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www.ConiferHistoricalSociety.org

CHSM

Conifer Historical Society and Museum

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Meyer Museum Feasibility Study Update

by Elaine Hood



photos by Elaine Hood

Norm Meyer and his children opened their home to public tours on September 18 to help raise funds for the museum feasibility study. Shown above are Erik, Cara, Norm Sr., Norm Jr., and Sharon.

* DID YOU KNOW *

The final take-off of Norm Meyer's 1968 Cessna 180 from the Meyer Ranch was on August 22, 2010. Its new hangar is in Hotchkiss, Colorado, with Norm's grandchildren. You can view of video of the take-off on the CHSM web site.

CHSM members can look back at 2010 and say, "Whew! We did a lot!"

First and foremost was the Museum Feasibility Project which was the focus of countless meetings and community events. CHSM President Janet Shown's letter on pages two and three provides an update on the project.

Conifer and the surrounding communities have shown enthusiastic support for this effort. Without you, none of this would be possible.

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

Call us at 720.333.0223

A Letter to the Community

by Janet Shown, CHSM President

You've supported the Conifer Historical Society and Museum through its activities, events and mission – but perhaps you've found yourself wondering, *"What is a feasibility study, and why do we need it for the Meyer living history museum project?"*

Our answer is both simple and multilayered. The feasibility study will answer one basic question – *"Is it worth it?"* – while addressing many composite questions within two major areas of study.

The primary area of study is a **Historical Structures Assessment** which will be funded by a noncompetitive grant from the State Historical Fund to **determine whether a public museum is a viable use** for the Meyer home and adjacent barn.

It was for this grant request that the Historical Society has raised more than \$7,500 to provide matching funds for the \$15,000 grant. The grant will allow us to hire a state-approved architectural firm in a competitive bid process to answer the following major questions related to the Meyer home and adjacent historic barn:

- ☆ What will it take to bring the Meyer home and barn up to code standards for public use?



- ☆ **Is the structure sound**, including exterior and interior structural systems, roofing and waterproofing, windows, doors, interior finishes, and foundations?
- ☆ What is the state of the **mechanical, plumbing, foundation, and electrical systems**?
- ☆ What **hazardous materials**, if any, are in the home and will need to be removed?
- ☆ What **zoning, building code, and accessibility issues** will need to be addressed?
- ☆ How will **public restrooms, parking**, and other issues be addressed?
- ☆ What will be the **estimated cost** of construction and renovation?

The **second area** of study, for which we will continue to raise funds, will be partly based on the

results of the Historical Structures Assessment. It will include market, economic, and operations analyses to **determine whether a living history museum is practical and sustainable** for the 90-acre Meyer home site. It will also answer these questions:

- ☆ What is the **cost effectiveness** of recommended structural renovations and treatments?
- ☆ What **archeological, traffic, water, access**, and other issues need to be addressed?
- ☆ How will the museum **maintain the current landscape and historic value** of the site while providing public access?
- ☆ What is the **estimated cost of running** a living history museum, and what types of staff would it require?
- ☆ What types of **activities and revenue sources** would sustain the living history museum?
- ☆ What **partners** would help in the efforts?
- ☆ What are the **site plans and master plans** for the living

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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

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history museum which will guide its development and operations?

A small group of amazingly talented and dedicated people on the Meyer museum project are identifying these questions and designing a pathway to answer them. I invite you to get to know these people and the profound level of expertise and skill they bring to this project so that you will know that **together, we can do this!**

☆Past president **Suzi Morris** helped found the Conifer Historical Society and Museum, and brings a wealth of experience in organizational development and management, human resources, and strategic planning. Together, we crafted an agreement with the Meyer family to conduct the museum feasibility study. It is Suzi's cherished vision to help the Meyer family leave a lasting legacy of ranching, historic preservation and living history to the Conifer community and all of Colorado.

☆The late **Mike Strunk** was a land planner for the National Park Service for many years before preserving open lands at the Mountain Area Land Trust and designing master plans and feasibility studies for living history

museums across the nation. It was Mike's dream many years ago to see the Meyer property developed into a living history museum honoring the Meyer family and preserving its natural beauty. Before he passed away last month, Mike developed an initial site plan for the living history museum and helped outline the feasibility study. We miss him and deeply value the contributions he made to the museum project.

☆**Lucy Bambrey** is a professional cultural resource specialist with 31 years of experience in cultural resource management and environmental consulting firms. A long-time area resident, she also serves on the Jefferson County Historical Commission and has been a board member for the Historical Society since 2008.

☆Retired historical architect for the National Park Service, **Bob Carper** brings decades of experience in planning and restoring historical structures. He has been an architectural advisor for the Design Review Commission of the Town of Georgetown for many years, and is a long-time Conifer native.

☆**Elaine Hood** taught history at the university

and high school level for nearly 20 years, and has conducted hundreds of oral histories. She has been active on the Historical Society board for four years, and is a communications specialist.

☆**Mike Sullivan** built the first Imax Theater in the US, and consulted nationwide on the feasibility studies, development and operation of 60 museum expansions, including the Smithsonian Museum. He was CEO of two science centers, including a thirteen-year stint at a historical home in Georgia.

☆Construction specialist **Jeffrey Polk** brings 40 years of experience in construction and remodeling, including historic renovations, drywalling and electrical remodeling. He has worked on numerous historic structures in the Denver and Evergreen areas, including the Coors and Gates family homes, and recently helped renovate the Pleasant Park School House.

I'm honored and excited to be a part of this remarkable team, as well as the larger board and membership that supports this effort and all the efforts of the Conifer Historical Society and Museum. **That means you,** and we all deeply appreciate and thank you for your generous support!

Janet Shown

In Memory of Mike Strunk

by Elaine Hood

For the latter part of 2010, the CHSM Museum Feasibility subcommittee would meet in my home every Tuesday evening. When Mike Strunk said he would help with this project, I knew we had a stellar team. Mike's career as an open space planner with the U.S. National Park Service meant he not only knew what work we had ahead of us, but he knew key people to help us along the way.

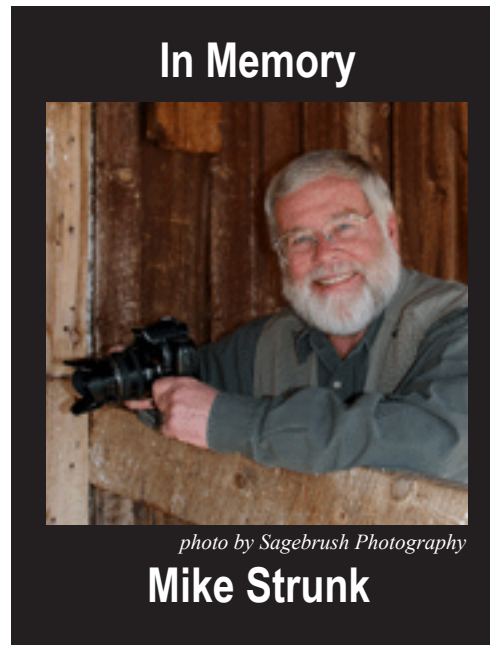
I did not know Mike well and still regarded him as a local celebrity. I had purchased his gorgeous *Portraits of Preservation* coffee table book when it was first published several years ago, and knew of his photography skills. (Mike owned Sagebrush Photography www.sagebrushphotography.net.)

I first met Mike and his wife Pat at the annual Old Timers' Community Picnic a few years ago. The picnic is a great way for newcomers like me to meet community members.

And as I say, I was relieved and thrilled when he joined our museum planning subcommittee. He had long been interested in the possibility of the Meyer property becoming something the public could enjoy.

This summer Mike and I collaborated on creating a unique commemorative photo of Norm Meyer kissing his airplane goodbye and we both verbally expressed how much we were enjoying working with each other. We appreciated each other's no-nonsense efficient work style.

A late October meeting in my home would be the last time I saw Mike, but of course I did not know it then. When he arrived a few minutes early, I was quizzing him about the book he was just finishing, *Butch Cassidy's Outlaw Trail*. He said it was the culmination of a lifelong passion as he had spent the better part of 40 years



photographing and researching the western Utah region where the Hole in the Wall gang hid out. It reinforced in my mind how lucky we were to have a professional and passionate historian on our committee.

After the meeting ended and everyone had left, my husband asked me how it had gone. I could not contain my excitement and gushed, "Mike has drawn up several rough drafts of what he envisions for using the Meyer Ranch as a living history museum, with gardens, ranching activities, where parking and rest rooms could be located! This man is amazing! I am so excited about this project because of the work he has done!"

Mike was going to have a routine surgery, so had told us he would be out of commission for a month, but we had agreed to resume meeting in early December when he would once again be ambulatory. Two weeks later I received word of Mike's death due to post-operative complications. I remain stunned.

Our hearts grieve for Mike's wife and children and the countless people whose lives he touched. Our community has lost a truly talented and kind man.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 12	CHSM meeting; Pleasant Park School; 6:30 pm
February 9	CHSM meeting; Pleasant Park School; 6:30 pm
March 9	CHSM meeting; Pleasant Park School; 6:30 pm