

Docents Newsletter

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

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Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

There is a new year upon us and like a thoroughbred horse racing toward the finish line in an important contest the docent task force is racing toward the museum opening deadline bearing down on us in March. Under the constant and ever pervading influence of our long time mentor, Ruby McFarland, the group has begun to transform the museum into something quite different and fresh. Improved displays, clearer, neater labels and even some painting and repairs have all been on our agenda for the “winter projects.” Any member of the society or Dayton local that visited the museum in the last year or so will this season find a totally new experience. If all continues to progress as planned, there will be a fresh new look to our most important display, Gold Discovery. There will be a new and concisely organized tribute to the Chinese, testifying to the importance of this hardworking group and their contribution to Dayton's early history. Also spruced up will be the Episcopal Church display, and the Sutro Tunnel. There will be a reorganization of the collection of Hazlett-Randall paintings, and a new Sesquicentennial exhibit, just to name a few.

But a museum does not live by exhibits alone and many other behind-the-scenes activities have also been taking place. Thanks to the dedication of our members the accessioning process has continued and been updated, including its transfer to a digital record on the newer computer in the office. Of special interest and importance, it looks like the long awaited for and patiently crafted docent training manual will make its debut this season to aid old and new docents alike in giving informative as well as interesting and entertaining

tours. Personally, I think the biggest and most important project, as well as the most satisfying, was seeing the size of the working group and experiencing their genuine and sincere desire to create something better for not only the Society but for the Dayton community as well. The Society has grown in size and in importance over the last few years and the museum is by far the most visible expression of our work, passion, dedication and commitment to history and to Dayton. Too much pride can be a fault, but each of you deserves up to the legal limit when it comes to your work for the Historical Society of Dayton Valley! Thank you.

New look!

By Donna McElroy

Winter chores have been keeping many of us busy at the museum since our last newsletter. For those who have not seen the progress, *have we got surprises for you!* And for our visitors this year.

After discussion, the decision was made to remove all of the books from the “Library” storage at the back of the museum. Now came the challenge as what to do with those books from so long ago. After being stored for so long, many of the books were water damaged and we found it necessary to discard them. There had been a water sprinkler leak that damaged some of the books and they were beyond saving. We did discard these and some that had mold or other severe damage. There was a big question as to should we or should we not toss all of the books. Pat and I slept on the question and made the final decision that work though it may be, we would keep the books and sort them. While sorting the books we came

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across some that are well worth keeping. There are books that had been used in our schoolhouse to teach the students who came to school here. We found many other wonderful and exceptional first editions that may be of some value to buyers.

Our final determination was to move all books to the "Depot" and place them in the room used as the train room. We have done so by moving the bookshelves as well. We will catalog the books and see exactly what we have. At that time we will decide if we will have them put on eBay or offered to a buyer.

The books vary in subject from poetry (the earliest book dated 1814 – 6th edition from London) so far to "Ranch Romance" series 1929 – "Early History of Nevada 1881 complete with drawings donated by the Ray Walmsley family, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" – "Alice in Wonderland" – and many more.

I do have some volunteers to help with the cataloging; if you have an interest, please give me a call.

Now to the vacated space left by these wonderful books. We have painted it and the bookcases that we chose to keep. They will be used to house our books for research. Those are all of the Diaries that are in boxes, scrapbooks, any and all of the wonderful books that we are finding and items that we find as we are doing our accessioning. We will also be able to store items that are now in the lending closet on shelves.

We have put a table in this back room and are able to hold small meetings there. It will also be a good spot for working on projects or for doing research.

Our new room will be a valuable addition. I am sure if anyone would like to come over and take a look at the room or the books we are still working every Wednesday from 10:30 until whenever to prepare for our opening and probably well after as well. Stop by and see us and our new changes!

Happy spring!

Closing notes

By Bob Wallace

A modest change in this issue of the "Docents Newsletter," occasioned by Ruby McFarland being slightly under the weather at deadline time, first weekend of the month. We trust Ruby will be feeling better by the end of February when the next newsletter is due for publishing. And a major thank you to Patrick Neylan and Donna McElroy for their submissions for this first newsletter of another new year. For the record, this newsletter is published eleven times each year, January being the month without an issue on account of the holidays at year's end.

One of the thoughts on this new year for those in the Historical Society came about at the January meeting held at the Dayton Valley Library. While we have seen busy years in the recent past, this year is likely to be another year with lots of time committed to various and sundry projects over the course of the year. Among other things, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the HSDV!

The first weekend of March marks the opening of the museum for the year, each weekend of that month. April and May will see the "ghosts" of Dayton providing details of "old" Dayton to the newer generations at the several schools around Dayton. As well, May is also Historical Preservation Month, the museum to be open daily, this year's theme: the Homestead Act.

June brings Oodles of Noodles and the Rummage Sale. August will be busy with Dayton Railroad Days, replacing the Depot Jamboree of several recent years, exact date to be determined. Hey, I like that change!

Dayton Valley Days come along in September, late October bringing the Ghost Walk and Nevada Day Parade, that parade day one of the few days of the year when the museum will be closed. November will see the election for HSDV directors, and December the Christmas party to celebrate another very busy year.

Dayton

Where Nevada history begins!