

Bella Vista Vision

Newsletter of the Bella Vista Historical Society

July – September 2021

Editor: Xyta Lucas

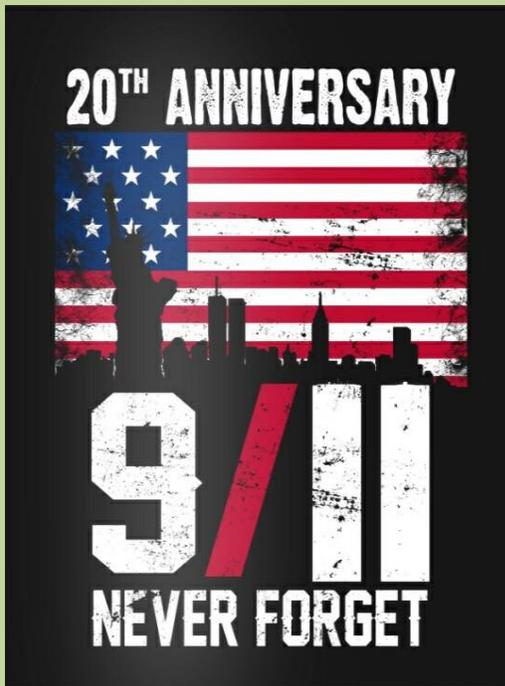
The Bella Vista Historical Society was founded in 1976 in order to “discover, collect, preserve or restore materials and artifacts concerned with our community’s heritage.”



1885 Bella Vista Way, Bella Vista AR 72714 (479) 855-2335

Website: www.bellavistamuseum.org Facebook: Bella Vista Historical Museum

9/11 TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY



A ceremony was held in downtown Bentonville on September 11 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Bella Vista Mayor Peter Christie attended the ceremony.

"I'm supporting all our men and women who carry on the very worthy tradition that we saw in full-fledged action, some 20 years ago," Christie said. "It's very important that we never forget this and that we continue to honor not only the first responders, but ordinary civilians who lost their lives -- we cannot forget."

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

Also on Saturday, September 11, Henry Dial of Bentonville worked on his Eagle Scout project at the museum and at Summit Cemetery. He mounted a new "MUSEUM" sign, which we had recently purchased, across the top of our highway sign to help draw more attention to the museum from the highway. (The old one we had up there was identical in size and color but made of wood and didn't last long; this one is made of vinyl.) At Summit Cemetery, he built a new support for the old cemetery sign, replacing the posts that had rotted over the past 40 years. His project involved determining what materials were needed, purchasing them (to be reimbursed by our Historical Society), and organizing a team of friends and family to help him with it all.



AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING SOLD!

Finally, we can announce that the sale on the American Legion building closed on August 30. An investment company bought the property and plans to recruit a business to move into the building. We look forward to finding out who our new neighbors will be since we share the parking lot. That's because the American Legion wanted to build a large building but to meet City regulations, they needed more parking spaces than would fit in front of their building. So they asked us if they paved the graveled parking area in front of the museum and built an exit ramp onto Highway 71 at the north end of the museum property, at no cost to us, would we agree to let them count our spaces in their application to the City. We agreed to do so since having paved parking and a second exit is a benefit to us. Of course, that meant we had to coordinate dates of special events to avoid each group having an event at the same time that would make parking scarce. We also agreed to split 50/50 the cost of maintenance of the parking lot, an agreement which we plan to continue with the new owner.

BOOK SIGNINGS

Dale Phillips and Xyta Lucas have continued to promote their new pictorial history book about Bella Vista, called "Images of America Bella Vista". All profits and royalties are being donated by the authors to the museum. On July 10, the authors partnered with Jill Werner at the museum, where she promoted her homemade jams while they promoted the book, both as fundraisers for the museum. The next day, they were at the Bella Vista Farmer's Market, then in September Xyta spoke to the Christian Women's Group, she and Dale spoke to the Bentonville Rotary, and they did a book signing at the POA Meet & Greet for new residents. The book is available at the museum and at a few other locations, including Barnes & Noble in Rogers; also online from Arcadia Publishing. Please note that it's in soft cover only. If you see a hardcover option on Amazon or other sites, note that these are counterfeit and the museum will not benefit.

OPEN HOUSE CANCELLED AGAIN

For the second year in a row, we have cancelled our plans for our annual Open House, due to Covid. We were hoping that by now everyone who was eligible would be vaccinated and the Covid numbers would be way down, but that's not the case.

We started the Open House tradition in 2013, and have held it every year through 2019. The first year it was combined with a Porch Sale. The porch sale went on for the weekend, with the Open House held that year on Friday, Oct. 18, from 3 to 6 p.m., with nearly 90 people in attendance. It was coordinated by volunteers Babs Thomas, Susan Porter, Carole Harter, and Xyta Lucas. Susan and Xyta are still active volunteers with the museum. Carole has retired and Babs has moved back to Houston.

Susan Porter



Susan Porter and Carole Harter visited with Marianne Farner in 2013



Babs Thomas



LOOKING BACK AT 1919

Arkansas Territory was granted territorial status by Congress on March 2, 1819, and some wanted to celebrate its centennial in 1919. The following is an excerpt, reprinted with permission, from an article entitled "Arkansas' [Not So] Big Birthday Party:" The Failed Centennial Celebration of 1919," by Lisa Speer, which first appeared in the Winter 2020 issue of the Arkansas Historical Quarterly (Vol. 79, No. 4, pp. 348-365).

"Arkansas's territorial centennial did not come at a particularly fortuitous in the nation's or the world's history. The Armistice had been signed on November 11, 1918, ending a war that had dragged on in Europe for four long years. Millions had died. Far more devastating than the world war in terms of lives lost, however, was the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918-1919. The influenza...quickly spread across the United States and the globe, accelerated by close living conditions in military camps and troop movements. The worldwide death toll is estimated to have been anywhere from seventeen million to fifty million, and possibly even as high as 100 million. Arkansas did not escape these years without its losses. Wartime soldier deaths...totaled almost 2200. The number of Arkansans dying from influenza was much higher – 7000 reported and many others not recorded. "

As it turns out, the Centennial Celebration planned for November 1919 in Little Rock never took place, probably both because of problems raising enough money to hold it, and because Little Rock's health officer, Dr. John Thames, "deemed a recurrence of influenza in November *probable*, and added that the congestion resulting from bringing an estimated 150,000 people into Little Rock for the centennial would only add to its severity and rapid dissemination."

EXHIBIT DONATIONS

Our Board member Sara Parnell has outdone herself the last few years in terms of donations to the museum, and we really appreciate her generous support. She has donated the following items for display: a vintage dinner bell, Cliff House sign, Winery sign, bed posts from the 1920s, a horse hitching post, two horse drawn plows, a frog gig, and a box of Spangles (the Linebarger Brothers used the latter on the dance floor at Wonderland Cave). She also paid for moving the old Linebarger golf course tee box to the museum grounds, and gave us another generous check to help with cemetery cleanup expenses. Thank you, Sara!

The Cliff House sign came from the cottage that is now painted blue that stands along Highway 71, across from Lake Bella Vista. The original owner was A. H. Lanyon in 1920. The property was sold to Clifford Stevenson in the 1935-36 timeframe, who named the cottage after himself. County tax records show he paid taxes on it through 1949, after which it went through several owners. Sara Parnell was the owner for about 10 years and sold it in 2020. Future plans for the property are unknown at this time.



OUR JAM LADY

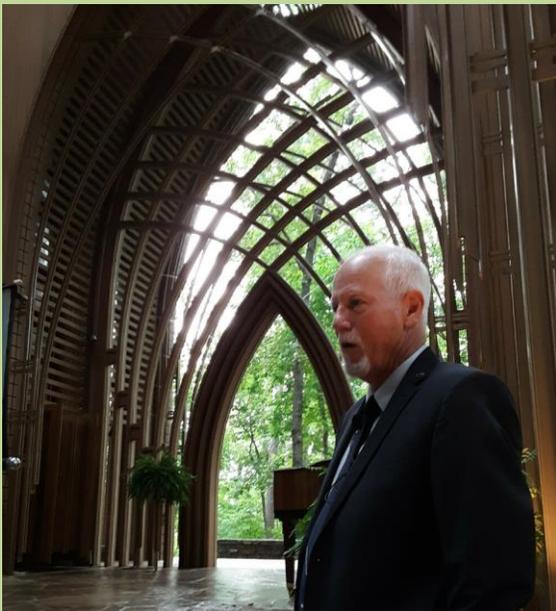
Jill Werner, who has volunteered in various roles at the museum since she first attended one of our Open Houses several years ago, has continued to pursue her jam making hobby through the pandemic. This year she has again brought her homemade jams to the museum to offer to visitors in exchange for a \$5.00 donation to the museum for each jar of jam. She advertises the dates she will be at the museum with her jams on her Facebook page, The Jammer Bella Vista, and her website, www.thejammerbellavista.com, and she puts up on the museum porch railing a special banner she purchased to let visitors know she and her jams are there on a particular day. She has three dates scheduled in October, the afternoons of Oct. 3rd, 16th and 30th. She also gives talks to groups. In the picture below, she was speaking to the Highlands Methodist Church women's group on September 13 about jams, and gave away some to them in return for donations to the museum. Her contributions to the museum's revenue, which have totaled several thousands of dollars over the years, are very much appreciated!



BELLA VISTA CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

The purpose of the Bella Vista Civil War Round Table is to educate and stimulate interest in the period of history of the United States known as the “Civil War”. The meetings are free, open to the public, and are normally held at the museum the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. At the July 1 meeting, a program by Matt McCoy, history professor at the UA Fort Smith, was presented on the role of Kansas troops in the Civil War. At that meeting, Dale Phillips, the new president, accepted the gavel from Chuck Pribbernow who has been president since the Round Table first met in May 2019 and has agreed to continue to serve as vice-president. They now have a full slate of officers including a secretary and a treasurer. Programs are scheduled now through most of 2022. For information about future programs, contact Dale Phillips at 812-899-2049.

The speaker for the August 5 meeting, Terry Winschel, long time staff historian at Vicksburg National Military Park, was expected to draw a crowd too large for the museum meeting room, so the Cooper Chapel was rented for the evening, and it was filled! Terry gave an excellent overview of the Vicksburg Campaign. The next day, Dale took him on a tour of the Pea Ridge National Military Park.



The September 2 meeting’s speaker was Cynthia Douthit, the executive director of the Jewish Christian Studies Center in Springdale. Her topic was “Jewish Soldiers and Civilians in the Civil War”.



The next meeting will be on October 7, featuring Tom Wing, also a history professor at the UA Fort Smith, who will talk about the Civil War diary of Henry Strong.

NEW MAILBOX

One of our Civil War Round Table attendees recently was focused on not hitting our flower bed when he backed out of his parking space and unfortunately backed right into our mailbox. He immediately let us know what happened, and shortly thereafter gave us a donation which exceeded the cost of materials and labor for a new mailbox, and that was much appreciated. Contractors Geary Gaston and Scott Morrison of Morrison Carpentry (along with Scott's dog) were able to put up a new mailbox and post for us within a few days, and we thank them for their speedy response.



BENTONVILLE HISTORY TEACHERS VISIT THE MUSEUM

We were pleased to welcome a group of history teachers from the Bentonville School District to the museum on August 11. Following a program about the history of Bella Vista, they toured the museum and the Settler's Cabin, and visited the gift shop before heading back to Bentonville.



Other recent visitors included the Village Writers & Poets group in July, and a group from Concordia in August. Both groups were small in number but large in enthusiasm so we appreciated their visits. Our docent Angie Rader is now the Activities Director at Concordia, so she was able to give the Concordia group a special tour!



HOLIDAY PARADE

We first participated in the July 4 Holiday Parade at Sugar Creek Shopping Center in 2019. Last year's parade was cancelled due to Covid, so this year was our second time, and we gathered for a group picture beforehand. We thank Dave Getter and Steve Fader for leading us in their vintage automobiles! Our thanks also go to Tim & Julie Hull and Steve Morrow of Allen's Food Market for all their work on the parade. We didn't have the long wait beforehand that we had two years ago, which made it more fun for our participants.



LINEBARGER PORTRAIT DONATED

Ann Boyd, one of the three Linebarger granddaughters (the other two are Carole Harter and Charity George) recently decided that it was time to clean out her attic. Among the treasures she found was this portrait of their grandfather, C. A. Linebarger Sr. The oil painting was done by Millard Krisman of St. Louis. Titled "Ozark Pioneer", it was entered in the City Art Museum of St. Louis' First Annual Missouri Exhibition on Oct. 17, 1941. Krisman died in January 2013 in St. Louis at age 90. His obituary stated, "Mil was an avid artist. He attended the Ste. Genevieve Art Colony at age 14 and studied under Thomas Hart Benton and Oscar Thallinger." In addition to being an artist, Krisman was also a musician who had his own orchestra. According to his obituary, "Millard's dance band, the Mil Krisman Orchestra, was widely popular in the St. Louis area in the late 1930's and early 1940's. He loved playing the saxophone."

Linebarger hired Krisman's orchestra to play at Bella Vista in the summer of 1941, which is evidently when the portrait was painted. The July 29, 1941, issue of Linebarger's newspaper, the Bella Vista Breezes, announced that the 21st Emancipation Dance, which the resort sponsored "every year for the colored employees, maids, chauffeurs and their friends from many points in the area", would be held Monday night, August 4th. The article states, "Mil Krisman, whose orchestra is gaining favor each day at the resort, promises some red hot swing music for the black and tan program and there'll be no end to fancy steps, including the rhumba."



The Krisman Orchestra at Bella Vista, 1941



The annual Emancipation Dance



HISTORIC SITES DRIVING TOURS

Co-President Dale Phillips led a group of museum volunteers on a historic sites driving tour on Saturday, August 28, to introduce them to sites they had read about but not yet seen. The group enjoyed visiting several historic sites that day. The driving tours are normally open to the public as a fundraiser for the museum but were put on hold during the pandemic. Plans are being made to start them again later in the fall. If you would like to go on one of Dale's tours, call him at 812-899-2049. They are usually held on a Saturday and last about four hours.



NEW DOCENTS

The docent role consists of welcoming visitors to the museum, giving a little information about Bella Vista history, explaining how the museum exhibits are laid out, and handling gift shop sales. We look for people who like interacting with others and enjoy learning about Bella Vista history. Anyone interested in becoming a docent is asked to contact Jill Werner at jrwner@cox.net or 479-721-3122. New docents who have come on board this quarter are Geri Ehrlich, Barb Jenner, Cathie Whittenberger, and Fran Boulware. Maci Echols, who joined us last quarter, has also joined our Board of Directors.

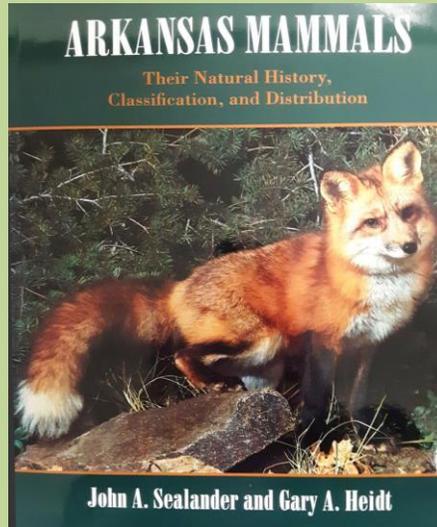
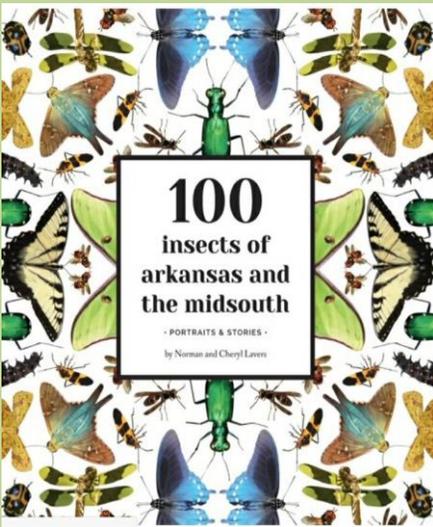
Several sessions of docent training were conducted this summer, both for new docents and as a refresher for returning docents, by Co-President Xyta Lucas, pictured here.



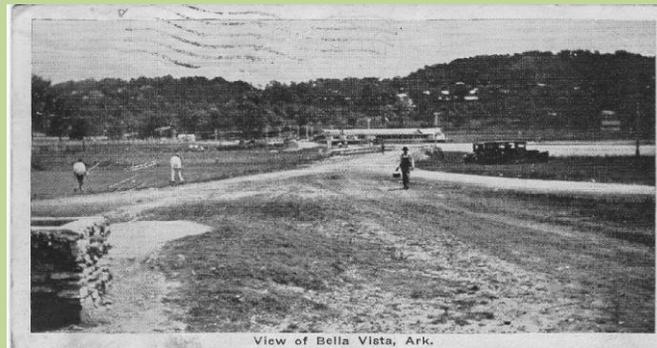
MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

Our museum gift shop continues to do a good business selling a variety of merchandise and Bella Vista souvenirs. Items added recently include books about insects and mammals in Arkansas, and a walking stick medallion with the City of Bella Vista logo.

We also sell glassware and other items that have been donated to the museum as a fundraiser. Recently we received a box of dolls from Mr. and Mrs. Ed Clifford and several Precious Moments figurines from an anonymous donor. We appreciate any donation of items that are in good condition and small enough to fit on our gift shop shelves.



LAKE BELLA VISTA DAM



This postcard, postmarked April 19, 1928, shows one of the earlier pictures we have of the Lake Bella Vista dam. A man is shown walking toward the camera from across the dam, with the large bathhouse (the predecessor to the later Dance Pavilion) in the background at the east end of the dam. The edge of the tee box for the second hole of the Linebarger golf course is just barely seen on the left side of the picture.

The Bentonville City Council approved a resolution at their meeting on Sept. 28 to remove the dam, unless the currently pending legal case, brought by Cooper Communities against the City of Bentonville, ends with a ruling that prohibits that. In the meantime, they are going to start working on repair of amenities in the southern part of the lake area, including the pedestrian bridge at the south end. If the dam ends up being removed, the resolution included the wording, "Said plan for dam removal and stream restoration will contain educational elements of the history of the Lake Bella Vista dam and other amenities that existed in the past at the current site."

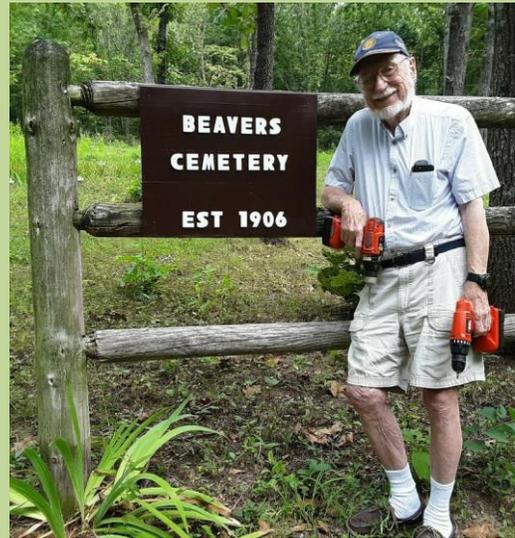
WORK DETAIL TEAMS

We continue to be very grateful for the Benton County Jail program that allows work detail teams to do projects for nonprofits throughout the County. So far in 2021, they have helped us 13 different days, usually under the direction of Deputy Tom Hall. All we have to do is feed them, and they certainly earn every meal! Sometimes we purchase the food, sometimes local businesses donate it or our museum volunteers prepare and donate it. In August, a team spent the day clearing and mowing at Beavers Cemetery, they mounted the old dinner bell alongside the Settler's Cabin, and they trimmed bushes along the south side of the museum and weed-eated along the north side of the museum property and out back. They also trimmed down the growth to eliminate the blind exit when driving out of the parking lot onto Kingsland.

This is what Beavers Cemetery looked like after the Team finished their work. They did a great job.



Woodworker Jim Lucas with the new Beavers Cemetery sign he made and mounted.



SETTLER'S CABIN

Our Settler's Cabin, moved to the museum grounds in March, 2019, continues to draw interested visitors. During the hours that the museum is open, docents are available to give tours inside the cabin. Here a Work Detail Team is mounting the old dinner bell alongside the front porch of the cabin.



A group of home schooled children and their mothers toured the cabin with volunteers Mary Jane Cole and Dale Phillips following a program the two gave to the group inside the museum in mid-September. Mary Jane and Dale were dressed in period attire while they talked about what life was like for the pioneers.



After touring the cabin, the children came back into the museum to chat with Mary Jane and Dale again, and to enjoy our Children's Book Corner.



EBONY AND IVORY

Right on the museum grounds, we have our own version of “Ebony and ivory, living together in perfect harmony”...a white pine tree with a black cherry tree.



We continue to appreciate the mowing and weed-eating that the POA General Grounds & Maintenance crew does for us, and we are so grateful to Patrice Murphy, our volunteer landscaper, for all her attention to our flowers and bushes!



MEMBERSHIP

Our Historical Society membership program is based on a calendar year with renewals due each January 1. Please note that if you renew your membership any time this fall, it is good for the entire calendar year of 2022 with renewal not due until January 1, 2023. New members are welcome to sign up for membership any time during the year. You may mail your check to us, or stop by in person when we are open to pay by check, credit card or debit card.

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 usually 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 printing and 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
1885 Bella Vista Way
Bella Vista, AR 72714

(479) 855-2335
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!