

# The Historacle

July 2009

*The Official newsletter of the*

## Talent Historical Society



105 N. Market Street • P.O. Box 582 • Talent, OR 97540 • 541-512-8838 • [www.talenthistory.org](http://www.talenthistory.org)

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## Farewell to Director, Jan Wright

Talent Historical Society is moving forward with an all volunteer force. Because of budget restraints, the executive director, Jan Wright, is leaving the society. We can look with pride at the development of the museum, the acquisitions of donated items and exhibits, the grant awards, the website and library, the collection of oral histories and photographs, the Beeson diary transcriptions and specific projects like the Middle School paintings which have all come to pass under Jan's leadership. Talent Historical Society has given Jan the opportunity to work with very special people and to dig deep into Talent history. She authored a pictorial history of Talent which will be a reference point for years to come.

Please consider offering a few hours a week to volunteer at the museum. We need to keep the doors open, continue the mission of the society, and invite all to partake of the rich history of this area.

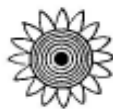
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Colorful display of paintings above the stage at THS

The open house to introduce the new Middle School painting exhibit was held on Saturday June 13th. Some of the artists who portrayed people, places, and things of Talent came to show their parents the work they had done. In addition to the students, Middle School art teacher, Bryan Tayler and his student teacher, Paul Messenger, came to see all the paintings displayed together. It is safe to say that no other project has been more lively or added more color to the museum. THS thanks and congratulates the young artists who contributed works for permanent display and those who helped make it possible, namely, Pat Bentley, Steven Banks, Ron Hodgdon, Cecil Gore, Home Depot, and the THS board.



# Unknown School House

In 1926 the Earl Newbry home on Anderson Road (now Colver Road) was burned to the ground. Earl's three year old son, Lyndel, vividly remembers the event and says that he witnessed the flames from the safety of his grandfather's porch next door. The *Ashland Tidings* reported on November 1st 1926 "the burned building had been the old Talent and Wagner Creek school house and erected over 30 years ago. It had been remodeled to a bungalow. The barn and other farm buildings were saved."

Lynn Newbry states the following details about the school "It was the old school house which was remodeled by a man to accommodate his family. I don't remember much about the detail of the house except that it did have a fireplace which is still standing in the house my father built in the spring of 1927. The new house was built around the old fireplace and is virtually on the foundation of the old school house. This place, where I grew up, is the fifth house from the railroad tracks on the north side of Colver Road . It is now painted red and the number on the mail box is G253. In addition to the fireplace the old school bell is still in existence. It is cracked (as a result of the fire) and doesn't ring very well but surprisingly it is all there. It was manufactured in 1886."

In 1973 Elton Petri, a local resident, wrote in the *Early History of the Talent Schools* , "A school was later built approximately in the NE corner of the Everett Beeson field on the Wagner Creek Road. It was sometimes referred to as the North Wagner Creek School. In later years when the school ceased to be, the building was moved to the Talent Orchard Co. west of Talent." Could the North Wagner Creek schoolhouse be the Newbry place that burned in 1926?



North Wagner Creek Schoolhouse, late 1880s. No bell showing in this picture but there is a chimney!

# Family Collections

There is a tug of war going on these days. With the advent of *Antiques Road Show* people now realize the monetary value of their family possessions. Photographs, letters, heirlooms, and our collective history are now for sale on ebay and at other auction houses. It is the opinion of the director that valuable history is being lost to private collectors. Historical societies and museums lose the opportunity to learn each time a piece of history gets auctioned off.

Talent Historical Society is a Johnny-come-lately as far as collections of objects is concerned. Oregon Historical Society and Southern Oregon Historical Society were collecting objects, photographs, and documents long before THS was organized. Many families had the desire to have their name preserved for history and left their pioneer objects to the larger repositories. When THS came into being space limitations prevented us from vigorously pursuing Talent's historical objects and documents.

If you have items with local significance please consider THS before ebay or Craig's list! The chance to share history does not come around very often and, if done properly, significantly contributes to our ability to interpret the events and people of our area. Photographs and documents can be compared to others already collected and put in context when placed in the societies' care.

One more issue. Many families rightfully like to leave their heirlooms to their children. Breaking up collections may seem fair to them but only allows each heir a portion of their heritage and severely fragments the original story. Leaving an entire collection intact and donating to the museum makes the collection accessible to the whole family and to the public in general. Loaning items is also a good way to spotlight your family's place in history. Good museums do not deprive you of your heritage, they preserve your family items and illuminate context and meaning.

## Radio Interview

Listen to Jefferson Public Radio on Thursday July 9th ,2009 from 9-10 a.m. for an interview with Jan Wright by Keith Henty. Jan Wright will talk about Talent and Rogue Valley history, the new Talent book and about what makes Talent unique. Call in with questions! 552-6782

Pre-sales of the *Talent* Book are brisk. Please order yours now by sending \$21.99 per book to:

Talent Historical Society  
P.O. Box 582  
Talent, OR 97540

After July 20th , pick up your book at the museum or pay \$2.50 extra for shipping. Thank you for the enthusiastic response to history!

### Board of Directors:

President: Bob Casebeer  
Vice Pres: Bill Horton  
Secretary: Katherine Harris  
Treasurer: Lysa Gore  
Directors: Lynn Newbry  
Greg Goebelt  
Ralph Hunkins  
Diane Glendenning  
John Morrison  
Teresa Snook  
Grayson Berry  
Emeritus: Alice Burnette

### Volunteers:

Katherine Harris  
Karen Carr  
Liz Carter  
Steve Banks  
Dick Simonson  
Pat Bentley  
Bob Casebeer  
Ralph Hunkins  
Bill Horton  
Greg Goebelt  
James Trowbridge  
Lysa, Cecil, & Sarah Gore  
Ron Hodgdon  
Jim Maize  
Marleen Wamsley  
Robert Burnett  
Alicia Moore

## *News Flash* Secrets Revealed

The old *Talent News Flashes* published from 1934-1989 by Mae Lowe and Alice Burnette are being put in order. Thanks to Robert Burnett, Pat Bentley, Jim Maize, and Alicia Moore the historical treasures from the *News Flashes* are coming to light. Some of the papers are very fragile and worn, some are damaged by rodents and water but they all contain volumes of information about our town and deserve a decent home in acid-free environments. Volunteers have spent hours working to put them in chronological order so they can be indexed for public study.



# Board Bios

The fate of the Talent Historical Society is in good hands. Here is a listing of the full board and a little bit about each one.

- President: **Robert L. Casebeer** is an emeritus professor of English, Southern Oregon University. Former high school English teacher, librarian, guidance counselor, & assistant principal, director of Project Prometheus for gifted and talented high school students. Studied at the University of the Americas and graduated from Southern Oregon University.
  - Vice President: **Bill Horton** is a retired drama director at Phoenix High School. M.A. in English from SOU. Member of the Rogue Valley Yacht Club.
  - Secretary: **Katherine Harris** attended Talent Schools, Rogue Community College and Southern Oregon State College. While raising her family she drove the school bus and was a “4-H Mother” and leader. Belongs to Talent/OSU Extension Group and a former member of the Talent Garden Club.
- Treasurer: **Lysa Gore** lived and worked in Pennsylvania before moving to Talent in 2008. She has a bookkeeping business and volunteers for THS and the Talent Chamber of Commerce.
- **Ralph Hunkins** born and raised in Deadwood, SD became a high school teacher, a soldier, and a foreign affairs specialist for Dept. of State in Washington, D.C. Ralph is a retired professor of education. Ralph and his wife, Margaret, moved to Talent in 1999 to be near the grandchildren and children.
  - **Lynn Newbry** was born near Talent, in 1923. After WWII he went into the fruit business with his father and had several orchards, a packinghouse and cold storage plant in Ashland. He is best known for serving as an Oregon State Senator from 1961-1975. He was a member of the board of the Oregon Historical Society, Southern Oregon Historical Society, The Oregon Board of Forestry and the Oregon Parks Commission.
  - **Greg Goebelt** has done many community projects including, Talent Chamber, Beautification Committee, and is currently the Talent Centennial Committee chairperson. He is a real estate agent for Remax and has been a professional drummer and chef.
  - **John Morrison** served as the mayor of Ashland from 2005 - 2008. Former journalist, newspaper publisher, college instructor, and Community Development Manager for Rogue Valley Council of Governments.
  - **Diane Glendenning** moved to Talent in 2007 to work at the South Valley Bank & Trust. Also volunteers at the Ashland Community Hospital. Is an animal lover and antique collector.
  - **Teresa Snook** graduated from SOU with a BS in Anthropology/Archaeology. She has worked on Native American sites and an Ashland bottle collection. A skilled exhibit designer and art agent for her father, Jim Snook.
  - **Grayson Berry** is the publisher & writer of the *Talent News and Review*. BS in Anthropology and Histoy from U of West Florida. Founder of *How Can We Help* cleaning company.

# The Pioneer Fruit Trees of Talent by Bob Casebeer

While famous photographer, Peter Britt of Jacksonville, got a lot of credit for being a horticulturist, the early fruit growing area of Jackson County was in the Talent area.

By 1860 Firman and Eli Anderson had the largest orchards, some 64 acres, along what is now Colver Road. The Stearns family of Talent grew fruit trees and sold them; and Welborn Beeson's diary indicates that by 1860 he had planted 121 fruit trees. However, just where did these early pioneer orchardists get their fruit trees? Some of the trees were known to have been grown from seed brought across the plains, by 1859 Orlando Coolidge had a nursery near Talent where fruit trees were grown, but many of the trees could have come from Henderson Lewelling's nursery near Milwaukee, Oregon.

Henderson Lewelling came to Oregon from Iowa in 1847. Henderson, his wife and eight children, left Salem, Iowa, with three wagons, one for the family and two laden with small grafted fruit trees. He had built two long boxes filled with charcoal, manure and compost, and carried 700 small trees all the way to Oregon. He watered the trees morning and night, wrapped the trees in cloth and burned fires at night to keep the nursery stock from freezing. The family rationed water to keep the trees alive, and built rails around the wagons to keep the oxen from eating the leaves. They were often alone as they only managed to travel 15 miles a day.

Lewelling had from 50 to 160 varieties of grafted trees in his wagon, plus starts of grape, currants and gooseberries. When he got to the Dalles, he wrapped all of his trees in cloth and ferried them down the Columbia, finally arriving at Milwaukee.

The Lewelling brothers—Henderson, Seth and John were not new to the nursery business. They had been the first pioneers to plant fruit trees in Iowa. Later, Henderson moved near Oakland, California joining his brother John, while Seth stayed in Oregon running the Oregon business.

By 1853 Henderson Lewelling had 100,000 trees for sale, the first grafted trees in Oregon, and they sold for \$1.00 to \$1.50 a tree. The previous year, his apple trees produced their first crop, and a single apple sold for \$1.00 in Portland. Truly, when Henderson Lewelling came west in 1847, he carried a million dollar fortune in his two wagons.

Many of the early orchards in Talent and Jackson county were grown from the descendants of Henderson Lewelling's 350 trees that survived the trip across the plains. And if you buy a Bing cherries this spring, you need to know that it was developed by Seth Lewelling and named after the Manchurian foreman or his Chinese horticultural crew.

31 May 1857 Welborn Beeson diary... *I went to Uncle David Sternes to see his garden, His peach trees are loaded with fruit as heavy as they can bear he has two apple trees full of fruit he has currants ripe, and raspberrys soon will be, his onions look first rate. He has the best garden & orchard that I have seen in Oregon. I can beat him though on the tomatoes and melons."*

# Memberships this Quarter

## **Renewing Members**

Kurt Bailey	Sally Shockley
Pat Bentley	Karl Slack
Robert Burnett	Claire Sommer
William & Carolyn Cecil	Star Properties - Jack Latvala
Roanne Clapp	
Paul Creel	
Judi Drais	
Bob & Annie Dreiszus	
Chuck Eccleston	
Michael Hall	
Kathy Jerman	
Ron & Beverly Lamb	
Gifford & Marilyn Lee	
Connie Miller	
John & Nancy Miller	
Carol Muir	
Rick & Yolanda Nagel	
Anita Nevison	
Carol & Randy Samuelson	

## **New Members**

Jim's Better Buys  
Mark & Nora Knox  
South Valley Bank & Trust  
Agnieszka Stachurska  
Genevieve Windsor

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