



Winter 2008-2009 Vol. 2, Issue 3

CHSM

Conifer Historical Society and Museum

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photo provided by Jean Lambert

Phyllis DeLaCastro stands beside the elaborate doll house raffled at the second Conifer Hobby Fair in 1972. The furnishings were all handmade by the Conifer community, including quilts for the beds and oil paintings for the walls.

*** DID YOU KNOW ***

In the early 1900s the small mountain schools would close during the winter months, due to snow, and remain open during the summer.

Conifer Hobby Fair

by Jean Lambert

It all started with a dream and some dreams do come true. The Conifer Hobby Fair was created by a very community-minded lady, Phyllis DeLaCastro, along with Ann Herr, another local lady. Phyllis was the central figure of the annual event. In the early months of 1970, she invited several people to her home to discuss an idea which caught like “wild fire.”

In a June 10, 1981, *Denver Post* article, DeLaCastro was quoted as saying, “I was eating lunch one day and thought about all the beautiful artwork created in the mountains that stays hidden in people’s homes. I thought there should be a way to share it.”

It was decided that the event should be called the “Conifer Hobby Fair” and

This issue of *CHSM* can be found at:
www.coniferhistorymuseum.org

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Suzi Says

Letter to the community

by Suzi Morris, CHSM President

What a year! Four new educational and entertaining events were presented to the Conifer community in 2008.

In March, our second annual Armchair Adventure was cosponsored by the Mountain Area Land Trust. "Growing Up in Conifer" featured the stories and photos of children who grew up in Conifer in the 1940s and 1950s. Sharon, Cara, and Norm Meyer, Jr. described what it was like to live at historic Meyer Ranch. Frank Blakeslee told what it was like to live with his family in the historic Lubin-Blakeslee cabin. Erv Knight talked about his childhood as one of four children whose father was a Conifer Mountain sawmill owner. Yvonne Ludwig shared stories and photos from her early childhood at the Gray cabin on Pleasant Park Road. We appreciated Rob Holmes beautiful setting at Meadow Creek Bed and Breakfast and the professional DVD production by Bob Potrykus of Red Stag Productions.

In June we participated in the first Conifer Heritage Festival at the Village at Elk Crossing. Our in-store exhibits next to Ravens included artifacts and new historical photos from early 1900s Conifer. Other Jefferson County Museums and nonprofit organizations also presented a variety of educational exhibits.

In August our first annual Old Timers'



Picnic was held at the Pleasant Park School. One hundred guests enjoyed a good, old-fashioned barbecue and a commemorative cake. An afternoon of visiting with old friends and new was enjoyed by all who attended.

In November our booth at the 31st annual Conifer Newcomers and Neighbors Holiday Boutique sold history books, DVDs of our Armchair Adventures, and our photo note cards of the Conifer area. Proceeds from our "gift shop" at the Conifer High School, along with the other vendors, will benefit a wide variety of local nonprofit organizations.

On December 13 we held our first annual Quilt Show and Holiday Tea at The Barn at Evergreen Memorial Park. Dozens of historic quilts and traditional patterns from the 285 Corridor were beautifully arranged in our exhibit titled "Pieces of Light." Guests were invited to Holiday Tea with savory sandwiches, scones with Devonshire cream, and delicate desserts. It was great to end the year on such a beauti-

ful high note!

What will we do in 2009?

We will certainly continue our intensive effort to record the histories of local residents who remember times gone by. To suggest a local resident for the oral history program, please contact Elaine Hood at 303.816.0638.

Other plans include a new Armchair Adventure program with the Mountain Area Land Trust, participation in the Intermountain Humane Society June event at Meyer Ranch, our summer Old Timers' Picnic, a fall Antique Show and Sale, the Conifer Holiday Boutique, and our Quilt Show and Holiday Tea in December. We will continue to participate in local community events that provide opportunities for us to present our exhibits and programs.

Our popular notecards, DVDs of our programs, and a variety of local history books will continue to be sold at all of our events. These gift items are available on our web site www.coniferhistorymuseum.org. Proceeds help defray costs of events and oral history programs.

Please consider joining the Conifer Historical Society and Museum. Your \$25.00 membership will help us bring more programs to the Conifer community!

We look forward to seeing you at our programs and events in 2009!

Suzi Morris

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CHSM is published quarterly for the Conifer Community, past, present, and future. It is intended to be an online publication with limited hardcopy distribution. Story ideas and contributions are encouraged. The photo of Norm Meyer's yellow house on the front page was taken by Lana Turner. Editor: Elaine Hood hood1959@yahoo.com

Hobby Fair *continued from page 1*

should be held the second Saturday in July.

The most likely place for the first fair was in the old Yellow Barn which stands at the corner of Barkley Road and Highway 73.

The day was beautiful and the atmosphere festive, with the handmade items from 63 area residents displayed in the stalls and walls of that historic building. Artists contributed home baked items and lemonade and iced tea were served to guests. The “office” for that first fair was the tail gate of the DeLaCastro’s station wagon. The event was so well taken by the community that the following year just had to be for two days!

This led the committee in search of a building that was weatherproof and could be closed for the night. They said ‘farewell’ to the old Yellow Barn and ‘hello’ to Aspen Park Community Building.

The second year, a Victorian doll house was made and filled with hand-crafted furnishings. It was complete with ceramic dishes, miniature oil paintings hanging on the walls and hand made quilts were designed for the miniature beds. The two story house even had cobwebs and a trunk in the attic! The winner of that treasure was Joyce Scheel of Conifer.

The Hobby Fair was held in the Community Building for three years when it again outgrew the facilities. West Jefferson Elementary School was chosen as the next new ‘home’ and the Parent-Teacher Student Association co-sponsored the fair.

In 1976, our bicentennial year, two quilts were designed by local artists depicting Conifer and the state of Colorado. They included replicas of local buildings, wildlife and flowers. Each block was embroidered or



photo provided by Jean Lambert

Frank Hartman won the Yellow Barn quilt in the 1993 Hobby Fair raffle.

appliquéed, then pieced together and quilted by several women who put in thousands of gossip-free stitches. In 1978, Carol Rudolph made a child’s quilt, Sue Allen made an afghan and Willowa Grant created a ceramic vase, all of which were raffled to lucky winners. Quilts were made and raffled for several years, with the 1993 Yellow Barn quilt being one of the most memorable.

The last year of the Hobby Fair was 1994. The middle school’s parking lot was being refinished so we could not offer parking. There was no other place to hold this popular event so the following year it was absorbed into what is today known as Conifer Neighbors and Newcomers (CNN).

We still see some of the same artisans at CNN who were present in the beginning. My son, Alan Lambert, began making his hand-woven pot holders and refrigerator magnets called “Al’s Pals” at the age of eleven. Each year his art work grew and evolved into bird houses and other wooden items. While attending UNC, he returned in the summers helping his dad, Bill Lambert, with wood tables and lamps. He was able to support his college years mostly with items he made and sold at the Conifer Hobby Fair. Alan now lives in Rifle. He is a professional wood turner and continues to display his wood products in CNN.



photo provided by Jean Lambert

Phebe Granzella holds her self-published book about the early days of the Jefferson County schools. Phebe was an active participant in the Conifer Hobby Fair, selling arrangements of dried flowers. Her book is available for sale through the Conifer Historical Society.

Would you like to see more photos from the Conifer Hobby Fair days? Go to www.coniferhistorymuseum.org

The **Conifer History Society and Museum's** mission is to record the oral histories of long-time area residents. Contact us with the name of someone you think should be interviewed. Call Elaine at 303.816.0638, or e-mail: hood1959@yahoo.com.

Correction

The Autumn 2008 issue had a mistake on page 3 (Old Timers' Picnic). The article incorrectly identified Lyle and Colleen Currier as owners of the Yellow Barn from 1955-1988. It should have indicated that Lyle's parents were the owners of the Yellow Barn during that time.

Notecards



Give the gift of notecards

Give the gift of notecards honoring the Conifer community this holiday season.

Beautiful notecards illustrating the rich historical buildings of Conifer are available for sale. Over 24 different cards can be purchased in 7 different packages.

Each photo was taken by local photographer Lana Turner. Proceeds of sales go towards furthering the endeavors of CHSM.

Contact Laura Debus to buy cards: 303.697.0465

Cost and order information is also available on the "Museum Store" page at: www.coniferhistorymuseum.org.

Armchair Adventure

You can now purchase two professionally produced DVDs featuring Conifer area residents describing their mountain memories from 'the good old days.'

Both DVDs were filmed during the Armchair Adventure public presentations held in conjunction with the Mountain Area Land Trust.

The 2007 edition features Bob Kuehster, Betty Fields Long, Jack Antweiler, Lucille Tanner and Norm Meyer talking about their family heritage in the Conifer area.

The 2008 edition features Yvonne Ludwig, Erv Knight, Frank Blakeslee, and the Meyer children (Sharon, Cara and Norm, Jr.) recounting what it was like to grow up in Conifer years ago.



\$20/DVD

**Contact Suzi Morris
303.697.0871**

Red Stag Productions

Video & DVD Services

Contact Bob Potrykus: 720.261.0860

bob@rstag.com

www.redstagproductions.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 14	CHSM meeting, Pleasant Park Grange, 6:30 pm
February 11	CHSM meeting, Pleasant Park Grange, 6:30 pm
Spring	Armchair Adventure
June 27	Dog Run at Meyer Ranch
August	Old Timers' Picnic