



Behind the Scenes at the Keller Heritage Center

Volume VII, Issue 1

January 2011

Stevens County Historical Society

2010 Christmas Tour Review

What a wonderful event this year. Of course it always is, but this year many people commented about the wonderful atmosphere. It was elegant, of course, but since it was a “North Pole Christmas” Santa’s work was everywhere. The tree was loaded with toys as was the small bedroom. Elves abounded to help and even a cat in the bathroom was helping. We all know what happens when cats help too much. It was a wonderful blend of elegance and whimsy. The candy and suckers outside were spectacular along

with different lighting and a blow up North Pole scene.

Gingerbread House Contest

We didn’t get as many gingerbread houses as we’ve had on some years, but the ones we did get were great! It’s so fun each year seeing the creativity of those who participate. Just when you think you’ve seen all there is to do with a gingerbread house, someone does something new. It’s nice to see the family projects too, knowing that everyone had a great time together. And, of course, they

make the Museum smell sooo good!!

Cookie Donations

We managed to scrape through by the skin of our teeth on the cookies this year. Last-minute donations saved the day. Usually we have leftovers to give to the companies and agencies that help us out, but not this year—all we had left were crumbs. But, we had enough for the Tour and we did well in donations and all’s well that ends well. We sure appreciate everyone who helped out.

THE MUSEUM GETS A TECHNOLOGICAL UPDATE

The Keller House is not at all handicapped-accessible. And there really isn’t a way to do it. So, much thought, preparations, and contact with the state Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation resulted in the idea of a video that

guests could see if they couldn’t navigate the stairs. It is also a great idea for presentations

to groups, schools, the SCHS web page etc. So a grant was received and the result is a large TV, a video about the house and DVD player. It will all be installed in the Learning Center and available for guest viewing.

For those of you who attended the 100th birthday party for the house, you saw Kitty Johnston, dressed as Anna Keller and talking about the house and their life in it. She agreed to repeat that role in the video. She conducts a tour through the

house and points out its many architectural features and the many interesting items in it.

Much research went into the details to make it accurate. The many kinds of wood in the house have been sometimes confusing and that is accurately portrayed, the wood storage for the fireplace is described, and even the little yellow chicken planter that Mrs. Keller gave to her friend is shown.

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Tour Guide Crisis—We Need More Guides!

We are having some trouble recruiting new tour guides and other volunteers. Apparently the baby boomers aren’t too much into joining and volunteering. We depend on our volunteers.

Several regular guides are not able to work this summer. The concern is that we may not be able to open the full schedule starting in May.

The commitment is small, only three hours a week. The morning guides work only June, July, and August and the afternoon people also work May and September. We can be flexible in most cases to accommodate schedules.

Being a tour guide sounds kind of scary to some people, that they have to conduct tours and that they have to know about every artifact. Both are not true. Tour guides are more like Walmart greeters. They meet people at the door and collect their admissions. They give out brochures that tell about the house, museum and grounds. Guests go through the Museum and house on their own. There is a new video that shows all the details about the house that guests can see. It’s easy!

So, if you or someone you know has a few extra hours, call the Museum at 684-5968.

Things We Need!!

It seems that whatever we need for our displays is out there somewhere. The trick is finding them. People have been so generous in donating items and are glad that the item has found a home. The trick is making our need known to those who have the items. In the spirit of connecting with people who have things and want to get rid of them to a good home, we started a list of things we need.

Here is the current list:

Candlestick phone – old, black
Refrigerator – old with a round thing on top
Mannequins – male most needed, body parts OK. We are looking for the old style like JC Penney used to have.
Barn wood for future projects
Serving items for the kitchen – like nice

glass plates and bowls, pedestal cake plates, (don't need cups and saucers)
Vacuum cleaner – upright
Colville Newspapers – 1970's and 1980's
Old Newspapers from other towns in the County.
Of course we always enjoy new artifacts, photographs and money. Those can come in any time.

Curator's Corner

by Katie Tolin

Whew! Another Christmas spectacle has come and gone with the Keller House, Museum and Learning Center dressed in their holiday best. Thanks to everyone who put in so many hours and so much effort to get everything absolutely perfect. The 'harvest' from the Mitten Tree provided sacks of mittens, hats and gloves. The smallest items were delivered to Colville's Head Start and the rest was divided between the grade schools in Colville and Kettle falls. There were fewer mittens this year, so if any knitters are out there looking for winter inspiration, you can start now for next December's tree. It's a great tradition that the schools really appreciate.

Now that the decorations are down and stowed away once more, the

real work of the year begins. Already, work has begun on a new case for the Indian artifacts display area. Marvin Ray has been supervising this project and it is making quick progress. Other work is being done to create a new display for the Department Store. With a recent donation of a lovely wedding dress and veil, the space will now spotlight a selection of the Museum's wedding dresses from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. These are lovely textiles; silks, satins and laces created for corseted and sometimes bustled figures. Let us all take a deep breath and be glad those fashions are in the past and available to be admired now.

In the Learning Center, there are plans for a new display of items from various fraternal organizations, all elabo-

rate swords, sashes and regalia. These items haven't been on display for several years so a fresh look at them is in order.

Other displays will get some updating, incorporating recent donations and sprucing things up as necessary. There's always plenty to do to keep the Museum in tip-top shape.

As usual, there are things that the Museum would really appreciate receiving. If anyone has a dress form that's no longer needed, we can always use more of them. A candlestick phone for the Telephone display would be wonderful and always, we need mannequins, especially male forms. Donations of time, money and historical items are what keep the Museum vital. Thanks to all who keep us growing.

Chewelah Colville Indian Agency Cabin Update

We are waiting any day for the formal approval to make the Chewelah Colville Indian Agency Cabin tax exempt. That is quite a process.

Winter snuck up on the outside work crew and while they were raking acres of leaves on the museum grounds, winter struck as it hasn't done for years.

The first work on the cabin will

the roof of the front porch. The structure under it needs shored up and the roof supports then replaced. Ah, Spring. It can't come soon enough!

Let us know if you would like to make suggestions about the use of the cabin. It has to be a museum but what kind of museum and what other uses it might be good for is up for grabs.

Volunteers, as always, are very much welcome and needed and this cabin is no exception. We'd really like it to be a showpiece, something that people really want to come and visit.

Around the Grounds

by Marvin Ray

The Fur display booth has been improved immensely during the latter part of November. New Board lumber has been installed on the outside of the booth. A new cougar hide and mounted head has been placed inside the booth. A mounted bear head and hide has been placed on top

of the booth and is looking down towards the viewers. It's really very impressive!

A new Indian booth is almost finished. The improved display area will involve Indian dresses, horse saddles and blankets and other ornamental blankets. Pictures of an Indian lady and dresses will be used, as well as other clothing. A sec-

ond display booth for Indian clothing is being repainted next to the new display booth, so both will look fresh.

The improved mining display will be finished by April. Two new pieces of equipment will be displayed. A covered, roofed area will be installed to protect a motor-powered compressor.



A Blast from the Past

Here is a photo of the Christmas Tree from the 1997 Christmas Tour. Aren't those crocheted ornaments just charming?

President's Message

Each year we think that we will have some time to rest during the winter months, and each year it proved to be a very busy time. This year is no different. As soon as the Christmas Tour was over work began again on the museum with new and updated displays. Research days have been very busy and the librarian has been working hard on the shelved items. This year we can hardly wait for the museum to open so we can rest.

I hope your continued membership means that you believe, as I do, that the work of the Historical Society is essential to the citizens of the county. It is amazing to me when I go through the museum at the

that are here. Then I go to storage and there are more. Then I go through files and there is yet more and then there are the photographs. The holdings of the Historical Society really are a treasure. As an example, without it, I would not have seen more than a few pieces of original Stickley furniture. I never would have seen items from the home of John Hoffer, Colville's founder, or seen the cannon from the HBC Fort Colville. The list of wonderful items is so long.

Each year more and more people come to us to help them find their roots here in Stevens County. Some leave with very little and some leave with lots. Almost always they find something.

I guess this is a reminder for all of us to continue to support the efforts and programs of the Historical Society as it chronicles the long and rich history of the county that we love. Also remember the HS when you dispose of old things, especially those that chronicle the county's history. As always cash gifts help with the work.

There are no paid staff so the hundreds of hours of work that gets done is a gift the county and its citizens. Some time we should convert the hours to dollars and see what the cash equivalent is. It would be huge. I think there are hours enough to equal about three full time people, at least. I guess we could do the informal math.

*** David Thompson Activities in Stevens County—Update ***

For information regarding activities celebrating David Thompson, visit the official website at: www.visitstevens.com.



Mmmm...Cookies!!!



We usually do our Christmas Cookies for our Tour. So many people have liked having the recipes for sale that we were thinking that it might be a good idea—and a fund-raiser—to make a little “Keller House Christmas Tour Cookie Recipe Collection.” This would mean that we need to collect recipes that folks are willing to share for the publication and then put them all together so that the booklet is ready to sell at the Tour. If we get it done earlier, we might even sell it at the Keller House before the Tour. Then, those who are willing to bake could bake recipes from the booklet so that patrons can taste-test the recipes before they buy it. Contact Shannon at 684-4198 or at gs87jjs@msn.com to participate.



Good News!!!



Rose is happy to report that we have a new resident at the Museum apartment. Her name is Brandy and she works as an EMT and at the nursing home. She is doing great with all her new duties here, even though she is so busy, and we are glad to have her!

Stevens County Historical Society

P. O. Box 25
Colville, WA 99114

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Membership Application & Renewal

- New Membership
- Renewal (membership expires on date on label)

Choose One:

- Senior/Student/Disabled.....\$10.00
- Single Membership.....\$20.00
- Family Membership.....\$25.00
- Business Membership.....\$35.00
- Sustaining Membership.....\$100.00
- Patron Membership.....\$500.00
- Life Membership.....\$2,500.00

Payment Enclosed: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Cut out, enclose payment and send to:

Stevens County Historical Society
P. O. Box 25
Colville, WA 99114

How to Reach Us

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 AM to 1 PM

Phone/Message Number: (509) 684-5968

Email: schs@ultraplix.com

Website: www.stevenscountyhistoricalsociety.org

Address: P. O. Box 25
700 N. Wynne St., Colville, WA 99114

Museum Hours:

May & September: 1 PM to 4 PM
 June, July, August: 10 AM to 4 PM (Mon.-Thurs.)
 1 PM to 4 PM (Fri.-Sun.)

October through April: Museum & Keller House Tours
By Appointment.

Research Library Hours:

Wednesday: 10 AM to 1 PM
 Thursday: 1 PM to 4 PM (limited services)

If you need other hours, please call the museum to arrange a different time.