



Behind the Scenes at the Keller Heritage Center

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Stevens County Historical Society

Rambles from the Curator

by Becca Gordon

Another year has come and gone. A new year has just begun. Last year many of you had the chance to see the renovations to Mr. Keller's Room and the canning display in the Keller House Kitchen. This year the trend of change is continuing, in both the Keller House and the museum. The upstairs wood floors in the house were refinished after Christmas, and they look beautiful!

There are plans in the works for a new display in the kitchen and dining room. In addition, plans are taking shape to open the attic to visitors with a new bedroom display in the room located there. Plans are also in the works to update the displays in the schoolhouse and the homestead cabin on the lower grounds.

Inside the museum, major renovations

are underway. The Hardware Store has already received a facelift and only has some finish work left. The Pioneer Life display is currently being completely remodeled and expanded. The large Music Room is going away, and in its place will be three or four new displays. One new display will be a Library, which is being donated and constructed by the Library Improvement Club in celebration of their 100 year anniversary this year. Heartfelt thanks go out to them for their incredible generosity! Next to the Library display will be a Judge's/Lawyer Office. Next to the Hardware Store will be a Music Shop. The final display, if space allows, has yet to be determined. A facelift is also planned for the current Laundry, Hair Salon and Print Shop.

As we are going through these renovations, I have noted several items that we will need to complete the displays. They are: dish set-formal or everyday-for Keller House, flatware set for Keller House, older children's-boys and girls- clothing from the 1800s thru 1940s, and everyday men's clothing from all eras. I am also in need of a number of large 100% cotton, white sheets to use as covers on the furniture in storage. If anyone has any of these items, or knows someone who does, and would like to donate them to the Society, please contact me at 509-684-5968 or email at curator@stevenscountyhistoricalsociety.org or SCHS_Curator@hotmail.com. Until next time . . .

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Around the Grounds

by Marvin Ray

In Review—Grounds Activity 2008

The grounds work has been completed for the fall and winter normal activity.

Raj Sahota, our new trainee from Career Path Services, has not only performed yard work, but also carpentry work during the past several months. Raj lost his job due to the economic downturn, and is now enrolled in school, but also has to perform a certain amount of work as his training progresses.

Raj helped Larry Fine install lights for the Christmas Tour. We are now involved with a very ambitious remodeling program involving

changing the looks of a number of display cases. New display areas will be created involving a large amount of carpentry work.

Consequently, the next several months will be very busy for the Museum volunteers. The only problem may be the lack of sufficient money to complete the projects.



President's Message

by Janet Thomas

Although at times it seems we move at a glacial pace, all I need to do is look back and see all the accomplishments to put things into perspective. Even when we move slowly, we move well!

The Christmas Tour went well with lots of guests and lots of fun, in spite of some nasty weather, particularly on Friday evening. The decorations inside and out exceeded any expectation I had. As one guest said – “last year I didn’t think the decorations could be more beautiful. And yet here we are and they are more beautiful.” This year even more people helped decorate with rooms and areas being assigned out. I would never have guessed the decorations would have gone together so well with nobody knowing what others were going to do. More thanks than can be expressed go to those

who helped. Put next year’s tour on your calendar. The first Friday, Saturday and Sunday in December.

When the tour was over the last of the un-refinished floors in the Keller House were done. And the inside of the museum looks a little like a junk yard here and there. We have some new displays and some old ones are being re-done. Should be an exciting season coming up.

We have had some wonderful generosity by individuals and businesses. Lots of supplies were donated to construct the new displays.

The Prestini show for next year is still being worked on. We are seeking funds to cover the cost of our part of the show. Including cleaning the paintings we estimate the cost to be over \$10,000 so

for sure we will need help.

The general membership meeting in October featured a Council of Elders who told about going to school in about the 30s. The Elders were wonderful and the stories they told were enjoyed by everyone at the meeting. Our thanks to them.

Volunteers were outstanding again this year. This list of names is long and the tasks they perform are amazing. They are so skilled and dedicated it is almost unbelievable. In addition to the obvious ones – tour guides – that work in the summer others work all year round. It is great to be part of this terrific group. There is room for you in that group.

Thank you for your membership and support. It’s a great cause and a great organization.

Gingerbread House Contest Report by S. Hensley

This year was going to be the LAST year for the Gingerbread House Contest if there were as few entries as we’ve had the last several years. It’s a lot more work to pull off that some people might think! However, I am pleased to report that we had 16 houses and the contest will be held again next year. We had such a variety of houses, all sorts of unique touches and all EDIBLE!! The contestants really rose to that challenge

with amazingly well. One gingerbread house (not in the contest) was decorated and given away as this year’s door prize at the Christmas Tour.

Interestingly enough, the house that won the People’s Choice Award was the second-place winner. Overall, it was SO hard to choose winners this year, which is just the way we like it. The Tour visitors just love to see all the gingerbread houses each year.

Keller House’s 2009 Season Begins May 1st!!

Mark your calendars for the beginning of the Keller House’s 2009 tour season! The Keller House will open on May 1st at 10 AM. You will be able to see new items in newly-remodeled displays, new restorations at the Keller House itself and really just a fresh, new look for every building. You won’t want to miss it this year!!

A Rose by Any Other Name....

It doesn’t seem like it should make a difference as to the name of the Museum Volunteers are given, but as time goes by it seems that it does make a difference. They used to be called “The Volunteers”, but over time there were so many volunteers doing so many things that the name lost its meaning. To distinguish them from the rest of the family of volunteers they were called “Docents”, which is the traditional name. That seemed too formal and scared people and it was a little hard to remember. So, “Tour Guide” began to be used. That seemed to really scare some people who thought they needed to know everything about every item in the museum, house, grounds, etc, AND they had to tour people around and give speeches to them.

Within the Museum Volunteers (Tour Guides) there are really two different assignments. One is as an actual tour guide who accompanies visitors to areas of the museum and may actually have a presentation for the visitor or may answer

questions from the visitor. The other assignment is to provide reception for guests entering the museum. They really provide guest relations or guest reception. They greet the guest, inform the about what is available, hand out pamphlets and point the way.

This year we are looking at a rename. As a group they will all be Museum Volunteers with some being called Tour Guides and the others being called Museum Reception. How does that sound? If you have comments call the museum before we have orientation the end of April. If you have a better idea, call that in also.

Preliminary work is being done to see who is available this summer as Museum Volunteers. There is always a need for more people to help and perhaps there will be a less intimidating name this year. We are also looking for someone willing to take on the job of coordinating the volunteers. If you’d like to give it a try, call the museum and talk to Janet.

Our Volunteers: The Lifeblood of the Keller House

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Keller House & Museum. The Keller House & Museum would not exist without the many dedicated volunteers that keep it all running, year in and year out.

Administrative volunteers make sure that budgets are completed, grants are written and applied for, volunteers are coordinated and donations of needed supplies are procured. Other volunteers actually perform the needed restorations and general maintenance. Tour guides come in on a regular basis and make it possible for the public to see the treasure

that is our Keller House & Museum.

Special projects require special volunteers. Avista employees regularly volunteer manpower and equipment to help hang Christmas lights for the annual tour. City crews plow the driveway, when necessary, so that guests can get up to the museum. Dozens of people donate their time and treasures to set up and display during the tour. We don't always get to thank each volunteer personally, but we sure do appreciate everything they do.

One of our volunteers works for a local company that donates money

twice a year to the agencies or organizations to which their employees donate 25 hours or more every six months. The grants are worth \$250 each time and the money will give a much-needed boost to the Museum's bottom line. We missed the first grant this year due to a technicality, but hope to get the second grant later this summer. Check with your employer to see if there is a program at your workplace.

If you are not currently a volunteer, look into becoming one. Even just an hour helps out and keeps things running. You'll have a great time!!

New Displays—Truly a Miracle

by Janet Thomas

The project to update some of the display and store fronts in moving right along. There has been wonderful support to help keep the cost down. This project is almost a miracle, as this year finances are so low and the need for repairs was so high, but people really came to the rescue and continue to.

Beryl and Bea Webb donated log siding to make the "Pioneer Life" display look like a log cabin. Gary and Janet Thomas donated two vintage windows for the cabin and the print shop. The Nichols Family donated barn lumber for the agriculture and HBC Fort display. SE Wood Products donated dimension lumber for the infrastructure of the displays. Marvin Ray donated polyurethane. Webley Lumber donated rough sawn lumber for the hardware store. Kelly Parmley donated wainscoting, and shingles he took from his historic house to go on the barn roof and in the school display and siding for an undetermined display. As soon as the weather permits Grady Knight will be bringing in some additional barn wood and shingles. Raj Sahota who is doing fabulous work on the construction donated boards for flooring and ceilings and the use of his pickup to haul supplies.

A new library is being constructed by Katie Tolin and Bruce Bailey. The doors are the old ones from the city library and furnishings are from the library as well. Bruce and Katie are furnishing supplies and labor for the project.

Connie Richart, long time museum volunteer and all 'round helper has been painting.

It almost goes without saying that Marvin Ray is up to his elbows in the project.

A big THANK YOU goes out to everyone who has supported this project. Isn't it amazing what can be accomplished when lots of people band together for a common goal.

When Becca, our curator gets back to work she will really be surprised at how well it looks. She has lots of work in front of her and her team to get the insides of the display ready for opening.



Working on the new displays—messy, time-consuming and worth everything!!

Stevens County Historical Society
P. O. Box 25
Colville, WA 99114

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Membership Application & Renewal

- New Membership
- Renewal (membership expires on date on label)

Choose One:

- Senior/Student/Disabled.....\$10.00
- Single Membership.....\$20.00
- Family Membership.....\$25.00
- Business Membership.....\$35.00
- Sustaining Membership.....\$100.00
- Patron Membership.....\$500.00
- Life Membership.....\$2,500.00

Payment Enclosed: \$_____

Name:_____

Address:_____

Cut out, enclose payment and send to:

Stevens County Historical Society
P. O. Box 25
Colville, WA 99114

How to Reach Us

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 AM to 1 PM

Phone/Message Number: (509) 684-5968

Email: schs@ultraplix.com

Website: www.stevenscountyhistoricalsociety.org

Address: P. O. Box 25
700 N. Wynne St., Colville, WA 99114

Museum Hours:

May & September: 1 PM to 4 PM
June, July, August: 10 AM to 4 PM (Mon.-Thurs.)
1 PM to 4 PM (Fri.-Sun.)

October through April: Museum & Keller House Tours
By Appointment.

Research Library Hours:

Wednesday: 10 AM to 1 PM
Thursday: 1 PM to 4 PM (limited services)

If you need other hours, please call the museum to arrange a different time.