

# Docents Newsletter

Volume 5, Number 4

Historical Society of Dayton Valley

May 2012

## Docents program

By Ruby McFarland

“When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it's a valuable plant.” Author unknown

It's that time of year again when we who garden are up to our elbows in dirt. Saw Vicki [Kinney] doing the weed pulling in our garden at the museum recently. She quite often is out in the garden at the museum and it shows her tender loving care.

The whole museum shows the TLC of a big group of volunteers who spend their valuable time making it a better place for folks to come. They seem to know which weed to pull as the displays make a whole better story.

Nothing is done with a group of people without a few ups and downs about how it should be done. Surprisingly, the opinions iron themselves out and the results are amazing. The weeds get pulled.

I've had the privilege of being with the Historic Society a long time and have watched our handful of members grow to a lovely garden of a great bunch of volunteers who work so hard for the membership. The few dollars we had has grown to a nice cushion of security.

Isn't it great how things get done when we all work together.

## Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

Ever been a groupie? The closest I ever came was in the 60's with the Supremes. I had every record they ever recorded and went to every concert I could afford. A couple of buddies and I even drove to Lake Tahoe from the Bay Area for a concert and back the same night, or rather the next morning. We could barely afford the tickets and gas at \$0.35 a gallon (my car required premium), and had nothing left to spend on food or hotels.

The HSDV is full of groupie. They are all around you. They are everywhere where Dayton history lives. The most recent examples are the “Group” that put on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. That “Group” had planning members, printing members, decorating members, refreshment members and clean up members. That “Group” depended on at least two museum groups. The outside “Group” who weeded, raked, sanded, painted, planted flowers and made the outside of the museum sparkle (check out the steps, planters, etc.) and the inside “Group” that worked on cleaning, painting and upgrading of displays since early this winter. Your museum is now the refined reflection of the vision first seen by our founding members 25 years ago, inside and out! That works well as the museum is being kept open every day in May by another “Group” in conjunction with the “Group” pulling off the May

- Continued on Page 2 -

lecture series.

While all of this was going on we had other “Groups” working too. One was the fourth grade school program. Through all of this, preliminary instruction was being followed by in-class presentations by pioneer Dayton ghosts, soon to be followed by a guided walking tour. We still have the railroad “Group” working on the depot projects, box car restoration and summer events. There is a “Group” working on the JohnD Winters shop at the museum. A “Group” will soon be working on the follow up work needed at the Firehouse. And still other “Groups” are working on the summer events: Oodles of Noodles, Rummage Sale, Dayton Valley Days, Nevada Day Parade, all the necessary required publicity and then of course the annual Christmas Party and awards dinner. Is it Christmas already?? In the meantime there are “Groups” working on the everyday operation of the Society, the formation of standardized operational forms, maintaining membership records, newsletters (docent and general), other policies and all of that really boring stuff that keeps any organization moving forward such as all the typing, checkbook balancing, phoning and the like.

If you ever felt like being a groupie you have joined the right “Group.” Thanks for all you do!

## Final notes

By Bob Wallace

Following up on Pat's article, some number of people populate the various “Groups” noted above as this, that or another Group. There is a great deal of crossover between them, and yes, amazing things are being done by all these HSDV members throughout the year.

Speaking as one who had to be out of town for much of this past winter, changes to be seen at the museum when getting back to Dayton for even a couple of days are stunning! First and foremost,

the gold discovery portion of the exhibit had been split between the front pair of display cases and have now been arranged within the same case. Abner Blackburn's discovery of gold flakes at the mouth of Gold Canyon in 1849 may not have made much of a dent in the flow of people going on over the hill to California's gold country, nor did John Orr's find of a 19.4-gram nugget slow that parade until California's Mother Lode interest slowed.

Then it was Gold Canyon's turn to take the spotlight until Gold Hill and Virginia City were established, with support for those mines, miners and towns coming from the population in the valleys below, including Dayton.



Dayton's Museum entry all spruced up for the 2012 season.

May is National Historic Preservation Month all across the nation, Dayton's museum included. In addition to the usual hours on Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and Sunday, 1:00PM to 4:00 PM, add in weekday hours from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM each day provided we have a sufficient number of docents whose personal schedules allow for one or another us to open the doors each day throughout the month.

May also brings with it the lecture series at the Senior Center next to the Library on Old Dayton Valley Road the first three Thursdays of the month, this year's theme tied to the Homestead Act of 1862. Each lecture begins at 7:00 PM.

Add in to the mix the several meetings each month connected to running the overall HSDV, the general monthly meeting on the third Wednesday of the month, 12:30 PM at the Library, and the Depot Working Group with its first Wednesday meeting at the museum may give some indication of just how busy a number of Society members are throughout each month.

For those new to the Historical Society of Dayton Valley, note that we are caretakers of several structures in Dayton, including the Firehouse/Jail on Pike Street, the School House Museum on Shady Lane, and what started out as Dayton's historic Carson & Colorado Railroad Depot, built originally where a portion of U.S. Highway 50 now runs west of Main Street, moved to its present position at Highway 50 and Main Street and turned into a private residence. Much of that old depot structure can still be seen if one looks carefully at the building and comparing it with pictures of both the Dayton depot during its railroad lifetime which stretched from 1881 to 1934, the period 1900 to the end of rail service in Dayton under N&C or S.P. ownership, and pictures of other Carson & Colorado depots further on down the line to Keeler, CA.

Many of the functions the Society participates in over the course of a year, those noted by Pat in his column, are intended to raise funds to cover operating expenses of the Society and provide "fix it" funds for repairs when they're needed. Given the age of these structures, repairs frequently

come into play and can be relatively expensive.

The one idea this Society diligently pursues is to repair these old structures to maintain their historic integrity. The firehouse/jail and school house museum date to the 1860s era in Dayton, the railroad depot to 1881. The museum as a school had its front entry and rear rooms added over the years, but otherwise looks very much like the pictures from 100 years ago. While the depot looks like the private residence it became after 1934, the intent of the Society is to return it to its C&C era look one day and maintaining it in its current location, although turned to its original orientation as closely as possible, restore the box car and place it adjacent to the depot as a welcome center to Dayton's historic Old Town.

So you see, lots of work to do as a member of the HSDV, lots of little jobs here and there to be looked after over the course of a year. Come join us and get in on all this great fun!