

San Juan Courier

Summer 2007

San Juan County Historical Society, P.O. Box 154, Silverton, Colorado 81433

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Members,

As I write today, I am looking out at thick, gray clouds. They look threatening, like rain. And glad we are for our summer monsoons—it was getting really dry. The wildflowers in the high country are in full bloom. Wish you were here.

Elsewhere in these pages you will read about the resignation from the Board of Bill Jones, who got an offer he couldn't refuse. We thank him for his many years of service and dedication. And, we are happy to introduce our new Board member Brian Fullmer. A local contractor, Brian brings to us a steady disposition and vast knowledge of how to get things done. Welcome, Brian—now let's get to work. That is one thing about your Board of Directors, dear members, we all know how to work and we are passionate about our mission.

On June 16th we had our annual Cemetery Workday. There were about 30 of us, including our newest helper Charlie Thomas, new son of Russell and Jennie Thomas. We set 14 markers on unmarked graves and had our traditional picnic in the Beaber's back yard under the clear blue skies of an unusually warm summer. Also on June 16th and 17th, we were the featured organization at the RGSRR Hobbies' annual "Picnic in the Yard," a fund-raiser at which rail buffs from around the country come to run G and F scale model trains on the elaborate setup in owner Greg Posta's yard. What fun! I got

Continued on Page 3

Mining Heritage Center continues to develop

In late summer of 2006, the rail from the Sunnyside Mine was donated to the Society by Sunnyside Gold. A group of volunteers, most of whom were 60 to 70 year old men tried their best to remove the switches and rail. This turned out to be very difficult. All but the head of 65 and 70 pound per yard rail was buried. This meant the use of a large air compressor to blow the dirt and rocks away. Most of the spikes were pulled with moderate to great difficulty, others had to be cut off with a torch. After getting about half of the rail, Fullmer Construction, the contractor doing the reclamation, volunteered to use his heavy equipment to finish the job for us. This rail will be used behind the Museum to display a variety of 3 foot gauge, main level, railroad equipment from the Sunnyside Mine.

In early fall 2006 the inside of the shaft for the handicap lift (elevator) was completed with a coat of paint. Yes, we know that no one will see this area, but, we felt it necessary to lock in the remaining drywall dust. The lift was then installed by Able Access of Albuquerque. They generally did a very good and fast job. Over the winter, the outside of the shaft on the mezzanine level was finished with rough 1x12 lumber, the main floor level was finished with tongue & groove bead boards that matched the bathroom exterior, and the basement level was finished with barn wood.

Since the lift door at the basement level was seven inches above the concrete floor to allow a shallow pit for the mechanism under the car, a wooden raised floor was installed from the bottom step of the stairs to the lift door then ramped along side the shaft to the concrete floor. The lift has been available this season for transporting handicapped visitors from the main floor to the basement and the mezzanine.

A major project this past winter was the construction of an old style San Juan Ore Chute between the basement and the main floor. This structure is mainly built with salvaged 8x8 and 6x6 timber complete with a pry up chute gate and control board. The chute angle is 37 degrees which is typical of a San Juan Chute. This chute display will eventually include a three ton ore car under the chute on track in the basement level, and a slusher to pull ore to a rail grizzly above the chute in a scam display on the main floor level.

A short distance from the chute, a single compartment raise is being constructed from the basement to the

Continued on next page

A Note of Explanation

Because of time constraints, this abbreviated version of the San Juan Courier is being produced for 2007.

We hope to return to our regular format for 2008.

Courier - 2007

