

# Docents Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 8

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

September 2009

## Docent program

By Ruby McFarland

I've come to the conclusion that the only thing in life that's constant is change. I've been around a long time and just about the time I settle into a comfortable spot someone comes along and changes the game play. I have surprisingly adapted to these sudden changes. There are so many circumstances that dictate change in life – birth, death, job change, loss of job, loss of friends, illness, and you could go on and on.

The point I'm getting to is the changes of the Historical Society of Dayton Valley. When first I started hanging around with the old-timers at the museum, our activities were centered around that building. There were only a handful of people attending regularly and our Christmas party was a pot luck at the museum. And people didn't always agree.

The museum now has a load of docents. Stony and Laura, who kept it open at first, still are hanging in and are the most cherished members. They had a great BBQ at their home in August that was attended by many more than that handful we started with. Thanks, Laura and Stony.

## Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

We had a great turnout for the recent tour of the Nevada State Library and Archives. Sixteen members of the Society and a guest, Jaquie Obos from St. Mary in the Mountains.

Susan Searcy gave us a detailed and thorough tour of the facility as well as explaining to the group very basic methods of preservation. Steps

we can do in our museum with simple everyday tools. She also supplied the names of preservation material companies so we can look into the costs of proper, acid-free folders and boxes for documents as well as artifacts.

The tour of the climate controlled “stacks” was particularly mind boggling! I thought I had a lot of stuff in my house! Row after row of boxes on electrically operated shelves stretching wall to wall many layers high. How fortunate we all are that there are such dedicated people to save the history of Nevada for future generations to enjoy and learn from.

Susan commented that in addition to all their work on cataloging, storing and preserving, she and the rest of the staff deal with over 100 requests per month for research information. We all thought we were busy!

The last thought on this great event is that perhaps it was a bit of an eye opener to all of us who know the importance of historical documents and other artifacts. Perhaps we need to learn more and take steps to do better at the museum as well as with our family items.

See you at the next event.

## Book review

By Patrick Neylan

“Coins of the Comstock,” by Fred N. Holabird  
The Pioneer Minor Coinage of Virginia City and the Comstock

This is a little odd review because I can't find the book to buy for my collection. It was loaned to me by a friend who bought it at a recent coin show in Reno. It was just released. I have read it,

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but unless Ed forgets about it, I will have to return it soon.

It starts with, to me, the amazing story of the enormous shortage of coins in the West. Just normal pocket change. I never thought about it, but the government did not respond quickly as it was involved in stabilizing the South after the Civil War and westerners were using gold dust, etc., for transactions, making it difficult for small sales, like in a saloon! This led individual merchants, many of them saloon keepers, to produce their own tokens good for a specific item, "One Drink," or a specific value, "5 cents." The book then examines all the merchants in Virginia City and other Comstock towns giving the history of the people, the bars, the shops with address, dates of operation, and in many cases, what happened to them all the way up to prohibition. Lots of neat details. Lots of pictures, many I have never seen. It is a quick informative read – if you can find a copy.

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## Dates to remember

By Bob Wallace

Some of our members are still on summer vacation, others of us are about to leave for a week or more. This, therefore, will be an abbreviated column of dates for the month of September.

**September 16:** HSDV general meeting, 12:30 p.m., at the Dayton Valley Library. C&C Working Group will meet immediately afterward.

**September 19-20:** Dayton Valley Days, in Old Town Dayton.

## What a month!

By Bob Wallace

That month would be the month of August when many of us took time during the month for a trip up the Pine Nut Mountains to visit several of the historic mining camps, enjoy a picnic lunch at Como, drive beyond Como to Pony Meadows and then return to Dayton.

We departed the museum shortly after 9:30 that Wednesday morning, crossed the Dayton bridge and turned onto Como Road, reached the end of two-lane road in mere moments and started our ascent of the Pine Nuts, a single-track road that goes nearly straight up the hill, affording good views of Dayton when one takes a moment to look back at our starting point. It's best not to take more than a moment to enjoy the view as the road will be turning again one way or the other by the time you get your head back to looking forward.

Weather for our visit to Como could not have been better. While temperatures were running relatively high in Dayton at 4400 feet elevation, going up to Como meant getting up to about 7500 feet elevation with temperatures somewhat cooler, and the occasional breeze helping to keep us cool, enjoying our picnic lunches while sitting out in the open near one of the old mining sites at Como.

Later in the month many of us enjoyed a BBQ dinner at Stony and Laura Tennant's home in Dayton Valley. Ruby McFarland briefly covered details of that event earlier in this newsletter. Suffice it to say everyone enjoyed an excellent barbecue with a handful of salads to choose from to fill one's plate with, excellent companionship amongst the folks in attendance, and a modest little breeze to keep all of us relatively cool that evening with no rain, despite guesses by several of us that it might be coming along any minute. A major "Thank you!" to Stony and Laura for hosting the barbecue, also to those who brought some of the best salads and desserts in the valley!

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