

Silverton Country Historical Society

Museum and Office 428 South Water Street



Silverton Country Historical Society Annual Meeting

When: Saturday; January 18; 2 -- 4 p.m.

Where: Gordon House; at The Oregon Garden, Silverton

Program: *Saving Wright through Preservation & Dedication*

Each January the Silverton Country Historical Society meets to review the year and hear reports of challenges met and ongoing projects and to elect board members and officers for the new season. A program of interest to members of the Historical Society and to the community at large is also presented.

This year, Molly Murphy, SCHS Vice President and Gordon House General Director, will discuss the valiant efforts to preserve Frank Lloyd Wright's building legacy. Twenty percent of his work has already been lost forever. Restoration and stewardship of 50 to 100 plus year-old buildings is a herculean task—but the pitfalls and processes involved are not unlike those that many homeowners face when attempting to save their own homes. Molly will have videos that will describe the resurrection and rebuilding of the 1957 Gordon House in Silverton by Oregonians and the 1910 Meyer May House by the Steelcase Company in Grand Rapids, Michigan--two exciting tales of success and dedication.



The Gordon House
Silverton, Oregon

Free for everyone and refreshments too!

Questions? Call the Museum at (503) 873-7070



The 1910 Meyer May House
Grand Rapids, Michigan

A Last Holiday Story: Lutefisk....

It started in the 1940s, well, not originally. It actually started centuries before in a part of the northern reaches of Europe named Norway. One answer to “How are we going to survive the long, hard winters where everything’s frozen”. The answer was lutefisk: preserved fish. Preserved with lye and dried bone-hard. It came to Silverton....the tradition of having lutefisk every Christmas season....in the 1890s when many Norwegians moved here from the northern reaches of the United States: Minnesota, North Dakota, Michigan.

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Lutefisk.. (Cont.)

The grocery store owners quickly learned to stock lutefisk every December. It was in great demand. Julius Alm moved into Silverton in the late 1890s and presented his stock of lutefisk in barrels that sat outside his store on the sidewalk. It's been said that every dog in town came along and marked those barrels as their very own. Ted Burian bought the East Hill Market in 1939. One of the first things he was asked was if he would sell lutefisk. He didn't know what it was but since his market was located on what was also called Norwegian hill, he order 1000 lbs and on December 20, 1939 his ad ran in the Appeal: "LUTEFISK new shipment---all you want lb. 10 cents".

The lutefisk dinner I want to tell you about began in the 1940s. My cousin Nancy Benson Bleakney, remembers that it started with six (or did she say 12?) couples who liked to play cards; they got together every month, taking turns at each others houses. Included in that group were my aunt and uncle, Willard and Martha Larson Benson, and Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Loe.

One year at Christmas time, Oscar Loe, Roger Loe's dad, suggested that instead of the usual munchy-type snacks at their monthly card game night, they do a traditional Norwegian dinner centered around lutefisk and all the trimmings. And thus it became a new tradition for the card players, sometime during the Christmas and New Year Celebrations they would have a lutefisk dinner. Mrs. Loe would always do the fish, no matter whose house they were meeting at. The tradition lasted until those card players became 'old-timers' and began to pass on. Everyone from the original group has passed away but they did instill their offspring with the memories and love of the tradition.

No one can remember when Roger Loe suggested that the tradition begin again. He enlisted the help of my cousin, Nancy, daughter of Willard and Martha. He pulled family and friends alike into the festivity. Even friends who weren't Norwegian; who hadn't ever tasted lutefisk. But they liked food. Everybody chipped in with potluck and a good time was had by all. Even the true-blue lutefisk haters joined in because they really liked everything else.....meatballs, lefsa, boiled potatoes, butter. There's lots of butter on the lutefisk. Not that I've ever tried it you understand. I still have visual images of a TV news program showing a lutefisk dinner in Portland and the lutefisk had a kind of slimy look to it and....well.... I've never even eaten cottage cheese. It's the texture maybe.



**Miles Brenden, Nancy Bleakney,
Brad Brenden**

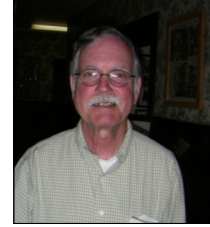
I'll leave the lutefisk stories to my husband. He is half Norwegian and had never eaten lutefisk in his life until my Brenden cousins talked him into going to a Sons of Norway lutefisk dinner in Salem. It's really a wonder he didn't get kicked out; so loudly he announced that he "couldn't understand how a race of people could do that to a perfectly good fish".

The lutefisk dinner had continued at the Chapel in the Hills with the management and support of Roger & Nancy until Roger passed away Sept 21, 2011. Nancy, feeling like she should be teaching the tradition to the next generation of lutefisk lovers, has enlisted my cousins Brad and Miles Brenden. They'll be doing their 3rd lutefisk dinner this coming January. God Bless 'em. I'm looking forward to.....meatballs, lefsa, boiled potatoes and butter. Lots of butter!

Carolyn Hutton

From the President. . .

As recently as last month, it was my intention that my message for this issue of the newsletter would be my last one as the president of the historical society. In November, we sent out a request to all members of the society to consider ways that each might serve, each in one's own way, including being a member of the board for the next couple of years. Some of the current board members answered that call and agreed to serve another term, and for that I am very grateful. However, there are still some positions on the board that are still open for next year, and of course we will be electing board members at the annual meeting later on this month. It is always difficult to make a time commitment to serve, and most of us recognize that difficulty.



In addition, some of our museum hosts have also expressed a wish to step back from their time commitment of being at the museum for one afternoon each month. There have been a number of days throughout our nine-month open period that only a few visitors come through the door. Sometimes there are no visitors at all. The Silverton Country Historical Society has collectively expressed a desire to provide a service to the community of Silverton by being available to help folks who enjoy history or wish to further their research through the discovery of material and photographs that help in that effort. There have also been suggestions by some of you that some type of interactive display for both children and adults might be helpful in building interest in what the museum has to offer. That's a great suggestion, and I think we need to talk about ways that we might accomplish that. But the fact still remains that not every day that the museum is open, do folks avail themselves of what we have to offer. So we need to be realistic about the hours we are available to visitors, balanced with the volunteers that are willing to serve during those hours.

We definitely like to hear positive suggestions from you that can help make our museum better. If you have ideas that you would like to have considered, please let one of the board members know, or better yet, since this is an opportune time to think about this, give some thought to volunteering your time and energy to serving on the board yourself, or hosting for three hours once each month.

Update: On a different note, the City of Silverton recently applied for a grant on our behalf to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Division to help build the Silverton Fallen Heroes War Memorial in Town Square Park. As of mid-December, the grant application had been reviewed and we are currently awaiting their decision on whether to approve funding. In the meantime, contributions have continued to come in and currently we have received just over \$7,000.00 from 28 donors. Please consider helping to add to this total, if you have not already done so. Help us build a memorial to the 46 Silverton servicemen who gave their lives for their country. We have also made contact with the Our Town newspaper and have been promised an article soon featuring the memorial.

Finally, I very recently decided that if no one steps forward between now and the time of our annual meeting to serve as president for the coming year, that I will continue serving for another year. However, if one of you does have a burning desire to serve in that capacity, let us know, and I would be willing to step aside. And, there will be an opportunity to nominate officers and board members from the floor at the annual meeting. I hope you will plan on attending the meeting at the Gordon House on Saturday, January 18 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM.

Norm

Silverton Country Museum - History in the Making

We are sad to report the death of Jon Digerness in California on Dec. 19, 2013. Jon was born and raised in Silverton, and was the only child of Knute and Fran Coberly Digerness. He graduated from Silverton High School in 1962. His obituary can be found on-line: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sacbee/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=168784694>



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Thank you to our new and renewing members—
Your support is what keeps us going!

Maggie McBride	Marjorie Minschew	Susan Dillon
Marvin Thompson	Fred and Nola Parkinson	Gail Joseph

Fallen Heroes Memorial Donors—

Steve and Cheryl Wareham	Robin Anderson
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Duane and Paulette Olson	Michael Wicks

In Memory of Jon Digerness—
Gretchen Rhyne

Thank you to all of our loyal supporters!

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The Willamette Heritage Center presents
All the Live Long Day: Work in the Valley

For the 4th year in a row the Silverton Country Historical Society has been invited to join in Willamette Heritage Center's very special salute to history of the Mid-Valley area. Be sure to come see our display as we look back in time to see how people of Silverton made a living. The exhibits are located at Mission Mill and the event runs from January 17 to March 15, 2014

If you received an overdue notice with your newsletter, we appreciate your prompt response. Thank you!