February Board Meeting Highlights

The meeting was called to order by President Shirley Venhaus, with the following Directors present: Anita Linscheid, Marjorie Owens, Dan Linscheid, Gloria Lutz, Colin Armstrong, Shirley McDaniel, Eileen Lewis and Lorna Grauer. Treasurer’s Report: Shirley V. handed out the financial report submitted by Ken Williams, who is ill. Vote on Employment Contract: It was decided to accept the contract to hire Katherine Huit as Director, with changes made by Jerry Hart and some minor amendments, and corrections of typos. Reports: Museum/Library: Marjorie reported the Wednesday group is working on straightening out the town files. Edna Troyer has made a donation of Amish clothing. Membership: Gloria reported 186 paid members, 52 of which are life members. There was some discussion about the best way for Gloria to be able to keep a running list of members on her home computer, so that labels printed at the museum represent the true membership list. Preservation: Anita reported the Friday group is finishing up the baskets and scrapbooks and still working on getting the photos into the Past Perfect program. She will be looking into contacting someone from the Oregon Historical Society to conduct a workshop type session with all the volunteers. Casper: Marjorie reported the representatives from Casper Inc. met with some of the Wednesday group to discuss their investigative findings of paranormal in the church building. They were able to debunk nearly every earlier finding, and although they felt they did find evidence of paranormal activity, their findings were inconclusive. Faced with several choices the Board decided to keep this information to a minimum fearing it might bring unwanted attention. The Board left open the option for this to be re-evaluated in six months or so. New Business: New Museum Report: Shirley is hopeful that everything is coming together with the architect plans and site prep to get to the point of groundbreaking soon. Proposal to Apply Weather-all to Log Chinking: Danny Fox has submitted a bid for $7,000.00 to re-chink the log cabin. Dan will follow up with Danny on the cost. Unless an unforeseen problem arises we will accept his bid with proper clarification. Agenda to Be Available on Friday via Email: Shirley V. will have agenda sent via e-mail to Board members. Items from the Museum to be used for Educational Purposes: These items for the covered wagon will be selected by Gloria, from those artifacts which are duplicated and suitable for this educational use. Form Committees and Assign to Board Members: There was some discussion on this matter but the Board is concerned most Board members already have their hands full with various volunteering activities and we need others to step up and help. Submitted by Anita Linscheid, Secretary.

Happy March,

This month I would like to introduce you to two of our volunteers. First: Lester Herring: Lester and his wife Virginia resided in California where he worked in chemical manufacturing, several years of retail sales and owned his own bicycle shop. They belonged to the Cloverdale Historical Society during which time Lester was president for 4 years. Lester also volunteered at the Pacific Coast Air Museum in Santa Rosa. They moved to McMinnville in 2005. As in his past he looked for a historical society and an air museum in which he could volunteer. Lester said he has been taking pictures as a hobby since the late 30’s. He has worn out one video camera and is working on his second. Lester offered to video our speakers at the general meetings. This is something we have tried to do in the past but never had a dedicated camera person. Now we do. Lester tapes the program and donates them to the museum in Lafayette. Here there are available for anyone to view and enjoy. Thank you Lester.

Dennis Hoisington: Dennis and his wife Tonia moved to McMinnville in 1993. He worked for Tektronix in Beaverton for 28 years. Tonia was a bilingual teacher at Newby and Washer Elementary Schools. Photography has been a hobby for Dennis for many years. I met Dennis at the Jane Kirkpatrick meeting where he was taking photos of Jane. We later visited and discussed many of the subjects that we needed a photo record of. The museum buildings and collections in Lafayette, the new museum site as it progresses on Hvy. 18 and Durham Rd, the Dist. # 14 Muddy Valley/Eagle Point school in its present condition and as we progress with the removal and reconstruction at the new museum site, and a collection of barns for a 2008 calendar were just a few mentioned. Dennis has produced CD’s of all of the above except the barns and I’m sure he is working on that. His work is professional and he has an eye for taking the unusual and as a result great pictures. Thank you Dennis.

Sincerely, Shirley Venhaus.

We are all happy to note that Ken Williams is out of the hospital and home. He was seen out and about town and says he is much better. I think it may have something to do with an old war wound but Ken isn’t talking. We wish you a speedy and complete recovery Ken. (submitted by Shirley V.)

The Yamhill County Historical Society is a nonprofit tax exempt educational and public service corporation established to protect, preserve and share the history and heritage of Yamhill County.
DONATION TO THE NEW MUSEUM BUILDING FUND DONATIONS - 2005
James Vincent Michael Boundy, Leonard Rydel A. Kolene Williams, David & Guchun Pfender Colin & Milly Armstrong

BUSINESSES
Oregon Mutual Insurance Co., Christensen Farms


BUSINESS/CORPORATE/FOUNDATION DONATIONS McMinnville Charitable Fund R & B Kauer Investments LLC Crystal Dawn Smith Rilee Foundation Christensen Farms, Gormley Plumbing Heating Cooling, Ameri Title, Oriet Tree Farm Oregon Mutual Insurance Co., Yamhill County Association of Realtors, New to You Clothes Store, Historical Society Garage Sale

MEMORIALS - 2006
Many of these donated to several memorials Gloria Lutz, Colin & Millie Armstrong, Ken & Pat Williams, Shirley Venhaus

DONATIONS FROM THE ABOVE TOTALED $86,500

IT IS BECAUSE OF THESE DONATIONS THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE I WILL BEGIN IN THE YEAR 2007. THIS SHOWS THE PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THIS PROJECT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE CONTINUED INTEREST AND SUPPORT AS THIS SITE IS DEVELOPED.

THE YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE THANK YOU.
(Submitted by Shirley V)

Ghostly Investigations
A group of paranormal investigators from McMinnville have been spending some time at night in the old church museum. The group, appropriately named Casper, brought equipment used in determining paranormal activity with them, and spent hours trying to determine any ghostly activity. The best time to confirm ghostly sightings and paranormal activity is at night. Marjorie Owens spent an evening, between 6:30 and 11:00 with the group and Nancy Mahi volunteered on a different night, between 11:00 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. These young folks jumped right in with cameras and audio recorders, and while their results were inconclusive, they've certainly earned kudos for their dedication and ambition.

Garage Sale Donations
Colin and Millie Armstrong reported on the generous contributions we continue to receive for our garage sale. Joann Abbot brought several carloads of items for both our sale last summer as well as for our next one.

Jerry Brown, local attorney, brought many pickup loads of items out to the storage building, including collections of various types.

Jack Squires donated many boxes full of items for our sale last year.

Elliot Cummins, a retired McMinnville attorney now living in Salem, has recently donated a variety of items. These folks are among the top donors for our garage sale, and we are appreciate their support.

New Volunteers Welcomed
We have two additions to our volunteer staff, Jennifer Sokol Blosser and Eleanor Mitchell. Jennifer will be conducting photo and postcard data entry in Past Perfect (our museum software), and Eleanor will be assisting Marge Owens with research library maintenance. Thank you for joining our group ladies. (submitted by Louise Heindl)
Welcome to the Hotel Oregon
By Katherine Huit
March 2007

During this fiftieth anniversary year of the Yamhill County Historical Society, I'd like to take you, dear member, on a walk through county history. Over the next several months, we will visit historic sites located in the towns of our county—some of which are historic landmarks, others little-known. This month, join me on our first stop: McMinnville, Yamhill County's seat of government. Located in the heart of Oregon Wine Country, McMinnville's historic downtown serves as the living room for this vibrant and growing city.

William T. Newby, the central figure in McMinnville's early history, had a dream to develop his land claim into a town that would serve the people and businesses of the upper Willamette Valley. His gristmill enabled area farmers to grind their grain locally instead of hauling it all the way to Oregon City.

At Newby's invitation Samuel Cozine set up a blacksmith shop close to the gristmill on what is now Third Street between Adams and Baker. When Newby's friend Solomon "Dutch" Beary built a merchandise store next to Cozine's blacksmith shop the three businesses drew more settlers to McMinnville, which in turn made Newby recognize the need for homes, hotels, and other buildings. By the turn of the twentieth century, McMinnville boasted a bank, a railroad station, a college, two hotels, several blacksmith shops, merchandise stores, and restaurants, and a strong social and economic base. It also had its own water and light department and served as the seat of government for Yamhill County.

Talk to an old timer in Mac - a term locals use when referring to McMinnville - and you'll learn that many of the buildings along "main street" downtown have been here since the late 1800s or early 1900s. McMinnvillites are serious in preserving the heritage on this street (Third Street) that it has been designated an historic district. Hotel Oregon, a landmark on the National Register of Historic Places, has served downtown McMinnville in various business garb for over 100 years, and still continues to do so.

Local developers Fenton and Link built the two-story structure in 1905 for $15,000. It opened for business as Hotel Elberton with local restaurateur and farmer Thomas A. White as its proprietor and quickly became popular with visitors to McMinnville, which in turn made Newby recognize the need for homes, hotels, and other businesses. By the turn of the twentieth century, McMinnville boasted a bank, a railroad station, a college, two hotels, several blacksmith shops, merchandise stores, and restaurants, and a strong social and economic base. It also had its own water and light department and served as the seat of government for Yamhill County.

One can still navigate the building via elevator—slow but sure—from the cellar to the rooftop—and a bird's eye view of McMinnville and the surrounding countryside (. . . hmm, perhaps some day in the not so distant future we will see the Hotel Oregon from our Landmark Lookout Tower).

Arnold "Nic" Nicolai, owner of the Hotel Montclair in Portland, bought the Hotel Oregon during WWII. He and his brother opened the Paragon Room restaurant and lounge in 1946. Located in the northeast corner of the first floor, the neon lit Naugahyde and wood-paneled Paragon Room gained a reputation for its great steak, onion rings and live performances by such talent as Heck Harper's western band. During the 1950s and into the early 1970s the hotel lobby housed various ventures, including the Greyhound Bus depot, a taxi stand, a snack counter, and a Western Union office. Beginning in the late 1950s, however, the building saw a slow decline of its resident businesses. First the Paragon Room closed in 1958, and then during the deep freeze of 1967, bursting water pipes caused damage that led to the closure of many hotel rooms. In 1975 the bus depot moved and the Beauty Maid Shop, a 40-year business resident, closed its doors a few years later. Yet, the first floor of the building continued to house a variety of businesses through the 1980s and 1990s—amidst the stories of John the Ghost—the locals' explanation for hard-to-explain sounds and events occurring in the uninhabited portions of the building.

During the late 1990s, Yamhill County's charming brothers Mike and Brian McMenamin. Seeking a location for a new McMenamins bed and breakfast, they'd scouted several sites before learning about the Hotel Oregon.

"It offered everything we were looking for: a great location in a pleasant historic district, a charming old structure, and a great customer base," said Mike McMenamin, of the Hotel Oregon and downtown McMinnville.

In January 1999 after many months of renovation, the structure re-opened its doors as McMenamins Hotel Oregon. The renovation included completion of the fourth floor, refurbishing of guestrooms (named for characters that are part of our community's history), a "stratospheric" Rooftop Bar, and a "subterranean" Cellar Bar. The addition of a building-wide art gallery depicting the lore and history of the hotel and McMinnville adds a personality not found in other local historical structures.

One finds the Pub on the main floor, with its 40-foot bar made of vintage re-milled fir. Also downstairs—and situated at the Evans Street entry—one will find the Hotel's Front Desk in all of its vintage glory. To the left of the entry is the Paragon Room, named for the former restaurant and lounge. Climbing the stairway, observing whimsical artwork on the way, we discover Mattie's Room on the second floor. Named for Mattie Hanna, beloved proprietor of the hotel's restaurant during the 1950s, the room's highlights include antique lighting and a mural that recounts some of the building's past. Located outside Mattie's Room is a round and arched, brick balcony that features a gracefully curved wrought iron railing overlooking Third Street. The showplace of the Hotel in years past, the balcony often saw ceremonious draping of the American Flag during parades and other significant events.

One can still navigate the building via elevator—slow but sure—from the cellar to the rooftop—and a bird's eye view of McMinnville and the surrounding countryside (. . . hmm, perhaps some day in the not so distant future we will see the Hotel Oregon from our Landmark Lookout Tower).
YAMHILL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 484
Lafayette Oregon 97127

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES
Paid July each year

- Individual $15
- Family $25
- Friend $50+
- Supporter $100+
- Community Builder $250+
- Community Benefactor $500+

Please make checks payable to the Yamhill County Historical Society. New members can prorate dues monthly from the above table. Membership dues, artifact donations and gifts are tax deductible.

Members receive the Westside newsletter and access to our research library free of charge. We are an all volunteer organization, and are constantly on the lookout for new helpers. If you can assist us in any way, financially or with your time or talents, it will be greatly appreciated. If you are not sure if you paid your annual membership dues last July, please contact Gloria Lutz at 472-7563.


What's Happening
Our next regular monthly meeting will be held 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 13th, at the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Old Sheridan Road, McMinnville. Our Board meets at 4:30, same place and date. Our program this month will be Violet Brown, on her rich Yamhill County pioneer heritage.

Other Events:
- August 11th & 12th: Lafayette Heritage Days—Still being firmed up...

New Members: We welcome new members Dennis Hoisington and his wife Tonia Beebe, and Curtis & Cynthia Doan. Thanks for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!