

WCHS Monthly Reports September 2023

Palouse Empire Fair 2023 Report

The Jones Schoolhouse was open all 4 days of the Palouse Empire Fair. On Thursday, September 7th (3rd grade day), costumed volunteers Krista Jones Boyd (Colfax), Val Gregory (Step toe), and Kathy Meyer (Pullman) offered half-hour mini-lessons, 1895 style, to 10 classes of students. In total, approximately 241 students, teachers, and chaperones participated. After school ended, additional fairgoers brought the number of Thursday's visitors up to 281. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, the schoolhouse was open to fair goers of all ages. Visitors numbered 6 on Wednesday (before the fair had even opened), 230 on Friday, 495 on Saturday, and 85 on Sunday (which was only open from noon to 4:00), for a fair total of 1,097. Additional volunteers included Jill Gfeller (wearing one of her fabulous vintage ensembles) and Mike and Theresa Dale (all of Thornton), and Scott Lyle (Pullman). I love how nearly the whole county is represented by volunteers at the Schoolhouse during the Fair!

Note that students used the blackboard and slates so enthusiastically that we are now reduced to only a few small pieces of chalk. If anyone wishes to donate several boxes of chalk, it would be appreciated. They don't have to be new.

Once again, photos of old schools in Whitman County were extremely popular with visitors to the schoolhouse. In addition, they could enjoy exhibits on vintage lunch pails and schoolbooks. Jamie Whitman (Pullman) also set up a large photo exhibit on Depot Days and a smaller one on the Depot in general. Unfortunately, someone stole a photo book on the Depot's Vintage Quilt Show that Jamie had put together.

Finally, self-guided tours of the Blacksmith Shop were once again available to fair goers. Vintage machinery and tools were labeled with the name and use of each. Val may have found a blacksmith to give demonstrations for next year's fair.

Kathy Meyer

Directors Report

- Started marketing for the annual meeting and found volunteers to help at the event.
- Worked at the fair on Thursday and Friday.
- Processed all the gifts and sent out tax letters.
- We need to make sure the bunchgrass is being sent to our current members. Not sure who runs the address list, but we continue to get returned publications which we pay for when they are mailed and returned. They seem to still be sending to the list that has deceased people and people who have not been members for over 5 years.

August 2023 Perkins House

With the heat rolling in, the house had some hot weekend hours of operation, but all is well. There was a wedding at the end of the month. The following is my analysis after the fact. Rentals are a bit tricky, especially for big events like weddings. Our volunteers are minimal, and each have their own things going so it is hard to have coverage. If we continue to advertise for these, we may need to think about asking Perkins volunteers for help. This wedding was from 2-8 but ran over by about an hour. Again, limited volunteers make this difficult: volunteer burnout is a concern. Coordinating weddings, showers, etc is almost like a separate job. Perhaps there is a volunteer who has the time and talent for such events?

Additionally, no bathroom or garbage pick-up makes it challenging for these types of events. September 30th is set for fall yard clean up.

Depot Report for September 2023

- A successful Depot Days, August 18-19, featured the theme “Tractors, Grains, and Trains.” Four local men, Jim Allen, Jack Fulfs, Everett Martin, and Gary Simpson staged their vintage tractors on site and shared information about their history. Displays in the freight room and passenger car attracted many visitors. Members of the Phoenix Conservancy and USDA provided facts about native plants and our Palouse Pocket Prairie project. Funds were solicited to support the introduction of native plants on the depot hillside.
- The Restoration Committee continues to work with Design West to prepare bid packages for upcoming window, door, and soffit restoration. Samples of paint and putty from the windows and sections of soffits were removed to be sent for lead and asbestos testing.
- The final details of roofing and gutters are still awaiting completion by CMR Roofing. A final payment will not be authorized until all work is finished.
- The Steering Committee is working through John-Mark Mahnkey to seek a more defined design and cost estimate for the passenger car platform to be completed by the McGregor Company.
- New materials for the 2023 annual fundraising campaign have been designed and will be mailed to approximately 400 potential donors.
- The Fundraising Committee will be hosting a series of small-group wine & cheese gatherings for potential donors. Information packets have been prepared for them.
- NW Electrical Contractors have installed LED lights in the new street sign, so it can be illuminated at night.
- The depot conducted its annual safety inspection by the Pullman Fire Department after having all the fire extinguishers tested, recharged, and certified. A problem with some storage materials used by a tenant needs to be corrected before a re-inspection will be done in November. We decided to add another fire extinguisher inside the passenger car. It has been donated and is being installed.
- The Steering Committee discussed desires to properly acknowledge the location of the depot on property originally a part of native tribal lands. Many agencies, such as WSU

and the Washington Historical Society, are making concerted efforts to craft statements and make public acknowledgements to such ends. Many organizations are also attempting to establish ongoing relationships with their local tribes. What is appropriate for us? One step in our Heritage Grant application is to contact all tribes in the area and explain what we are doing to the site. The depot wants to develop an appropriate land acknowledgement statement to satisfy grant requirements. It was decided that we really need direction from WCHS and are asking for the WCHS Board to develop a policy.

- The Steering Committee discussed the current WCHS Acquisition Policy and pointed out some questions/concerns. Do we allow the docents to accept any donations? Who should be in charge of acquisition taking or screening/does the acceptance process need to be verified and by whom? What type of artifacts are really desired? Who should be in charge of forwarding acquisition papers to Val or Alex?
- Since the quarterly meeting with the WCHS Executive Team was cancelled in August, when will another meeting be held? What concerns does WCHS still have?

Roy Chatters Newspaper & Printing Museum

August-September 2023

It's been an eventful six weeks, but overall good. In August someone broke in the back door of museum and did some spray-painting. Amazingly it was only on the walls, and on some cloth covers for the newspaper archives, but not on any displays.

It is now better secured. I have borrowed security cameras for the time-being but ultimately I would like something different.

The graffiti is all gone now, thanks to some painting that I had been putting off. Not having Haunted Palouse in the museum anymore ensures longevity.

The newspaper rack covers were also getting pretty ratty, so since some needed replaced because of the paint, a friend offered to make all new ones. Another thing I'd been putting off due to Haunted Palouse.

The wonderful support from the community has renewed my enthusiasm. \$400 was pledged as reward money for information leading to apprehension (to no avail as yet).

The exterior long-overdue painting is done. The museum is looking lots better for Palouse Day Sept. 16. We're having refreshments to celebrate the museum's 40 years (20 years before the flood, then another 20 years after reopening). Wil Smiley will be doing letterpress demonstrations as well.

Projects continue for Alex Otero and Don Myott, and their research work is already paying off by helping others seeking information.