in the Foundation's museum area, which they anticipate opening to the public in the next couple of years. The display measures sixteen feet long and features the Casa Grande, Eloy, and Maricopa train depots circa 1912. In addition to the great detail and craftsmanship put into the model, it also features a moving train that children (and adults, too!) can operate and watch zoom down the track from station to station.

The exhibit, which will be on display for the entire museum season, will be completed in time for our opening day, September 15th. Its official debut will be at our **Opening Event on Sunday, October 2nd** from noon-4:00pm. This also coincides with our first Family Fun Sunday of the season. **(Continued on page 5)**



Art Carlton,
Founder of the
Bruce C. Smith
Model Railroad

Casa Grande Valley Historical Society "Hot Wings for History"

Fi

rs

Sunday, October 9, 2011
11am - 4pm

110 W. Florence Blvd, Casa Grande

Fun for the whole family!

Featuring local food & craft vendors,
beer, DJ, & prizes

Members: \$7 / Non-members: \$10

Kids 5-12: \$1 / 4 & Under: Free

For tickets & info call:

520.836.2223



Admission for adults and seniors will be just \$4 that day, and will be free for children under 16, as always. Light refreshments will be served. There will also be activities for the little ones so be sure to bring your children or grandchildren. Art Carlton will be present to demonstrate how the model works and answer questions about the exhibit. The display is supplemented by artifacts and archival materials from our collection as well as from Art's personal collection.

We are ever so grateful to Art and Helen for their dedication and generosity in donating this display to the Society for the year. As our state is celebrating its 100th birthday this season, this exhibit debut is a great way to kick off a significant year in Arizona history.

Keep in Touch...

Because of these tough economic times your museum is seeking ways to reduce expenses. One way is to provide our membership with an electronic copy of our newsletter. If you wish to receive a hard copy of the newsletter you can continue to do so; however, we would like to encourage you to provide an email address so we can reduce our printing and mailing costs. Please send your request to info@cgvhs.org along with your membership name and a current e-mail address.



Staff Update

Although the Museum has been closed for the summer, the staff and several devoted volunteers have been busy working behind the scenes. Here's a sampling of what we've been up to:

Office assistant **Dee Heinle** has been adding to the unique inventory of the museum store. She has ordered T-shirts featuring the CGVHS logo in a variety of new colors so that all can show their pride in the Society. Several fun railroad-themed toys have also been added to our children's section. Betty Taroyle and Emma Yepa, two of our native artisans, have added more of their wares to the store as well. Betty makes beautiful necklaces featuring turquoise, hematite, and other indigenous materials. Emma's specialty is the unique tri-colored Jemez pottery she handcrafts. And of course, we are always adding to our wide catalog of books on various subjects. Dee is also hard at work planning a new fundraiser which will be held in December: the "Historic Finds" yard sale (see info at right). More on this to come!

Office manager **Ashley Moser** has kept busy mapping out an exciting calendar of events for the coming year. In addition to the Opening Event on October 2nd, she is assisting Erica Herman and Regis Sommers with a new fundraiser, the Hot Wings for History chicken wing cook-off, which will be held at the museum on Sunday, October 9th. Guests of all ages are invited to stroll the museum grounds while sampling chicken wings and beer from local vendors; they can vote for their favorite recipe, and then see who the judges picked as their favorite. Other local food and craft vendors will also be set up to sell their unique wares. Check out the ad on page 5, or call Ashley in the office at 520.836.2223 for more information.

Ashley and Dawn have been working together on two exhibit updates. The banking display in the Garrett Room has been redesigned to make it more visitor-friendly. We are also in the process of revitalizing the Dallis Schoolhouse. The goal is to make the space appear more like a functioning schoolroom, and also to tell a more complete narrative of the history of education in the Casa Grande Valley. Some modifications to the schoolhouse have already been made, while others are awaiting pending grant requests.

Collections manager **Dawn Snell** has completed the Historical Society's picture book for Arcadia Publishing. With the help of archivist Kay Benedict and research assistance from Merrilyn Ridgeway, Dawn has selected, researched, and written captions for more than 200 historic photographs from our collection. After a year and a half of intermittent hard work, the completed manuscript was sent off for publishing in early June. We hope to have the finished books ready for sale in the museum store in time for the holidays. The book will also be available in bookstores throughout the country. More information on the exact release date is forthcoming. Congratulations, Dawn, on a wonderful accomplishment!

Grant writer and education coordinator **Merrilyn Ridgeway** has been working tirelessly throughout the summer on several projects. Near the end of last season, Merrilyn was instrumental in forming a Centennial Task Force composed of several local organizations. These various groups will work in unison to make the Arizona Centennial a successful and memorable event in Casa Grande. The official statehood centennial is February 14, 2012. Be sure to look for more information on our website and in upcoming newsletters!

Merrilyn has drafted numerous grant proposals seeking funds for the upcoming Centennial celebrations, as well as for much needed exhibit updates. She also worked to acquire four new display cases, donated from the former Mining & Mineral Museum in Phoenix, which will be used in the Dallis Schoolhouse. Merrilyn also coordinated with local Boy Scout Aaron Plumb on the Heritage Hall renovation project which took place throughout the month of August. These volunteer efforts not only helped the Society immensely, but helped Aaron earn his Eagle Scout rank. Thank you, Aaron, and congratulations on your admirable achievement!

Archivist **Kay Benedict**, our longest standing volunteer, continues to come in two days a week to process photographs and other archival materials. In addition to assisting Dawn with the creation of the picture book, she has also worked with Art Carlton to find materials for the railroad exhibit.

(Continued on page 7)

Staff Update, continued

Kay was featured in the August edition of Pinal County Lifestyles, which explored the "captivating careers" of local residents. Kay shared her experience of nearly 50 years with the Historical Society. In addition to all of this, Kay has also been processing the Women's Club of Casa Grande Collection, which you can read about on page 3.

The staff would like to welcome **Erin McClish May** as our new custodian. In addition to serving as the Docent Chair for the Museum, Erin is now maintaining our facilities each week. She has always demonstrated extra care and attention to detail for the Museum and its grounds. She has also made herself available throughout the summer to help with extra projects. Erin is a great fit and we are pleased to have her on board!

THE HISTORIC FINDS YARD SALE



When: Thursday, Friday, & Saturday,
December 1, 2, & 3, 2011
8am-Noon daily

Where: Lehman's Warehouse
1015 E. 1st Street, Casa Grande

Why: All proceeds go directly to the Historical Society to establish a new scholarship fund, as well as financing new exhibits and educational programming.

Please call 520.836.2223 if you would like to make a donation to the yard sale. Pick-up is available for large items. Volunteers are also needed to assist staff during the event.



A Book Review from our Museum Store...

The Doctor Wore Petticoats, Women Physicians of the Old West

By Chris Enis

Reviewed by Dawn Snell

This book contains the profiles of 12 women seeking to become doctors when that endeavor was looked upon with the same sort of disdain as women of the evening. These women believed that the West was more in need of physicians and perhaps more open to the idea of a woman doctor than the rest of the country. In many cases they were proved correct, but not without first having to overcome all manner of difficulties. Medical schools were reluctant to accept women and when they did the professors and fellow students treated them badly. It includes stories of women forced to overcome prejudice that was so all encompassing that men would rather die than be treated by a woman doctor. Early on even women viewed female doctors simply as healers rather than as doctors. As bad as the prejudice was, these women persevered, whether through financial need, compassion, or the simple belief that they could help their fellow citizens. The women highlighted in this volume practiced their chosen profession in gold mining camps and on Indian reservations, and in rough and tumble lawless towns such as Deadwood City, South Dakota. They became pharmacists and dentists and ultimately gained the respect of those they treated. Perhaps their most important contribution to society was the example of dedication and persistence they established for other women who sought to succeed in their chosen profession.

The Doctor Wore Petticoats
125 pages
\$12.95

If any of our members are so inclined, the museum would be happy to consider printing their book review of one of the many books available in our gift shop, even children's books.



**CASA GRANDE
VALLEY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY & MUSEUM**

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Casa Grande, AZ 85122

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New Treasures at the Museum Store!



**A wide array of fun and
educational items for kids!**



**New T-shirt styles
and book selections**



A variety of beautiful jewelry