

Docents Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 7

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

August 2009

Docent program

By Ruby McFarland

We're planning a trip to Como – or since I don't know when this will be in the newsletter – we may have gone. I saw smoke up that way and I thought we may not be able to make it.

Lately I've been reading the copious writing of Alf Doten. He was quite the renaissance man, he reinvented himself frequently. He had several pages in his journals devoted to his short stay in Como. He played his banjo at the first dance, he reported news in Como's first and only newspaper that lasted three months. He liked the ladies and had a stable of admiring women who thought he was okay.

I've been to Como before but after reading Alf's tales it gave me a better feeling about the Como area.

Emma Loftus wrote about Como also and Chester's involvement with the mining there. There are still folks who think the mother lode is yet to be discovered.

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

On July 25th the on-going Docent Training continued at the School House Museum. Ruby conducted a session on early mining in the Dayton area. This included a detailed explanation of the models of mining equipment which are on display in the museum. Well attended, this session gave new insight to many Docents on the stages of mining, milling, etc., as it developed in the Dayton area.

This series of lectures adds weekly to the know-

ledge of our Docents and helps build the training manual we are all working on. Thanks to Ruby for extending this opportunity.

Book review

By Patrick Neylan

“A Kid on the Comstock,” John Taylor Waldorf

This is a fun easy read that gives great insight to the life of a “kid” during the boom years of the Comstock. It lets you see life in the 1870s through the eyes of the son of a hard working miner. You will see the arrival of the Circus, meet John Mackay, run away from home, fight on the mine dumps for firewood, live through the Great Fire of 1875 and follow the funeral procession of a departed Chinese.

You can read all the dates and stats of the period, view all the photos, but you will only get a sense of the everyday life of the miner and his family by reading books like this one. It is still in print and easily available at the Mark Twain Bookstore, Virginia City, or the State or Railroad Museum in Carson City.

Dates to remember

By Patrick Neylan

Important dates to keep in mind through this month of August:

August 5: Field trip to Como. Meet at the School House Museum 9:30 a.m. Bring water and a lunch, and your camera.

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August 8: Docent training at the School House Museum. On-going training on Museum displays.

August 15: “Granny,” Dayton's first motorized fire engine, travels to Virginia City to take part in a Fireman's Muster and Parade. Come up and cheer for “Granny,” hand out Dayton brochures and promote Dayton Valley Days! Great time to say thanks to Central Lyon County Fire District for all their help and support to get “Granny” back on the road.

August 19: HSDV General meeting, 12:30 p.m., at the Dayton Valley Library.

August 22: Docent training at the School House Museum. All members welcome.

August 26: Docent meeting, 10:30 a.m., at the School House Museum.

Newsletter notes

By Bob Wallace

This issue is a few days late due to some of us being away from the area on vacation, including your editor. Therefore, special thanks go this month to Patrick Neylan for covering the “Dates” column normally written by Donna McElroy, in addition to his own “Docents” column. Patrick also put together the book review article on virtually a moment's notice Sunday evening.

Ruby McFarland writes the “Docent Program” article, and we thank her for that submission each and every month. Ruby's column makes for a good way to get each issue off the ground. For the record, we journeyed to Como on the day this newsletter made it into print.
