

# Docents Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 1

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

February 2010

## Docent program

By Ruby McFarland

“It is not fair to ask of others what you are unwilling to do yourself.” Eleanor Roosevelt

That's kinda what volunteering is all about. Now-a-days I sometimes have to ask people to help me with things I can no longer do. I'm willing but the flesh is weak.

Now, this time of year we think about all the things we can accomplish in the next few months. It puts a strain on some of us while we know it's important for the success of HSDV to put forth the effort. It's still important to me to do what is necessary to keep the program interesting. I hope we can maintain a certain level of fun in doing the job. When the fun leaves, it becomes a chore.

Sitting the museum is and has been a labor of love. I love the museum, the volunteers, the history, and the visitors (especially the visitors). The most fun I've had is telling the history to people who don't speak English. The charades I've gone thru to get the story across is comical. Equally funny is their attempt in asking the questions. We usually end up with a good laugh and being friends.

I have a couple of field trips I'd like to have us do this year. After I make the primary arrangements I'll let everyone in on the plans. I don't want to promise what I can't deliver.

All I can say is, have fun this year, keep it light, place principles before personalities, and show up.

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The School House Museum  
will re-open on February 20-21  
Saturdays, 10-4; Sundays, 1-4

## Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

Good news to all of you who have been a part of the Docent Program within the Historical Society of Dayton Valley for the last two years! All of you and all of your efforts are about to be realized in the completion of the much touted and hoped for: DOCENT TRAINING MANUAL.

For over two years we have all worked toward this goal, and now, waiting for refinements and historical reviews, we are about to present to the Society an accurate and readily understandable manual. This guide will enable docents of all experience levels to feel comfortable giving tours in our museum.

Within this manual will be “open and close” guidelines for operating the museum, as well as a brief overview of cash register operations. The day to day efforts have been composed by Docent Donna McElroy. Included is a promise that all new docents will be a buddy with an experienced docent until they are comfortable running the museum alone.

The Society owes a major “thanks” to Ruby McFarland for the insight that created our Docent Program, as well as to Donna McElroy, who has been instrumental in administrating it, and who will now be taking over the supervising of staffing at our museum for the upcoming season.

The history of Dayton is important to all of us. Please help the Society remain a force in our community. Urge your friends to join the Society and participate in the Society-sponsored events!

[Patrick Neylan is a docent at St. Mary in the Mountains Catholic church in Virginia City, and a docent at the Dayton Museum. -Ed.]

## Red Shirts and Leather Helmets: Volunteer Fire Fighting on the Comstock Lode

Author: Steven Frady

By Patrick Neylan

This fascinating history of fire fighting on the Comstock was written by Steven Frady, fire chief of the Virginia City volunteer fire department and one of the founders of the Fireman's Museum in Virginia City. With the theme for this year's Historical Preservation Month (May) being "volunteers," what could be a better study than that of the men and women who have protected the rest of us from disaster by fire on the Comstock and especially Dayton.

This book has information on Dayton, including a history of our early firefighting equipment which now resides in the Virginia City Fireman's Museum on C Street. It describes the poor conditions of buildings on the Comstock in the early days as well as the evolution of firefighting techniques and equipment. It also lists and describes the major fires that occurred on the Comstock and includes many photos of men, equipment and conflagrations. Personal stories make history come alive for the reader.

It also includes the by-laws of early firefighting companies, and a glossary of terms used at the time. It is sort of a specialized read, but interesting and well worth the time.

times each year. The Dayton History Reader Book Club meets the first Thursday bi-monthly from 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM at Starbucks in Dayton.

The objective of this group is to read and discuss historical fiction, non-fiction, historical memoirs, books that borrow events, facts, characters, or settings from history. Dates for meetings include: February 4 (last week as this is written); April 1, June 3, August 5 and October 7. Books for discussion have already been determined.

Saturday, April 24 has been selected as the date to hold a C&C Railroad Depot Jamboree and Art Show at the C&C's historic Dayton Depot, corner of US 50 and Main Street, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Look for a fun-filled day designed to assist in funding rehabilitation of the building, returning it to its C&C Depot look dating to the 1880s.

May is once again Historic Preservation Month, this year's theme being "volunteers," as noted in the article across the page from this column. As has been the case in previous years, the museum will be kept open daily throughout the month.

It's been several years since we've had a good snow around the area in winter months. This year may be attempting to make up for prior years of very little snow, if any snow at all. During one of our drives around the Old Town in December after one of our snow events of that month we found the museum looking like the photo just below. Residents of the area have suggested this may be one of the best winters in some number of years.



## Newsletter notes

By Bob Wallace

A quick note for docents: Cleaning of the museum prior to opening for this year will take place on Tuesday, February 9 at 10:00 AM. Opening day for this year will come on Saturday, February 20, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM; Sunday, February 21, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

Book readers have a new group interested in reading and discussing western history several