

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 Beaver'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

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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

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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.

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Mining Heritage Center

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roof. Skid boards for a coffin hoist and more mine ladders are yet to be installed. This raise will show the typical older method used to hoist men and materials from a mine drift (tunnel) up to a slusher scam and a stope. Note that a stope is where ore is actually mined. Fingers in the bottom of the stope allow broken rock to fall into a scam tunnel where it is slushed through a grizzly (to stop rocks which are too large) into a chute. The miners in the stope work on top of broken rock. Since broken rock takes about 30% more space than solid rock, the stope must be pulled periodically through the process described above in order for the miners to have room to work.

Other projects for the safety of our visitors were also accomplished. These included the construction of an escape stairs near the tunnel from the jail building, replacement of the heavy wooden door at the top of these stairs, with an exterior steel door, and the installation of crash bars and signs on all of our emergency exit doors.

Another major improvement this year was the installation of new security systems in the Mining Heritage Center, the Jail, and the Archive buildings.

An air compressor relocated to the Mining Heritage Center from the Mayflower Mill several years ago (previously used for the shop and metallurgical lab) was refitted with a single phase motor, some new piping and drain valves and is now ready for final installation.

This past year the Silverton Masonic Lodge decided to put their lodge building on the market. This meant that the Historical Society needed to move a large number of items that were stored in the first floor back rooms. This has allowed us to view artifacts that had not seen

the light of day for years. The rarest of these items, now stored in the Silverton Northern Engine House, need to be selected for display.

Two new large display cases were constructed for use on the main floor level. One of these has been used to house a large collection of J. A. Saenger's antique carpenter tools donated by Bill Maguire Jr. The other is to house miscellaneous items and will hopefully be filled in the fall of 2007. There are several other previously constructed shadow boxes that need to have displays. With Zeke Zanoni, Jerry Hoffer, and Scott Fetchenhier busy with the heavier mining displays, some help with other displays would be appreciated.

Presently we are installing two foot gauge track, using 25 pound per yard rail, down the ramp into the basement of the mining museum. This has turned out to be more difficult than originally thought. Metal ties, spaced every six to seven feet apart, are fastened to the concrete using drop in anchors. The metal ties clamp to the base of the rail maintaining the track gauge. Wood ties are then set between the metal ties. Each of the wood ties had to be custom fit between the concrete floor and the rail. In the ramp these tie thicknesses ranged from 1 and 1/4 inch to 3/4 inch thick. A walking plank will be placed on the ties between the rails and screwed to the wood ties to hold them in position. A vertical bend was made in each of two three foot lengths of rail to make the transition from the ramp angle to the basement floor. These bends were made by heating the rail red hot at the bend location then using a 50 ton hydraulic press to bend the rail to match a template. Once on the basement floor level we are using 3 and 1/2 in thick by 5 and 1/2 wide ties and will use three inch mine rail spikes. Again in the first 15 feet on the basement floor we discovered that

the uneven concrete is forcing us to custom fit many of the ties.

We need to thank: Larry Perino of Sunnyside Gold for donating the rail from their mine; Bill Chinworth, Rus Melton, Barney Zenizo, and David Zanoni for their efforts removing spikes; Brian Fullmer for removing the rest of the rail and switches then transporting them to town; Frank Montonati for use of his air compressor and various welding jobs; Larry Raab for welding on the San Juan Chute; Blair Corder for fabricating the metal plates needed to mount the crash bars on the emergency exit doors; and Rod Cook for his donation of a trailer load of barn wood.

Books Available from the Society

One of the many ways you can support the Society's efforts is by purchasing books through the Museum store. The following are suggested reading and may be ordered by mail.

Many More Mountains, Volume I; Silverton's Roots by the late Allen Nossaman. The definitive early history of Silverton, Second printing. \$70.00 plus \$5.00 s&h

Ghosts and Gold, The History of the Old Hundred Mine by board member Scott Fetchenhier. \$12.95 plus \$3.00 s&h

DVD: *Grinding for Gold, the Mayflower Mill Story* \$14.95 plus \$3.00 s&h.

Several books about Silverton's Hillside Cemetery by board member Freda Peterson are available—please inquire.

Chairman's Letter

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to run a model of Casey Jones! We made over \$1300 from the admission fees and sandwiches that we sold to the hungry crowds. All of this money is going into our Caboose Restoration Fund, which now has \$11,550 towards our campaign of raising \$18,000 for match money. We have plenty of caboose t-shirts for sale, dear members. For \$15.00 + \$3.00 shipping, you, too can contribute to the restoration of Colorado's oldest caboose.

Speaking of fund-raisers, members Kim and John McGlothlen came up with an idea to send out a mailing asking life members to upgrade their member-ships by \$150 in memory of former archivist Allen Nossaman. That solicitation netted over \$2,000! Thanks, dear members!

In 2004, the Society got grant funding to document the Mill. It produced a Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and a Historic Structure Assessment of the Shenandoah-Dives Mill. Despite its excellent integrity, the Mill is in urgent need of numerous repairs to preserve the structure. A complete set of HAER documentation, consisting of interpretive measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written history was produced, using interns from the NPS and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) summer program. The drawings and historic research produced for the HAER also supplemented the framework of the Historic Structure Assessment for the entire mill compound. This investigation developed a comprehensive conservation plan for the Mill. The Society has applied for a "Save America's Treasures" grant to implement the plan. We are supposed to hear "in the fall", according to their application

guidelines. Keep your fingers crossed, dear members. Jim and Bob are doing a whale of a job running the Mill—I don't know what I would do without them, or without my loyal museum staff Duane and Mary. Thank you all so much.

Speaking of volunteers, Archivist Freda Peterson has finished putting the card catalog onto the computer. What a monumental job! And a special thanks goes to her daughter Julie, who spends part of her vacation to get us out of computer messes. It takes help from everyone. Thanks to Nancy Clark for again coming on board this summer. Of particular mention is the receipt of author Allan Bird's research papers for his books *Bordellos of Blair Street* and *Silverton Gold, the Story of the Sunnyside Mine*. Thank you, Allan. Considering the vast amounts of material that the Sunnyside gold Corporation has donated to us, your research will be a valuable tool in making sense of it.

The Powerhouse Planned Unit Development plat was signed off on by the County, a quiet title was finished and an avalanche study has been commissioned. The first three of nine lots have been sold, with three more sales imminent. Installation of the sewer and power will commence as soon as the water table goes down—which should be soon. We will be keeping lots 7 and 8; 8 is where the restored brick substation building sits. We have three tenants there, including ScottyBob's Custom Skis. This development is for industrial use—stinky, noisy, heavy equipment-type use. As the price of in-town property goes up, there are fewer places for this kind of development. Although not a traditional business incubator, we think that the spirit of economic development is being carried through. This is good for Silverton, dear members. We have retained jobs, we have created new

ones and we have provided places where business can flourish. By the end of summer, Klink & Lew will have their new building ready to move into. How exciting! Thanks, Bill Jones, for your capable administration of this project.

And so, dear members, we are busy as we can be, furthering our mission of historic preservation and in the meantime, being good neighbors and citizens. We appreciate your support.

Bev

Glossary of Mining Terms

Chute: Wooden or metallic box at end of ore pass designed to hold and transfer ore into waiting ore cars.

Coffin Hoist: narrow one person lift.

Drift: Tunnel.

Grizzly: A grating used to separate differing sized ore pieces.

Raise: Vertical or near-vertical opening driven upward from a level to connect with the level above.

Scram: Opening along which the ore is moved by a slusher to the chute.

Stope: Area mined upwards or downwards on a vein.

Slusher: Hoist unit used to pull ore in a passage (scram) to a chute.

This information is given to help you understand the work that is being done in the Mining Heritage Center. The definitions may have broader meanings in other contexts.

Jones resigns from board position

It is with regret that we accept the resignation from the Board of Directors of Bill Jones. Jones joined the Board in 1974 and served as the Society's treasurer for most of those years. Jones has relocated to Republic, Washington, where he is starting a new job setting up the assay laboratory at a new mill at the Kettle River Zinc Mine, owned by Kinross Gold. His wife Leslie has taken a new job in community development for a four county area around Republic. During Jones' tenure he administered many Society projects, including the most recent Powerhouse Business Incubator Project, a \$700,000 project funded largely by federal grant money. He also was in charge of the accounting for the Town Hall restoration after the disastrous fire. This project won a National Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

He was also in charge of the rehabilitation of the Silverton Northern Ticket Office and kept track of rent credits during the

restoration of the 1882 Denver and Rio Grande depot. A scholar about the Shenandoah Mining Company, Jones has amassed a large collection of papers and photos, among them a complete set of photos of the erection of the Mayflower Mill in 1929. He is also a rail buff, in demand as a speaker at conferences and tours. The Society is richer for his service and we wish him and Leslie much happiness and good fortune in their new home.

News of Grants

The San Juan County Historical Society is pleased to announce that we are the recipients of two grants this summer. The first is a grant from the State Historical Fund for the historic lean-to addition on the brick substation, also known as the Powerhouse. Built in 1906 by the Silverton Electric Light Company, the brick substation with its distinctive round windows received State Historical Funds to restore the brick part of the building. The early

tar-paper covered addition is slated for repair this summer. This work will complete the rehabilitation of this handsome building, whose purpose is to provide space for upcoming businesses in Silverton and the jobs they will generate. The building is presently rented to Fisher Woodworking and Scotty Bob's Custom Ski Works.

The second is a grant from the Colorado Scenic Byways Program for work along the Alpine Loop. The application was made by the Society and the Bureau of Land Management. Work slated for this summer and fall is stabilization and visitor safety enhancements on the Tobasco cabin on the Hinsdale County side of the Loop, stabilization and visitor safety enhancements on the Pacific Mine Boardinghouse in Placer Gulch, west of Animas Forks, and the installation of interpretive signs at these sites.

The grant funds will also purchase a set of audioguides for the Mayflower Mill, enabling visitors to hear the story of the mill as they tour. An interpretive sign for the Caledonian Boardinghouse at the Mining Heritage Center will also be funded. This grant will also pay for half of the handicapped lift in the Mining Heritage Center. The Colorado Scenic Byways Program is funded by federal highway funds which are passed down to the states and administered through the State Departments of Transportation. The funds are used for interpretation, safety and visitor amenities.

In late braking news, Chairman Beverly Rich announced that the society has been awarded a grant from the Colorado Historical Fund for window and exterior restoration work on the jail museum.

The grant is in the amount of \$87,884. It is anticipated that most of the work will take place in the summer of 2008 although Rich expressed hope that it might get underway later this year.

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

I wish to enroll as a member of the San Juan County Historical Society in the class designated below for the calendar year 2007. I understand that this membership entitles me (and my spouse, if applicable) to a vote at the annual meeting in October, 2007.

- ☐ **Member:** Voting privilege [\$10.00]
- ☐ **Family Member:** Voting privilege, man and wife [\$16.00]
- ☐ **Supporting Member:** Voting privilege, couple, and museum admission for season for immediate family. Discount on books [\$25.00]
- ☐ **Society Patron:** Voting privilege, couple, and season museum admission for immediate family and listing in the San Juan Courier, Book discount [\$50.00]
- ☐ **Life Membership:** All privileges for life [\$350.00]

Name: _____

Address: _____

