

Docents Newsletter

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Historical Society of Dayton Valley

August 2012

Docents program

By Ruby McFarland

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.” *Mark Twain*

While I'm sitting here looking for the right words that might be of interest to anyone, my mind looks like a blank page. I guess it's because I can't figure why anyone would want to hear from me, or what I have to say.

One event I have to remark on is the fire house BBQ. What a great bunch of folks. It's a comfort to be recognized by so many people. It means we all must be doing something good in the community. It's as though we came together as one big family. I know I view the HSDV as my extended family. I couldn't, at this time of my life, do without you.

Again, everyone is working feverishly on the railroad station recognition in the community and elsewhere. You're busy putting your best feet forward for the betterment of the community. You can't fault that kind of dedication. The HSDV organization has done more in the past five years than was done in the past 20 years. The new folks in the society are doing their best jobs ever keeping the fire of knowledge stoked for the future.

I'm just writing this off the top of my head and hoping you want to hear what I have to say. I say it from my heart. Everyone should be so lucky to have an extended family like ours, and to get recognition from the community is the icing on the cake. The firemen put on a good BBQ.

I hope I extended all the right words to express

how grateful I am to be part of the HSDV.

Docent doings

By Patrick Neylan

Over the ages the discussion of one form of evolution stirred up great controversy and pitted one great mind against another. The debate raged for decades and for some it still isn't settled. In other cases and in other arenas evolution has been a good thing. For me, the creation of the tail fin by Cadillac in 1948 and its evolving into the uniquely styled automobiles of the 1950's, by all manufacturers, was indeed a very good form of evolution; and now evolution has struck the HSDV!

Very few years ago the society hosted an extremely fun, musically alive, varied theme event fondly remembered as “The Jamboree.” Soon, however, this event will fall under the spell of evolution and emerge as one full-blown, specifically themed, track laying, whistle blowing RAILROAD EVENT! With an official locomotive simulator to operate, historic railroad lectures and field trips to experience, model railroad components to buy/sell or swap, depot tours, food, music ... the list goes on! What “kid” of any age with an interest in railroading won't find something to interest them?

In no instance does evolution just happen. Not for Cadillac and certainly not for the HSDV! In our case, the evolution has been brought about by the Carson & Colorado Working Group. Their dedication, hard work, constant research and innovative thinking is about to steam off and become one of the society's best efforts at focusing atten-

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tion on, not only “the depot,” but on the railroad history of Dayton. The next thing subject to evolution is your opportunity to participate. Whatever level of railroad interest or Dayton history interest you have, there is a place for you at *Dayton Railroad Days*! All types of help will be needed. Sign up, help out, enjoy, learn ... *EVOLVE!* Call Tom Parcels at 246.9419 for more evolutionary ideas. You won't regret it! See you there!

Closing notes

By Bob Wallace

Into the month of August with another major event for Dayton and the historical society. Over the weekend of August 18 and 19 will see us hosting *Dayton Railroad Days*, successor to the former *Depot Jamboree*. The change of name will give us a better handle on what our focus ought to be with this event each year.

While the structure sits now as a former residence at Highway 50 East at Main Street, the depot was constructed in 1881 at what is today's Highway 50 East at Railroad Street, later relocated to its present site when the highway was widened in the 1950s. Today's kitchen was the station agent's office where he interacted with local residents, where today's living room and bedrooms are located was the freight portion of the building.

As constructed, Dayton's depot was the first along the line between Mound House and Keeler, many of the subsequent depot structures built along lines similar to Dayton's, albeit with varying footprints. The Dayton depot is 20'x50'; other depots along the line varied both in length and width.

Construction of the depot utilized post and beam for the framing, board and batten for the exterior. Doors and windows in the station agent's end of the building were typical for the period, with access to the freight storage area coming via a large door on either side of the structure, and freight dock around the sides and end of the

building. The station agent moved between his office and the freight space via several steps and a door on the river side of the building.

The Carson & Colorado Railroad began carrying passengers and freight in 1881, traveling to the south with passengers and freight for towns and mines along the line, bringing mined material back to Dayton for processing by the mills before going on to various destinations.

By the 1930s, rails between Mound House and Churchill had become so lightly used the railroad applied for abandonment, closed down the line in 1934 and pulled up the rails by 1936, leaving Dayton without railroad service for the first time in more than 50 years.

What are our plans today? Eventually to return the depot to its 1881 appearance, rotate it to its former alignment with the station agent's end facing Mound House, build a permanent foundation under it, make a welcome center for Dayton as the Gateway to the Comstock, and a history center for the Carson & Colorado Railroad here in Dayton.

What's needed? Just a bit of cosmetic surgery to remove the kitchen, several bedrooms, enclosed porches, replacing the interior of both the station agent and freight storage areas of the C&C depot along with its freight dock around three sides of the building.

Looking for pictures of how our depot used to look? Some number of photos can be found at the museum, a number of them enlarged by the late Morgan Webber. Another source here in Dayton is the David Myrick volume on Northern Nevada to be found at the Dayton Library, Myrick's Volume 1 covering both the C&C and the Dayton, Sutro & Carson Valley Railroad.

August dates:

August 1: Depot Working Group, 1:00 at the museum.

August 15: HSDV general meeting, 12:30 at the Dayton library.

August 18 and 19: *Dayton Railroad Days*, 9:00-4:00.

August 22: Docents, 10:30 at the museum.