MUSEUM REMAINS CLOSED

As of the date of this newsletter, our museum remains closed since March 16 due to the corona virus situation. Our Board is going to meet in early October to discuss whether we might be able to slowly re-open, perhaps on weekends only. Historical museums in Springdale and Rogers have reopened this month (September), but they have a full time paid staff; we are in a different situation with our all-volunteer staff.

BELLA VISTA CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

We are very happy to announce that the Civil War Round Table meetings are starting again on Thursday, October 1, at 7:00 p.m., in the big meeting room at the American Legion, next door to our museum, at the corner of Highway 71 and Kingsland. Masks will be required and social distancing will be practiced. They will continue to meet there the first Thursday evening of each month until the museum fully re-opens or until the Legion building is sold. The October 1 speaker will be Russ Pennington on the Battle of Arkansas Post. The November 5 speaker will be Tom Dillard on the Civil War Infrastructure in Arkansas. The program planned for December 3 will be Jerry Moore and Dr. Chris Huggard on Aaron Van Winkle. If you would like to get on their newsletter mailing list to find out what programs are coming up, email Chuck Pribbernow at cnpribb@yahoo.com.
MEMBERSHIP

Please note that if you renew your membership in our Historical Society any time this fall, it is good for the entire calendar year of 2021. Membership forms are included on the last page of this newsletter. Since the museum has been closed since March, we are definitely down in walk-in donations, so your membership renewal this fall would be much appreciated. Even though we are closed, we continue to have insurance, utility, and building maintenance expenses. We are grateful that the City of Bella Vista has been able to continue to provide us much needed financial support.

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JILL’S JAMS

With all our normal fundraising events cancelled this year, we were very fortunate that Jill Werner decided to take advantage of her time at home this summer and make more of her delicious jams, which she gives away in exchange for a $5 donation to the museum. On September 5, she was given permission by our Board member Steve Morrow, who is the manager of Allen’s Food Market, to set up tables in front of Allen’s. Jill brought 280 jars of jam with her and raised nearly $1,400 for the museum in a few hours that morning. Helping her were Dale and Carol Phillips, Xyta Lucas, Sandy Flaming, and Jeannette Hume. Jill plans to do it again one more time this year, on Saturday morning October 10, starting at 9 a.m., again in front of Allen’s, so if you missed out last time, please stop by.
Clayton Cross, the chainsaw artist from Oklahoma who created Mr. Mulligan in 1996 from a tree stump in the Highlands Golf Course parking lot probably never expected to see his guy wearing a mask, but that’s what is happening in today’s world with this virus pandemic. According to his website, https://chainsawartistry.com, Clayton Coss is a chainsaw wood sculptor, using a chainsaw as his only tool. He has been sculpting wood since November 1985 when his father talked him into entering a chainsaw sculpting contest. He has sculpted literally thousands of trees in the Tulsa area and surrounding states.

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DONATIONS

We appreciate the fact that while the museum has been closed most of this year due to the virus situation, we continue to hear from people who have items they would like to donate to us. If we have the space and the donation has a tie to Bella Vista history, we welcome those donations. Recent donations include a beautiful tea set hand painted by artist Ara Mae Calhoun in 1990, donated by her son, Wayne Calhoun and his wife Linda, along with prints of paintings by artist Athline Cates, which his mom had received from the artist.

Also, we received a couple of donations from Tom Diepenbrock, who enjoys exploring with his metal detector. He found a horse shoe at this old fruit cellar off the bike trail at the south end of Chelsea in southern Bella Vista, and he found this horse hitching post ring behind the Welcome Center on Highway 71; he has now donated both items to the museum. Thank you, Tom!
BIG SPRING

An early fall hike up to the Big Spring behind the Trout Farm showed some pretty scenery recently. The area looks somewhat different now than it did in the Linebarger years (below left), when they had installed hydraulic rams for pumping water throughout the Bella Vista Summer Resort. Below right is what it looks like today. The Trout Farm property has been sold by long time owners, Cindy and DeWitt Smith, who are moving to South Carolina to be nearer their grandchildren.

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JOHN COOPER JR. HOME SOLD

The home (shown below left) behind the brick wall on the east side of Highway 71 at the northern edge of Bella Vista was sold this year by Pat Cooper, the widow of John Cooper Jr. After John Cooper Sr. bought the property when he started Bella Vista Village, his daughter Boyce and her husband George Billingsley lived there, then they built a new home, which is today’s Inn at Bella Vista on Chelsea Road, and John Cooper Jr. moved to the Highway 71 location with his family. He died in 2013. An estate sale was held one weekend in late August. The smaller house still stands next door (old photo below center, courtesy of the Benton County Historical Society Pioneer), and the picture on the right shows how that house looks today.
LINDA CASH RUSH

Linda Cash Rush is one of the few members of our Historical Society who is an area native! Her great-grandfather, Willis Cash, donated the land in 1896 for the building that became Summit School and Church, with its nearby cemetery, located not far from today's Metfield Clubhouse off Granshire and Aveton. Our Historical Society became the owner of that property two years ago through a quit claim deed from the Bentonville School District (the school was consolidated into the Bentonville district in the 1940s).

Linda spent the first 18 years of her life on the nearby farm of her parents, Oscar Cash and Lois McCool Cash...in fact Lake Brittany sits on the southern border of the farm where she grew up. Her parents had rented the 320 acre farm for years, then purchased it about 1944 for $1,700. Around 1951, they sold the northern 160 acres for $1,000. They lived on the farm from 1927 until 1971, when they sold the remaining 160 acres to Cooper Communities and moved to a small ten-acre farm in the western part of Bentonville, where they lived the rest of their lives. Her father died in 1981, and her mom died in 2004.

When Linda was a child, her father grew strawberries commercially, and hired her and her siblings, along with other workers, to pick them. The start of the strawberry harvest was just about the time of year when school was letting out for the summer. Her father later stopped growing strawberries and had dairy cattle instead. They always had a big garden, and it seemed to her the entire summer was spent canning and freezing the garden crops.

Linda has a lot of fun childhood memories too. For one thing, every spring she considered it fun when all the farmers would burn off their land. They would pick one day when all conditions were just right to do this. They did it to prevent real destruction in case somehow a forest fire broke out and burned out of control, but also to keep the underbrush cleared out so that grass would grow for farm animals, and to try to control the ticks, chiggers, etc. She remembered coming home on the school bus and getting a whiff of that ‘woody’ smoke. As night would come, they would see the red glow in the sky from the woods on fire, and it seemed very exciting to a child.

Linda was too young to attend Summit before it was consolidated into the Bentonville School District, but her older siblings did. Linda went all 12 grades to the school in Bentonville that is now called “Old High” on Northwest Second Street.

About the time Linda graduated from high school is when John Cooper Sr. had decided to develop Bella Vista. Linda says, “It all sounded like a fairy tale to most of us ‘natives’ and many people felt that nothing would ever materialize, but how wrong they were!”

Linda had planned to attend the University of Arkansas, but her father’s illness prevented that, so she went to work instead. After several years at a company in Rogers, a friend who was the Recreation Director for Cooper Communities told her about the secretarial position at the ‘fabulous’ new clubhouse that was going to open.

She began working at the Clubhouse on November 16, 1968, the day it opened, and worked for the POA until she retired in 2014. During those years, she met people from all walks of life. She said one of the most colorful football coaches she can remember meeting was the legendary ‘Bear’ Bryant who participated in the annual Football Coaches Golf Tournaments that Cooper sponsored.

Linda is enjoying retirement in Bentonville, where she and her older sister share a home. We thank her for sharing her memories with us.
LAKE BELLA VISTA DAM

According to the Friday, August 28, 2020, Arkansas Democrat Gazette, “The decision rests with (Bentonville) whether to repair, replace or remove the dam at Lake Bella Vista, according to a ruling Thursday by Benton County Circuit Judge John Scott. Bentonville filed a lawsuit against Cooper Realty Investments and the Bentonville/Bella Vista Trailblazers Association. The lawsuit asked the judge to decide what rights the city had in regard to the property and whether any agreements limit the city in rebuilding or removing the dam. Scott said Bentonville has the authority to rebuild or remove the dam under a special warranty agreement the city has with the Trailblazers. Cooper Realty conveyed the property Feb. 10, 2000, to the Trailblazers by limited warranty deed. The Trailblazers conveyed the property to Bentonville on Nov. 1, 2006, by special warranty deed, according to court documents. The city included Lake Bella Vista in its park system. The lake was formed by a man-made dam on Little Sugar Creek. Flooding in 2008 damaged the dam. The city planned to rebuild an improved dam, according to the lawsuit. Some groups asked the city to consider eliminating the dam and to return the creek to a naturally flowing stream, according to the suit. Cooper Realty wants the city to rebuild the dam and maintain the lake, according to the lawsuit. Cooper claimed the conveyance of the property to the Trailblazers and later to the city was conditioned on the dam being maintained, and, if necessary, building a new dam to maintain Lake Bella Vista. George Spence, attorney for Bentonville, said the city hasn’t decided whether to replace or remove the dam.”

To go back further in the history of the dam...when the Linebargers sold the Bella Vista Summer Resort to E. L. Keith in 1952. While the Linebargers didn’t want to see the height of the dam increased, they did specify that “such present dam height and spillway may be perpetually maintained by said grantee, his heirs and assigns.” However, it appears that using the word ‘may’ instead of ‘will’ took any obligation out of the agreements going forward, so it did not play a role in the debate about the dam.

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TOWN CENTER WEST

Our history continues to evolve with the ever changing landscape in Bella Vista. This fall, Cooper Communities decided to take down the buildings in Town Center West reportedly in hopes of making that property more attractive to a future business or businesses. Town Center West was constructed in 1971, so those buildings stood there for nearly 50 years.
CEMETERY UPDATES

We have had quite a bit of activity at local cemeteries recently. The small Nott Cemetery off Magrath Drive and Brims Ness Lane in western Bella Vista became inaccessible after the big windstorm that we had in Bella Vista on August 26, 2019. Exactly one year later, on August 26, 2020, a Work Detail Team from the Benton County Jail spent a day clearing Brims Ness Lane. The street was totally blocked as is seen in the picture below left. The trail from the end of the Brims Ness Lane cul de sac leads to Nott Cemetery. Recently Chuck Pribbernow, Dale Phillips and Carol Phillips returned to that cemetery to do some additional clearing around the gravestones. Being two of the founders of the Bella Vista Civil War Round Table last year, Chuck and Dale are especially interested in Civil War veterans’ graves. One of the graves at Nott Cemetery is that of Union soldier Cyrus Nott (below right). He enlisted in 1861 in Watertown, N.Y.

Chuck and Dale also spent a morning in early August clearing the very small cemetery that holds the graves of Joseph and Mary Mills up on the knoll across from the Blowing Springs RV park. Mr. Mills was also a Civil War veteran. That gravestone has deteriorated over the years and is going to get a cleaning soon. (Left picture courtesy of the Benton County Historical Society Pioneer.)
SUMMIT CEMETERY

Summit Cemetery has been the focus of attention recently also. A tall old tree that appeared to be very sick needed to be removed. Through the generosity of members of the Butterfield Trails Questers chapter, along with donations from other individuals and the museum, a tree service was paid to cut down that tree. Part of it was taken away to be used for firewood and the remainder awaits a controlled burn by the Bella Vista Fire Department. In addition, with the help of Dorothy Miller of the Benton County Cemetery Preservation Group, the location of a number of formerly unmarked graves has been identified, and will soon be marked with concrete markers and white crosses, similar to what a former Questers chapter provided on other graves at that cemetery in 1988. The cemetery fence will be extended to encompass these graves.

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MORE THANKS....

--To Terry Davis and Dorothy Miller for helping us locate unmarked graves at Summit Cemetery.

--To T. H. Rogers Hardware Store for donating lumber for the white crosses for those graves.

--To Jim Lucas for making the white crosses and also for building small tables for museum exhibits.

--To Carol Phillips for dressing up with fabric the exposed end of an exhibit cabinet in the Harter Room.

--To Tim Jaycox and the staff at the POA printing office for their help with our newsletter.

--To the Fly Tyers for their continued interest Bella Vista history and for inviting our speakers to their meetings. Over the past six years, we have averaged nearly one program per year for them.

--To the Weekly Vista staff, especially Keith Bryant, Lynn Atkins, and Terri O’Byrne, for their continued publicity about the museum and Bella Vista history.
NEW BOOK COMING

We are excited to announce that a new book on the history of Bella Vista is scheduled to be published in 2021. Dale Phillips and Xyta Lucas, as co-authors, signed a contract this summer with Arcadia Publishing Company of Charleston, S.C. Arcadia is known for its local and regional pictorial history books. Jack Kellogg is also helping the authors by providing major help in scanning photos. We will be selling the book in our gift shop, and it will also be made available at Barnes & Noble and on Amazon. Dale and Xyta have spent time visiting sites they want to include in the book. Shown just below is Dale touring the Inn at Bella Vista with owner Beverly Williams. The authors are pictured in the second photo below (courtesy of Jack Kellogg).
One of the two remaining chapters of Questers in Bella Vista, Butterfield Trails, celebrated their 40th anniversary on July 7, 2020, with a ‘masks on’ meeting at the museum, followed by an outdoor tour of Summit Cemetery led by Xyta Lucas.

The Butterfield Trails Questers chapter met again on September 28, but decided to spread out more in the meeting room of the American Legion next door to the museum. Their speaker was Leah Whitehead, pictured below, President of the Benton County Historical Society, who talked about the plans underway for a new Bentonville Historical Museum. Some exhibits are on display in the old Benton County Jail just off the Bentonville square, but they are seeking a permanent location in a historic building in Bentonville, and plan to hire an Executive Director in the near future.
SHILOH MUSEUM SHOUT OUT SERIES

We were honored to host Kim Hosey of the Shiloh Museum this summer, when she taped a tour of our museum hosted by Xyta Lucas. Kim did a good job of editing down over one hour of talk into a concise 15 minute video. It’s now available on You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akLQYwgtNic.

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JOHN DRUM’S 100TH BIRTHDAY

We helped John Drum celebrate his drive-by 100th birthday party in front of his home on Lake Windsor on August 10. This was a party initiated by Jene Porter and others from their St. Theodore’s Episcopal Church. John still lives in the house he had Fay Jones design in the 1980-81 timeframe, which is featured in the exhibit at our museum that our docent Susan Porter and team created several years ago. Pictured here are John and his longtime friend, Rosalie Robinson, sitting in his golf cart while Mayor Christie reads a proclamation honoring John on this milestone birthday.

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LANDSCAPE APPRECIATION

Our landscape volunteer, Patrice Murphy, and her assistant, Barb Wenger, continue to keep our flower beds and shrubs looking good. We also appreciate the trimming of bushes along the south side of the museum by Dale and Carol Phillips. The crews from the POA General Grounds & Maintenance Department still mow and weed eat on a weekly basis for us. Thanks to everyone! The picture below was taken on July 30 when the crepe myrtles were in full bloom.
MEMBERSHIP

Please note that if you renew your membership in our Historical Society any time this fall, it is good for the entire calendar year of 2021. New members are welcome to sign up for membership any time during the year. Renewal is always due January 1 of the following year. Since the museum is closed, we cannot handle in person payments, but would ask that you mail your check to us.

By becoming a member, you support the preservation of Bella Vista’s rich and unique history, and help us educate the public. Benefits include receipt of our quarterly newsletter and an invitation to our annual membership meeting held each March. Our newsletter is available by email or snail mail, but of course we would prefer to have your email address so that we can avoid mailing costs. If you don’t have email, however, we will mail our newsletter to your home address. We have no paid staff, so all revenue including membership dues and donations is applied to our general operating expenses unless you specify a particular project. We very much appreciate the financial support we receive from the City of Bella Vista, which helps us pay for major operational expenses, but we still need your individual membership dues and donations to help us to continue to improve the museum in every way we possibly can. Thank you!

Bella Vista Historical Society
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www.bellavistamuseum.org

Date: ___________________________

Name: ___________________________________________________________________

Street Address: ____________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip Code:________________________________________________________

Telephone: ________________ Email Address: _________________________________

Membership Fee:

Individual $15 __________

Family $25 __________

Corporate $50 __________

Donations in excess of your membership dues are very welcome also.

The Bella Vista Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization and donations qualify as tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!