

SAN JUAN COURIER

Summer 2014

Silverton, San Juan County, Colorado

New Construction Expands Mining Heritage Center

by Stephen F. Rich

In the fall of 2013, ground was broken for a much needed addition to the Mining Heritage Center. With funds from donations totaling nearly \$70,000, we began the excavation in August. The new addition is comprised of a full basement and two floors and is approximately 2,500 sq. ft. that match the existing floors levels. Throughout the project, local Silverton contractors were hired. Plans for the addition were drawn by architect, Dan Hoyle of Silverton.

We hired local contractor Pete Maisel for the excavation work. The foundation required a specialized system of "underpinning" to support the existing ramp used to move heavy mining equipment in and out of the Museum. The concrete work was performed by Speedy's Concrete from Ouray. Engineering work was reviewed and approved by Mark Mackie of Silverton.

Jim Weller Construction, of Silverton began framing in late October. Prior to constructing the first floor, the roof and the adjoining wall of the existing ramp had to be removed and the lumber salvaged. Board member, Scott Fetchenhier did much of the material salvage. Framing moved ahead quickly on the first floor, while the wall sections and gable ends were framed and sheathed on the ground. The entire second floor was up and set in three and a half hours! The owner/operator of the crane used was Society board member Bill Alsup of Silverton. The roof was next and within eight weeks our building was "in the dry".

Most materials and hardware were purchased from ZE Supply of Silverton. Insulation was installed by La Plata Insulation of Mancos, sheetrock was installed and finished for painting by Durango Drywall, priming and painting was done by Cody Bradford and Nick Houston of Silverton.

Electrical work was mounted on the surface, in conduit, by JEM Electric of Olathe and the overhead garage door was purchased from and installed by Montrose Garage Door. Plumbing the hydronic heat for the basement floor was performed by another Society board member, David Zanoni of Silverton. Custom milled 1 x 12 rough sawn spruce siding was made by Mike Barney of Silverton, while museum staff worked on numerous phases of the project.

The new spaces in the Museum will provide us with a larger and more efficient exhibit shop and much needed storage areas on the main floor. The basement will house additional mining exhibits and storage. There are several areas that were previously

used as storage, which will now become exhibit space.

The top floor, affectionately known as "The Great Room", will contain an exhibit gallery for historic Silverton photographs gleaned from our Archives. It may double as a changing exhibit area. The space will also serve as a meeting area for presentations and various programs. In addition, it will house a small office/work area, a "clean room" to preserve and restore artifacts, mount and frame photographs, and produce exhibit interpretive panels and labels. A hay loft door with a chain hoist will allow us to move large heavy and bulky items.

This spring, Jim Weller and his crew are installing the roof tin and siding to complete his contract. When finished and stained, the new addition will be an exact match to the existing building. The staff has been busy reorganizing and constructing several new exhibits, as well as building new work benches and shelves and moving the shop to the new space.

This project was a great economic benefit to Silverton as it bought materials locally and provided jobs throughout the winter for nearly twenty craftsmen and trade professionals.

As this important addition to the Museum has incurred some debt, the San Juan County Historical Society is seeking tax deductible donations to help offset this debt. Contact Scott Fetchenhier or Bev Rich in this regard.

(See page 3 for a photograph of the new work.)

Set Aside June 21 for An Evening of San Juan Mining History

Ever wonder what it would have been like to live in an old mine boarding house in the mountains around Silverton? On Saturday June 21, Karen and Mark Vendl, co-authors with Duane Smith of "My Home at Present", will be giving a presentation on mine boarding houses at Silverton Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

The presentation will tell the story of the miner's daily life living in a mine boarding house. In spite of ever-present dangers like deadly avalanches, it also could also be a good life in which food was very edible as well as plentiful, libraries and poolrooms provided recreation, and the miners spent hours telling stories and playing cards.

Newspaper and first-hand accounts, and historical photographs will provide a fascinating look into the life of miners in the San Juans. Please join us for an entertaining evening.



Although the old oil shed does not look too promising in this view, it will become an important part of the Engine House restoration project and the adjacent Silverton Railroad Historic Park.

Railroad Oil Shed is New Restoration Project for Engine House Development

The San Juan County Historical Society in partnership with the Durango Railroad Historical Society is seeking a grant of approximately \$22,500 from The Colorado State Historical Fund to reconstruct and rehabilitate the Oil Shed at the northeast corner of the Silverton Northern Engine House in Silverton. The total budget for the project is approximately \$30,000. Twenty-five percent of the total funds need to be raised by the two societies.

The shed is 99% in the Cement Street right of way between 8th and 9th Streets, a section that was never groomed as a street. On March 10, this project was presented to the Silverton Town Council where it won unanimous approval. The Mayor has prepared a letter of support for the project and will sign the grant request.

When the San Juan County Historical Society acquired the Engine House Site in 1977, the Oil Shed roof, southwest wall and part of the southeast wall had already collapsed. The ruins of the Oil Shed remained mostly stable with the floor and jumble of wood structural members slowly

deteriorating for the next 33 years. A study of the available photographs indicated that the Oil Shed is important to the historical context of the area. The ambiance of historic railroad sites comes from open storage piles of track materials, heavy rail car parts, and various small buildings and sheds where smaller lighter items were stored. The reconstruction of this shed, a necessary accessory to the engine house, will greatly contribute to this site.

This project is to reconstruct the remains of the 14 x 30 foot shed to its appearance from 1912 through 1942 and to rehabilitate the interior. The shed will be used as an office, library, conference room, and break room for personnel performing restoration and maintenance in the adjacent Engine House.

This project is a small step toward the vision of creating a Silverton Historic Railroad Park in a corridor between the engine house and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Depot (formerly the Denver and Rio Grande Western Depot).

Join Hillside Clean-up Day in June

The twenty-first annual Silverton Hillside Cemetery volunteer work day will be on Saturday, June 21, 2014 .from 10:00 a.m. until noon. This is your chance to help the town of Silverton maintain, restore, and preserve its wonderful heritage.

Suggested tools to bring: limb loppers, hand-held clippers, shovels, rakes and pruning saws.

Following the work session, bring a sack lunch to eat and share in the anecdotes of early pioneers buried in Hillside Cemetery.

If you are unable to attend but would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Silverton Hillside Cemetery, send your contributions to: Hillside Cemetery Fund, San Juan County Historical Society, P.O. Box 154, Silverton, Colorado 81433

Chairman's Report

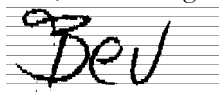
Dear Members:

It is hard to imagine, but here we are, celebrating our 50th year. To any and all of you who have volunteered, served on the Board of Directors, and who just plain supported us, we give a big **THANKS!** And, I was there—my mother drug me out to help clean the jail—I was just 13, and things historical did not excite me. It was quite an initiation—getting to clean an old building that had been vacant except for mice and chipmunks for 30 years. And, do you know, I have been cleaning it ever since! As I look back at my 50 plus years of involvement, we have done some amazing things. We went from being in the jail that had no electricity and a little pot belly stove for heat to a newly restored building, inside and out. In a leap of faith, we built the Mining Heritage Center, and in another leap of faith, the new addition that is being finished as I write. It is truly one of the best mining museums in the country and it gets better every year.

We saved the depot after it was bombed in 1975, using money from a sympathetic insurance adjuster and bake sales. Eventually, we sold it to the Durango & Silverton Railroad for “adaptive reuse” as a ticket office! We went from buying the Silverton Northern engine house to relaying the track and hooking up to the main line. We went from the scheduled demolition and reclamation of the Mayflower Mill to being a National Historic Landmark, one of only 20 in the State and one that uses hydro-electric power! We went from having the Old Hundred Boarding House almost fall off a cliff to having a whale of an adventure putting it back together using helicopters. We started working at Animas Forks over 30 years ago, and you won't believe your eyes when you visit there next. We went from having our archive in the library's basement to having a state-of-the-art archive building, complete with two new computers and three scanners. We have a new website and are looking at new software for cataloging. We saved the oldest newspaper on the Western Slope and became a “Historic Site in Journalism”. We had a five year plan that ended up taking twelve because we kept getting sidetracked by such events as the Town Hall fire and little things like building a business park. We advocate for Hillside Cemetery and hold a workday every year, and thanks to Freda Peterson, have one of the finest documented cemeteries in the country. And now, we are embarking on building a railroad!! Seriously! Sometimes I shake my head—how the heck did we get to this place? We have won numerous awards, including two National Honor Awards from the National Trust and the latest from the Mining History Association. And, as I point out every chance I get, we **DO NOT** get any public funding—we raise it all ourselves. We have been the economic engine of San Juan County since the mine shut down—who says preservation does not pay.

And through the years, look at the talent—Freda Peterson, Allen Nossaman, Zeke Zaroni, Fritz Klinke, George Chapman and so many more. What an honor it is to have worked with these folks. Their vision and tenacity and just plain getting it done is an incredible testament and an incredible legacy. One of my favorite sayings is “I use not only the brains I have, but all that I can borrow” (Woodrow Wilson). And I truly do...I could not get along without these “brains”. People think that museums just happen, but I can tell you, dear members, it takes a lot of work. From draining the pipes at the jail for the winter, to planting our pansies in the spring—it all takes work. And you, dear members, help us the most with your contributions and your support.

So join us for our celebration on September 19 at 5:00 at the museum. We will have the famous Silverton Brass Band, speeches, cake, and we might even break open some champagne. Here's to the next 50!!



Mark Esper Continues to Lead Society's Historic Newspaper

It's been five years since the San Juan County Historical Society acquired the Silverton Standard & the Miner newspaper, the oldest business in town. In 2009, in the midst of the Great Recession that saw newspapers throughout the country facing unprecedented hardship, things were not looking good for the Standard.

The paper came to the historical society as a donation from Randy Miller, owner of Thirteenth Street Media Inc. of Boulder. Miller had purchased the Standard as part of a package that included the Norwood Post and the Telluride Daily Planet in July of 2008. Had he not donated the paper, lack of a buyer would have probably led to a shutdown of the historic publication.

The historical society inherited a newspaper that was not exactly making money. And it didn't even have a business office in Silverton anymore. A bank account was opened with the historical society putting in \$10,000. We recruited Gina Rosato to handle advertising and business matters. She got the business office up and running.

Five years later the newspaper is still holding its own. Editor and Publisher Mark Esper has now operated the newspaper for seven years.

Originally from Flint, Michigan, he has worked at weekly and daily newspapers in Michigan, Colorado, Montana and New Mexico.

Over the years he's done some reporting

on just about every conceivable topic—from corruption in the Navajo Nation government to tracking down survivors of a massacre in a remote area of El Salvador. He has been to 53 countries, reporting from Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, Central America, Cuba and the Middle East and he's also been to all 50 U.S. states.

“I've been detained by Interior Ministry officials in Serbia, was interviewed on ABC's ‘Good Morning America’ from Havana and somehow made it out of Morazan Province (El Salvador) alive,” Esper said. In 2003, on the eve of the Iraq War, Esper took an overland trip from Beirut, Lebanon to Damascus, Syria, then on to Jordan, the West Bank and Israel. “I was kind of inspired by Thomas Friedman's book, ‘From Beirut to Jerusalem.’ It was an amazing journey.”

The experience left him well prepared to handle duties at the Silverton Standard. “It was good training for Silverton,” he said. “Plus I've done a couple of grizzly-mauling stories in Montana, so I was well-prepared to cover the Town Council here.”

In 2009 Esper was a finalist in the Washington Post's Next Great American Pundit contest, finishing in eighth place among more than 5,000 entrants and he has won dozens of Colorado Press Association awards for the Standard.

“Silverton's a great place to write about—especially for someone who loves history,” Esper said.

Nossaman Archive Proves Valuable Source of Material to Authors, Others

by Casey Carroll, Director of the Allen Nossaman Memorial Archive and by Ray Dileo, Assistant Director

A lot of interesting things have been happening in the Allen Nossaman Memorial Archive. Over the last year, Director Casey Carroll and her assistant Ray Dileo have helped several authors find documents and images for book projects. They helped to provide images for the new book, *My Home at Present* by Mark and Karen Vendl and Duane Smith. They found interesting images and documents for Janet Jewell's new book, *Returned From Oblivion, the Story of Jacob Schueler*. Schueler was a relative of the French Boys who owned the King Solomon Mine in San Juan County.

Bev Rich and Carroll just completed working with Beth Green from the Small Durango Press to produce a new book titled, *Walking Silverton*, for which the archive provided many images.

Upcoming book projects they are helping with include: assisting Mark and Karen Vendl in finding material for their new book, *Mines Around Silverton*. The Vendls are graciously donating the proceeds of this book to the Society. It doesn't get any better than that! Also, Kim Davy Eisner (Life Member) is writing a book about Howardsville where she has been a summer resident since the 1950s.

The Archive has been able to help John Sites who is working with the Town of Silverton renovate the Visitors Center by locating images of the building back when

it was at the Power House. Ray supplied Dr. Bob Brokering with pictures of the old town site of Eureka and the Sunnyside Mill to display in the store at the Eureka Campground.

There have been two paranormal groups in town that have visited the Archive.

Large panorama images (three to four feet wide), photographed by John V. Lorenzon in the early 1900s were scanned and printed and will be for sale this year in the Mining Heritage Center Gift Shop or at the Archive.

Many people drop by to see if the Archive has any information about their ancestors. Frequently they are able to find photographs and/or obituaries (former archivist Freda Peterson's Hillside Cemetery books are a great help) of their ancestors who once lived in Silverton.

This summer, Carroll and Dileo have begun scanning, digitizing and cataloging photos, documents and artifacts where Peterson left off. This is a monumental task, but with the help of Society Life Member Harry McGavran, they will continue the work of building the ongoing digital database.

There are fees for most services at the Archive, as it is not supported by any other means. Initial inquiries may be made by phone to (970) 387-5609.

The Archive hopes to be open at least two days per week soon, for one day is certainly not enough.

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or email: editor@silvertonstandard.com

Now's the time to help the Society: Join Today!

San Juan County Historical Society • Post Office 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 2014. I understand that this membership entitles me (and my spouse, if applicable) to a vote at the annual meeting in October, 2014.

1. **Member**—\$25 per year, entitling an individual to one vote in meetings of the general membership, discounts on books, and free museum admission.
2. **Family membership**—\$50 per year entitling each couple to one vote each in meetings of the general membership, discounts on books, and free museum admission.
3. **Society Patron**—\$100 per year, entitling an individual or couple to voting privileges, a museum pass for the season, discounts on books, and a listing in the Society's publications.
4. **Life Member**—\$1000, entitling an individual or couple to all of the above privileges for life.

Name: _____

Address: _____

SAN JUAN COURIER

George Chapman, Editor

Published annually by the San Juan County Historical Society, a non-profit Colorado corporation, for its members and all persons interested in the preservation of the history of San Juan County, Colorado.

**San Juan County Historical Society
Officers and Directors, 2014**

Beverly Rich, Chairman; Scott Fetchenier, Secretary/Treasurer; Jerry Hoffer, George Darnall Zaroni, David Zaroni, Patty Dailey, Stephen Rich, and Bill Alsup, Directors



The extent of the new addition to the Mining Heritage Museum is obvious in this mid-winter view from Memorial (formerly Lions) Park. To the immediate left is the Jail Museum and to the left of that, the Allen Nossaman Archive.

Silverton Railroad Historical Park Development Plans are Detailed

by George Niederauer

A year ago we presented the concept for a Silverton Railroad Historic Park as a joint endeavor by the Durango Railroad Historical Society and the San Juan County Historical Society. This year the two organizations are initiating three new projects to help bring the concept to fruition.

To display and protect up to a dozen rail cars, the concept calls for a double track under a pavilion with a raised platform between the tracks. Each display track will be about 210 feet long to accommodate six rail cars. The platform will be about ten feet wide. The pavilion covering all this will be about 200 feet long and 36 feet wide. That will allow footpaths at ground level along the two tracks.

The tracks, platform and pavilion are a project of the Durango group. We plan to have drawings and estimates put together and submit proposals for grants this summer.

The large project could not happen without the support of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, for it will be located on their land between the depot and the engine house. In late March 2014, the two societies signed an easement agreement for the track and pavilion.

The Town of Silverton is also a partner, because some of the track will be on the Cement Street right of way, and the Town Council approved this project earlier this year. Yet another partner is the Galloping Goose Historical Society of Dolores, which has agreed to permanently loan the necessary quantity of rails, just as they did for the Silverton Northern track already laid. Durango Railroad Historical Society will need to purchase turnouts, tie plates, joint bars, track bolts and nuts, tie plates, and ties.

Besides restoring locomotive D&RGW 315, a long-standing objective of the Durango Railroad Historical Society has been to restore a series of freight cars, and perhaps some work cars. They have restored a drop bottom and a high side gondola.

Commitments have been made to acquire and restore the following: flat car, boxcar, single and double deck stock cars—all D&RGW. Last year they committed to reconstructing a pre-WWI tank car on a wood frame. Also on the list are a short (30-ft) refrigerator car, and a short caboose.

Second in priority were work cars, some of which are also known as maintenance-of-way and outfit cars. A few came on the market last winter, so Durango Railroad Historical Society made a commitment to purchase and restore

three: outfit tool car, outfit bunk car, and flanger.

Over the next several years, with the help of many committed volunteers and contracted professional help, it is hoped that the pavilion will be constructed and filled with cars and interpretive material.

Of course funding is a major consideration and it is being sought from foundations, corporations and businesses, and individuals. Persons interesting in helping through donations or suggestions for sources of funding are asked to contact officials of either society.



This post-1890 building in Animas Forks is at the confluence of the east and west forks of the Animas River and is one of the buildings involved in the upcoming project.

Alpine Loop Celebrates 25 Years; Further Animas Forks Work Planned

by David Singer

Visitors exploring the hardrock mining heritage sites in the high country of the San Juans this summer will be able to participate in the celebration of decades of preservation efforts at Animas Forks.

E. B. Greenleaf and Henry Wood built the first cabins at Animas Forks in 1874, and would be proud to know that so much energy and passion has gone into preserving the site.

Many people have played critical roles

in the townsite's preservation, creating yet another layer to its history. My wife, Julie Coleman, an archaeologist by trade, with degrees in History, Geology, and Anthropology, grew up around mining in Gunnison, moved to this side of the mountains to survey and document mining heritage sites around Silverton as a seasonal employee of the BLM in 1991. She worked on developing the BLM Management Plan for the San Juan County side of the then new Alpine Loop Scenic Byway. In 1992, Julie was drafted to work in the BLM's Gunnison Field Office, preparing the same type of long-range Management Plan for the heritage resources on the Lake City side of the Alpine Loop. Fourteen years later, Julie relocated her duty station to the San Juan Field office, and was put in charge of the implementation of the same Management Plan she helped design.

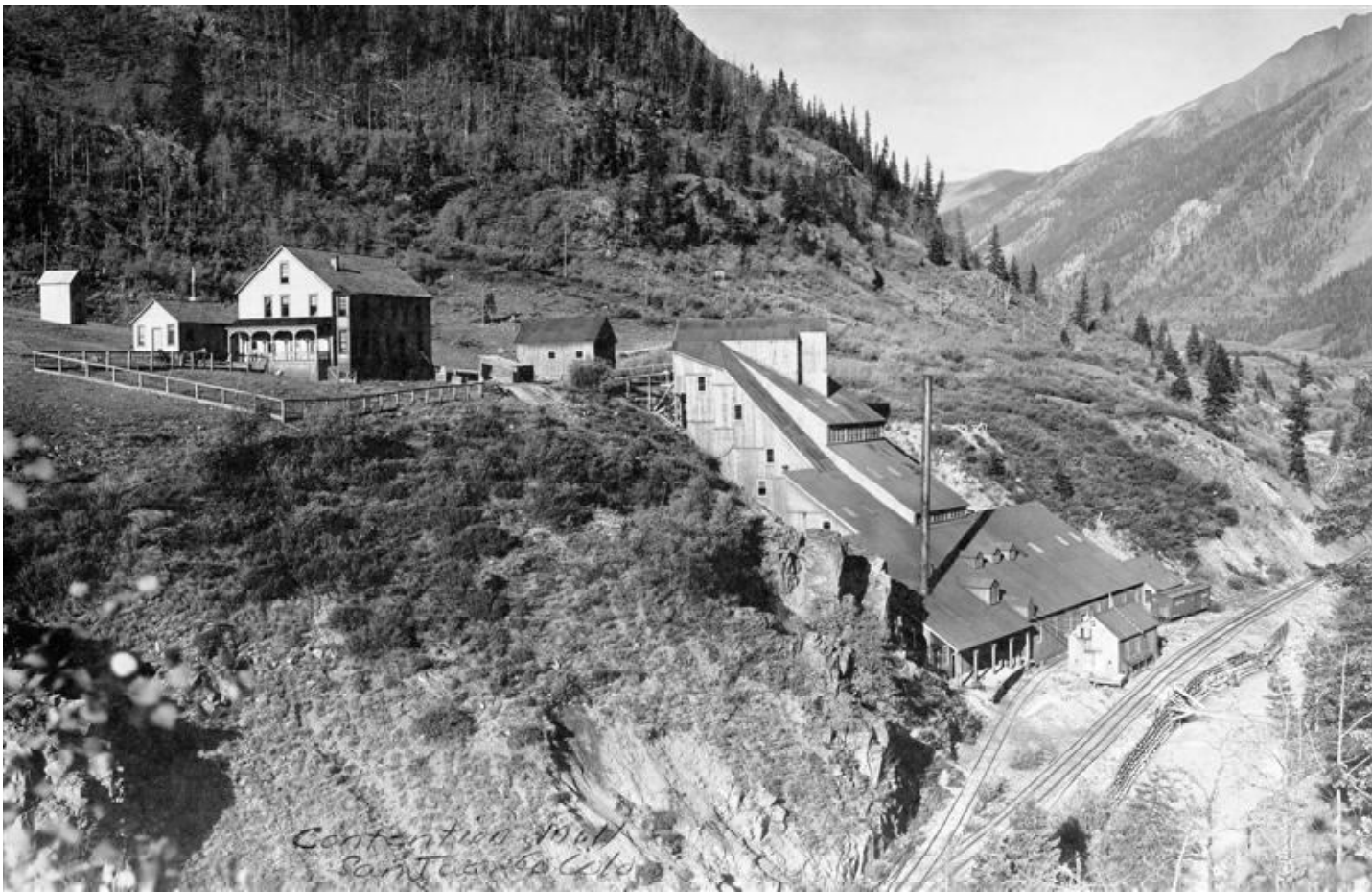
This year we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the dedication of the Alpine Loop Scenic Byway. After the work done last year in the stabilization of five Animas Forks buildings, we have now been funded from the State Historical Fund to complete the final four structures, including the jail, the oldest building on the site. Julie had established an Assistance Agreement with the Mountain Studies Institute (MSI), with these types of stabilization and preservation projects on the Alpine Loop in mind. Bruce Bourcy, the BLM archaeologist who is now overseeing the project, collaborated on a grant request that was successfully submitted to History Colorado for \$115,000 on behalf MSI. Bourcy and Marcie Bidwell, the Executive Director of MSI, dedicated an additional \$30,000 as cash match from funds that were allocated through the Assistance Agreement for this final phase of work at the site, bringing the total for the project to approximately \$145,000. MSI is a non-profit research and education organization and high-altitude field station based in Silverton.

Work this summer will focus on raising the buildings to plumb, improving site drainage, installation of masonry piers and footings, replacement of missing structural floor diaphragms, and improving safety and access to each of the structures. Missing windows and doors will be replaced to help seal the building envelopes from massive accumulations of snow and driving rain. All four of the buildings will have improvements made to components of their roof structures, and new sheathing will be installed, including the restoration of the original cedar shingles.

Silverton Restoration Consulting has developed the drawings and specification for the construction documents, in partnership with Reynolds and Associates, and will be managing the restoration project over the course of the summer. Loren Lew, the master craftsman who ran the construction crew during the initial phase of the project will be continuing his work in phase two.

You are invited to tour the site during construction, but please respect the contractor during your visit, and keep clear where work is on-going. Bring your cameras, a decent map, and plenty of water. Stay safe, be a good steward, and enjoy the mining heritage that we all find so irresistible to explore. Besides the breathtaking scenery, wildlife, and the occasional hailstorm with a climactic rainbow, you're bound to discover the lore of hardrock mining in the San Juans!

David Singer is the Principle Investigator for Silverton Restoration Consulting. Singer has donated his time to prepare the grant applications for this project and several others in San Juan County.



Silverton Northern right-of-way runs in front of the Contention Mill in this early photo.

Work Continues on Restoration of Silverton Northern Right-of-Way

by Fritz Klinke

The rebirth of the Silverton Northern Railroad is gaining headway under the direction of Fritz Klinke, who heads up the Silverton Northern committee. The historical society secured a 99-year lease from San Juan County for the abandoned right-of-way alongside the Animas River between the Powerhouse Industrial Park and Howardsville. This 2.5 mile stretch of road way is through the most scenic part of the line, passing by the sites of Waldheim, Silver Lake Mill, Wilfley-Mears Mill, Iowa-Tiger tram house and the Contention mill site.

The main impetus of this project is for economic development as well as for historic interpretation of the three Mears' narrow gauge railroads that ran from Silverton. Embraced in the San Juan County Master Plan, Heritage Tourism includes all of the various museum projects of the society and the rebuilt Silverton Northern is part of that plan adopted several years ago.

A group of about ten local residents has been meeting on a regular basis since the first of the year. This group has adopted a logo for the railroad as no historic logos were found. Fund raising is a major effort and various items useful for fund raising, such as hats, patches, mugs and the other typical gift shop items have been developed.

A crowd funding project will be announced shortly as a means to raise money to put down a demonstration piece of track that will be incorporated in the final project. The funding effort will feature a means for individuals and families to purchase a tie that will be used in the construction.

The first several hundred feet of track will be built early this summer on new grading on society owned land next to the Powerhouse site. As funds become available, more track will be laid and the other facilities needed for the operation of the railroad will be built. The other parts

needed for laying track include spikes, tie plates, rail joiners, and ties.

The Society has some rolling stock that can run on the rebuilt Silverton Northern, including the Casey Jones motor car, and as funding allows, other equipment will be secured.

This Silverton Northern rebuilding project is not physically connected with the track at the Silverton Northern engine house and is a separate and distinct project that will be an operating railroad as compared to the display activities at the engine house.

A new website has been developed, www.silvertonnorthern.com, that includes historic photos, history of the railroad, and fund raising information for individuals to contribute to this project. Any support that can be given to the Silverton Northern will be greatly appreciated. The appeal of seeing trains operating once again alongside the Animas River is an exciting prospect and one in which we hope you will want to participate.

Grants will assist Restoration and Conservation of County's Miner's Union Hospital Building

by David Singer

Two grants were recently awarded to San Juan County for the restoration of the Miner's Union Hospital building on Snowden Street, including \$200,000 from the State Historical Fund, and a grant from the Department of Local Affairs, in the amount of \$150,000. San Juan County dedicated \$20,000 from its Mill Levy fund that was established for the renovations of the Courthouse. Working in partnership with Willy Tookey, and Lois MacKenzie and Terri Brokering at the County Nurse's office, we were able to take that small seed money and embark on a long awaited preservation project that will benefit the health and welfare of the citizens and visitors to Silverton and San Juan County for decades to come.

The National Park Service designated the Town of Silverton a National Historic Landmark in 1962. That original Landmark designation identified the Miner's Union Hospital as a significant "Contributing Structure" because of its architectural merit, but also because it was designed by F. E. Edbrooke, who has been called Colorado's greatest Nineteenth-century architect. Edbrooke moved to Denver in

the 1870s to design the Tabor block and Tabor Opera House. In 1889 his architectural firm received the commission to design the Colorado State Capitol, the construction of which was overseen by famed Silvertonian, Otto Mears. Edbrooke was also the architect of Denver's Masonic Temple, the Brown Palace Hotel, and the Central Presbyterian Church. Edbrooke's design of the Miner's Union Hospital can be typed as Turn-of-the-Century Renaissance, or Italianate. Edbrooke created a statement of Silverton's prosperity with his design of the hospital, exemplifying the strength and influence of the union in this remote mining town.

The Silverton Miners Union, Local #26 was formed in 1894 by the Western Federation of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, shortly after the Silver Panic of 1893, to counter the lowering of wages and the increasing of hours by mine owners. In 1907 the mining industry had stabilized and San Juan County was producing millions of dollars of gold and silver. The Union was at its peak membership when the Miner's Union built the hospital. The basement was designed to have private rooms for the doctor and rooms for the

laundry and boiler. The first floor and second floors housed the wards, private rooms, the doctor's offices, and on the third floor, a state-of-the-art operating room. Today, the operating room still retains its large solarium windows, and the building's original layout and features remain essentially intact, after years of serving the community. Almost every miner in Silverton was a union man, and charitable events involving local families were frequent, including fund-raising for the hospital's construction and equipment.

Today, the building is owned and operated by San Juan County, and still retains its status as the community's only health care facility, 107 years since its construction, housing the offices of the County nurse and rooms to see patients by visiting doctors, nurses, and health care professionals. This type of facility is critical to the 600 residents that call San Juan County home. The building is also home to the County's Office of Emergency Management and provides office space to a visiting psychologist. The Miner's Union Hospital has become the home for several non-profit groups including the Mountain Studies Institute, the County Food Bank,

and the Silverton Standard and Miner Newspaper. The office of Silverton Restoration Consulting is located on the third floor as well.

Preservation of the building began in 1995. The roof of the hospital was replaced, and repairs to the building's two entries were completed with a grant from the State Historical Fund.

In recent years, the County has been investing in the health care operations at the nursing office with new equipment and expanded operations. The County's goal is to have the facility officially designated as a Satellite Clinic to an established Medical Center, such as Mercy Regional. This status will attract mid-level providers including Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants, and possibly open up additional funding specifically allocated for rural health care through participating State and Federal agencies. Lois MacKenzie, San Juan County's acting nurse, has established a working relationship with Mercy Regional Medical Center, and we are currently in an evaluation period for the Miner's Union Hospital to achieve that Satellite Clinic status as a result of her efforts. MacKenzie actually lived in the hospital as a child, when her father Ralph served as the county doctor from 1959 to 1962.

A prerequisite for the satellite status is bringing the building into compliance with required handicap accessibility criteria. The County's intent to "adaptively reuse" and preserve the building includes the installation of an elevator. This will be installed off the alley and the elevator shaft custom-fitted through a stacked closet space. The existing restrooms will also be reconfigured to achieve compliance in this first phase of work. The rehabilitation of the building will follow the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Buildings, and improve the efficiency of the building through the restoration of windows and doors in the initial phase. All exterior wood components will be rehabilitated and critical repairs made to the brick masonry and window sills and headers during this phase. Phase one will also include asbestos abatement and a professional assessment of the coal-fired boiler. Finally, a full set of construction documents will be developed. The documents will include detailed drawings and specifications outlining work to be completed in a subsequent or Second Phase of construction, which will focus on the restoration of the interior of the building, including repairs to delaminating plaster, decorative wood finishes and trim, upgrades to lighting fixtures, data access, heating and ventilating systems, and fire detection.

The San Juan County Commissioners have been endorsing historic preservation for over 20 years, working in partnership with Colorado's State Historic Fund on numerous successful preservation planning and implementation projects. San Juan County has invested in the economic benefits of historic preservation through heritage tourism as both the life blood of our economy, and out of a community-wide sense of honor for those individuals who arrived in the 1880s and built such a community in this remote and challenging mountain location. The Miner's Union Hospital is the most community oriented building I've had the honor of working on in many years. Letters of support for the grant request on this project arrived at my office unsolicited, which has never happened.

A building that started its life as a gift from the Silverton Miner's Union members and their families, continues to serve the community to this day as a model for charity, public spirit, and social responsibility.

