

Frontier Without Limits: High Desert Rendezvous

The Western Museum Association is planning its annual conference in Boise October 11-14, 2006. Plan to join fellow regional members as the WMA celebrates its own, modern version of the famous western tradition of rendezvous. In the early 1800s, trappers, Native Americans, merchants, missionaries, and explorers would gather to trade, exchange information, and kick up their heels. In Boise, we will create our own extraordinary confluence of cultures, institutions, and resources, our own unique trading fair, and come away richer for the experience.

Through sharing, we will relocate the keen, leading edge of our profession, whether in visitor studies, architecture, technology, exhibit design or management. We will compare our efforts to those of our colleagues, and gain perspective. We'll examine, again, the fabric of our personal commitment, and seek wisdom to fuel its renewal. Current knowledge represents the ultimate frontier for museum professionals. With change accelerating, it is an inquiry without end, toward a destiny never quite manifest, an ever-retreating sunset, a frontier without limits.

The Boise Museum Association is your host committee for the conference and has arranged several entertaining activities for the week.

On Wednesday evening, guests will be treated to a "Bar & Brothel" tour of downtown Boise on the Boise Tour Train while they enjoy spirited banter about the city's colorful past. They'll return to the Rose Room, located in the Historic Union Block, for dinner, a beer tasting and auction.

Thursday's event will be held in Boise's Old Penitentiary Historic District. Attendees will travel to the Idaho Botanical Garden from the Grove Hotel and will be encouraged to wander through the various garden areas as they sample appetizers and drinks. During dinner, visitors may examine cell houses, Maximum Security, and "Siberia," the name given to the solitary confinement area. The Idaho Museum of Mining and Geology, located just outside the entrance to the Old Pen, will also be open that evening.

On Friday, attendees will be welcomed by the Basque community for an evening of good food, entertainment and fun. The Basque Museum will open its facilities and those of the

Fronton building and the Cyrus Jacobs/Uberaga House for folks who would like to tour and learn more about Basque culture and early Boise history during the gathering hour before dinner. Guests will be entertained by Txantaangorriak (Robin Red Breast), a group of local button accordionists and tambourine players, ages 5-40+, who will engage the crowd with their musical charm.

On the final night of the conference guests will be treated to "A Taste of Idaho." This fun, informative evening will showcase three unique venues, which will be enhanced with scrumptious Idaho cuisine and beverages. This event will be a progressive experience with guests stopping at each venue for approximately one hour. Our evening will begin at the Discovery Center of Idaho, progress to the Idaho Historical Museum and conclude at The Boise Art Museum. The Idaho Black History Museum will also be open for guests to visit.

The Idaho Association of museum is making up to 20 \$100 stipends available to qualifying members. Contact your regional representative for more information. Members of WMA and the various professional groups within the organization such as the Registrars Committee of the Western Region (RCWR) are also able to offer stipends and scholarships for the conference. Check out the WMA website (www.westmuse.org) for further information. There are also volunteer opportunities. Look for more information in future mailings.

Join us in Boise for a great educational opportunity and chance to meet and strengthen your professional contacts within the region.

2006 Program Committee Chairs

Dan Crandall, Director
Pittock Mansion

Sarah Kennington, Registrar
UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History

2006 Host Committee Chairs

Jody Ochoa, Museum Program Manager
Idaho State Historical Society

Patty Miller, Executive Director
Basque Museum & Cultural Center

- Jody Ochoa, IAM Treasurer

IDAHO ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUM OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT

Lyle Wirtanen, Director
The Historical Museum at St. Gertrude
HC3, Box 121
Cottonwood, ID 83522
(208) 962-7123, FAX (208) 962-8647
director1@connectwireless.us

VICE PRESIDENT

Patty Miller, Director
Basque Museum & Cultural Center
611 Grove Street
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 343-2671
pattyam@basquemuseum.com

SECRETARY

Alyse Cadez, Ed. Technician/Volunteer Coordinator
Nez Perce National Historic Park
39063 U.S. Highway 95
Spalding, ID 83540
(208) 843-2261, Ext. 138
alyse_cadez@nps.gov

TREASURER

Jody Ochoa, Registrar
Idaho State Historical Museum
610 N. Julia Davis Drive
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 334-2120, FAX (208) 334-4059
jochoa@ishs.idaho.gov

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

***Position needs to be filled.

REPRESENTATIVES:

NORTHERN REGION

Position 1 (Term 2005-2009)
Sherry Caisley, Director
Appaloosa Museum & Heritage Center
2720 W. Pullman Road
Moscow, ID 83843
(208) 882-5578 x 279
museum@appaloosa.com

Position 2 (Term 2002-2006)

Lyle Wirtanen

SOUTHWESTERN REGION

Position 1 (2004-2008)

Patty Miller

Position 2 (2005-2009)

Dr. Thom Couch, Director
Owyhee County Historical Museum
P.O. Box 67
Murphy, ID 83650
(208) 495-2319
lrcouchphd@yahoo.com

SOUTHEASTERN REGION

Position 1 (2005-2009)

Betty Murphy, President
Ketchum/Sun Valley Historical Society
& Heritage & Ski Museum
P.O. Box 3557
Ketchum, ID 83340
(208) 726-6423, FAX (208) 726-6985
bmurphysv@aol.com

Position 2 (Term 2004-2008)

Linda Deck, Director
Idaho Museum of Natural History
ISU Campus, Box 8096
Pocatello, ID 832098096
(208) 282-5417, FAX (208) 282-5893
decklind@isu.edu

AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES

Position 1 (2005-2009)

Grace Wolfe, Director
Boise Basin Museum
P.O. Box 661
Idaho City, ID 83631
(208) 392-9551, FAX (208) 392-9905
museum@surfbest.net

Position 2 (2005-2007)

***Position needs to be filled

Position 3 (2005-2008)

Alyse Cadez

Smithsonian Magazine's Museum Day

Smithsonian magazine is again organizing a Museum Day on September 30, 2006. They encourage any and all museums to be involved by providing free admission to the public on that day and promoting Museum Day at your museum. They will provide the promotional signage for you, as well as in-magazine promotion of your museum, Smithsonian magazine subscriber names in your market for one-time promotional use, listing and image on their dedicated Museum Day website, the association of your museum's name with Smithsonian (ranked the #1 world brand for quality by Equitrends), and your name associated with Museum Day in all the media outlets nationwide that the Smithsonian uses to promote and cover Museum Day. For more information contact L. Dennett Robertson, Director of Marketing, Smithsonian Publishing, at robertsond@si.edu.

- Linda Deck, IAM SE Region Representative

From the President

Idaho is fortunate to be the site for the annual Western Museums Association conference in 2006. This is the first time that the WMA has held their conference in the state, so we are preparing to put our best face forward in welcoming museum folk from all the western states and western Canada.

The conference will be held on October 11-14 with the Grove Hotel in downtown Boise serving as the conference headquarters. This event promises to have something for everyone. There will be a variety of concurrent sessions that will have application to museums large and small. Interest group meetings pertaining to curators, administrators, registrars and more will allow time to learn and exchange ideas according to interest area. Exhibitors will be on hand to demonstrate and promote their products and services. Evening events are planned that will add to the fun. I hope you are reserving those dates to be in Boise and to participate in this professional development experience.

May 18 is International Museum Day. All museums are encouraged to publicize this day in their area and to provide incentives for people to visit their local museum. Half price admissions, educational programs, and local contests are just some ideas to help celebrate this day.

The Idaho Association of Museums board is investigating the feasibility of establishing an IAM website. Most state museum associations have a website. Our website would include information about the association, a listing of conferences and workshops of interest to museums and links to member museums. You will hear more as we study this proposal.

The Nez Perce Summer of Peace, the only nationally recognized Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Event in Idaho, will be held in June. While several activities will be occurring throughout the month, the majority of the events occur during the week of June 11-17 at Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston.

I am pleased to be the co-chair (along with a member of the Nez Perce Tribe) of the Healing Conference that is scheduled for June 15-16. This conference will bring cultures together for a day and a half of positive interaction. It is intended to be a time to overcome some of the misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the past and to continue healing the trauma that has resulted. Our museum has a Nez Perce exhibit that honors the first people who lived in our area. Other events occurring during the week include the eighth annual Lewis & Clark Symposium, a peace village, Lewis & Clark Corps II, a salmon feast, a powwow and more. Please keep these dates in mind if you are in the Lewiston area.

- Lyle Wirtanen, IAM President

Update from Ketchum/Sun Valley Heritage and Ski Museum

Our winter activities in the Museum begin in December with our Old Fashioned Christmas celebration. One of the huge pines planted in 1933 in the Forest Service Park where we are located, is the official Ketchum Christmas tree. The community is invited to participate in the tree lighting, carol singing and of course a visit with Santa who arrives on a Ketchum fire engine. This annual celebration is attended by at least two hundred each year and has become a Ketchum tradition for the children.

During our ski season, we have a reception at the museum for the Ancient Skiers. This is a very large ski club with about 900 members nationwide. Most of our visitors are from the Seattle, Washington area and are members of our museum. We entertained about 140 club members in late January with margaritas and munchies. They especially enjoy visiting our ski museum's displays of 100 years of skis and the history of the sport. Both Sun Valley's and Ketchum's City Councils are invited as special guests.

This year we produced an afghan depicting all the interests of our two cities, Sun Valley and Ketchum. We have had great financial success with it and have reordered three times. Our design includes Bald Mountain, Sheep Trailing, Wagon Days, Sun Valley Resort and, of course, our Museum.

It was a pleasure to have the Western Folklife Center from Elko, Nevada bring their educational "Human Landscape of Sheep Ranching in the American West" display to our museum during the annual "Trailing of the Sheep" festival in October. Hundreds came to see the authentic sheep camp and learn our history of sheep ranching.

At present we have an art and photography display "Celebration of Bald Mountain." All local artists and photographers who have painted or photographed our beautiful ski mountain were invited to participate. More than 75 people attended the opening reception.

We also have completed our Snow Board display honoring our local Olympic champions, Sondra VanErt and Gram Watanabe. Gram competed this year in Torino. The school children like this exhibit the best.

Our projects this year include producing a new walking tour of all our historic buildings in Ketchum and Sun Valley. We are working with the Historical Preservation Commission appointed by the Ketchum City Council to produce an informative brochure and provide plaques for all historical buildings and locations.

- Betty Murphy, President, Ketchum/Sun Valley Historical Society
Heritage and Ski Museum

Got Archives?

In February, the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude's in Cottonwood and the Appaloosa Museum in Moscow each hosted The Basics of Archives a free workshop presented by Steve Walker, Idaho State Archivist. This course was developed by The Council of State Archivists and the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) and is targeted toward people who are responsible for maintaining historical records.

Both of the workshops were a great success with 20 people attending in Cottonwood and 10 people attending in Moscow. As a part of this free one-day workshop, participants receive a digital copy of the online archives course offered by the AASLH. Steve Walker presents the material in a straight forward manner and is quite willing to answer any questions no matter how general or specific. If you would like to schedule this workshop for your institution or region please contact:

Steve Walker, State Archivist
Idaho Public Archives and Research Library
2205 E. Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83712
Tel: 208-334-2620 or 514-2323
e-mail: Steve.Walker@ishs.idaho.gov

- Sherry Caisley, IAM Northern Region Representative

IAM Website in Development...Get Online!

At the March board meeting, IAM officers voted to establish an IAM website, crafted by iPlan out of Boise. Visitors to this website will be able to access information about IAM itself (IAM's mission and by-laws, the board members, board meeting minutes), IAM events such as the annual conference and workshops, and general IAM news (including the newsletter).

Perhaps the most important feature of the site will be an interactive map of Idaho, showing cities in which museums or other cultural institutions are located. Site visitors can click on the city to bring up a list of those institutions. The institutional IAM members name will be linked to a page of their own, with their name, photo or logo, brief description, hours of operation, admission information and directions, and a link to their website. This is a benefit of IAM membership and board members foresee that this will be a great marketing tool for our members.

The website is in development now. Very soon all member institutions will receive a mailing, email, or fax requesting the information needed on their museum to add to the website. Don't miss out on getting your institution added before the summer tourist season begins...join IAM and get us your info! For more information contact Linda Deck, IAM Southeast Region Representative, at decklind@isu.edu or 208-282-5417.

- Linda Deck, IAM SE Region Representative

Blaine County Museum Honors Living History

You don't have to look any farther than your own backyard to find true Idaho Gems. That's the philosophy of the board of the Blaine County Historical Museum in Hailey.

The Blaine County Museum has introduced a program that honors its living history. Blaine County communities nominate one woman who has been part of, contributed to, or worked to preserve the history of that community. The nominees must be 70 or older and have lived in the area for at least 30 years. These women make up the annual Blaine County Heritage Court.

"The Ladies of the Heritage Court are the real 'Gems' of our county," says Teddie Daley, Director of the Blaine County Museum. "These are the women who worked the soil, raised the families and held together the fabric of community." Daley says some honorees have been the daughters and granddaughters of the original settlers of the Wood River Valley. Others moved here as young women and established family roots.

This is the third year for this event. The women are honored with a full-fledged Coronation pageant, complete with tiaras, flowers, banners and heritage wardrobe. The pageant, held the last Sunday in June, features well known enter-

tainers and guests, all directing their talents to the Ladies of the Court.

During the Coronation Ceremony, each woman is escorted by her town's mayor. They are introduced to the audience, presented with special plaques announcing their appointment to the Heritage Court and crowned. Gladys McAtee, 92, of Hailey told the crowd that the Coronation made her feel like "Cinderella, a real princess." The local newspapers run features on each of the Ladies prior to the Coronation, detailing their families, histories and the role they played in creating the Valley's cultural heritage.

The 2006 Heritage Court Coronation will be June 26, at the Liberty Theater in Hailey. The program runs from 2-5 p.m., with entertainment, ceremony, reception and special museum tours. This is a free public event. For more information on the Heritage Court, activities, public appearances or volunteer opportunities, contact Laura Hall, Heritage Court Director at 208-788-3952, or Teddie Daley, Blaine County Museum, 208-788-1801.

- Betty Murphy, President, Ketchum/Sun Valley Historical Society Heritage and Ski Museum

Tax Exemption Will Benefit Museums Throughout the State

An effort began in 1999 for the 2000 legislative session to initiate the passage of legislation that would exempt museums from paying sales tax on admissions and on purchases by their institutions for supplies. One of the main obstacles that the supporting IAM team faced was that they had to convince legislators that one of the primary functions of museums is that of education. With difficulty, the bill passed the House Revenue & Taxation Committee and the House, but died before being presented to the Senate Local Government & Taxation Committee.

We rallied the forces again for the 2001 legislative session. This time, it made it through the House and over to the Senate Local Government & Taxation Committee, but never sent to the Senate floor for a vote. The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. later that year, and the uncertainty of economic instability, definitely influenced our legislative representatives for the next couple years. There never seemed to be an appropriate atmosphere to present the bill again, so the effort was shelved.

In 2005, Patty Miller, IAM Vice President, decided that it was worth the effort to bring the issue to the legislature one more time. The bill was drafted by Patty's father, Tom Miller, a retired attorney who had much experience in legislation and lobbying. He asked Representative Carlos Bilbao to send the draft to the Legislative Services office in the fall of 2005 and the process began yet again.

The IAM realized it needed numbers to present a case for the fiscal impact that the adoption of the bill would have on the state coffers, statistical information to prove that museums were serving the general public and school students and that museums are an economic benefit to their communities.

Sherry Caisley, an IAM rep from the Appaloosa Museum in Moscow, Idaho, sent out a survey and began collecting data. Approximately one-fourth of the state's museums completed the survey. Erin Kennedy, of the Boise Art Museum, created a large map identifying the location of the museums, to be used as a visual aide. In the interim,

David Pennock, Executive Director of the Museum of Idaho, had kept records which estimated that, from the opening of the Museum of Idaho and for the following three years, the economic benefit to the city of Idaho Falls was approximately seven million dollars. Pennock had also met with a Representative and Senator from Idaho Falls who were willing to act as sponsors and promoters of the bill.

Armed with information, representation and a draft bill, the legislative team began to tackle the daunting political system of state government. Representative Carlos Bilbao, a Basque-American from Emmett, had the Legislative Services office put the draft in RS (routing slip) form and then introduced RS#15414 to the House Revenue & Taxation Committee on 1/26/06. The committee voted to print it and House Bill 475 was created. Hurdle #1 was cleared.

Representative Janice McGeachin made arrangements for a lobbying team consisting of David Pennock, Tom

Miller and Patty Miller to meet with Revenue and Tax Committee members on an individual basis to address questions or concerns they might have concerning the bill. McGeachin then presented the bill to the committee on 2/21/06. Following Representative McGeachin's introduction, Pennock gave a succinct, fact-filled presentation using the Museum of Idaho as a case study, but assuring the committee that he was speaking to the needs of all Idaho's museums. Members of the Boise Museum Association were in the audience to show support for the passage of the bill. The committee voted unanimously to send the bill to be voted on by the House with a "do pass" recommendation. The House vote took place on 2/27/06 with an outcome of 67 Ayes, 1 Nay. Hurdle #2 was cleared.

Next, steps one and two had to be repeated with the Senate's Local Government & Taxation Committee. Representative McGeachin put the lobbying team in touch with members of that committee. Many were open to listen to our comments, but a few said that they could not support a bill for another sales tax exemption. With BMA representatives in the audience, McGeachin presented the bill to the Senate committee and Pennock followed with his presentation. A majority of the committee voted to send the bill to the Senate floor with a "do pass" recommendation. Hurdle #3 was cleared.

The bill was presented on the Senate floor on 3/8/06. Tom and Patty Miller were in the gallery to hear the vote. Senator Tom Corder of Mountain Home carried the bill and opened debate. Senator and Majority Leader Bart Davis of Idaho Falls then spoke on behalf of the bill, strongly supporting its passage. He spoke about the economic benefits the Museum of Idaho has had on the economy of Idaho Falls. Senator Mel Richardson of Idaho Falls then rose and spoke to the attributes of the Museum of Idaho as an exciting place and shared the wonderful educational experiences he has had taking his grandchildren to the museum. Senator Elliot Werk, Boise, asked if a sunset clause had been added to the bill - Senator Tom Corder replied, "no". There being no further debate, a vote was taken of the Senators and as Tom and Patty Miller sat anxiously in their seats, a roll call vote was taken. 31 (aye); 4 (nay). It passed!

Governor Kempthorne signed the bill into law on 3/15/06. The exemption will go into effect on July 1.

The lobbying team used the following points to stress the need for passage of this legislation:

1. Museums are an educational resource for Idaho's citizens
2. Museums are an additional educational resource for Idaho's students
3. Museums have a positive economic impact in their communities
4. The bill is narrowly-focused to define museums, requiring them to be public institutions or 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations.

Continued on page 6.

Continued from page 5.

5. The bill does not exempt museums from collecting and paying sales tax on items sold as merchandise in their stores.
6. The bill does not allow abuse from entities that are not 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations or public institutions.
7. The bill does not extend the exemption to museum construction and remodeling work done through contractors who pay the tax on materials they purchase.

Numerous factors led to the successful passage of House Bill 475:

David Pennock's commitment to create a dynamic presentation, his travel to Boise numerous times to strategize and his efforts to rally Representative McGeachin and Senator Davis to support the bill.

Representative McGeachin went out of her way to familiarize herself with the bill, and did a great job presenting the museums' case to both the House and Senate Committees. She was also instrumental in getting us in to speak with Representatives and Senators to promote the bill and answer any questions or concerns the legislators might have.

The effort would most likely have had a different outcome had it not been for the pro-bono efforts of Tom Miller and his understanding of the workings of the legislative process. He personally wrote letters and contacted Representatives and Senators in an effort to promote the bill and gave unselfishly of his time to coordinate the lobbying effort.

IAM representatives were asked to contact legislators to stress the statewide impact of the bill. Many wrote, called or emailed those people and this communication, combined with the statistical information submitted by the museums early in the process, definitely helped to influence the vote.

In conclusion, legislators felt that they could support HB 475 because they could see that museums are good for Idaho and Idaho's economy. A sales tax exemption for museums is the first step in the process to lend a hand to the institutions that are so valuable to the preservation of our state's history and to its economic viability.

- Patty A. Miller, IAM Vice President

IAM Newsletter
c/o Frank Spaeth
Idaho Museum of Natural History
ISU Campus Box 8096
Pocatello, ID 83204