

October 3, 2017

Dear Members,

As I write today, the wind is blowing and a little sleet is starting to fall—the kind that stings your face and eyes and causes you to hasten your step. After a promising start to our autumn, the weather turned blustery and wet and stripped our trees of their golden leaves—darn! Old man winter cannot be far behind!

But it is not all bad—it has been really good “museum” weather. We have had some really big days at the museum in light of the weather, with our customers citing getting in and out of the weather as a reason for their visit. We surpassed last year’s number of 10,342 visitors on September 7<sup>th</sup>, and are about 2000 folks ahead of last year! I work at the museum two days a week and I can’t tell you how fun and satisfying it is—the people who visit are just amazed to find a world-class museum in such a little town. By the time I am through with my day, I am walking on air—a couple of feet off the ground! Thanks to Casey and Steve Allen for their good work this summer. New at the museum this year is our major display of printing presses from the historic Silverton Standard and the Miner, thanks to Jon and Sharon Denious and Loren Lew and his crew. What a job it was to move all of that HEAVY equipment! Also, a major display of models, thanks to Lowell Ross and Ken Vaughn. Also, Thanks to Steve Rich for the new display about movies filmed in Silverton. You need to make the trip, dear members, to see what we have done!

The Mill did well also. We sold so many Heritage Passes that it put us over the top. Thanks to the Old Hundred Mine Tour for pushing that pass, which gets visitors into the Mine tour, the Mill Tour and the Museum for 20% off. We also had a crew at the mill this spring fixing some real ice damage to the gift shop portion of the Mill and fixing some holes in the roof, thanks to your generosity. David Singer is putting the finishing touches on the construction document for the Mill so that we may apply for grant funds to finish the assay office rehabilitation. Thank you Melanie and Will for your good work this summer. And, an aside: we got a check for \$1300 earlier this summer from San Miguel Power Association, the REA which supplies our electricity. It was for electricity that we produced from our little hydro-plant! How ‘bout that! Thanks to Denny Kurtz for keeping an eye on it and in good running order.

We had an excellent Cemetery work Day, and, by golly, the Town stepped up to the plate in the wake of Paul and Mary Beaber’s retirement from running the event. This summer we were the lucky recipients of an annual workday that several area LDS Churches volunteer for—we must have had 200 people. Boy, did we get some work done! And they fed us afterwards, too! Thanks Michelle Hamilton and Chris George from the Town for ramrodding the workday this year.

The archive was busy as usual. The EPA is interested in our mining maps. Kirstin Brown of the Colorado Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety provided a scanner that can scan documents up to 44" wide and that is being used to scan maps for the Bonita Peak Superfund sites, as well as some of the larger items in our collection. Of note at the archive: John Graham – great grandson of William Palmquist, sheriff 1906-1908 and judge 1908-1947 donated papers and photos. Alice Kimble (first woman county assessor in the United States) descendant – donated historic artifacts, papers and photographs, Paul & Mary Beaber – collection of cemetery information. Also new as an exhibit, our newly restored caboose is now residing besides the archive building and, just finished is a garage to put it in for the winter. It is already a big attraction for the museum complex and, hopefully is putting visitors through the museum door. And, dear members, you will be pleased to know that the marble bench in honor of Bill Alsup was placed in front of the archive in the spring.

Just yesterday the railroad committee applied for a grant for the exterior restoration of the Silverton Northern Engine House. Thanks to go to George Niederauer and Jerry Hoffer for their hard work on that. Believe me, dear members, there is an art and science behind putting a good application together. Keep your fingers crossed. They have been working for two summers on the oil shed and now have a very serviceable building to use for storage of tools, break space and storage. The building seems so big, but Jerry assures me that it is built in the same foot print as the old shed—a real optical illusion.

Loren Lew is finishing up on the facades of the Cole and Hoffman buildings (right across from the Town Hall, they had a fire in 2011). After quotes from metal fabricators came in extremely high, Loren had to come up with an alternate system to refabricate damaged pieces of the buildings' cornice. Being the master, he did, and they look fabulous. Silverton is one of the first National Historic Landmarks (1962) and is still one of only 23 in the State of Colorado, so it important that our pristine main street be maintained—it is what people come to see. It is how we make our living! I am busy getting that grant accounting done and out the door! Although not our projects, Lew is also working on the Miner's Union Hospital restoration project and has finished work on the Sound Democrat Mill. The Mill is where I plan to be on Wednesday with project coordinator David Singer, Mike Owen from the State Historical Fund and Liz Francisco, archaeologist from the BLM for a final inspection. What is so important about this project is that it highlights one of the two types of milling in the San Juans—stamp milling. The Mayflower Mill presents the story of “flotation” milling, and with the Sound Democrat, we have a wonderful presentation of “stamp” milling.

I know that many of our members are wondering what the status is of our Silverton Northern Rail Road project is. Well, it is still a “go” although not directly sponsored by the Society. The Society Board of Directors do support the concept and the project, but, at this time, do not want to subject the Society to any of legal ramifications that a running railroad might have. One of the best things about your Board of Directors is that we can agree to disagree, but we all put the interests of the San Juan County Historical Society first. The Silverton Northern Railroad committee is in the process of forming a separate 501 (c) 3 to pursue our dream of rebuilding the railroad to Howardsville. We ain't done yet!

Out in the county the work at the Santiago Mine site continued this summer, thanks to member Ryan Bennett. You are used to hearing about grant money from me a lot, but this work is being done on his own dime! This is who we are, dear members, people who value our history, indeed, who are fascinated with it, and want to share it with generations to come. Ryan's children can take their children up to Treasure Mountain one day and say “This is what my dad did for you. He saved this for you.” Thank you, Ryan, from all of our present and future grandchildren.

That is who we are, dear members. Thanks so much for your support.