

Docents Newsletter

Volume 2, Number 6

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

July 2009

Docent program

By Ruby McFarland

My how time flies when you're having fun. Here it is July already – I think I may have missed spring. We all were so busy the past couple of months we hardly had a breather. There was a time I wished for more things happening in HSDV. You have to be careful what you wish for.

I'm so proud of all the docents and the roles they have played in making the activities successes. Want something done, just ask a docent. I get back to the fact that docents are "teachers." The exceptions are the HSDV docents. You can find a docent who can do almost anything in each of our folks. Just look at how much we have done the past two months. If you can't remember, read the past copies of the **Docents Newsletter**. You can't really point out any one of you as the best. You are all the best in my book. Keep on keeping on. We need every one of you to make the HSDV a success. Teachers – you have taught me a lot.

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

We need your help! The long touted and waited for Docent Handbook is behind schedule. Part of the reason for this is my fault and I am working to correct this, but we are all in this together. It is the result of the efforts of many to get us started, and includes descriptions of six of the major displays. I gave most of you copies of the notes so far compiled for your review and discussion. If you have not yet received a copy, please let me know (246-3527), as your input is vital to our accuracy and usefulness. It is our goal that every docent be

comfortable and at ease when giving tours at the museum. Please get your input to me ASAP.

That is where we are today. How are we going to get to the final pot of gold on the horizon? First of all we need to continue the museum training sessions in earnest. It is no secret that it is the middle of summer and we all have a myriad of things to attend to, but we will need to depend on those members who can attend on various Saturdays to take notes and share with the rest of us. I can help you write up your notes if that is easier for you. Just ask.

We have some major topics coming soon: Farm/Ranch equipment, daily household items, mining equipment, the Carson and Colorado, to name just some of the biggies. To create a manual we will all be proud of will take the efforts of all of us. The complete and proper manual should be in place by the fall. That will be the end of it? Not a chance. We then need to sift through all that information and create a self-guided handout for visitors that prefer to go it alone, or for when we hopefully have too many guests at one time to talk with! That is our February reopening goal!

Now before you start writing letters to the Editor, I agree with you in that sometimes the Society gets to be like work ... but, ... think of what you are doing for our community, and the fun you are having with such special people as you get to work along side of. Makes it worth it for me, and I hope for you.

[In addition to the telephone number Pat provides in his article, he can also be reached via Internet email at: virginiacitypat@sbcglobal.net -Ed.]

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Rummage sale success

By Donna McElroy

I would like to take this opportunity to "Thank Everyone" who helped to make our event a success. It is with great pride I acknowledge all of our volunteers who worked so very hard in the sweltering heat to accomplish our goal. We had the help of many in our organization who donated items to us to sell. We were also very fortunate to have had members of our community donate items to us as well. We had a woman from Carson City call and ask us to come and pick up items from her; we had people who dropped items off. We even had a person who brought us 42 boxes of books as a donation. We were very fortunate. My personal appreciation to all of you for a job extremely well done! Working with you all is a joy and pleasure! Sincerest Thank You ALL!

Dayton's beginnings

By Laura Tennant
Historian and Curator of History

It was 160 years ago in mid-July when frontiersman Abner Blackburn, guiding a Mormon wagon party, camped near an obscure desert ravine on the way to California's gold fields. With a bread pan and butcher knife, he prospected the creek bed, finding small flakes of placer gold. Later that day, his company found gold valued at \$10.00. That's when Gold Cañon was named.

The following year, 1850, Mormon pioneer, John Orr, from Deseret (Salt Lake City) found a nugget weighing 19.4 grams. Nevada's gold rush was on!

Disheartened with what few riches were left at the California gold fields, hundreds of miners moved to Gold Cañon, located in Utah Territory. Their tent camps soon created a settlement where Dayton developed. In 1859, working their way up the canyon, prospecters struck it rich when they discovered the world-famous Comstock Lode, the

first noted silver mining district in the United States.

Time marched on:

Dayton was a bust or boom milling town like many Nevada mining camps, but she held her own, finally growing in real leaps and bounds in the 1990s. Before long, the first historical society formed to preserve Dayton and Nevada's history.

Thanks to the Society's volunteers, the Dayton Museum opened in 1994 in the 1865 schoolhouse on Shady Lane.

In 1999, the Historical Society organized the state's first sesquicentennial (150th anniversary celebration) in July. Thousands of people helped celebrate the gala with a huge parade, including a Wells Fargo Stage and horses, Pony Express, ornate costumes, historical character portrayals, tent cities, first-ever silver commemorative medallions minted on the same press as the CC silver dollars and much more.

Incredibly, another ten years has passed. Once again, the Society (Historical Society of Dayton Valley) is inviting the public to help us celebrate 160 years of Dayton's history at the Dayton Museum at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 11, with refreshments, live music, costumes, children's games, Museum tours with a Dayton history book on sale, and old-fashioned demonstrations.

See you there.

The ghosts of Dayton's past

By Patrick Neylan

During the month of March, members of the Historical Society of Dayton, from the Dayton School House Museum, donned period clothes and, aided by displays and artifacts from the museum, portrayed early Dayton pioneer residents and brought history to life for fourth graders and their teachers at all three of the local Dayton schools. This innovative teaching tool was very

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well received by students and teachers alike.

The kids were very attentive as they learned about everything from crossing the United States in a covered wagon, to panning for gold, to raising their own food, to life without electricity, cars, computers or TV. They were especially interested in how men and women dressed in the 19th century. The flood of questions that followed the presentations was rewarding proof of success for the "spirited" members of the traveling troupe. The pioneers of Dayton are sure to hitch up their wagons and return in an expanded program in the 2010 academic year in Dayton.

The Dayton School House Museum is located on Shady Lane in Old Town Dayton and is operated by the Historical Society of Dayton Valley. From February to November the Museum is open on weekends or by appointment. For additional information, or to arrange a tour, you may call 775-246-3527.

[This article was first published in the Spring 2009 issue of **The Nevada Muse**. -Ed.]

Dates to remember

By Donna McElroy

We are going to be relatively busy in this month of July. Regular meeting dates are on the calendar, along with an "all-Dayton" weekend on July 11 and 12 in Old Town. Below are this month's dates.

July 8: Board meeting

July 11: The 160th Anniversary of Gold Discovery in Dayton - 2:00 p.m. until ? at the School House Museum

July 12: Celebration of Life at the Carson & Colorado Depot - 5:00 p.m. until ? at the Depot, corner of Highway 50 and Main Street

July 15: General meeting, 12:30 p.m. at the Dayton Library, followed by the C&C Working Group

July 22: Docent meeting - 10:30 a.m. at the School House Museum

July 25: Lecture on Farm Equipment featuring Stony Tennant, 11:00 a.m. at the School House Museum

Dayton's School House Museum is hosted by volunteer docents from February to November. Hours during those months: **Saturdays**, 10:00-4:00; **Sundays**, 1:00-4:00.

In addition to events and/or activities noted here, nearby venues may have their own activities. Check newspapers and/or Internet resources under **Entertainment** or **Local Events** for current information in Carson City (**Nevada Appeal**), Dayton (**Dayton Courier**) and Virginia City (**Virginia City News**).

Newsletter notes

By Bob Wallace

First and foremost, a huge **thank you** to those who submitted material for this month's **Docents Newsletter**. Contributors included the usual suspects: Ruby McFarland, Patrick Neylan and Donna McElroy. This month we welcome Dayton Historian and Curator of History, Laura Tennant. Laura has been writing about Dayton in a number of publications for many years, and has lectured at the School House Museum on topics of local interest to Dayton residents and docents.

One note on this month's newsletter. Shortly after putting the June issue together, the upgrade version of your editor's computer operating system arrived. Despite backing up the "page frame" for each month's **Docents Newsletter**, along with all other documents on the hard drive, the new OS version didn't appear to be all that interested in opening up the two basic pages in the new environment. Both page forms had to be invented all over again. Aside from a change of font for the text within these pages, you're likely not to notice any difference between June's newsletter and the current month.