

Bella Vista Vision

Newsletter of the Bella Vista Historical Society

April – June 2020

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

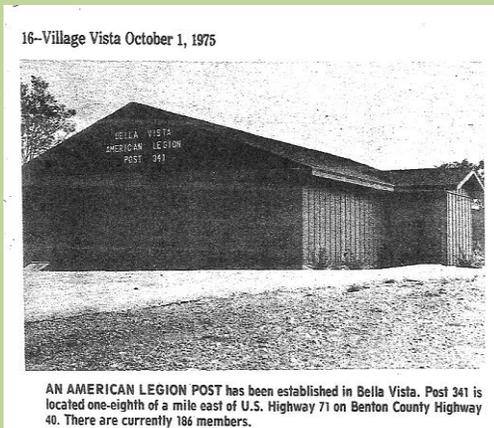
Website: www.bellavistamuseum.org Facebook: Bella Vista Historical Museum



We are sad to hear the news that our next door neighbor, the American Legion, is going to sell their building and move to a new location, but we are glad they are continuing as a Post in Bella Vista. The listing is available for viewing on this online marketplace website: www.loopnet.com/Listing/1889-Bella-Vista-Way-Bella-Vista-AR/20078762/.

AMERICAN LEGION IN BELLA VISTA

The American Legion in Bella Vista first got started in the early 1970's. They began by holding meetings upstairs over the Hill 'n Dale restaurant, which later became the Hungry Earl and then R & J's, at the northeast corner of Lake Bella Vista (at the site where there's now just a concrete slab). In 1975, the Legion received their official charter and moved into a building just east of the intersection of Highway 71 and County Road 40.



The American Legion building is shown on the left in this Village Vista picture in 1975. The Church of Christ began renting the building at some point, and then purchased it in 1979. (Records are not currently available to confirm, but it appears that Clark Keck, who built the building, may have sold it to another owner, who in turn sold it to the church.) The Church of Christ building was expanded several times over the years so that the front of it now faces Highway 71.

The Village Vista of November 19, 1975, reported on the Legion's building dedication, "Melvin Ireland, first district commander, was master of ceremonies for the dedication. He said a lot of credit for the post and building goes to Clark Keck, who built the \$50,000 building and leases it to the American Legion for \$1 a year. Keck said the post currently has 173 members, but that he expected many more to join."

About those early years, the Legion's website, bellavistapost341.org, has this information:

"Lots of work," wrote first Post Commander Kenneth 'Ken' Dover concerning the first years of the...Post history. "Been thinking about the events of the Post and how it all began. Clark Keck wanted to operate a private club, and in order to do so he gave land, a place to put the Post; it was at the corner of Co 40 and U S 71....Ken, Clark and George Littlefield applied for and received the American Legion Charter. We bought an old 34 ft house trailer and held meetings in there until the building was completed. It took 2-3 years to get the private club license."

They worked on increasing funds and the membership in the meantime. "To raise money we held bingo for several years in the upstairs of the old reception center at the lake and made lots of money for the Post. After the club opened we went from about 45 members or so to over 600 members and became famous from there on out." (The Weekly Vista, successor to the Village Vista, ran a column called "What's Happening Here", which listed American Legion bingo every Friday night upstairs above the restaurant.)

Our museum opened in 1985, at which time it became neighbors with the Legion because they had relocated to the corner of Highway 71 and Kingsland in 1981. In his book *From Vision to Reality*, historian Gilbert Fite wrote, "Next door stood an old stone house that CCI (Cooper Communities Inc.) had used for storage and maintenance. In October, 1981, CCI turned that building over to the American Legion Post 341 to use as its Bella Vista headquarters." The Legion had their official dedication there on October 24, 1981.

Post 341 was called just the Bella Vista Post but traditionally, American Legion posts are named after deceased veterans. So in 2007, it became the Marshall Sayner Post. Sayner had died in 2006. In 2016, the name was changed to the W.E.'Rocky' Glidwell Post. Glidwell had died in 2015.

In 2009, fundraising started for a new building because with 600 members, they outgrew the old farmhouse, which could hold only about 50 people.



In August 2012 demolition work started on the old house. (Our Historical Society was able to get some of the stones from the stone facade that covered the house to use as border on paths at our 1927 water tank property up on Cedar Crest Drive.) In September 2012 the old house went up in flames in a planned burn by the Fire Department.

On October 27, ground breaking was held for the new building. Their pavilion was built behind the building first, then the new building went up. That winter of 2012-2013, the Legion met in our museum next door while their new building was under construction. It opened in 2013. In 2014, a Memorial POW-MIA Garden was dedicated behind the new building, named for Capt. James Herrick who went missing over Laos in 1969.



MUSEUM STILL CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

With the recent spike in corona virus cases in Northwest Arkansas, and now some in Bella Vista, we have decided to keep the museum closed until further notice. When we do re-open, the Bella Vista Civil War Round Table meetings will resume on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Their meetings have also been a victim of the virus, having their April, May, June and July meetings cancelled so far. If you would like to get on the mailing list to be informed of future speakers, please contact Chuck Pribbernow at cnpribb@yahoo.com.

We had several other events scheduled for this quarter also and we look forward to rescheduling them in the future. For example, Dana Johnson and the Photography Club had a couple of events planned, and we were going to host George Scott of Bella Vista for a presentation in his role as Mark Twain.

Also, the temporary closing of the museum resulted in visitors not getting to see our latest Fisher-Price toy exhibit of Easter-themed toys, on loan from Bella Vista resident Bruce Fox. When we re-open, Bruce will display other selections from his collection, and we will reschedule his presentation about the Fisher-Price company. An employee of Fisher-Price for over 30 years, Bruce became their company historian, and has published two books that will be available for sale during his presentation.

None of us ever expected to have to live through the kind of pandemic we are in now, but probably none of us ever expected to see this kind of gas price either. The picture below was taken at the Jane MO Walmart on April 23, 2020:



LAKE BELLA VISTA DAM

The walking trail across the Lake Bella Vista dam has been permanently closed. They are going to build a new pedestrian bridge across Little Sugar Creek north of the dam. We are still waiting to hear what is going to happen with the dam itself.

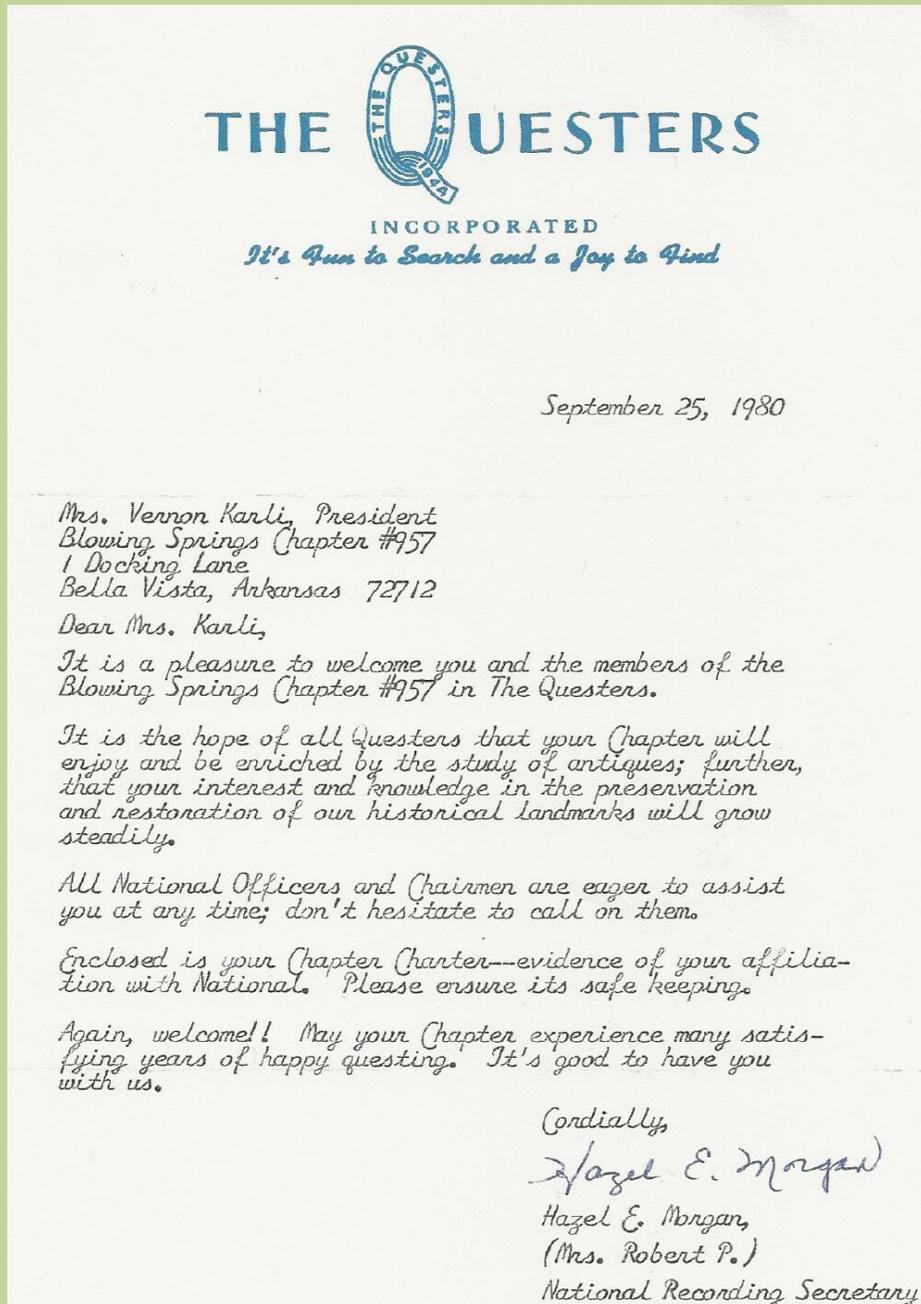


BLOWING SPRINGS QUESTERS DISBANDED

Questers is an international organization, with chapters in the U.S. and Canada, founded in 1944 in Philadelphia. The Questers website, www.questers1944.org, gives their Mission Statement: "Questers keep history alive by supporting preservation, restoration and education."

Sadly, one of three chapters of Questers in Bella Vista, the Blowing Springs chapter, recently disbanded due to a drop in membership. Several members chose not to continue in Questers, but a few continued in another chapter. The remaining two chapters in Bella Vista are Trail of Tears, of which Katy Van Note is president, and Butterfield Trails, of which Betsy Mertz is president.

The Blowing Springs chapter was organized on July 30, 1980, so this year would have been its 40th anniversary.



As was the custom back then, letters were addressed using the woman's husband's name, Mrs. Vernon Karli, although her signature of Elizabeth Karli was on the chapter's charter.

We appreciate the donation by the Blowing Springs Questers of their scrapbooks and other materials to the museum for keeping in our scrapbook repository cabinets.



Relating to Questers, here's a personal story from Xyta Lucas, a Questers member since 2009, to accompany the picture of her above: *"Because of the Questers' interest in preserving historic buildings, I chose to do a presentation in March 2012 for my Blowing Springs chapter about old buildings and other historic sites in Bella Vista. I rented the American Legion building, the old farmhouse, as a location for the program because it was already scheduled to be demolished to make way for their new building, so I assumed it would be the last chance any of us would have to be inside it. I invited Carole Linebarger Harter, who was then the BV Historical Society President, to attend, and afterwards she immediately invited me to get involved as a museum volunteer. So my involvement with the museum is a direct result of Questers! I am now a member of the Butterfield Trails chapter."* The Butterfield Trails chapter was also organized in 1980 and hopes to be able to celebrate their 40th anniversary this year.

SPEAKING OF SCRAPBOOKS....

Another donation to our scrapbook repository this quarter was from Jane Cathey, the daughter of Paul and Jean Riley. The Rileys not only played golf for years in Bella Vista, they and their friends took a lot of pictures of their golf groups, all of which they compiled into a very full scrapbook! Jean died in 1997, and Paul eventually remarried. He died in 2011, and his second wife, Lorraine, is now age 98, living in Minnesota. Jane said she was a real sweetheart and called her their "Bonus Mom." Jane hated to just throw her parents' scrapbook away so she approached us about donating it, and we accepted. This picture of her parents was included in the scrapbook. Thank you, Jane!



SETTLER'S CABIN UPDATE

There was little activity this quarter with the Settler's Cabin due to the museum closure. However, volunteer Carol Phillips did spend several hours filling holes in the cabin doors that had appeared over time. One hole had been purposefully drilled in the front door to put a rope through to use as a door handle until we were able to get sliding bolts and a padlock. Carol did a great job! She and Jack Kellogg are finishing up the DVD that will give a tour of the cabin furnishings. We will make that available inside the museum, after we re-open, to be viewed by anyone with mobility limitations.

Front door before:



Front door after:



SUMMIT CEMETERY

We have had a lot of help recently with the Summit Cemetery that our Historical Society owns just west of the intersection of Granshire and Aveton off Graham Lane in the Metfield area. The City Street Department mows the open area for us several times each summer. Volunteers who have helped this spring and summer are Dale Phillips, Gary Mertz, Jim Lucas and Xyta Lucas. The Benton County Jail Work Crew did a cleanup last fall which resulted in a huge stack of dead trees and debris, and the City Fire Department recently burned the pile for us. We really appreciate everyone's help!

Below is pictured the November pile.



Now all that's left are ashes.

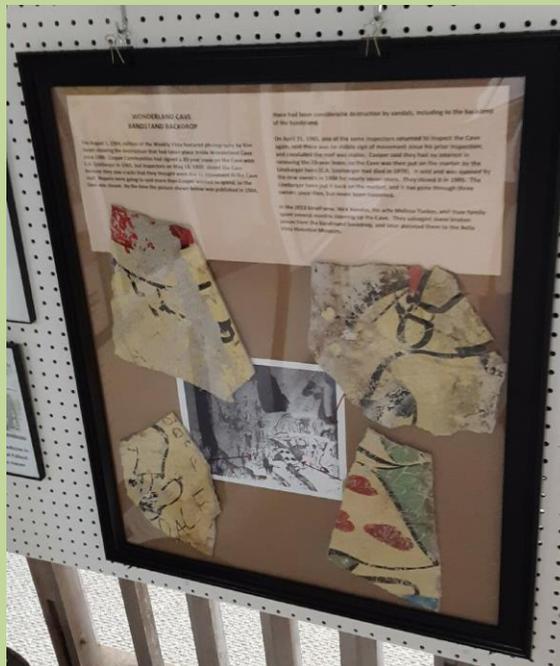


DONATIONS

We were very fortunate this past quarter to receive several donations for exhibits. First of all the Bella Vista Public Library gave us these two fine looking cabinets that formerly sat just inside their back door for temporary exhibits, but that back door now goes to their new addition so they didn't fit any more. The cabinets are now part of our Wonderland Cave exhibit area. We were able to sell an old display cabinet that sat in that spot so it was a win-win situation for us!

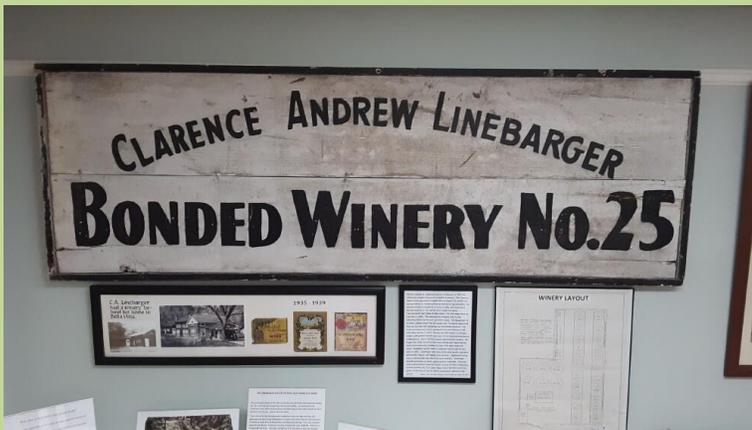


Last year, Nick Kendus and Melissa Tucker donated some pieces of the old bandstand backdrop from Wonderland Cave that they found in the 2012-2013 timeframe when they were cleaning out the Cave, and we now have those in a framed exhibit. The pieces were leftovers from the vandalism that took place in the Cave during one of the periods it was closed but they still play a part in the history of the Cave.



Other recent donations came from Sara Parnell, our museum Board member, who decided it was time to move on to a new phase in her life so she sold her Artist Retreat Center in late March. The old log house that Sara named the Artist Retreat Center was built in 1853, and the new owners have said they have no plans to tear it down; we were very glad to hear that!

Sara donated the original winery sign that was from the building behind the log house, a garage that C.A. Linebarger built in 1928 and turned into a winery in the mid 1930's after Prohibition was lifted. Sara also gave us other items leftover from the Linebarger days...two bed headboards from one of the old Linebarger cottages, a little coin operated horse racing game (one of several that Carole Linebarger Harter remembers being at the Sunset Hotel and at least one other location), an unused carton addressed to C.A. Linebarger of boxes of Spangles for the Wonderland Cave dance floor, and an awning of the kind that was used to shield cottage owners from the heat and the weather on their open porches, which we have now displayed behind an old photo of women enjoying the afternoon on their cottage porch.



MEMORIES FROM CAROLE LINEBARGER HARTER

"This photograph was taken in 1939 of my mother, Florence Linebarger, wife of C.A. Linebarger, Jr. They were living in Bentonville at the time, and were neighbors of pilot Louise Thaden's parents, the McPhetridges. The dog Christina was a Great Dane who had belonged to Louise but she was unable to take it with her at the end of the summer so she gave it to my parents. Years ago, when my mother was still alive (she died in 2015 at age 100), we visited the Rogers Historical Museum which also had a copy of this photo. As she looked at the photo, she said, 'There's Christina!', so I asked 'where' since I saw only my mother and the dog in the photo. She pointed to the dog, and I said, 'Mother, you don't remember my friends' names, so why do you remember this dog's name after all these years?' She replied, 'You'd remember the dog's name too if you'd fixed him a hot meal every night!' Evidently there was some kibble that was better if mixed with water and heated."



A BIG THANK YOU!

--To all of the staff at the Weekly Vista for helping us keep the museum in people's thoughts, while we have to remained closed, by publishing articles about the museum and Bella Vista history. And thanks to Becca Martin of the Arkansas Democrat Gazette for her help too!



LANDSCAPE APPRECIATION

Our landscape volunteer, Patrice Murphy, continues to keep busy with planting, trimming and watering flowers in our flower beds. We really appreciate her help! The crews from the POA General Grounds & Maintenance Department continue to mow for us, and Dale Phillips has helped with weed eating. Thanks to everyone!



NEW (TO US) PODIUM

We were fortunate to find a used podium at an area flea market before the stores closed down, so when the museum re-opens and we start having speakers again, we will no longer have to depend on the kind folks at Riordan Hall to loan us their podium. We thank contractor Richard P. of The Maintenance Company in Bella Vista for cutting down the height of it for us, so the speaker won't have to be 6 feet tall to see over the top of it! Richard also did a great job of hanging the winery sign for us, along with other miscellaneous contractor tasks he's done for us over time.



MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't already renewed your membership for 2020, please do so. New members are welcome to sign up for membership any time during the year. If you sign up after July 1, the dues will be ½ of the annual membership listed below. 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
1885 Bella Vista Way
Bella Vista, AR 72714

(479) 855-2335 n
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!