

IAM News



Full Speed Ahead: Practical guides for interpretive exhibits

Mark your calendar for the IAM conference. When: Friday and Saturday, April 16 and 17. Where: Nampa, at the Woman's Century Club Host: The Canyon County Historical Society

Plans are well underway for the April 2010 annual conference. The main presenters will be Barbara Bauer and Elizabeth Jacox of the TAG Historical Research consulting group. Their goal for the conference is “to provide the tools needed by small museums on a tight budget to create beautiful, coherent exhibits using their own museum collections.”

Barbara and Elizabeth have been in the history consulting business for more than 15 years and have provided assistance with collections management and interpretive exhibit development to small museums. They will present an overview of the process based on their experience developing an interpretive plan for a historic ranch operated by the Bureau of Land Management.

The overview will be followed by topic-focused breakout sessions for brainstorming and discussion.

And a lot more is planned. A panel of three museum people will describe some of the small exhibits they have created. Michael Vogt, Curator of Collections and Exhibits for the Basque Museum and Culture Center, will be discussing one of the rooms created for the national exhibit at Ellis Island: “Hidden in Plain Sight: The Basques.” Ann Curtis, Director of the Payette County Historical Museum, will talk about small exhibits they have created. Mary Reed, past Director of Latah County Historical Society, will present two examples of exhibits that integrated artifacts with local stories.

On Saturday Jim McReynolds, Director of the Wallace District Mining Museum, will discuss his digitization project and the “virtual exhibit” component of PastPerfect software. (See the story on page 2.)

And you'll have the opportunity to share your experiences and learn from others during three table top discussions: unique and interesting exhibit sources, writing and designing intriguing labels, and adding hands-on activities and materials to enhance the exhibit experience for both kids and adults.

Special guests will be representatives from the Idaho Humanities Council, the Idaho State Historical Society, and the Idaho Heritage Trust who will talk about grant opportunities their organizations offer. Tom Blanchard, Chair of the Idaho State Historical Society Board of Trustees, will provide a perspective on happenings around the state that affect our museums.

Keith Petersen, Idaho State Historian, who has been visiting numerous museums throughout the state, will give a presentation, “Reflections on Idaho Museums” for the Friday luncheon. The ISHS trustees have been invited to join us for lunch.

The conference setting in Nampa is a 1908 house that is now the Woman's Century Club clubhouse. Their members will cater Friday and Saturday's lunches and provide beverages and snacks for the morning and afternoon breaks.

Friday evening activities. The conference will give you a chance to learn more about Nampa's success in preserving its history. On Friday the Canyon County Historical Society will lead a walking tour of historic downtown Nampa followed after a dinner break by a reception at their 1902 Union Pacific Depot museum.

Travel stipends available. The IAM will again offer travel stipends for the conference. We've budgeted funds to help defray costs for a limited number of conference attendees. Preference will be given to individuals attending an IAM conference for the first time.

For the 2010 Conference, the IAM will award three stipends of \$50 for participants who are within 100 miles of Nampa; two stipends of \$150 for participants who live within 100-200 miles; and one stipend of \$250 for a participant who lives over 200 miles away.

To apply for a stipend, please submit a brief letter detailing your relationship to a museum (staff, board member, volunteer), if you have attended an IAM conference before, and why you feel you should be awarded a stipend to attend the conference. Submissions should be sent to Alyse Cadez, IAM President either by email at alyse_cadez@nps.gov or mailed to Nez Perce National Historical Park, P. O. Box 1000, Spalding, ID 83540. The subject line of the e-mail should read, "IAM Stipend Request." You can also contact Alyse at (208) 843-7038 for more information.

Recipients will be required to write an article for an upcoming newsletter describing some knowledge or information they gained from the conference.

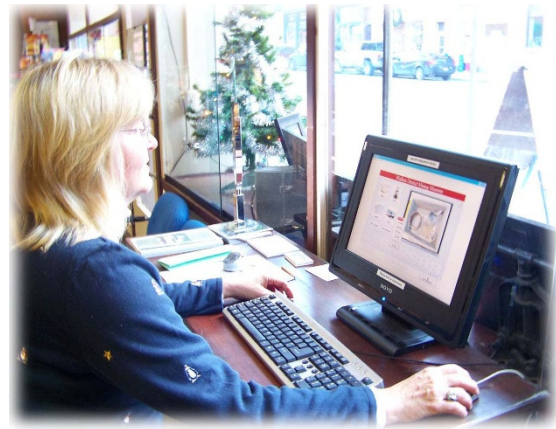
The registration fee, which includes lunch, breakfast snacks, and refreshment breaks on Friday and Saturday, is \$35 for IAM members and \$45 for non-members who will receive an IAM membership as part of their registration fee.

The 2010 IAM Conference, hosted by the Canyon County Historical Society, promises to be a time of learning and sharing with other museum professionals and volunteers. We hope that you will make plans to join us. And please consider applying for a stipend. **Watch your mail for a conference brochure and registration form in early spring.**

The Wallace District Mining Museum is creating virtual exhibits

Many museums use or are familiar with the PastPerfect software for digitizing their collections. Jim McReynolds, Director of the Wallace District Mining Museum, received a grant from the Idaho Humanities Council last year to begin the process, but with an interesting twist. He is including interpretive language with each record to create virtual exhibits which PastPerfect offers as an add-on feature.

The PastPerfect website describes the virtual exhibit component as "the instant website creator." It can convert collection records and images stored in PastPerfect to



Jim McReynolds's wife, Peggy, at one of the museum's computer kiosks set up for visitors and researchers at the museum.

HTML for posting on the Web. Visitors can browse and view digitized images of photographs and artifacts for a full virtual experience. You can also use the virtual exhibit function in your museum with a computer and monitor, which is what the Mining Museum is doing.

The Wallace District Mining Museum was established in 1956 as the Coeur d'Alene District Mining Museum. As one of the richest mining districts in the world, it has produced over 1.2 billion ounces of silver since 1884. Over the past 20 years 750,000 visitors have come to the Mining Museum which has thousands of original documents, about 10,000 historical photos, and hundreds of artifacts in its several mining exhibits. All of these historical materials contribute to the museum's status of being a core research institution. The problem with the collections, which the museum is working to solve, is that the provenance of much of what it owns has not been documented.

The digitization project, which has received a second IHC grant, provides a good example for other museums on how to organize the digitization process. Jim has developed a system to insure a high and consistent standard of how information is entered into the data base. Also important to the museum's long-term goals is that Jim views the project as essential to the museum's educational mission and to making the data accessible to the public and researchers. That is why the virtual exhibit component is an integral part of the project. The project includes setting up the data base and exhibits on three computers which will be accessible to the public.

As with many museums, much information about the artifacts has not been written down. In order to rectify this situation Jim is working with John Amonson, the former director and a local historian, to add historical documentation to the records. Another important long-

range goal is to redo the existing exhibits and create temporary ones.

Want more information? Jim will be at the IAM conference which will be a good opportunity to talk to him about the project. He will also give a session on virtual exhibits on Saturday. In the meantime you can check out PastPerfect and the see examples of virtual exhibits at www.museumsoftware.com.



News from the Idaho State Historical Society
A year of awards and honors for many who have contributed to preserving Idaho's heritage

South Bannock County Historical Center Receives the Sister Alfreda Award

In 2008, the Idaho Heritage Trust, Idaho Humanities Council, and Idaho State Historical Society created a new award to recognize Idaho museums. They named it the Sister Alfreda Elsensohn Museum Award for Outstanding Service.

Sister Alfreda Elsensohn founded the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude in Cottonwood. As one of Idaho's outstanding historians, she sought to collect, preserve, and interpret artifacts from Idaho County and the surrounding area to better educate the public.

She believed that "a museum is a bridge which links the present with the past." It is her vision of Idaho museums as exciting educational institutions that the Award seeks to recognize by honoring one outstanding Idaho museum each year.

The Bonner County Historical Society received the Award in its initial year. This year, on November 20, 2009, Governor Butch Otter, along with representatives of the three sponsoring organizations, presented the second annual award to the South Bannock County Historical Center. The award also came with \$10,000 that the Center can use to continue its efforts to preserve regional history.

Governor Otter also proclaimed November 20, 2009, as "South Bannock County Historical Center Recognition Day in Idaho," for having demonstrated professional excellence in interpreting the county's history, its educational programming, and its contributions to the community.

"We are honored to be acknowledged as this year's award recipient," responded Center Director Cathy Sher after the day of festivities in Lava Hot Springs. "The 2009 Sister Alfreda Elsensohn Museum Award plaque is now proudly exhibited with this museum's original 1980 Charter Member document. The Idaho State Historical Society was instrumental in founding our museum, always giving indispensable expertise and solid direction needed to build a quality museum. This award marks a rare moment in our museum's history, and gives us great confidence in a bright future for South Bannock County Historical Center." Governor Otter is the first governor to visit the Center.



From left, Governor Otter, Kathy Sher, and Jim Johnston, ISHS Trustee from Pocatello

Idaho State Historical Society Awards Sixteen Community Grants

In the third year of its community grants program, the Idaho State Historical Society awarded grants to 16 organizations throughout Idaho. Most of the awardees were Idaho museums or historical societies.

"The Community Grants Program provides us with an opportunity to preserve and promote Idaho's cultural heritage," remarked Janet Gallimore, Executive Director of the Idaho State Historical Society. "We rely on partners throughout Idaho to assist us in helping to preserve Idaho's history. These grants will provide additional funds for programs and organizations located throughout the state and will help to strengthen partner organizations."

All grants will be matched at least dollar for dollar. The grants that have been awarded are as follows:

**New issue of *Idaho Landscapes*
features Idaho museums**

- **Nez Perce County Historical Society, Lewiston: \$1,600** to purchase hardware and software required to digitize the Society's substantial historic photograph collection.
- **Payette County Historical Society, Payette: \$1,205** to interview residents about the agricultural history of the county.
- **Teton Valley Museum, Teton: \$1,440** to complete an ongoing project to digitize the *Teton Valley News* from 1909 to 2000
- **Hagerman Valley Historical Society, Hagerman: \$2,426** to purchase hardware and software equipment to inventory the collections and migrate records to a digitized system.
- **Dry Creek Historical Society, Boise: \$1,900** to develop interpretive exhibits.
- **Bradbury Logging Museum, Pierce: \$874** to purchase hardware and software for collections management.
- **Wallace District Mining Museum, Wallace: \$2,000** to continue an ongoing project to digitize records of its collections.
- **Boundary County Historical Society, Bonners Ferry: \$2,000** to provide for storage materials, museum lighting, and a printer and scanner.
- **Franklin Relic Hall, Franklin: \$1,500** to purchase computer equipment to assist in collection management.
- **Idaho City Historical Foundation, Idaho City: \$1,932** to purchase hardware and software for collection management.
- **Basque Museum and Cultural Center, Boise: \$2,000** to assist with funding an exhibit entitled "Hidden in Plain Sight: the Basques" which will be on exhibit at Ellis Island in New York, and then at the Basque Museum in Boise.
- **Canyon County Historical Society, Nampa: \$2,500** to purchase shelving and materials for artifact storage.
- **Latah County Historical Society, Moscow: \$1,000** to digitize four popular walking tour brochures for Moscow and Potlatch in order to make them more accessible.
- **White Spring Ranch Museum, Genesee: \$700** to purchase archival materials for storage of photographs and research items.
- **Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center, Moscow: \$869** to make the museum's exhibits more accessible for young people.
- **Caldwell Historic Preservation Commission, Caldwell: \$1,720** to develop interpretive signage at "The Hat," a National Register of Historic Places property.

"Where would you go if you wanted to find the last stop light that operated along America's longest interstate highway?" The chair where Frank Robinson sat as he composed lessons for the world's largest mail order religion? The uniform worn by the greatest pitcher in major league history? A hand-written poem from a three-time presidential candidate extolling the beauty of Shoshone Falls? The nation's first television tube? To see any of those things, you would need to visit an Idaho museum."

That is the opening paragraph of the lead story, "Memories on Main Street," in the latest issue of *Idaho Landscapes: History, Science and Art*. The magazine is published jointly by the Idaho State Historical Society, Boise State University, and Idaho State University.

The lead article, written by state historian Keith Petersen and Laura Woodworth-Ney, Chair of the History Department at ISU, focuses on several different types of museums as examples of the more than 100 museums in Idaho. Featured are the Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center in Moscow, the North Idaho Museum in Coeur d'Alene, White Spring Ranch in Genesee, and South Bannock County Historical Center in Lava Hot Springs.

Gini Woodward's article, "Bedtime for Bonners Ferry" relates how the donation of 19th-century bedroom furniture led to a revitalization process that completely transformed the Boundary County Historical Society. Or, as Gini writes, "When the Hawkins family of Lexington, Kentucky, purchased bedroom furniture in 1877 no one knew those pieces would eventually become the catalyst to reawaken a sleepy historical society in Idaho."

Larry Burke looks at museum collections by focusing on the Blaine County Historical Society's internationally recognized collection of political campaign memorabilia. Another article by Burke discusses the planning underway for what will be one of the state's newest museums, the Canyon Crossroad Transportation Museum at Celebration Park near Melba.



Esto Perpetua Awards—2009

The Herrett Museum's exhibit of contemporary landscape paintings and photographs is featured in the journal's "Album" section. Jody Hawley Ochoa, administrator of the Idaho State Historical Museum, describes a purple coat worn by a Boise rock star Paul Revere, a Lewis and Clark medal, a Japanese doll, and a gospel coach to highlight the breadth of collections at the state's largest museum. Nancy Tacke rounds out the journal with an article on Sister Alfreda Elsensohn, founder of the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude.

No matter where you are in Idaho you are not far from a museum. Idaho's museums welcome more than a million visitors a year and are the keepers of some of our state's most cherished treasures. This issue of *Idaho Landscapes* helps to promote Idaho museums and the outstanding work they do.

The 76-page full-color journal can be a great item for museum stores. The suggested retail price is \$8.00; museums can purchase copies to sell for \$4.00. Contact Keith Petersen at keith.petersen@ishs.idaho.gov, or 208-882-1540 for more information.



By the way, to find the artifacts noted in the first paragraph you will want to go to the following places: stoplight, Wallace District Mining Museum; Robinson chair, Latah County Historical Society, Moscow; Walter Johnson uniform, Snake River Heritage Center, Weiser; poem by William Jennings Bryan, Twin Falls County Historical Society, Filer; television tube, Farnsworth TV and Pioneer Museum, Rigby.

The two artifacts pictured here are at left hand-crafted fiddle from the White Spring Ranch Museum near Genesee and above the Model T Ford from the new Canyon Crossroad Transportation Museum at Canyon County's Celebration Park.

"Each recipient has demonstrated a truly exceptional level of achievement in their efforts to preserve a part of Idaho's heritage," said Janet Gallimore, ISHS Executive Director. "Their commitment clearly illustrates the widespread care that Idahoans share when it comes to our state's historical preservation." This year's recipients are as follows:

Jack and Barb Coyner, Princeton. Honored for their work with the Potlatch Historical Society, the Coyners have been extremely active in historic preservation, specifically on the renovation of the Potlatch City Hall project and the restoration of the 102-year-old Washington, Idaho and Montana Railroad Company Train Depot.

Friends of the Historical Museum Inc., Boise. For 45 years, Friends of the Historical Museum have promoted the appreciation of Idaho history and are dedicated to supporting the Museum's educational mission through funding and volunteerism, including raising and donating over \$75,000 to finish the renovation of Pioneer Village, adjacent to the Museum in Julia Davis Park.

Honorable Byron J. Johnson, Idaho City. A retired Idaho State Supreme Court Justice, Mr. Johnson has been a long-time member of the Idaho City Historical Foundation which maintains and oversees the Boise Basin Historical Museum and Pioneer Cemetery. The Foundation also provided historical consulting and fundraising expertise to Idaho Public Television's 2007 production of "Assassination: Idaho's Trial of the Century," about the assassination of Governor Frank Steunenberg and the ensuing trail.

Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, Statewide. In 2009, the Committee finalized over 160 grant projects and published the final report on the Idaho bicentennial. It supported the acquisition and preservation of nationally significant sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail, and it worked with Congress, federal and state agencies to facilitate efforts that resulted in the expenditure of millions of dollars on projects in Idaho that support heritage tourism and preservation which will enhance Idaho for generations to come.

Ernie Lombard, Eagle. Mr. Lombard has created a design legacy for several of Idaho's most historically significant buildings. For many years, he has worked to preserve special historic areas, educate Idahoans and others about our history, and create a historical legacy for future Idahoans to enjoy. His personal photo library consists of over 3,000 images of historic buildings and sites, and his best-selling video, *Ghost Towns of Idaho*, is widely watched in Idaho public schools.

Helen Turner Lowell, Parma. Mrs. Lowell, who celebrated her 104th birthday in July, is a long-time Parma resident and founding member of the Old Fort Boise Historical Society. Since its publication in 1976, the book she co-authored with Lucille Peterson, *Our First Hundred Years*, has been the touchstone publication for those interested in learning about early life in Parma.

City of Nampa and the Nampa Historic Preservation Committee, Nampa. The Downtown Historic Façade Restoration Program assists downtown building owners in returning buildings that are 50 years or older to their historic appearance. The program has created an infusion of investment, bringing new life to historic structures and improving the aesthetic of downtown Nampa. In three years, it has completed seven renovation and rehabilitation projects.

Dr. Robert Sims, Boise. Dr. Sims is Professor of History, Emeritus, at Boise State University and a committed supporter of local and regional history. He teaches classes in twentieth century United States History, and his research interests include the Great Depression era, the Pacific Northwest and Japanese American history.



Recipients of the 2009 Esto Perpetua Awards

Idaho museum receives national award from the American Association for State and Local History

Every year the American Association for State and Local History gives national recognition to the highest achievements in state and local history. Among these, the most prestigious is the Albert B. Corey Award, which “is reserved for very deserving, small, primarily volunteer-operated organizations that best display vigor, scholarship, and imagination.” Only one Corey Award is given annually, and some years no award is made. In 2009, for the first time ever, an Idaho organization, the Dry Creek Historical Society, won this award.

Through the untiring efforts of many, Dry Creek Historical Society succeeded in preserving the Schick-Ostolasa farmstead from demolition. It not only saved the site, but also transformed it into a vital part of the community.

Construction of the farmstead began in the late 1860s and was patented in 1873 by Phillip L. Schick. It included 160 acres located along the Dry Creek road to the Boise Basin mines. The family held the property until 1920 when Basque immigrant farmers began managing the property for a series of owners. Members of the Ostolasa family lived in the farmhouse from 1927 until 2005.

Ada County owns the two-acre property which is managed by the Dry Creek Historical Society. There are seven historic farm buildings on the site: the farmhouse, the kitchen/spring house, root cellar, wood shed, saddle shed, granary, and horse barn. A barn for wagons and draft horses lies just outside the boundaries of the historic site. The farmhouse is one of the oldest intact houses in Idaho.

The Historical Society hopes to create a living history education center to teach visitors about life on a 19th-century ranch with flower and kitchen gardens, a chicken house, and other outbuildings. The Society also hosts an Old Time Farm day in the fall with historic interpreters and demonstrations.

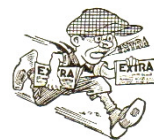
The AASLH also honored four Idaho institutions with Awards of Merit, the most ever won by Idaho in one year. Receiving the awards were the Idaho Heritage Trust; the Idaho Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission; Helen Turner Lowell, 104-year-old Parma resident; and the Twin

Falls County Historic Preservation Commission.

ISHS staff members Shelby Day and Suzi Pengilly are AASLH Awards co-chairs for Idaho; Keith Petersen serves as the regional representative for Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska.



Top to bottom: historic photo of the Schick-Ostolasa farmhouse; recent view of the farmhouse; and the award ceremony. From left are Claudia Druss, Jan Gallimore, and Lori Otter.



Spread the news about your museum or cultural site! We encourage our readers to submit articles about museum events, activities, awards, intriguing artifacts and documents, and other subjects of interest to our museum and cultural community. If possible, please include a photo along with your story. Please send your information to Mary Reed, Newsletter Editor. Email: reedme@pullman.com. Or mail to 313 NW Webb Street, Pullman, WA 99163. Thanks!



c/o Kelsey Salsbery
Museum of Idaho
200 N. Eastern Ave.
Idaho Falls, ID 83402



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