

Rendezvous Recap: Voices from WMA - Boise 2006

WMA Close to Home!

It was a rare treat to be able to attend a Western Museums Association annual meeting so close to home! Yes, Pocatello is 240 miles away, but that was just around the corner compared with other WMA sites (next year it's in Oakland, and after that, Anchorage). Boise was a terrific host site, and I congratulate all who had a hand in making us feel so welcome (kudos to Patty Miller and Jody Ochoa).

Great weather, the central location of the Grove Hotel to various restaurants and pubs (for networking with colleagues, easily one of the most important aspects of attending a conference), and the walking proximity of most of Boise's museums made this year's WMA quite enjoyable and even memorable. Not to mention (yet here I go...) how affordable Boise is compared to most other conference sites. The size of the meeting also contributed to the comfortable atmosphere; it was easy to find people you wanted to meet up with among the not-too-large crowd, yet there were enough attendees to give it synergy.

Only one moderated session didn't live up to my expectations...specifically because the moderator had to read a prepared paper by one of the presenters who couldn't make it to the meeting. This is a word of advice to all would-be presenters...you know more about your subject than we do, so just talk to your audience in a conversational way. NEVER read your papers! This is inevitably deadly, killing the atmosphere of free and easy exchange.

I thoroughly enjoyed every other session I attended. Presenters were well prepared and thoughtful, and each one left plenty of time for questions so that the audience could become involved in the exchange of ideas. The roundtable discussions were also very successful. They were attended by enough to be spirited in discussion but still intimate, and I gleaned several good ideas from them.

WMA is a terrific meeting, this one even more so because of being in Boise and all the advantages I've mentioned. We're all in luck for 2007,

because IAM will have its usual annual meeting again, this time April 13-14 in Pocatello. Like WMA, we can promise a small gathering of very engaged museum professionals, affordability, and practical sessions on what you need to know. It's also a great opportunity to give a talk at a session and tune-up your presentation skills and experience. I hope you'll join us!

- Linda Deck, IAM Vice President
Director, Idaho Museum of Natural History

WMA = Unlimited Opportunities

WMA's aptly-named annual meeting provided me with an unlimited menu of opportunities for gathering ideas and collective advice for the expanding needs of the Central Idaho Historical Museum (CIHM). The museum is located on a four-acre McCall site with its four classical log structures which are on the National Historic Register. A generous grant in 1992 made it possible to create a master plan for the site which included a museum complex.

For various reasons the plan never became a reality. In spite of this a small volunteer staff has successfully maintained the site for more than a decade as an interpretive center and as a means for preserving the heritage of McCall and central Idaho. The time has come to dust off the old master plan and design its future.

McCall, on the shores of beautiful Payette Lake, has always been a destination resort. For



IAM members held a meeting at the Basque Museum during WMA.

ninety years it was also a lumber mill town as well as a center for forestry, mining and agriculture. Now, as the hub for several world-class all-season resorts, McCall's rapid development has raised concerns that bridges to its rich historic past along with the values and experience are disappearing.

I arrived at the opening session at Boise's Egyptian Theatre with only vague expectations. While every session had relevance to CIHM, after listening to Dr. Bishop describe the changing face of the future and offer an entirely new definition for museums, I knew I had hit the jackpot.



IAM Vice President Linda Deck shares information at the IAM Annual meeting held during WMA.

The various presentations on financing and fundraising became my number one priority. McCall is losing its public gathering space to new commercial buildings while the increasing population has created a greater focus on providing a center for various venues: a museum building, art gallery, auditorium and youth activity center. The "Report from the Trenches: Financing a New Museum" clarified our possibilities for capital expansion.

Other sessions, "The Sky's the Limit...Developing the Perfect Fundraiser" and "Creative Fundraising for the Small Museum," were an added bonus. These panelists were so knowledgeable and entertaining, their enthusiasm and dedication to their institution so inspiring, that it would be difficult for anyone to walk away without a new and encouraged perspective.

In the near future a planning group will meet with a professional designer to update the old plan and brainstorm options for creating the vision, mission, and criteria for creating a successful 21st century museum complex. The sessions I attended on critiquing exhibits, energizing teachers and families to be part of the process, and finally, renting out the museum for community meetings, will all enter into the planning process.

It will be a huge undertaking. Thank you and wish us luck!

- Patricia Eames, Archivist and Board Member,
Central Idaho Historical Museum

New Frontier: Family Fun in the Museum

I attended a number of sessions at this year's Western Museum Association conference in Boise and I'd like to highlight one of the sessions in this article. The first session I attended was the 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. session on Thursday. The session was titled "New Frontier: Family Fun in the Museum." The session was quite interesting, but perhaps a bit disjointed.

Kathryn Blake, curator for education at the Phoenix Art Museum spoke about family activities at her facility and spent a lot of time discussing the museum's new children's area. Points of interest that Blake shared are her museum's mix of live programming and self-directed activities. They have a cool backpack that kids can borrow when in the museum with activities related to objects or galleries in the museum. They also have a website associated with the museum geared just for kids. (phxartkids.org). They have chosen to brand their family/children's programs with a character they had created just for them.

Next, Barb Carlson, the education specialist at Zoo Boise spoke about some of their programs. She had six key points for family activities:

1. Find the right audience.
2. Find the right time.
3. Develop quality programs.
4. Offer something visitors can't get from a regular visit.
5. Keep costs low.
6. Allow time for programs to grow.

The third speaker seemed a little out of place in the session. Her name was Melinda Adams and she was a home school advocate. Her part of the session discussed serving the home school audience. She had a lot of interesting information on the home school audience, and while her information was valuable, it seemed to be a bit out of the scope of the session.

She discussed ways to attract the home school audience and what they are looking for in educational activities in museums. She suggested holding a special "Home School Day" with a multi-modal, interdisciplinary approach to the activities, which should be geared for all ages. Working with home school associations and groups can be a great way of attracting these families to a museum.

Overall, I thought this session had some very good thoughts and ideas in regard to creating programs for families. At the IMNH we have done a series of "Fun Family Free Days" that have been very well received and very well attended. I plan to use some of the ideas from this session to continue to improve this program in the future.

- Frank Spaeth, IAM Member,
Public Relations & Marketing Manager
Idaho Museum of Natural History

Note: These reports are from people who received scholarships to attend WMA. Part of the requirement was for each scholarship recipient to write an article about their WMA experience. Look for more WMA reports in future issues...

From the President

It's often difficult to find time these days to take a minute to celebrate successes. I'd like to take this opportunity to do just that. The Idaho Association of Museums took some very positive steps this year and accomplished some important goals the Board established for itself at the 2005 annual meeting in Twin Falls.

The IAM lobbied successfully for legislation to exempt all 501(c)(3) museums from paying sales tax on admissions earnings and on the purchase of supplies.

The IAM created a website for its members and the general public. Visitors to www.idahomuseums.org can learn about the IAM and museums throughout the state.

The IAM increased its membership to about 50% of the museums in Idaho as institutional members and another 35 individual members.

Museums across Idaho participated in the Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee's Museum Initiative, in which funds were used to improve Idaho's museums as a lasting legacy of the Bicentennial.

IAM member organizations helped to host the Western Museum Association annual conference in Boise in October 2006. It was the first time this conference has ever been staged in Idaho and evaluations revealed that participants thought it was one of the best conferences ever!

The future is bright for museums in Idaho. Working together and coordinating our efforts with our State Historical Society and other federal, state, and local entities, I am very optimistic that we can continue to improve our museums and awareness of the wonderful educational facilities we represent. You can be sure that the IAM Board is a dedicated group of individuals that wants to meet the needs of all museums, both large and small, and is committed to continue to work toward that goal. I intend to make an effort to stop in and visit more museums in our state and to meet the staff and volunteers who work so hard as keepers of our history and culture in Idaho.

- Patty A. Miller, IAM President

From the Editor's Desk

Mark your calendar!

The IAM's 2007 annual meeting and conference will be held April 13-14 in Pocatello at the Holiday Inn, which will offer reduced rates for IAM members. Travel stipends will be available to help members attend the conference. If you have any suggestions for the meeting and conference, please contact President Patty Miller or a representative in your area. We hope to see you next spring in Pocatello!

Changes at the Idaho State Historical Society

With the resignation of Executive Director Steve Guerber, the Idaho State Historical Society's trustees have named Keith Petersen to the interim position.

Those who are "old timers" with the IAM might remember that Keith was one of the museum people who organized the association back in the late 1970s. At that time he was director of the Latah County Historical Society. He's well aware of the needs and contributions local museums have made to Idaho since then. Keith has also provided outreach for the state historical society during two Working Together projects. Until this appointment, he was the Idaho Coordinator for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. We wish him well in his new assignment.

The Historical Society's trustees will soon begin the search for a permanent Executive Director. They welcome any help IAM members might be able to provide in getting the word out. If anyone is interested in the position or knows a potential candidate, please contact Keith at the Idaho State Historical Society, 2205 Old Penitentiary Road, Boise, ID 83712. The telephone number is 208-334-2682.

Changes at Latah County Historical Society

On May 5, 2006, Mary Reed retired as Director of the Latah County Historical Society, ending a 23-year tenure. Daniel Crandall, the new Director, has much experience in the museum field, including serving as executive director of the Pittock Mansion in Portland since 1980. He also was director of the Cowlitz County Historical museum and has worked as a consultant in many other historical and archaeological projects.

Dan has served on the WMA's board of directors and was a program co-chair for the Boise meeting in October. IAM members will be happy to know that Dan has considerable experience with state museum organizations, having been president of the Oregon Museums Association for four years and helping to organize a joint conference between Oregon and Idaho's museum associations several years ago. Dan is now on the IAM board representing the Northern Region.

Reminder

In early January I'll be sending out the annual membership renewal notices. I want to thank all members for their continuing loyal support. If you haven't done so already, I encourage you to take out an individual membership in addition to your organizational membership. Also, please encourage other staff, volunteers and board members to consider joining. Increased membership income will help the IAM carry out its mission to help all museums in Idaho.

Finally, my very best wishes for the holiday season!

- Mary Reed, IAM Newsletter Editor and Membership Coordinator



Historical Museum at St. Gertrude - Cottonwood, Idaho

Our museum is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year making it ONE of the longest, continuously operating museums in the Northwest. The museum began in 1931 with the receipt by Sister Alfreda Elsensohn of a mineral collection originally from the U. S. National Museum, today the Smithsonian. That gift was the incentive for people to begin gifting artifacts to Sister Alfreda who, in turn, began collecting and preserving those gifts. Today the museum is located in a climate controlled, 8,000 square foot, modern facility that is home to some 70,000 artifacts with about 12,000 on display.



We have sponsored several activities during the year to celebrate the museum's years of service to Idaho. Some of those have included a big band dinner dance in March (shades of Glenn Miller days), our 14th annual Raspberry Festival in August, a fall lecture series, a formal blessing of the museum by the sisters in honor of our anniversary, and our current traveling exhibit.

From October 25 until December 2, we are hosts to a Smithsonian traveling exhibit entitled, *Key Ingredients: America by Food*. We are one of six locations in Idaho to host this exhibition, which explores how food has influenced our culture, our traditions, our etiquette and more. Its intent is to get our visitors to talk and to tell about their individual experiences related to food.

Along with the exhibit we have sponsored several community events connecting the exhibit themes to the local area. These included lectures on local agriculture, the history of breweries in Idaho, a history of meat markets in Cottonwood, a discussion on Nez Perce foods, and the history of food at the Monastery of St. Gertrude. Events coinciding with each lecture included a community potluck, a Nez Perce fry bread taco dinner, a traditional monastery dinner, a home brew class and beer tasting and cultural demonstrations.

We are proud to say that our museum began 75 years ago with a Smithsonian mineral collection and this year has hosted a Smithsonian traveling exhibit. Our brochure states that we are "the Smithsonian of the Camas Prairie," and so we invite you to visit our incredible museum whenever you are in our area.

- Lyle Wirtanen, Director, Museum at St. Gertrude

North Custer Museum

The North Custer Museum, also known as the Challis Museum, is operated by the North Custer Historical Society. The museum collects, preserves and displays artifacts reflecting the life of early settlers in central Idaho, with special emphasis on the north Custer County and Challis areas. It is located at 1211 S. Main Street, which is on the left side of Main Street, one block east off Highway 93. The mailing address is P. O. Box 776, Challis, ID 83226. The phone number is 208 879 2846

The museum is open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., from Memorial Day weekend through the end of September or by appointment. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated.

- Peggy Parks, North Custer Museum



The Museum of Winchester History: A Success Story

Winchester is located in Lewis County in north central Idaho. Now an economically stressed area, it was a thriving logging center for the first half of the 19th century. Today, residents drive miles to work in the Lewiston and Grangeville mills, and children attend a consolidated school in Craigmont, Idaho. A rural community of 308 inhabitants, it has a post office, a volunteer fire department, one restaurant, one church, a new library, two bars, one grocery and very little else. Winchester is on the Nez Perce Reservation, near Winchester State Park, and on the edge of the Craig Mountains.

The Winchester Booster Club established the museum in 1966, a year after the Craig Mountain Lumber Company burned and closed operations. The museum languished until 2003 when the City Council encouraged a group of citizens to form a Board of Directors, survey the more than 2,000 artifacts and photographs and determine its viability.

Seeking professional assistance and support, the new Board accessioned the collection and began the conservation process. It received funds to train volunteers to interpret the collection, and with the assistance of Idaho Department of Corrections volunteers painted the historic Community Center which houses the museum. The board launched a membership drive. The Forest Service and the National Park Service provided funds to install an adjacent firewise native-plant landscape and to develop a Lewis and Clark auto tour. Additional support came from the City of Winchester, Idaho Heritage Trust, Idaho Humanities Council, the Forest Service's Rural Community Assistance program, the National Park Service, the Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, several corporate supporters and members.

The museum's collections consist of an 18th century native plant landscape; 19th century artifacts including 1872 survey markers, household, farm and ranch equipment; photographs; 20th century materials including logging and the Craig Mountain Lumber Company; records and artifacts of early settlers and devastating fires; and military artifacts of the First and Second World Wars. There is a small but growing research center of reference materials including photos and videos of the Camas Prairie Railroad photos and videos. The museum hosts cultural programs and serves as a community center

The volunteer staff provide curatorial work, mount exhibitions, and network with area organizations including Winchester State Park, the Wolf Education Recovery Center and Ilo-Vollmer Historical Society. Educational partners include Lewis Clark State College and schools and museums in the area.

"Museum of Winchester History" continues on page 8.

The Idaho Museum Partnership Project

Realizing the need of small, rural museums for assistance in developing and creating interpretive exhibits, the Idaho Heritage Trust is sponsoring a partnership project funded by two grants from the Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee.

The museums selected for the project are Lemhi County Historical Museum at Salmon, the Museum of Winchester History, Clearwater Historical Museum at Orofino, Weippe Discovery Center, and the J. Howard Bradbury Museum at Pierce. A team of three consultants, Mary Reed, Fred Fritchman, and John Dadabay, will work with the staff, volunteers and boards of each museum to select a subject and themes, develop interpretation, design the exhibit and then install it. The grant will also fund exhibit materials. The only restriction is that the exhibits be related to Lewis and Clark. Because this is a partnership endeavor, the museums' volunteer staffs and trustees will be actively involved in all stages of the project.

In addition to producing these exhibits, the Heritage Trust sees this project as a means of demonstrating the value of providing financial assistance for interpretive exhibits to museums throughout Idaho. Although funding for a statewide grants program to help small museums is still a long-term goal, it is hoped this pilot project will help convince funding agencies to support this kind of program.

In addition to the five museums listed above, the grant will provide \$1,000 for educational projects and consultations to the Hilltop Heritage Society in Weippe.

- Mary Reed, Project Director



Planning meeting of the volunteers and consultants at Winchester Museum. (From left to right are Janine Alley, John Dadabay, Gene Dugger, Joey Davis, Travis Steel, Deloris Jungert Davisson, Mary Reed, and Fred Fritchman.)

We invite you to join the Idaho Association of Museums

The IAM is a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and advancement of Idaho museums. We publish a newsletter three times a year and host an annual conference for our members and the wider museum community.

Membership in the IAM offers many benefits

- IAM Newsletter published three times a year
- Museum Assessment (MAP) mini-grants and travel stipends
- Professional development, education and networking
- Networking with other museums
- State and Regional advocacy
- Annual conferences

Become a new member, renew your current membership, or invite a colleague or friend to join by filling out the enclosed form and sending it with your payment to Jody Hawley Ochoa, IAM Treasurer, 610 North Julia Davis Drive, Boise, ID 83702. Please make your check payable to the Idaho Association of Museums.

You can join IAM with an individual membership as well as with an institutional one.

<u> </u> Individual	\$10 per membership	
<u> </u> Institution	Dues	Annual Budget
	\$15	Under \$5,000
	\$20	\$5,000 - \$25,000
	\$30	\$25,001 - \$50,000
	\$50	Over \$50,000

 I/we wish to make an additional contribution

Thanks for your support of the Idaho Association of Museums

.....

Name: _____ Title _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____ City, State, _____ Zip, _____

Idaho Association of Museums

Officers and Board Members, 2006-2007

www.idahomuseums.org

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Position 2 (Term 2006-2010)
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Newsletter Committee:

Wendy Miller, information gatherer
Mary Reed, Editor
Frank Spaeth, layout and distribution.

"Winchester History from page 5."

In 2006, the Museum of Winchester History joined the North Central Idaho Museum Consortium which is working with geologists and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) faculty and interns from Lewis Clark State College to produce a GIS "Fly-Through" of North Central Idaho. This will be a virtual, interactive computerized three-dimensional tour of North Central Idaho.

In December and January, the museum will host the Smithsonian outreach exhibit, *Key Ingredients: America by Food*. Along with the exhibit, the museum will sponsor "Centuries of Celebrations," five Saturdays of reflections on and demonstrations of historic foods, a theater production by Highland High School Drama Troupe titled, "What's Cookin', Good Lookin'," and a rendezvous for fifth graders with a hands-on look at foods from the 18th to the 21st century in Lewis County.

May 2007 is set for the opening of a permanent exhibit, *Ordway's Search for Salmon*. This is part of the Idaho Museum Partnership Project sponsored by Idaho Heritage Trust and funded by the Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee.

-Deloris Jungert Davisson, Director, Winchester Museum

IMNH Receives IMLS Grant

The Idaho Museum of Natural History received a \$32,861 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to create a traveling exhibits program to expand their statewide services.

The grant money, funded through the IMLS's *Museums for America* program, will be used for a project titled *IMNH on the Road*. The goal of this project is to create a proactive, comprehensive and self-sustaining traveling exhibits program at the Museum.

The IMNH's project was one of 177 selected out of a total of 448 grant proposals that competed to receive IMLS Museums for America funding. In all, nearly \$17 million was awarded to institutions across the country. Only two museums in Idaho received funding from this program.

"We've wanted to get a traveling exhibits program up and running for a while, but we just haven't had the resources," said Frank Spaeth, the Museum's Public Relations, Marketing, Promotions and Advertising Manager. "Thanks to this grant, we'll be able to build the program and reach out to the entire state, and beyond, with our future traveling exhibit offerings."

- Frank Spaeth, Idaho Museum of Natural History

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