



BOUNDARY COUNTY
Historical Society

P. O. Box 808
Bonners Ferry, Idaho 83805

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January 15 **Annual Spin In** at the Museum 10-2.

February 25-26 **High School Job Fair** in the Event Center

March **Curator and volunteers visit 4th graders** in their schools

April 12 **Annual Membership Meeting**

April 22-27 **Recycled Materials Art Show**

May 14 **Fundraiser Dinner**

Board of Trustee business meetings second Tuesdays every month at 5:30 p.m. – 1/11, 2/8, 3/8, 4/12, and 5/10

The Boundary County Historical Society, Inc.
is a 501 (c)3 organization.

7229 Main Street P. O. Box 808 Bonners Ferry, ID 83805

Winter Hours

From October 1 – May 1 the Boundary County Museum maintains winter hours, Friday-Saturday 10-4.

During these dormant months, like little mice under the snow, the curator and volunteers continue their work; researching, archiving, repairing and building exhibits to prepare for summer hours which will resume in May 2011.

Be sure to watch for special programs and events during the winter months.

Support the preservation of local heritage by becoming a member and/or donating cash, materials, equipment, or your time.



Boundary County Historical Society and Boundary County Museum

Time Capsule

Volume III Issue 1 Winter 2011

Thirty-Seven Feet



Rachel Rosebaugh studying the river gauge on the old steel bridge. Rachel was a charter member of the Boundary County Historical society in 1969.

Those were ominous words in the early days along the Kootenai River. That was the measurement in feet from the river bottom to the crest of the river. In 1956 and 1961 the river reached that point, which meant

the river could breach the dike system that protected Bonners Ferry and the surrounding farm lands.

In the years leading up to the building of the Libby dam in the early 70s, locals congregated at the south end of the bridge to check the river level. In the early days there was a staff gauge painted on cedar timbers mounted to the supports of the old steel bridge. In later years there was a more accurate plotter system in the old block building near where the Pelton wheel now is. Today there is a digital readout that can be viewed, mounted to the seawall at the end of the bridge.

Who knows, maybe this summer that old staff gauge may get rebuilt and we can relive the days of the walk to the end of the bridge to check the river level?

— Cal Russell

Recent Grant Awards

The Idaho State Historical Society: \$2500 grant to upgrade computer equipment and partially fund a Dust Bowl Immigrants oral history project

Idaho Heritage Trust: \$4000 grant to continue structural repair work on the museum buildings



Colorful Rug in progress on the museum loom.

Annual Spin-In January 15

In the old days, the really old days, across the Atlantic in medieval days, when spinning was an occupation of almost all women, there was a mirthful holiday celebration called St. Distaff's Day or Rock Day. It was a tradition on January 7th each year for women to set aside the leisure

of the 12 Days of Christmas and to resume work at the spinning wheel. Wool, silk, and linen were spun by industrious hands into yarns which were later woven, knit, or laced into garments and household goods.

Fiber Artists in Boundary County have been gathering each January for more than a generation to continue the tradition. Saturday, January 15 from 10-2 the Museum Event Center will be alive with spinning, knitting, visiting, and a potluck. An exhibit of vintage textiles from the museum and private collections will be on display in the gallery.

Visitors are invited to participate in a new event, a "Textile Treasure Roadshow". This is an opportunity to bring in an old textile you might own and learn more about it.

Research resources will be available. As Joan Myers commented, "Everybody has some folded up old thing in a drawer." So pull them out and join the show and tell. Gini Woodward will identify materials and techniques. No dollar appraisals will be offered. Bring your own spinning wheel and fibers, or other projects and join the fun; or just come and watch as old time skills are kept alive.



Tidbits and Trivia

12,690 square miles is the area of basin drainage above the Kootenai River gauge at Bonners Ferry.

The historic maximum level of the Kootenai River, recorded at the bridge May 29, 1961, was 1780.13' above sea level which equals 37.13' local gauge.

The historic minimum level of the Kootenai River, recorded at the bridge December 5, 1929 and December 6, 1930, was 1741.14' above sea level which equals -1.86' local gauge

Volunteers, Adopt an Artifact

Over the last few years several volunteers have adopted various items in the museum and repaired them to working condition for the enjoyment of visitors.

First Bert Wolff keeps the Wimshurst generator in sparking good shape. Then Jim Hubble renovated the foot pedaled metal lathe which once belonged to Harold Buroker. On occasion Jim demonstrates the remarkable skills required to use this tool. Since last year's spin-in, Debbie Ackley renovated the rug loom and has already woven 5 rugs which are available to purchase in the museum gift shop. Another volunteer has taken on the task of oiling old harnesses. Eldora Gatchell digitizes oral history cassette tapes. Last but not least Don Morice seems to have adopted the maintenance of the museum buildings.

This is a small sampling of volunteer efforts. There are plenty of projects available for adoption. What are your interests and skills? We have a volunteer job for you. Check with Sue.

Thank you, Team Museum!

Wish List

Regular needs: toilet paper, paper towels, copy paper, sheet protectors, new white three ring binders, coffee, tea

Special needs in new or good condition: Folding chairs, canister vacuum, legal size file cabinet, office desk chairs. Sheets, curtains, or fabric suitable for rag weaving

Current Board Members

Gini Woodward, *President*
Mike Sloan, *Vice President*
Cal Russell, *Secretary*
Carolyn McNeill LaMar Olsen
Don Morice John Standal
Jill Nystrom

From the Curator

While researching recently, I came upon the January 5, 1895 Kootenai Herald where S. D. Taylor reported, "There is talk of getting up a historical society at Bonners Ferry. The spot we inhabit is full of romantic history and such a society would do good work in preserving data for future use. The old pioneers are now with us and their stock of early information should be recorded in literature."

One hundred fifteen years later, we are very thankful to all the individuals from that date to present who related, wrote, and recorded stories, saving pieces of local heritage for our enjoyment. The volunteers and I have been studying and archiving many documents saved by three "historians", Eveline Ruhberg, Paul Flinn and Karen Hubbard. We thank them for preserving this local heritage.

As 2010 draws to an end, I want to thank all the individuals who have donated artifacts, photos, funds, and volunteer hours to the museum. Without you, the museum could not function. I can only hope that we are living up to the dreams of those early pioneers and helping to preserve our "romantic history".

Sue Kemmis, *Curator*

From the President

As we enter the new year, I would like to pause and express my gratitude to all who contributed to another successful year for our historical society and museum. Looking forward to 2011 the board of trustees, staff, and volunteers anticipate rewards and challenges as we spin the past and present together to create an ever stronger heritage legacy for the future.

One of the imminent and important tasks is to develop a short and long term strategic plan for the museum, buildings, and programs. Our heritage is common to us all, how can we better serve the community? What would entice you to be more involved, exhibits, collections, programs, school field trips, traditional skills dem-

onstrations and classes? Please join the historical society and share your thoughts and ideas with any board member.

Gini Woodward, *President*

From Colet Allen

Membership Reminder

As 2010 came to a close, annual paid memberships in the Boundary County Historical Society increased to 71 individuals and families. The membership committee's goal for calendar year 2011 is at least 100 paid memberships. Funds raised through membership fees are dedicated to paper, ink, and postage for this newsletter and other museum printing needs.

Benefits of membership include free admission to the museum, quarterly newsletters and 10% discount at the White Caribou museum gift shop. Members elect board of trustees at the annual membership meeting.

With the start of a new year, we frequently make New Year's resolutions. I am going to offer up a few ideas for people who love our community, love the heritage that is core to Boundary County, and want to give back with some service. Here are some ideas that I hope you add to your resolutions.

1. Renew your Boundary County Historical Society Membership or become a new member.
2. Invite a friend or relative to join.
3. Volunteer. Find a museum task that you enjoy, sign up for a few hours a month and contribute to the continued success of your community museum projects.
4. Visit your community museum regularly as a stay vacation. Bring your friends and family.
5. Attend historical society programs and events.

There are several categories of membership. Pick the one that works best for you but please pick one and use the membership form and envelope enclosed to send your check today. The Boundary County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization. Thank you.

Colet Allen

From John Standal

How do I gift an object or other treasure to the Boundary County Museum Collections? Here is a brief answer to this frequently asked question.

First, deliver the item to Curator Sue Kemmis during museum hours. Sue will prepare a "Deed of Gift Form" which the donor then signs. The item is held until the next monthly meeting of the Collection Committee. This group consists of members of the Board of Trustees and the Curator who review each item to determine whether the item meets the criteria for inclusion in the museum collection. Items may be declined, most often because of poor condition, a duplicate for an item already in the museum, or potentially hazardous material such as an overly musty book.

The Collection Committee actively seeks items related to Boundary County History. Once an item is accepted by the committee, the Curator catalogues the item. The item is assigned a unique collection number, photographed, entered in the "Past Perfect" data base, and prepared for exhibit or proper storage. All information provided by the donor is entered into the data base, preserving not only the item, but the story of the item for future generations. The Boundary County Historical Society Museum currently houses over 10,000 items and photographs, catalogued in the Past Perfect data base.

The stated goal of the Boundary County Historical Society is to preserve the history of Boundary County. Please keep your community museum in mind if you have items, photos, or stories to share that relate to any aspect of our heritage.

John Standal
Collections Committee Chairman

