The past year has been an unusual and challenging one for the Historical Society. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to close our doors for the first time since the Society opened its museum in Philomath in 1980. There were additional challenges for our staff in that, just as we were installing the exhibitions in our newly-finished Corvallis Museum, we had to stop work. Our planned opening had to be postponed. We cancelled all events and gatherings that we had planned for the year. Throughout this time, our Board of Trustees, Society members and donors have been extremely supportive, and we can’t thank everyone enough.

**EXHIBITIONS:** The Museum’s exhibition program is at the heart of our mission. Mark Tolonen, Curator of Exhibitions, and the volunteers in his department planned, prepared, and installed the following exhibitions in the Museum galleries:

**FIRST FLOOR GALLERY:**

**Circa 1920: roaring into the modern age**  
**February 9, 2018-through February 28, 2020**  
Curated from the collections, “Circa 1920” featured objects illustrating social, political and cultural movements and happenings from about 100 years ago in local, regional and national history. Themes include World War I, prohibition, the influenza epidemic, Boy Scout movement and more.
Monterey Jazz Festival Posters
March 13-August 8, 2020
Due to the first COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, the opening of Earl Newman’s exhibition of Monterey Jazz Festival posters was delayed until the month of July. The exhibition was displayed in both the Moreland Gallery and the First Floor Gallery in the Philomath Museum.

Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II
August 21, 2020 – 1/2/2021
This Smithsonian Institution-produced poster exhibition examined the complicated history and impact of Executive Order 9066 that led to the incarceration of Japanese Americans following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Embracing themes that are as relevant today as they were 75 years ago, “Righting a Wrong” looks at immigration, prejudice, civil rights, heroism and what it means to be an American. The poster exhibition centers around eight core questions that encourage viewers to engage in a dialogue about how this happened, and could it happen again. The exhibition also included colorful and diverse kimono from the private collection of Corvallis artist Karen Illman Miller.

MORELAND GALLERY:
Changing art exhibitions presented from November 2019 through October 2020:

Rip Cronk Retrospective
Nov. 15, 2019 – Jan. 11, 2020
Rip Cronk creates powerful imagery using diverse artistic styles and mediums. Rip Cronk’s murals adorn city walls from Honolulu to Switzerland. His diverse studio work includes pencil drawings, watercolors, acrylic and airbrush art. Recent public works in the Benton County area include murals at Linn-Benton Community College, Crescent Valley High School and downtown Corvallis.

The Art of Work
Jan. 17 – Feb. 29, 2020
Art of Work was a collaborative exhibition featuring art from the permanent collections of both Oregon State University’s College of Agricultural Sciences’ Art About Agriculture program and Benton County Historical Society. The artwork chosen for the exhibition represented industries such as gardening, farming, cattle production, timber management, mining, scientific research, boat building, shipping and fishing.
Flow of Woven Light
August 14-Sept 19, 2020
Digital weavings by Joan Truckenbrod. Joan’s artist statement: “My artwork creates an intuitive conduit between technology and nature, ... simultaneously injecting each into the other. I am constantly intrigued by the physical sensations of invisible yet palpable phenomena in the natural world, imaging these ephemeral, transient experiences, creating physical artworks from digital drawings to digital fiber and installations. Developing algorithms embodying mathematical descriptions of these phenomena in nature, translating them into code, creating artwork that materializes this data.”

Philomath Open Studios
Sept 25-Nov. 7, 2020
The annual Philomath Open Studio Tour (POST) is a unique opportunity to visit with artists in their studios, see work in process, and discuss where we find ideas and inspiration. Due to the global pandemic, the 2020 tour was POSTponed until 2021. However, the artists did exhibit their work at the Philomath Museum. Participating artists were Dominique Bachelet, Mimosa Beck, Sydney Burton, Dale Donovan, Dale Dreager, Debi Friedlander, John Friedlander, Mark Gillespie, Jeff Gunn, Marcella Henkels, Carol Houk, Ann Lahr, Kate McGee, Beth Rietveld, Merrill Sommers, Debby Sundbaum, Sommers, Leslie Tejada, Steve Terhune, and Emily Thomas.

COLLECTIONS: The Collections Committee met through March of 2020 to review new gifts and proposed deaccessions. From November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020, the Society was offered gifts from 67 donors, including objects, images, documents, manuscripts and published works.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS:

ADULT PROGRAMS: BENTON LECTURES 2020 at the Philomath Museum

Mon. Feb 24, 2020 Presentation by Chelsea Grassinger
Museum as Middle Ground: Balancing History, Modernity and Community.
Chelsea Grassinger, a Principal at Allied Works, will share her thoughts on why museums matter, and what makes the Benton County Historical Society’s new Corvallis Museum truly unique. For Allied Works, each project vision is drawn from the specific character of the place and in support of the unique mission of the institution. Museums in particular have a responsibility to inspire and to give back, and often come with opposing aims: to protect and preserve important artifacts, and at the same time, to be open and inviting spaces for all.
Oregon History Bingo: A curious look at the roots and branches of exclusion. Oregon has a unique history that is deeply rooted in systemic exclusion begun long before Lewis & Clark ever walked here. This interactive talk offers an opportunity to explore what inspired Oregon’s founding as a white utopia within the broader context of the United States at the time. Employing a lens of more curiosity and less judgment, some connections between Oregon’s past and our current context will be surfaced and - we may even have some fun.

Mon. Feb 3, 2020 Presentation by John Frohnmayer.
What is the Role of Ethics in a Post-Truth World? The role of truth in society has been problematic at least since Pilate asked Jesus: What is truth? But in today’s political world truth has slouched to being whatever the speaker wants it to be. How can we run our Courts? Witnesses there are sworn to tell the truth and can be punished for deliberate falsehood. Can Congress do its work without compelling truth? Most importantly, can a democracy survive without a common understanding of what is called the social contract?

Mon. Jan 27, noon – 1pm: Presentation by Janice Dilg.
From Radical Idea to Ratification: Women’s Voting Rights. This lecture will offer a brief overview of the long history of women working to gain the right to vote, Oregon's history of women's voting rights between 1870-1912, and their continued efforts to bring voting rights to the nation with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920.

CHILDRENS PROGRAMS
Sat. Jan 25, 12:30pm-3pm: Kids Day @ Philomath Museum (ages 5-10 and families); Tied to The Art of Work exhibit.
Partners: Corvallis-Benton Public Library, Arts and Agriculture program at OSU

Sat. Feb 22, 12:30pm-3pm: Kids Day @ Philomath Museum (ages 5-10 and families); Tied to The Art of Work exhibit.
Partners: Corvallis-Benton Public Library; OSU College of Ag.

EVENTS: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all planned events in 2020 were cancelled.

MEMBERSHIP AND VISITATION: Membership is currently 432 member-households. We now offer Patron members an additional benefit of membership in the North American Reciprocal Museums program, giving free admission to member museums across the United States and Canada.

From November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020, 2,469 people visited the Philomath Museum. Our affiliate organizations, Marys River Quilt Guild and Benton County Genealogical Society, suspended their meetings in March, 2020. The Corvallis Museum was slated to partially open in late November, 2020 but the Governor imposed a two-week shutdown for museums November 18 through December 2, 2020.
FUNDRAISING
OPERATIONS: From November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020, $89,425 was raised from operations appeals.

CORVALLIS MUSEUM: The Corvallis Museum Capital Campaign ended successfully in the spring of 2020. Museum construction ended in January 2020, and exhibition installation began in February. The project was put on hiatus during the COVID-19 statewide shutdown. Exhibition installation began again in May. Artifacts were moved in mid-July and installation wasn't completed until late October. Unfortunately, state-wide shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the opening. As we move toward operating two museums, we have changed the open hours of the Philomath Museum to Wednesday-Saturday, 10 am to 4:30 pm. Admission is free in Philomath. The Corvallis Museum will be open Wednesday-Sunday, 11 am to 5:30 pm, admission is free to members and students 18 and under, and LBCC and OSU students with a valid i.d. Adult, non-member admission is $5.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS:
Volunteers in the Collections and Exhibitions Departments help in many ways: cataloging collections, taking photographs of objects, and making storage mounts and assisting Mark Tolonen, Exhibitions Curator, with exhibitions research and preparation. We are fortunate to have over 20 volunteers in the Collections and Exhibitions Departments.

During the year, we recruited 35 volunteers to serve as docents when the Corvallis Museum opened. They were provided with on-line training and preparation in anticipation of the opening.

I would again like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Trustees and the Museum staff for their dedication and outstanding service to the Society. We are very fortunate to have over 60 regular volunteers working in all areas of the museum program: Collections, Exhibitions, Board of Trustees, and Board committees. Mary Gallagher and Mark Tolonen of the curatorial staff have done a remarkable job managing our collections, and producing fine exhibitions and working with our many wonderful volunteers. Peter Lee, our maintenance and facilities manager and Peggy Lee, finance manager, although both part-time employees, have devoted themselves to their jobs and done outstanding work in their areas. Terri Thomas as part-time staff for Membership and Community Engagement continues to improve the on-line auction, and solicit new sponsors and plan events like the very successful Family Day. She has also grown the membership over the past year. And thanks to part-time front desk staff Jim Michalek and Marcelo Carroci for making our visitors feel welcome. It is an honor and a pleasure to work with this committed museum staff and cadre of dedicated volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

Executive Director,
Benton County Historical Society