



## Executive Director's Annual Report 2014 Benton County Historical Society and Museum Philomath, Oregon

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

**FIRST FLOOR GALLERY:** Opening on November 26, 2013 was *Cool Tools* featuring agricultural, distillery, engineering, lumbering, robotics, surveying, textile working, and wood working tools from the collections. The exhibition featured hands-on activities for children and adults and tablet stations with digital interpretation of the objects. This show ran through November 1, 2014. Opening on November 14, 2014 was "Something Old, Something Blue" featuring an array of blue-colored objects from the collections. These thematic exhibitions intend to give our visitors an overview of the breadth of the combined Horner and the Historical Society's collections.

**MORELAND GALLERY:** Nine changing art exhibitions were presented from November 2013 through November 2014. These included:

*Expressions of Nature* by Karla S. Chambers October 4 through November 30, 2013

*Mark Allison and Lee Kitzman: designs in paint and clay* December 6, 2013 through January 18, 2014

*Benton County Cover-up: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Coverlets and Quilts* January 24 through March 8, 2014

*Annual Willamette Valley Scholastic Art Awards* March 14 through April 12, 2014

*Art: the 4<sup>th</sup> 'R'* April 18 through May 17, 2014

*Sweet Grief and Permission to Play* May 23 through July 5, 2014

*Fancy Pants* July 11 through August 23, 2014

*Yuji Hiratsuka Works on Paper: Prints, Drawings and Book Arts* September 5 through October 11, 2014

*Philomath Open Studio Artists* October 17 through November 15, 2014



**Collections:** The Collections Committee meets regularly to review new gifts and proposed deaccessions. From November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014, the committee accepted items 623 items or groups of items from 100 donors, including objects, images, documents, manuscripts and published works. The Collections department has 29 volunteers working with Collections Manager, Mary Gallagher. These dedicated volunteers donated 2,900 hours last year, unpacking collections objects, entering data in the PastPerfect database, taking photographs of objects, and making storage

mounts.

An estate gift from the Elizabeth (Beth) Russell estate allowed us to purchase three more rows of compact shelving for the Johnson Collections Center. Ms. Russell was a Corvallis resident, former active Society member and daughter of a past Horner Museum director.

An unusual event occurred in May, 2014: we received a call from the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office about items from the Horner Museum that were apparently stolen from its Gill Coliseum location[ estimated to have been taken in the 1970s], and recovered by police officers in a narcotics raid in Portland in the spring. The objects are a collection of Presidential tokens that were given by a 1903 graduate of OSU to the Horner Museum in the 1960s. They were identified by a label on the back of the coin holder that noted the donor's name and the Horner Museum. When the coins came back to our possession, we wrote a press release announcing their return. We received some of the best press coverage we've ever had with this remarkable story.

**Educational Programs:** Volunteer docents continue to participate in the Museum's educational programs by visiting classrooms with History in a Trunk or leading guided tours of the Museum exhibitions. We were saddened to lose one of our most active docents this year. Marlene McDonald passed away at her home in August.

School and student groups that toured the museum were: Avery Nature Center, OSU printmaking students, Lutheran preschool, and several classes from Philomath Elementary School, Blodgett Elementary School, the Montessori School, the First Congregational Church preschool, Kings Valley Charter School, and Hoover Elementary School and Cub Scout troops, and Peak Adventures club.

Our newest collaboration with Philomath Public Library is a children's story time held in the Moreland gallery, followed by an interpretation of the art exhibition and tour of the first floor gallery. Self-guided school tours and Scout troop tours bring the total number of children served in 2013-2014 to 945 children at the museum and an additional 200 children in the classroom. The majority of children live in rural areas.

Our adult educational programming included two lecture series: the Benton Lectures held in February-March attracting 177 people. The summer lectures titled "A World of Ideas" is held in partnership with the Corvallis/Benton County Public Library and Linn-Benton Community College/Benton Center, attended by 281 people.

Other public lectures included art talks by Mark Allison and Yugi Hiratsuka, Dr. Dave Brauner spoke about Fort Hoskins, and a book launch of a new book by Jane Kirkpatrick. Also held were poetry readings and celebration of Oregon's poet laureate, William Stafford.

**Events:** Special events held were: luncheon to honor the museum volunteers and recognize their contributions to the Society; served as a venue for the Philomath Chamber of Commerce Wine Walk held in July; annual venue for the Philomath Christmas tree lighting ceremony in early December.

Fundraising events included: Philomath Frolic BBQ held in July on the Museum grounds, Pastini's Dine Out for the Museum held in mid-May, and the Fall Online Auction, held in October.

**Membership and Visitation:** Membership is currently 375 member-households. Approximately 80 volunteers are involved in all aspects of the Society's programs, including collections, exhibitions, fundraising and educational outreach.

From November 1, 2013 to October 31, 2014, 6,563 people visited the Museum: 945 children and 5618 adults. After analysis of the guest book, of those visitors who sign, about 44% of our visitors come from Corvallis, 44% from out of the area and 12% from Philomath.

Various organizations meet throughout the year in the Moreland and in the Museum Annex. These include: Marys River Quilt Guild, Benton County Genealogical Society, and Philomath Lion's Club. Annex usage averages 50 people per month, or about 600 people per year.

Other adult groups that have toured or met at the museum include: retirement community groups from Park Place, the Eugene Hotel, West Hills Retirement Center, and Grace Center. Service clubs included Corvallis Evening Rotary and PEO groups. Oregon Community Foundation representatives, groups from Hewlett-Packard, and the Corvallis Chamber also visited or met at the Museum. The City of Philomath also held two open houses for retiring public employees.

**Financial:** for the first time in our fundraising efforts, we were offered an incentive gift for our annual appeal in 2013. Two donor-families offered a combined \$10,000 if we were able to raise \$30,000. We surpassed our goal; the program was so successful that we did not have to launch a spring appeal for operations, and ended our fiscal year with a surplus.

**Facilities:** Bob Holton, our facilities manager, made or supervised many improvements to the buildings and grounds this year. Many of our summertime visitors remarked on the beauty of the front garden. We were able to have the shed re-roofed this year, had the parking lot stalls and curbs repainted. Joos Hardwood Floor contractors re-finished the first floor west entryway fir flooring, which hadn't been done in at least 30 years. We also had carpets in the Moreland and offices on the east side cleaned. Finally, we replaced the front porch light fixtures with period-appropriate replicas.

**Staff:** Staff is involved in the following organizations: Mary Gallagher is on the Oregon State Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation and the Corvallis Downtown Advisory Committee. Irene Zenev serves on the Philomath Downtown Association Public Art Advisory Committee and the Philomath Leaders group. Terri Thomas participates in the mid-Valley development group and the Benton County Cultural Coalition.

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. 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. Bob Holton, 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 Membership and Fundraising Events Coordinator has improved the on-line auction, solicited new sponsors and created new fundraising events. And thanks to Jim Michalek and Jenny Mower for making our visitors feel welcome. It is an honor and a pleasure to work with this committed museum staff.

## The future of the Benton County Historical Society

The Society continues to raise money for a new museum in downtown Corvallis. An active Leadership Gifts Committee, chaired by past BCCHS president, Alice Rampton, has received over \$4 million in donations and pledges from donors since fundraising for the new museum project began in the fall of 2010. This year, we are working to meet a \$1 million challenge from Pete and Rosalie Johnson by February, 2015. When we reach that benchmark, we will have about \$4.5 million left to raise for the \$9.06 million project.

In April 2014, we submitted our Capital Campaign Fundraising materials, designed by Weldon+ Marks, to the American Alliance of Museums annual design competition. This national competition is highly regarded in the industry and our submission won an honorable mention in its category: museums with budgets of under \$750,000 year.



Architect's design concept for the Corvallis Museum and Cultural Center, location at 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and Adams Ave. Corvallis, Oregon.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Irene Zener".

Executive Director,  
Benton County Historical Society & Museum