

Docents Newsletter

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

July 2012

Docents program

By Ruby McFarland

“Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its luster and perfume;
and we are weeds without it.”

William Cowper (1731-1800)

We had to call the fire department paramedics last month at our house. While talking to one of the fellows he mentioned a day of appreciation this month. The fire department (Dayton) is planning a BBQ on 7/24/12 for the HSDV. The symbol of 7/24/12 is that the fire department is there for us all seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 12 months of the year.

If you haven't had to call those brave people to your home you might not know how dedicated these folks are and how caring they are when you need them. I can't say enough. Because of our age at our house lots of emergencies can arise in a hurry. They have always been there – in a hurry.

It's nice that all the organizations in the Dayton Valley can work together to make this truly a big extended family group of folks. You have no idea how much it means, not only to my household, but the rest of the community to have people you can call on to help. It's especially true of the members of the HSDV.

I've had newcomers say they have never lived in a more caring community. Kudos to us. I do know that I appreciate all the members in HSDV. I couldn't be prouder to be a member of an organization who cares about others the way the people in the HSDV do.

And I'm especially glad to see how everyone jumps in to help on all the projects we get involved

in doing. That's why we have so many successes. Thank you all for being caring members.

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

The fact that the membership of any organization is its life's blood is a no-brainer! For our HSDV this becomes more and more apparent every day. As we progress through the year it is obvious that as a Society we are more than involved in our community. We tend to participate in all community related events, but even more importantly, we also tend to originate some of them. That case in point is our “nothing short of remarkable” school program that has been conducted for the past 4 or 5 years. This remarkable educational tool is largely unknown by the general public but greatly appreciated by the fourth grade students, their parents and teachers, which is our goal!

Every year your Board tries to assemble/predict a calendar of events for the coming year. Every year “other things” pop up! Every year you respond, adapt, change direction ... and cover all of the bases! Every year you step up and make sure that your Society succeeds! The amount of help is not important. The fact that it is important to you in whatever degree is what makes the Society work. Thanks to all of you who, in any way, participate in the activities of your Historical Society. You are more important to Dayton than you are possibly aware of.

Interesting facts: We just had the most successful rummage sale in our history (major expenses paid

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for the next year, count how many members helped with that one!). Our treasurer reports brisk renewals from dues, events like Oodles attracted several new members, attendance at our general meeting is increasing with participation from several new members, there are new volunteers showing up for docent duty at the museum, week-end traffic at the museum is rising, calls for special tours of the museum are increasing, and other “groups” are seeking the participation of *your* Society in community-related events, most recently, the “Farmer's Market” event which just began and your Society is a part of! Do you think you and your Society are important to your community? You bet you are!

The Past is our “Mission,” but the “Future of the Past” is our responsibility! Thanks to all of you! Thanks for all your support, work, dedication, interest, help, questions, or whatever. It is all important. You are an important part of the Historical Society of Dayton Valley, and an important part of the future “history” of Dayton! “Where it all began.” Keep doing what you are doing, or maybe just a little more. You are part of a local “Force.” Be proud of that!

Rummage sale success!

By Donna McElroy

Once again our groupie attitude has helped us complete one of our major fundraisers with excellent success! With our Co-Chairs Gretchen Arndt and Vicki Kinney, our event reached the intended goal of paying for our liability insurance for the Historical Society, plus a substantial reserve left over for our coffers.

I would like to let our membership know of the many individuals who helped to make our event such a grand success! We had some volunteers who could only help for a few hours and some who only had a very few items to donate to the cause. But we also had our regular folks who were there to do the sorting, pricing, placing, prodding of customers (assistant shoppers). When we put on

this event it takes a “village!” We need people to help set up the tables and move all of the items from donation sites to our sale site. There are those who repair items that need it! Those who stage the items and make them look appealing to the prospective buyers, the sign makers, the cashiers, the baggers, the men who load the items in folks' vehicles. Our groupies! We could not accomplish our goals if it were not for all of our helpers. Just the little things like having enough bags to put items in. Thanks to our staff that did the great Bar-B-Q, and the shoppers for those goodies. Our on-site rummage guards. Yes, did you know that we had a member spend two nights on-site with our goods watching over it! Above and beyond the call of duty! A huge “Thank You” to Vickie and Gene Kinney for that.

I really hesitate to mention names in this article lest I forget someone. You see, there were so very many who helped with this endeavor it would be impossible to list them all!

Now, who are these many wonderful people, you ask? They are our members and spouses, their children, friends, and our community. Two brand new members who just signed up last week. Two teenage boys that I recruited, just our groupies!

We have had many people who have been repeat customers to our event over the years. Many have given us items to sell. Some have given us suggestions for future changes, and all have been very appreciative of our activities in the community.

At the end of our sale the prices are cut very low. This is the fun part. I was part of two very rewarding transactions. The first one was with a little boy who was shopping with his mom and uncle. His uncle was willing to buy him anything he wanted. The young man saw a drafting table and wanted it. We struck a deal. What a happy little boy! He will use it for drawing in his room. Who knows, one day he may become an architect! Another incident was with a hospital bed that we had to sell. The woman who bought it could not afford the full price. Her mom had just had a

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stroke and the bed would be so helpful to her; at present she was sleeping in a recliner. She was almost in tears at the thought of not being able to afford it. When our members heard the situation they sold it to her at a price that she could afford. She and her husband were so very appreciative. Being able to help people in our community is always a positive thing to our group.

Once our sale is complete we still have work to do. The task has become routine to us now. The process begins. We bring in the volunteer trucks and trailers and begin the process. Tents are dismantled, boxes and bags are brought out and the packing begins. We separate the trash from treasure-still-usable items and load them to go to the Dayton Food Bank this year. Our group has given items to other charitable groups in past years. We wish to continue the good fortune and help our community.

During our two days of the sale we have had the opportunity to reach out to our community and share our love of history with them. We have given tours of the Depot to a few folks who showed an interest. We shared our Walking Tour Brochure, passed out the "Legends and Lore" pamphlets, and our membership application to people.

Closing notes

By Bob Wallace

We may be beyond the busiest weeks of the year by this point, but much is left to be done. Regular meeting dates again this month, except for the Depot Working Group, usually on the first Wednesday of each month except when a holiday falls on such a date. Third Wednesday, general meeting at the Library, 12:30 p.m.; fourth Wednesday, docents at the museum, 10:30 a.m. The month of August should find all meetings back on their assigned days.

In addition to the monthly meetings, this month of July, as noted in Ruby's article, will find the HSDV enjoying a barbecue at the Central Lyon

County Fire Department building on Corral Drive at 6:00 p.m., July 24, this to celebrate the 125th anniversary of "our" fire department. For those driving to the event, you may want to park at the Medical Center parking lot and walk over. Many of the residents along Corral Drive park at the curb in front of their homes, thereby reducing the number of spaces that might otherwise be available for HSDV members. The walk from the Med Center to the barbecue may be equivalent to about a long block.

June 21 found five of us driving to Newark, CA., for this year's Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge Historical Society conference, meetings being held at Ardenwood Historic Farm. Included this year were train rides on narrow gauge rails, including one with a horse providing the power for a three mile round trip.

Enjoying this and three other rail-related trips were Linda Clements, Bernie Allen, John Crowley, Tom Parcels and this writer. Our second trip was a three-car train taking us from the Arden station to their new car barn at the back of the property, designed to be used for inside storage of some of the cars in their collection.



Three-car train near the SPCRR car barn; an Industrial Locomotive was used to get us there along the narrow gauge trackage.

Beginning on Thursday, June 21, through the day and evening on Friday and Saturday as well, meetings extended well beyond 9:00 each evening, with presenters discussing the numerous narrow gauge

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railroads along California's coastal areas and in the Central Valley. Talk about full immersion!

Beyond the presentations came opportunities to view narrow gauge equipment being restored over time by the Society for the Preservation of Carter Railroad Resources (SPCRR), those initials originally representing the South Pacific Coast Railroad which ran from Alameda (with a ferry connection to San Francisco) to Santa Cruz by going through the mountains above Los Gatos.



One of several box cars at the SPCRR facility, this car being used as a museum. The car next to it has yet to be restored. Each is similar to the former SP #84 now at the Dayton Depot.

Closing out the extended weekend was a ride on the Niles Canyon Railway between Sunol and Niles, with a stop at Brightside Yard on the return trip to view the large number of engines, both steam and diesel, freight and passenger equipment stored at that location. All five of us from Dayton rode in the former Yosemite Valley 330 passenger car being restored at Brightside Shops.

For the remainder of this month of July and early August, dates for HSDV meetings look like this:

July 18: HSDV general meeting, 12:30 p.m. at the Library on Old Dayton Valley Road

July 25: Docents meeting, 10:30 a.m. at the museum.

August 1: Depot Working Group, 1:00 p.m. at the

museum.

Coming up in the middle of August, on the 18th and 19th if everything stays on track as planned, is this year's Dayton Railroad Days, this year celebrating the arrival last September of the former Southern Pacific narrow gauge #84 box car from Bishop, California, and the former Carson & Colorado Railroad Depot. Both depot and box car will be long term projects for restoration purposes, although short term goals will also be in play to ensure each is in reasonably good shape between now and whenever Big Daddy Depotbucks comes marching through town with a very large check to get us from where we are to where we would like to be at that future date.