Greetings After a Fun 2013 Summer Season

Museum Open 5 Days a Week: The Salida Museum was able to open 5 days a week this past summer season thanks to volunteers who made it possible. Judith Kinzie, Larry Kovacic, George DeRoos, Ron Regenald, Bob Campbell and John Skinner manned the desk and entertained our visitors. Starting this Fall we are keeping the Museum open on Friday afternoon, Saturday all day, and Sunday afternoon to determine customer interest.

Next summer we will again try to open the Museum 7 days a week. Anyone interested in volunteering to host a day or help with anything else can contact the Museum at 719-539-7483.

Thanks to Susan Jesuroga and Madeline Mastromarchi, two new volunteers who have been doing a wonderful job of redesigning some of the Museum exhibits. The General Store, for one, now sports a distinctive new flavor capturing the experience of early Salida shopping.

From The President: “A Little Bit of History”

Salida Opera Houses: Salida’s first opera house, the Craig Opera House, was a wooden structure, two stories high, built in the early 1880’s on the east side of F Street where Alexander’s store (Lalliers) now stands. It was one of the casualties of the devastating fire of January 2, 1888. Stock companies and vaudeville entertainers after that played in the Fraternity Hall, now City Hall. In June, 1888, the community builders formed the Salida Opera House Association with $30,000 capital and erected the building now occupied by the Salida Theater (Unique) at a cost of $25,000. The seven Association directors were E.W. Corbin, G.W. McGovern, M.J. Collins, Peter Mulvany, J.W. O’Connor, J.W. Wood and W.W. Roller. They purchased a 75 x 150 foot lot on First Street between the Mail and French’s Drugstore from Kate Bender. The Masonic Lodge would occupy the second floor.

The newly erected building had a 50 x 75 foot auditorium, a 35 x 50 foot stage, and two 25 x 40 foot store rooms on either side of the stage. The building featured brick construction with stone caps and sills, and was to be lighted by electric and heated by a furnace. The new Salida Opera House formally opened New Years Day, 1889, with Cornwall, Churcher & Collins in charge of the affair. Red, white & blue bunting and the American flag decorated the interior, which was lit by a steady stream of 75 incandescent bulbs. Professor Simmons’ Orchestra from Leadville played the “Grand March Quadrille”, Waltz, and Schottische.

At midnight the celebration recessed to the Monte Cristo Hotel for a “sumptuous collation” prepared by E.A. Thayer. Each table was decorated with three frosted pyramids over two feet high with appropriate mottos on each side. Each plate featured a buttonhole bouquet. The guests then took carriages back to the Opera House and danced till 3am. On January 16, 1889, the opening performance at the new Opera House was “Alone in London”, presented to a standing room only audience and accompanied by Swindensky’s Orchestra.

To be continued, Judy Micklich, President
Salida Museum Association

406 ½ W. Hwy 50
Salida, CO 81201

Return Service Requested

Salida Museum Website

Visit the Salida Museum Website, www.salidamuseum.org, for articles on local history, events, photographs, quick facts, and other useful information. The Links tab gives you addresses for Colorado museums and adventure organizations. You can access museum volunteer and membership information as well as the latest Museum Newsletter. We are always happy to receive feedback on our website, so check it out and give us your suggestions. We extend our grateful thanks to the Salida Chamber of Commerce for their assistance with our website and newsletter activities.

Support the Salida Museum Association

Donate to the Museum. Send a check to the address on the front page. Amount donated ______________.

Join the Salida Museum Association. Annual membership is $10, lifetime membership is $100. Volunteer for the Museum and help with ongoing projects. We will contact you.

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
City ________ State ________ Zip ________
Phone ____________________________
Email ____________________________

Mail this coupon with your payment to:
Salida Museum Assn., 406 ½ W. Hwy 50, Salida, CO 81201

Museum News

Exhibits Get Facelift: Susan Jesuroga and Madeline Mastromarchi have been working on updating several of the Museum exhibits. The General Store, Tuesday Evening Club, Schoolroom, and Ranching Exhibits have received new looks. Stop by the Museum and see what a great job they are doing.

Deck of Historical Playing Cards: The Salida Museum continues to solicit sponsors for the creation of a complete deck of historical playing cards. Each card will feature a historical photo from Chaffee County along with a caption and the name of the sponsor. You can sponsor a single card or multiple cards, with the cost of the card varying with denomination and suit. Contact Bob Campbell at 719-221-2171 for information.

Xcel Grant Completed: An Xcel grant received several years ago by the Museum has resulted in the completion of the second volume of "A Child’s History of Salida", a book put together by the 2nd grade teachers at Longfellow Elementary School in Salida. The Museum sponsored the printing of the books and also helped with historical research and photos. Many thanks to Xcel for funding educational projects of this kind to benefit our students.

Museum Landscape Project: We are planning to Xeriscape the front yard of the Museum this Fall and next Spring. Landscape architect Meg Hearding, MH Garden Designs of Salida, has designed and submitted plans for an interpretive theme featuring local native plants. The plants will be identified with small signs indicating their names and histories in the Salida area. A walkway will allow viewing the plants, and a dry streambed and large rocks will depict their natural setting. We are currently soliciting donations of plants and materials, as well as volunteers willing to help with installation. Call Bob Campbell for more information at 719-221-2171.