April Board Meeting Highlights

The YCHS board met in the Dayton Christian Church on April 10th. Correspondence secretary Marjorie Owens reported five pieces of correspondence including emails. Under the Museum report, stainless steel screens are being made to keep vermin from entering under the church. Volunteer Chair: no report. Membership chair Gloria Lutz reported that membership forms would be available at tonight's meeting. Preservation report: photo scanning and database entry continues, with nearly 1000 having been processed to date. Jennifer Sokol Blosser, one of our newest volunteers, continues to do an excellent job with these, and has prepared three-ring binders containing copies of the photo scans which should help future researchers with their tasks.

Old Business: Angela and Darrell Flood reported that the Lafayette Heritage Days event, scheduled for August 11th & 12th, is still being planned, and will include a breakfast, a parade, contests for the longest handlebar mustache and the best period costume and much more. Our covered wagon will be part of the festivities. Building Maintenance: Danny Fox has now started the process of re-anchoring the Log Building, at a cost of $7,000, payable over three months. The annual YCHS picnic is scheduled for August 18th at noon, to be held in Nancy Thornton's barn in Moores Valley. More details to follow in our summer edition.

New Business: Director report: Katherine updated the board on the planning committee activities, a possible computer hardware grant, and submitted a proposed a volunteer code of ethics form for consideration. A groundbreaking ceremony for Phase 1 of the new museum will be held in conjunction with the farm tractor plowing event on the 14th of this month at the new museum site, weather permitting. The land transfer for the new addition to our current 5 acre parcel has not been completed. An Oregon Heritage Conference will be held in Pendleton on May 3rd thru May 5th. The First Federal Savings and Loan has donated $631.33 to our cause, which was applied to the covered wagon trailer purchase. Dorothy Gunness has purchased the First Federal Bank gate, a historic and significant part of not only her family history, but also that of McMinnville and all of Yamhill County. A category of Special Life Membership was discussed and will be considered at a future board meeting. The Perrydale railroad depot has been offered to our society and plans are in the works to dismantle and transport it to our new site for safekeeping and eventual reconstruction. The Yamhill County Women for Agriculture has approached Shirley Venhaus concerning the establishment of an area in our new facilities to promote their cause, along with initial and continued monetary support, if details can be worked out.

From Your President

In the last two months the YCHS has been fortunate to receive some wonderful donations.

Organ: Mr. & Mrs. Russell Barney donated a circa 1880 Reed Organ to the Museum. It was manufactured by W. Bell and company in Guelph, Canada. This organ reportedly saw service with the McMinnville's pioneer First Christian Church, formally located at 5th and Cowles street. Barney retrieved the organ from a tool shed near Sheridan in October 2006 and lovingly restored it.

A grand piano that also has Yamhill family connections. More information to follow.

Orville and Rose Bernard's collection of Indian arrowheads and other local Native American collected over the years has been designated to come to the society. He told of walking plowed fields and stream areas after high water and finding them lying on top of the ground. Orville estimated that approximately 90% of his collection was found in Yamhill County. Orville and Rose arranged the collection in frames, glassed top tables and in cupboards. We are looking forward to displaying them at our new site.

As a result of an article in the News Register about our new up coming farm equipment building, Walt Stahlhecker contacted us about donating his father's 1949 8N Ford Tractor to the museum. Walt's parents Orin and Erma Stahlhecker lived on the family's 33 acre dairy farm located on Highway 240 near Newberg. Orin used the tractor for many purposes including tilling the fields, harvesting crops, cleaning barns, working the family orchard and other tasks. We went out to look at the tractor and discovered a jewel. Orin passed away about three years ago. Ray Kauer got on the tractor, hit the key and it cranked right off as if to say, "There is still life in this old tractor"! The hand book that showed lots of use is still with the tractor.

That same day we visited Alan and Irene Tessman who live on Bell Road above Newberg on Man's family farm. You may remember Alan and Don from our meeting at the Gibbs School. They helped move the school to its present site. Alan has donated a Deloach 48 inch circular sawmill to the Museum. Built around 1900, John D. Tessman (Alan's father) operated the sawmill on the family farm from 1932 through 1954, sawing lumber for farm buildings and neighbors. The engine had been sold but Ken and Pam Haggaard, of McMinnville, have offered the donation of a steam engine for the sawmill. It will be moved to the new Museum site where it will be reassembled and put to use again. Ed Banke has offered to donate his time to get the engine running again. Wouldn't it be great if the old mill could produce the lumber for its own building.

Have you notice the wonderful articles in the newspapers? Thanks Katherine.

That's just a few of the things that have been going on with YC.HS. Sincerely Shirley

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.
Spotlight On a New Volunteer

So much effort has been put into preservation and easy access for our wonderful photo collection. A number of volunteers have numbered, documented and placed photos in archival sleeves. The process of scanning them into our database for easy retrieval had begun when the volunteer working on this part of the project left for several months. Saddened, we knew this project would take even longer than anticipated, despite everyone’s hard work. However, we were blessed with the right person at the right time approaching us with a desire and passion to fill these needs and more.

Jennifer Sokol Blosser asked what she could do to help. Pointing her to this project, she delighted in scanning the photos and entering information. Almost immediately she suggested she would be willing to combine the last step of this project with a comprehensive index for easy non-computerized research. Could she do this? You bet. With her keen memory, Jennifer retains those images when she sees various pictures, and hundreds of photos down the road, when she sees another photo with the same person, barn, or whatever, she ties the two together. Several people working on the same project would eliminate that possibility.

With her background in genealogy, she uses resources of our society and the Genealogical Society holdings to track down identities of people and places in the photos, and she has done this for us many times. Just this past Friday, as she held a photo of a group of unknown people, using the above method, she tracked down the family and identified all the people in the photo, including where they lived. With another photo of people at an unidentified school, she was able to discover the name of the school. To date, she has compiled six complete photo-notebooks, with more on the way. Jennifer is amazing, and we are so very thankful for her willingness to work with these old photos.

Jennifer wears many hats: The daughter of Linfield College Professor Peter Richardson and local attorney Beverly Richardson, she graduated from McMinnville High school in 1988. She continued her education as an undergrad at the University of California in Santa Cruz, studied in France for a time before attending and graduating from Lewis and Clark with a Bachelors degree in French. Following that she went on to Willamette University Law school for one year, and worked as a trial assistant in McMinnville before doing Paralegal work in Portland and teaching French for a year.

Jennifer’s husband Alex works at the vineyard founded by his mother & father, Bill & Susan Sokol Blosser. The birth of Jennifer’s twin boys initiated her to her most important job of all, that of being a mother. As a stay-at-home mom, she has been busy working on her extensive family genealogy and volunteering for Gen Web for the last three years, transcribing vital statistics records for a project being done for the state of Massachusetts. Given her love of genealogy and history she now volunteers at our museum on the photo project as well as for the Oregon Historical Society in their photo archives. On top of all this, she is getting ready to start graduate school at Emporia State University in Portland to gain her masters degree in library science with a goal to becoming a museum archivist.

Jennifer is a joy to work with and everyone enjoys the visits by her two young sons. Note: If anyone feels they’d like to try to help identify some of the people, places or things in our photos that are currently unidentified, please make arrangements with Jennifer or Marjorie Owens to do so. Your help would be much appreciated.
John F. Kennedy once said, "Change is the law of life . . . and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

Last month I talked about what a fabulous job YCHS had done over the years in collecting the artifacts of our local history. I also commented on the amazing achievements of our present group of volunteers in the areas of preserving - tasks which shall continue into the future and which fulfill the protect and preserve portions of our mission statement. It is for our future generations that we move toward developing and building a new museum facility, which will enable the Museum to serve as a community resource for learning - thereby achieving the share the history and heritage portion of the YCHS mission statement. Change is afoot at YCHS - but it is with this change that we move toward the future and exciting things to come!

Speaking of the future and exciting things, Farm Fest 2007 was an incredible achievement, with nearly 100 people showing up to watch as a team of volunteers broke ground at our new site and in the process, prepared the soil for a crop of oats. Before the tractors hit the dirt, YCHS President Shirley Venhaus and I cut the ribbon, signaling the beginning of Phase I of the new complex. This event is yet another example of volunteers stepping up to the plate with amazing results. They had a fantastic time participating and everyone was wearing a smile!

Chuck Kadell and his lovely wife Carlene coordinated the wonderful group of volunteers who made Farm Fest 2007 such an outstanding success. Carlene organized the food for the farm crew, who worked up an appetite preparing the soil. Gunny Brandon, of McMinnville, loaned the Society an American Flag for the event and The Yamhill County Farm Bureau loaned a public address system. Dave Cruickshank served as our master of ceremonies, presenting the "tractors on parade", which featured members of the Oregon Two Cylinder Club who used their equipment to prepare the field for the oat seed provided by Steve and Gretchen Jones, of Select Seed in Amity. The tractor team plans to return in the autumn to harvest the crop during our annual Harvest Festival event.

Highlighted among the vintage farm equipment were Allis-Chalmers, Caterpillar, Cockshutt, Farmall, Ford, Minneapolis-Moline, and Oliver tractors and implements. Also featured was a 214 John Deere plow recently donated to YCHS by Linda Gusa. Pacific Reflex Signs, of McMinnville, produced our Farm Fest banner for a bargain, which we displayed on the old farm machinery at the site. Gloria Lutz was on hand with the Covered Wagon, and several youngsters enjoyed it immensely. Joanne Watts worked the information table and helped with refreshments, and Jean Sartor helped prepare a load of books for sale at the event. Colin and Millie Armstrong lent their support and got a jump-start on our annual garage sale, raking in $300 in sales. Dennis Hoisington captured the event with his digital camera and Lester Herrington documented the activities on video. Also helping were Frank Dummar, Ken Williams, Shirley and Byron McDaniels, Ken and Barbara Knutson, and Trudy Dick.

As if donating land, artifacts and financial support wasn't enough, Ray and Barbara Kauer contributed a portable restroom . . . and Ramsey McPhillips, who also donated land for our new site, was on hand to witness his family's farm produce yet another crop of oats! Thanks to all who contributed to make this event such a great success!

Now, close your eyes and visualize the new facility where we will gather to recognize our achievements - past, present and future - and the people who made it all possible. Can you hear the applause? I can. Can you see your fellow members? I can, they are my neighbors. Have you shared YCHS' plans for the future with your neighbors? I have, and I challenge you, the members of YCHS, to bring a new member (or two) to our next meeting on Tuesday evening, May 8. This is such an exciting time to become a part of this organization. As mentioned above, Gloria Lutz is blazing trails across Yamhill County with the Covered Wagon Program, visiting many schools and organizations during April, with at least five visits scheduled for May. Gloria is also our membership coordinator - and she'd love to hear from you! You will find her contact information on page two of this newsletter.

In the months of March and April, I conducted a volunteer survey, and as this newsletter goes to press, I will begin the task of tabulating and evaluating the comments and opinions for presentation at an all-volunteer meeting in May. If you, as a member, would like to fill out a survey - or would simply like your voice to be heard, please feel free to write to me directly (YCHS, PO Box 484, Lafayette, OR 97127), or drop me an email (ychsdirector@onlinemail.com).

I can also email or mail to you a survey if you wish. The information provided in the survey will help YCHS with planning and development of member and volunteer activities, as well as exhibits, educational outreach and other areas of interest to our membership and the Yamhill County community.

I've also been very busy traveling the County to promote YCHS and its plans to organizations, individuals and anyone who will listen! On the schedule for May and June are Michellebooks Country Club, May 9; Newberg City Club, May 15, McMinnville Kiwanis, May 17, Chehalem Chamber of Commerce at the new site on June 19; and the McMinnville Soroptimists, June 26, 2007. If you'd like to schedule a presentation, let me know.

In other news, we have begun an inventory of YCHS holdings. Yes, a devoted team of seven volunteers is busy inventorying the contents of all three buildings in Lafayette. If you would like to join in this activity, please contact me. You will join an incredible team of individuals who enjoy working with the treasures of Yamhill County, as well as lively conversation in an effort to identify some of the more mysterious objects! Of course, if inventorying is not your thing, there are many other volunteer opportunities at the YCHS Museum, and I'd be glad to meet you sometime in Lafayette to show you around and talk about where you might be able to help.

There are some exciting events coming up during the next few months, including the YCHS Annual Picnic. This year Nancy Thornton has been generous in offering her home for this event on August 18. I hope to see you all there, so be sure to mark your calendars! This newsletter marks a break in publication until July, but I look forward to seeing you at our May meeting. Until then, enjoy the nice spring weather, after all it's a beautiful day in Yamhill County!
Our Board meets at 4:00, same place and date. Our program this month will be, "Intermodal Transportation", by Gordon Zimmerman.

Other Events:
- August 11th & 12th: Lafayette Heritage Days—Still being firmed up.
- August 18th: Annual Picnic at Nancy Thornton's farm in Moores Valley.
- September (date to be announced): Harvesting the crop planted in April at the new site.

We welcome new members Aaron Warkentin, Edward Young, Armand de Rossiet, Patrice Petersen, Darrell and Angela Flood, and Don Leffler. Noel and Mary Martin have joined as supporters. We thank you all for supporting our organization. We invite you to attend our meetings and events, visit our museum and become more involved in our local history!
Farm Fest 2007