

# The Historical

January 2010

## The Official Newsletter of the Talent Historical Society



### **Things Your Historical Society Did This Past Year**

For as long as the Talent Historical Society has been in existence, and that means from the date of our incorporation in 1994, annual reports of its activities have been provided to the membership. In keeping with that tradition, here are some of the significant accomplishments of the Society from January 2009 until the end of the year.

#### **Envisioning Oregon**

We were instrumental in inviting James Fox, the Special Collections librarian at the University of Oregon to share with the joint meeting of all the historical societies and museums in Jackson County the program he and other state archivists have begun called "Envisioning Oregon." Basically, this group has received federal funds to locate significant historical documents now residing unknown in the local historical museums and archives in the State of Oregon. We were the only historical society in Southern Oregon to attend the initial formative meeting held in the Willamette Valley.

#### **Lysa Gore Appointed Treasurer**

Lysa Gore after joining the board of directors of THS was appointed treasurer, taking the place of board member Ralph Hunkins, our long time treasurer.

#### **Scale Model of Beeson's Hexagonal House Authorized**

Authorized the creation of a scale model of the Welborn Beeson hexagonal house that was built in the early 1860s. Dick Simonson, who has built somewhat similar scale models, has volunteered to create the model which will become one of the exhibits in the museum. The walls will be hinged so that viewers can see the inside of the model.

#### **Talent Area Historical Documents Created for THS Library**

A book of historical documents about the Talent area that are available on line has been created and placed in the library collection. Some 60 plus documents have been discovered.

#### **Transcriptions of Beeson Diaries Cover 1851 to 1888**

Continued the transcriptions of the Welborn Beeson diary. He began the diary, which is the only continuous documentation of activities in Jackson County by a single individual in 1851 and only ceased writing it when he died in 1893. Jan Wright and a host of transcribers have now transcribed and digitalized the handwritten diaries from 1851 to 1888.

## **THS Website Swells Google Talent Record**

Maintained the Talent Historical Society website [www.talenthistory.org](http://www.talenthistory.org) and as a result 1,230, 000 references to the Society and its activities are listed by Google. We can monitor the number of “hits” that are made to our website. Those of you who have computer access to the Web are urged to look at our website.

## **Jan Wright's Book of Historic Photographs Sales Soar**

When Arcadia Publishing Company released Jan Wright's book *Talent*, a book authorized by the THS Board and using photographs from among the 3000 plus Talent area photographs collected by the Society, the Society bought 200 copies to sell to area individuals at \$21.99 a copy. We now have fewer than 45 copies left. Tark's Grocery also made arrangements with Arcadia and has sold scores of copies as well. This is the second Talent book supported by the Society, the first being *Talent—Worth Its Weight in Gold*. The Society has ordered more of Wright's book in anticipation that Talent's Centennial will increase area resident's desire for additional copies.

## **New Membership Booklet Created by Greg Goebelt**

Greg Goebelt, THS board member, and Chairman of the City of Talent Centennial Committee, created a new membership booklet to give to individuals when they join the ranks of Talent Historical Society members.

## **Middle School Students Create Paintings of Historic Talent Area**

Working with Paul Messenger, a graduate student at Southern Oregon University. Steve Banks, Talent Middle School art teacher Bryan Taylor, and graphic artist and THS member Pat Bentley, a host of colorful paintings now grace the area above the stage in the museum. Created by Talent Middle School students, the project coordinated by Jan Wright, then the director of the THS museum, created a guide to the paintings, showing the historic photographs used by the students, and a listing of the student artists. This guide is available to visiting viewers. The rack which holds the pictures above the stage was created by volunteers Ron Hodgdon, Richard Olney and Zach Owen.

## **Kerosene Lamp Exhibit Created by Nancy Tompkins**

Nancy Tompkins mounted a display of a few of her extensive collection of kerosene lamps. If readers have not visited the museum since this rare exhibit was available, it still is on display.

## **Talent Historical Society Hosts Two Poker Classic Tournaments**

The Society has hosted two Poker Classic Tournaments during 2009 as part of our fund raising efforts. Ron Medinger, a loyal member of the Society, and a crew of specialists in operating poker tournaments, conducted the sessions for the Society. They were not quite the rousing moneymaker we had hoped, but those who participated had a great time, and the Society even made a few dollars.

## **Talent High School Memorabilia Donated for Display**

Dwain Davis gave a Talent High School letterman's sweater and two Talent High School Annuals to the Society. They join a copy of Ellis Beeson's 1911 Wheeler's Fifth Reader donated by member Lynda Weinhold. Talent residents who possess other Talent area school documents are urged to contribute them to the Society archives. We also possess several boxes of Talent school archives which are available for in-house perusal.

## **New Board Members Fill Two Board Vacancies**

Due to resignations from the board of directors last year, two new openings were filled by appointment. Teresa Snook, newly graduated from Southern Oregon in anthropology filled one of the vacant positions, and former president of THS, John Morrison, newly freed from his role as mayor of Ashland, filled the second position. John is a graduate of Talent High School and a journalist. We have recently changed our bylaws to increase the number of board members, so if any member is interested in becoming a board member as vacancies occur, simply submit a request to the Society. The board is authorized to appoint members if a vacancy occurs after elections are held for board members at each annual meeting which are usually held in November of each year. The board would like to have eager reserve applicants waiting in case of a new vacancy.

## **Lindsey Family Diary Added to THS Diary Collection**

William Lindsey brought in a diary that his grandfather kept which recorded an 1873 trip from Scotland to America. The Lindseys settled in Ashland, and were the owners of the well-known Lily Glen barn on the Dead Indian plateau on Howard Prairie. A copy of the diary has been included in the THS diary collection.

## **Spring Art Walk Swelled THS Attendance**

Over 120 Talent residents came into the museum during the first Talent Art Walk to view the creations of the two artists whose art was displayed in the museum during the March event.

## **Helen Sieber, Emeritus Board Member, Passes On**

Helen Sieber, whose guiding hand aided both the creation of the Talent Historical Society, and remained a board member until the day she died is deeply missed by the members of the board and by those members of the society and the city who knew her. Her efforts to provide funds for a museum site, and her knowledge of the city and its history as well as her involvement in the business life of the City of Talent, and its organizations over the long years she lived her, endeared her to hundreds .

## **Volunteer Fred Hutchinson Builds Closet in Storage Area**

The Society has received a number of antique clothing items, which we use for display on our manikin "Martha Talent." We have had a storage problem in that we had no facility where the clothing could be hung, thus avoiding wrinkles, etc. Fred Hutchinson volunteered to create a small closet using some of the cabinets we inherited from the county library, and has solved our problem. Three cheers for volunteers, especially Fred!

## **Historic Flags Now Frame the Stage**

Lynn Newbry, former state senator from Jackson County, and a member of the Talent Historical Society Board of Directors has given the Society two flags which once graced the office of his father, a former Oregon Secretary of State, and which also were prominently displayed in Lynn's Salem office when serving Jackson County in the state senate. We now have an Oregon State flag, which shows its age, for the blue background is now rusty red, and a forty-eight star U. S. flag placed on the THS stage.

## **Farewell Reception Held for Departing Director Jan Wright**

July 19 was the day that the Talent Historical Society held a farewell reception for Jan Wright, our long-time director of the museum. Due to the unwillingness of the county commissioners and the county budget committee to continue funding of the Southern Oregon Historical Society and the 13 other community based societies and museums located in Jackson County, THS economically was forced to discontinue the services of our treasured museum director, Jan Wright. The Society was finally forced to rely totally on volunteers for the operation of the Talent Historical Society, and as of June 30, 2009, had to let the only remaining professional historian employed by any of the historical societies in Jackson County seek other employment. The farewell reception, which included book signing for *Talent* which Jan had just finished, packed the museum. The board made Jan a lifetime member of the Society, and she still is active in the society in two other ways: she continues her involvement with the transcription process of the Welborn Beeson diaries, and her massive Jackson County pioneer website can be accessed on the THS website. Those whose families are among the 19,000 Jackson county pioneers on her website, can now reach her via the link on the THS website. Her website is a massive contribution to both the genealogical base for researchers as well as key to Jackson county history. We miss Jan.

## **Society Uses the Friday Evening Market as Showcase**

Thanks to the efforts of Lysa Gore and Diane Glendenning, both members of the Society board of directors, the Talent Historical Society maintained a booth at the Friday Evening Market this past summer and early fall. We sold our *Talent* book, some of Katherine Harris' figs, and a variety of other items and generally used the market as a way to showcase the Society as a operational museum and area organization.

## **Years of the *Talent News Flash* Donated and Sorted**

Alice Burnett and the late Mae Lowe jointly wrote and edited a mimeographed weekly and biweekly newsletter for Talent from 1934 until 1983. Alice, one of the founding members of the Talent Historical Society, has kept file copies of this historical treasure for all these years, and this summer donated her collection to the museum archives. Her son Bob Burnett, loyal Talent Lions Club member, spent hours this fall and early winter organizing and sorting the 52 years of newsletters by date, month and year. Larry Lowe of Jacksonville, Mae Lowe's grandson also has a complete set of the publication, which will allow the Society to create a complete set, filling in a few missing issues. Former board member Jim Bradley, also treasurer of the Talent Friends of the Library, has been placing digitalized copies of some issues on the Friends' website using his infrared scanner. These records provide Talent residents with a spectacular historical data base for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **“Martha Talent” Garb Changed for Each Season**

Thanks to unsung efforts of volunteer Margaret Duggar, our manikin which sits on a chair on the THS museum stage, gets a new costume change season by season, using historic clothing from our collection, loaned to us for the occasion by interested patrons. Margaret had some special help from Sarah Gore, Lysa and Cecil Gore's daughter, who also is a member of the Camelot Theatre company, when the flawed chin of our manikin was repaired using the cosmetic skills which her stagecraft has fostered. Thanks to both, “Martha” looks wonderful.

## **Editor of *Talent News & Review* Joins THS Board**

James Gray, editor of the *Talent News & Review*, the local monthly newspaper, joined the board of directors of the Talent Historical Society last June. A 2004 graduate of the University of West Florida in humanities with dual minors in anthropology and history, James is the youngest member of the board. His appointment is in keeping with the rest of the board's desire to make sure that folk who do not sport grey hair are members of the board. James and his wife moved to Ashland in 2004, and he has used his journalistic skills since coming west, writing for the *Daily Tidings*, the *Mail Tribune* and the *Sneak Preview* before founding the *Talent News & Review* with partners Nathaniel Hayden and Ron Rivard. James and his wife, who is seeking a second degree in chemistry at SOU as preparation to become a pharmacist, are the parents of a Violet, age three.

## **Norman Rowe Donates Original Music Scores to Society**

Norman Rowe, the music arranger for the Ashland City Band, and a resident of Brookings, has placed the original score arrangements in the THS collection: The scores of *The Valley of the Rogue*, and *The Crater Lake March* are now housed with us. *The Crater Lake March* was created and performed as part of the Crater Lake Centennial celebration by the Ashland City Band.

## **Talent Area Obituary Book One Completed**

Working from the hard effort done by former board member and former Talent resident Carl Schauger who edited much of the material found in *Book One Talent Area Obituaries*, the Society now has a research notebook available for researchers of those individuals who have died in the Talent area. Unfortunately, like a birth index, this effort is continual, but we try to record the birth and death of Talent area residents.

## **Annual Meeting Held November 14**

Jan Wright held the attendees spellbound as she narrated the stories behind some of the photographs included in her new book *Talent* during the annual meeting of the Society in middle November. During the annual meeting which included a brief presentation of the accomplishments of the Society during 2009, the following individuals were elected by those members present to serve on the board of directors of the Society for their coming two year terms: Katherine Harris, John Morrison, Diane Glendenning, Greg Goebelt, Lynn Newbry, Teresa Snook, and James Gray. They join Bob Casebeer, Lysa Gore, Ralph Hunkins and William Horton, thus rounding out the eleven members of the board of directors. Thanks go to member Jim Bradley, who aided Jan by handling the power point presentation.

## **Great Fiscal News: Treasurer Reports Society Solvency Maintained**

Treasurer Lysa Gore informed the Board of Directors that the Society ended December 2009 with a bank balance of \$4,108.41. An additional \$50 is maintained in the petty cash account, and the sales shop inventory is listed at \$921.50. The rental of museum space to Camelot Theatre as they prepare to mount new shows, the sale of the items in the sales shop, the annual memberships dues, and donations currently provide the backbone of our fiscal resources.

## **ORA “POLLY” BOYD, FORMER RESIDENT, PASSES AT 106**



*ace on*

*This is Ora Frances “Polly” Boyd's wedding portrait, made in 1923. THS members Ron and Linda Weinhold currently live on the Boyd place on Holton Road. Several items from the Boyds have been given to THS by them.*

On August 26, 2009, 106 year old Ora France “Polly” Boyd died in Eugene. Polly was born in Talent to Francis E. W. and Nellie Smith; her grandparents, came from Kentucky—with a brief stop in California to Oregon in a covered wagon, losing five children to cholera on the way. In her teens, Polly went to work for the telephone company as an operator, and met Howard Boyd, newly arrived from Minnesota by Harley motorcycle, who was working as a lineman for the same company. On 29 September, 1923 the couple married, and continued working until her first child was born. Years later, rejoining the work force, she found employment with the Red Cross serving in The Dalles, Astoria, Klamath Falls, and on the state staff in Portland. The couple moved to Eugene, and Polly found herself active in Republican politics, serving as vice-chairman of Lane County Republicans. She became the president of the University of Oregon's Mothers Club, and raised money for the construction of Erb Memorial Union student center. According to her obituary in the Eugene Register Guard, she picked up vice-presidential

candidate Richard Nixon at the Eugene railroad station in 1952, prior to taking him to McArthur Court for a speech. Nixon asked her, “You probably didn't get many people to come out, did you?” Years later when telling this story, the family recalls her mother telling her, “We filled the court!” “Polly” kept a scrapbook and it includes missives from Nixon, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, and Ronald and Nancy Reagan. Polly came by her political interests more or less genetically, her great aunt, Marian Towne—a Democrat from Jackson County—was the first woman elected to the Oregon House of Representatives, in 1914. After Polly and Howard retired, they returned to Jackson County, living on Holton Road here in Talent, taking care of their tree farm. One of Polly's greatest exploits occurred when she and her husband jeeped their way to the tip of South America and then returned, taking a whole year to make the trip. Both she and Howard spoke fluent Spanish. Polly is buried in the Stearns Cemetery here in Talent. This is what one of her grandchildren, Peter, had to say about his grandmother: “There won't be any big news stories, there won't be any national day of mourning, there won't be 24 hour news coverage for the loss of this wonderful woman. She will slide into the background like millions of other great people. My last grandma is gone. “She was an inspiration, she got me into history and archeology when everyone else thought I was foolish, she brought me into her life as a grandson.... I will miss you grandma, I can never thank you enough for your love, your strength, your spirit, and your support. Thank you for everything, for helping me dig up artifacts in Oregon, for making me laugh, for helping me discover the National Geographic, and for just being my Grandma. I love you, and you will be missed.” Polly, a third generation native to Oregon, was born on May 21, 1903, at the family homestead in Talent. Her legacy includes two children, two foster children, six grandchildren, nine foster grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, 12 foster great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren with another due in June.

## **Looking Back—Talent News Flashes January 1988**

### **Track Cleared**

Southern Pacific Railroad crews cleared the site of the January 10 derailment on January 13. Approximately 1/3 of the cars that jumped the track had to be pushed onto their sides and will be pulled out later. Crews installed prefabricated rails and ties to replace the damaged ones. The train jumped the track Sunday afternoon but railroad officials have not yet revealed the cause of the accident.

### **Remodeling Phoenix High School Considered**

Board Chairman Sandy Lynch accepted the remodeling study which estimates that approximately \$8.75 million is needed to remodel the existing high school.

### **Governor Here in June**

Governor Neil Goldschmidt will deliver a commencement address June 7 at Phoenix High School. Jerry Stinnett, PHS principal, said the governor's office has confirmed that Goldschmidt will appear at the evening commencement which will be held at South Medford High School.

### **Get RR Crossing**

Residents of Hartley Lane will soon get their RR crossing back after more than six months of traversing the back road to Colver.

## BULLETIN BOARD DATA

Donations or loans of objects which the Society can use for exhibit display are always welcome. The recent stamp exhibit and the current Valentine exhibit are examples of loan objects that have been provided by members of the society. The following individuals have recently provided loans or donations, and we thank you:

Randy Boarman  
George Kramer  
Bill and Ruth Slack

Liz Carter  
Katherine Harris  
Dick and Shirl Phillips

Robert & Audrey Casebeer  
Robert & Carol Delsman  
Ralph & Margaret Hunkins

### What We Currently Are Looking For:

1. Some members to fill at least two vacant board positions.
2. A Volunteer coordinator
3. Items and pictures to circa 1910 to build exhibits to celebrate the City of Talent's Centennial.
4. One or more artists to create and paint a mural on the exterior of the museum.
5. Digital Camera with tripod or tripod ready
6. 20" or 27" Television

### Email Addresses

If you have an email address, and currently are receiving the Historical by mail, please help the Society save postage expenses by providing us with your email address. You can do this by email to us, simply send your note to us at [talenthistory@gmail.com](mailto:talenthistory@gmail.com)

### Save the Date

The Camelot Theatre is contributing the ticket sales of their Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> production of *Frost/Nixon* to the Talent Historical Society. This will be the third production that the Theatre had conducted as a fund-raiser for the Society. More details will be sent to the membership as the performance date nears, and also watch the newspapers for more details.

### Talent Historical Society Website

On our website, under the heading HOW YOU CAN HELP, you can find a link to Amazon.com. If you are planning to buy a book as a present or for you own amusement or edification, log on to the link provided and shop Amazon as you normally would. The Talent Historical Society will then receive a percentage of your purchase as a donation from Amazon. Go to [www.talenthistory.org](http://www.talenthistory.org) for more information.

### Foot Traffic in Museum Rises

We ask visitors to the museum to sign our guest register when they enter the museum. This is one way to check on the success of the Society. We have observed that not every person actually signs the register, but by counting the signatures in the register for 2009, we discovered that 1348 individuals signed in. During 2008 the total of those signing the register was 986. Since there are about 7000 residents in the city of Talent, and several thousand more in the outlying area, we have a long way to go to reach those who live close to the museum at 105 N. Market Street, Talent, Oregon.

## New and Renewing Members this last Quarter are listed below:

### New

*Cherie Brooks*

*Morgan LeeAnn Bailey*

*John & Lillian Rockfellow*

### Renewing

*Charlotte Beeson Joon*

*Bruce D. Snook*

*Herman Willitte*

*Dick & Shirl Phillips*

*Cecil & Lysa Gore*

*Alicia Moore*

*LaVelle Ricks*

*Robert & Karen Carr*

*Billy & Ruth Black*

*Daniel & Linda Jackson*

*Carl & Wanda Ferdue*

*Bud & Mary Gleim*

*Joan J. Dean*

*Grail & Phyllis Douglas*

*Robert & Audrey Casebeer*

*Robert & Carol Delsman*

### Business Sponship

*Gary Rockfellow*

*George Kramet*

*Liz Carter*

*Betsy Dial Mills*

*Ralph & Margaret Hunkins*

The Historical is published quarterly by the Talent Historical Society, 1056 N. Market Street, Talent, Oregon 97540. Our telephone number is 541-512-8838. We are open Wednesday through Saturday weekly from 1 to 5. Our website can be accessed at [www.talenthistory.org](http://www.talenthistory.org) The Society operates totally as a volunteer organization. We maintain archives about the Upper Bear Creek Valley, conduct historical research and host a museum. We welcome increased membership.