

Finding Color



Fall/Winter
2006

"News from the Montana Heritage Preservation & Development Commission"

visit our website at www.montanaheritagecommission.com

KNOW YOUR HISTORY--

MONTANA HERITAGE COMMISSION

I am fortunate to be serving as the Interim Director for the Montana Heritage Commission (MHC). It is an exciting opportunity for me, and I am continually impressed with the board, staff, and people involved with this "project" of preserving, caring for, and sharing the resources of Virginia and Nevada Cities (Reeder's Alley too...).

When I tell people what I am doing, most have visited Virginia City, but few have ever heard of the Montana Heritage Commission. This needs to change. One of my core goals will be to have our agency get more recognition and be well known. The Museum of the Rockies, the Nature Conservancy, Big Brothers Big Sisters – as unrelated as they are, each is well known for who they are, and for what they do. This kind of recognition is vital as we pursue new funding sources.

I am confident that MHC can elevate its name recognition and be more widely known for being great stewards of these incredible historic resources. In the near term, some of my other priorities are to:

- ❖ secure continued state funding in the 2007 legislature,
- ❖ increase private contributions via membership and foundation development,
- ❖ lay the groundwork for a capital campaign,
- ❖ improve our branding and name recognition, and
- ❖ position the organization for future success.

Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts and ideas. You can call me at 406-443-2081, or email me at preichert2@mt.gov.

Paul Reichert, Executive Director



John Ellingsen marveling at the inner-workings of the Wurlitzer DX. Inset is some of the stained glass that will hide the upright mechanics when the nickelodeon is fully reassembled.

WURLITZER DX RETURNS TO NC MUSIC HALL

Sounding better than ever, the Wurlitzer DX Roll-Changing Nickelodeon returned to Nevada City on October 23! The DX is a 1914 player piano; a piano that has an electric motor-driven pneumatic system that reads notes punched in a paper music roll, which then plays the music and moves the keys. The Wurlitzer DX is unique because of its roll changing capabilities. The center glass door reveals not one, but six rolls on an interior carousel, giving the listener not one, not five, but thirty different song choices!

The DX began its long road to recovery in the summer of 2005. Richard Reutlinger of San Francisco met with MHC staff and proposed a partnership between AMICA (the Automatic Musical Instrument Collector's Association) and MHC. This was an incredible opportunity for both sides, so we quickly decided to act. AMICA members generously donated the funding, and work began. *(continued on p. 3)*



Montana state funding for Virginia City and Nevada City is scheduled to sunset June 30, 2007 unless new funding is secured during the 2007 Legislative Session. Draft legislation has been requested to continue funding.

In addition, Governor Schweitzer's proposed budget includes \$3 million in long range planning funds for preservation and maintenance at Virginia City and Nevada City.

Your support for these bills, and any others that may help sustain the care for these Montana treasures is greatly appreciated.

**PIONEER CABIN & CARETAKER'S CABIN--
PRECIOUS TREASURES**



Members of LCGRA at the August 1st celebration.

On August 1, 2006, the Montana Heritage Commission officially acquired the Pioneer Cabin and Caretaker's Cabin from the Last Chance Gulch Restoration Association. It is with

deep gratitude that we accepted the donation of these properties. Our pledge is to preserve the historic integrity of these properties to the best of our ability.

In the past two months, we have taken steps to protect the buildings from water and the elements with rain gutters, improved drainage; artifacts have been catalogued by our curators, the front steps were rebuilt, and both cabins have received repairs to keep rodents out. Thanks LCGRA--your generosity will be enjoyed by Montanans for years to come.



WHAT IS THIS?

Montana Heritage Commission Archaeologist, Cecile Gevock uncovered this artifact while digging in Virginia City this summer. If you can identify it, please email Cecile at CGevock@mt.gov. If you guess correctly you will win a five dollar Alder Gulch Gold token, good for purchases at participating businesses in Virginia and Nevada Cities. For a larger, color photo of the object, see our Fall 2006 newsletter on our website under What's New.

Dimensions: 2 7/8" in length, 1 7/8" in width and 3/4" in depth. Material: milk glass.
Marks: embossed "E" inside dish



Top View

Bottom View
"PAT.OCT.27.1875"

Profile View

NEW COMMISSIONERS & STAFF

We would like to welcome new Commissioner Richard Sims. Richard is the new director at the Montana Historical Society and serves on the Montana Heritage Commission by legislative statute. Richard comes to us from Arizona where he was the director of the Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott.



Paul Reichert
Interim Exec. Dir.

We would also like to welcome our new Interim Executive Director Paul Reichert. Paul was most recently the director of Downtown Bozeman and served as director of Downtown Helena prior to that.

Both Richard and Paul bring a wealth of experience that will be beneficial for managing our historic sites. Welcome!



Virginia City, Montana "Prospecting the Past"

Monte Dolack © 2005

Monte Dolack's commissioned work of
Virginia City-- "Prospecting the Past."

Poster Size: 33 x 22

Unsigned \$ 40
Signed \$ 150
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*We could never come close to fulfilling our mission without
Our amazing Donors and Volunteers.
You have helped make 2006 the best year yet.
We look forward to building relationships and
nurturing partnerships in 2007.
To all of you, we say Thank You.*



AMERICORPS & NEW ARRASTRA EXHIBIT

MHC was fortunate to have nine Americorps workers for eight weeks this fall. They assisted with winterization efforts, preservation of the Daems Cottage/Corbett house plus the new arrastra exhibit.

The reproduction arrastra exhibit at the McFarland Curatorial Center interprets this primitive method of “milling” of gold ore, and features real arrastra drag stones on loan to the Commission from the U.S. Forest Service. Placer gold, having been milled out by nature and heavier than almost any other naturally occurring substance, is easily separated from the sand and gravel in which it occurs with water and a simple gold pan or sluice box. In contrast, gold ore, usually mined underground, must be broken down to separate the gold from the waste material. From ancient times, arrastras were used to grind or “mill” gold ore. They performed the same functions as modern iron milling equipment, or ball mills. Manufactured milling equipment was expensive to buy and transport to remote places. Arrastras, however, could be built from nearby rocks and logs.



Americorps Volunteers and John Ellingsen building the Arrastra.

Though they were in common use through the 1930's, arrastras are extremely rare today because the last thing done at an arrastra site was to tear up the stone “pavement” to collect and pan the gold dust which had fallen into the cracks between the stones. The timber frames quickly deteriorated, and usually only the heavy drag stones remained to mark the site.

Logs for the arrastra exhibit were donated by the U.S. Forest Service, and most of the labor has been done by Americorps volunteers. The stones themselves came from a historic site on Forest Service property above Sheridan in the Wisconsin Creek Drainage.

John D. Ellingsen, Curator of History

YOUTH CHALLENGE VOLUNTEERS SPRUCE UP REEDER'S ALLEY & PIONEER CABIN



A group of 40 Youth Challenge cadets from Dillon did a fall work blitz on October 25 at Reeder's Alley and Pioneer Cabin in Helena. Cadets raked leaves, cleaned storage, picked litter, painted picnic tables, prepared the Pioneer Cabin for a new roof, and helped with general fall cleanup chores at the Alley.

Many thanks go to Linda McClure for meticulously organizing jobs, tools, crews and supplies to make the event run smoothly. Also, a huge thanks to John Nugent for recruiting the cadets each year for Virginia City and Reeder's Alley work days and for his ongoing support of the Montana Heritage Commission. AND, thanks especially to the cadets for their energy, commitment to the project and a job well done. You're the best!



(Wurlitzer, cont from p. 1)

In January 2006 the nickoledeon was transported to Reblitz Restorations, the Colorado Springs shop of world-renown, music machine specialist Art Reblitz. Age and rodent infestation were addressed and corrected by Mr. Reblitz; all pneumatic cloth, leathers and hammers were replaced and the piano openings were sealed to prevent rodent reinfestation. The exterior case was treated with a non-silicone oil, to protect the wood and also allow it to breath. No other efforts were made to “clean-up” the case.

Though the DX sounds better than ever, it does not look new. Our goal is not to restore our music machine collection but preserve them. Allowing each piano to show its age, while sounding just as it would have 80 or 100 years ago is as much for our visitors as it is for the piano. The machines are made to be played; scratches, dents and missing decorative pieces do not detract from the beauty of the music, instead they tell the story of the machine and the people it played for.

Stop by the Nevada City Music Hall in May to hear the Wurlitzer DX! An enormous thank you to Richard Reutlinger for getting this project funded, with hopes of many more to come; to Art Reblitz for his fantastic work; to Jack Frost, Larry and Judy Emmons, and Tom Zook for transporting the DX safely; and to all the AMICA members who generously donated the funds. Thank you!

Janna Norby, Curator of Collections

Heritage Conservation Network

Hands-On Building Conservation
Workshops Around the World

Help Build a Future for the Past

Historic Finishes of the Old West
Virginia City, Montana
July 9-13, 2007

Join HCN and an expert from the Virginia City Institute for Preservation Research and Technology in exploring the properties and characteristics of historic interior and exterior finishes. Field work will be done at several sites within the Virginia City National Historic Landmark District. A great opportunity to learn while advancing preservation efforts at the 19th century mining town.

No experience necessary. Workshop fees for this particular workshop cover instruction, materials and insurance only. Participants should plan on arriving the day before the workshop starts. Details available on our website.

Participate in Hands-on Preservation – Sign Up Today!

www.heritageconservation.net
1557 North Street - Boulder, Colorado 80304
303-444-0128

CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Trails to Tourism, a regional workshop on heritage tourism in Southwest Montana, was held September 19th in Dillon at U of M Western. The focus of the workshop was promoting heritage tourism networks and developing cultural tourism loops (or trails) in each of four areas of Southwest Montana: Butte/Anaconda, Virginia City, Lima/Dillon, and the Boulder Valley. Participants from historical, preservation, artist and tourism groups attended, including several from the Montana Heritage Commission and the town of Virginia City. The Hands of Harvest Heritage Tourism project from the Central Montana region was presented as a successful model for rural economic development and historic preservation. Plans to meet and draft a map with potential loops were made for November 14, with Jim Jarvis and Julie Simonsen to represent the group from Virginia City. The Montana Preservation Alliance co-hosted the workshop with the Beaverhead County Historical Society and the Lima Historical Society. Participants were enthused by the energy and ideas of the participants to create regional heritage trails.

Marjorie Antolik, Asst. Curator of Collections

EDUCATION IN ALDER GULCH

Historians and museum professionals are often asked to justify what they do in economical terms. Why do we have nearly one million objects and 200 buildings in Alder Gulch? Why did the people of Montana purchase this resource?

When all the layers of the onion are peeled away, the Montana Heritage Commission (MHC), and our extensive collection of artifacts and buildings are a huge educational resource for current and future generations.

In the year that I have been with MHC I have been a part of some remarkable developments. We have entered into new partnerships, continued existing ones and began new programs that place more emphasis on the educational potential of this site. We recently took steps with University of Montana Western and Professor Linda Reiten in which we have begun using our site to educate Montana's future



History Camp friends
resting on the Miner's Hike.

teachers on how they can teach virtually any subject using our collections and sites. The Montana Heritage Commission has always, and will continue to be an important part of Montana's educational infrastructure.

As an agency the Montana Heritage Commission faces challenges ahead with an upcoming legislative session that will partly determine our funding for the next several years. We have a lot of work to do here, but we must not take our attention away from the bottom line or be tricked into justifying our existence based on red or black ink on the bottom of a balance sheet. Our bottom line is the kids at history camp, the Elderhostel students, the professionals who took Virginia City Institute courses and every single visitor who came here as a tourist looking to be entertained, and walked away with something that had been lost to them--a sense and feeling for the past and how hard we have worked as people to get where we are today. That bottom line is so much more important than any economic quantification can ever be.

Bill Peterson, Curator of Interpretation

NEVADA CITY CABIN GETS NEW LIFE

This summer a Nevada City cabin progressed towards restoration, through the combined efforts of the Preservation Crew's Virginia City Institute Class, and the Living Historians in the "Step Into Montana's Past" interpretive program. Jeff MacDonald started the process with the Preserving Log Structures course that was taught in May. This one week seminar worked on some of the aspects of hewn log structure restoration, proper stabilization techniques, broad-axe hewing, log replacement, stone work, foundations and footings. The Preserving Log Structures class got the ball rolling with much needed sill log replacements and a new foundation under the cabin.

The Living History interpreters, under the direction of the lead preservation specialist, continued working on the cabin throughout the course of the summer. Interpreters worked on leveling the interior floor, chinking and daubing the cabin, acquiring hand sawn lumber, roofing the cabin, and providing the much needed manpower to bring the cabin back to life. Sterling Schmidt donated sand and cement to the project. The Nevada City Blacksmith is working on hand forging hinges and latches for the door, and additional hardware for the interior. The work effort is planned to continue next summer. Thanks to Sterling, John Salas, Ray Clark, and all the other interpreters who helped the project along.



Cabin after a summer of work.

Sterling Schmidt daubing cabin.

RESTAURANT ALLEY--COMING SOON!

Reeder's Alley is bustling with new businesses, and soon we will have three restaurants to choose. The Caretaker's Cabin--Fine International Cuisine, operated by Catherine Smith and Nonie Ruzevich (better known as Chooch and Nonie), will open in early December. Val and Randall Zeleniak will soon open Bootlegger's at the Stonehouse, AND we have Karmadillo's, still serving great southwestern food from the deck overlooking downtown Helena. Major renovations have been done to the Stonehouse and Caretaker's Cabin. We very grateful to these new tenants for the effort and care they are taking to make these special destinations for all. Other new businesses include an antique jewelry and art studio by Alaina Bensley and antique jewelry and beads by Julie. Welcome to the Alley!



CHRISTMAS PAST IN NEVADA CITY

Our Education and Interpretation program will host a living history holiday event December 2, 2006 in Nevada City. Christmas in Territorial Montana was very different from our twentieth-century celebrations. Our present Christmas customs originated from a wide array of inspirations, nearly as various and numerous as the immigrants who settled this vast country. Most of the ways Americans celebrate the midwinter holiday came about in the nineteenth century. Customs at that time in the East included attending church, feasting, dancing, decorating with evergreens, and visiting friends.

What was Christmas like in the mining camps of Montana? The miners often celebrated by feasting and drinking. After the arrival of women and children, Christmas became celebrated much as it was back in the States, very dependent upon the settler's heritage, and Christian roots.

Living historians will portray a selection of early Montana Christmas celebrations in the Nevada City Museum. Activities will start at Noon, and continue until 4 pm, suggested admission is a \$3 donation the Nevada City Museum. Following the Christmas Past event the Montana Heritage Commission and the Community will sponsor a potluck dinner at the Community Center in Virginia City. For a complete schedule of events go to www.virginiacitymt.com, What's New.

Dan Thyer, Living History/Volunteer Coordinator

SAFETY IS THE BEST POLICY

MHC is taking employee safety seriously. Safety Officer Donny Steeley is writing new safety policies and creating a new incentive program to implement a safer work environment..

Donny Steeley

Preservation Specialist & Safety Officer





8th Annual -- Virginia City Christmas Socials

. . .Be a part of the magic. . .

For a complete schedule of events, locations and costs visit www.montanaheritagecommission.com, What's New, Friday, Saturday, Sunday between Thanksgiving & Christmas - Shops open 10 to dusk or later

ONE-TIME EVENTS

(See detailed calendar for details)

December 1-5

- * Open House and Craft Sale – Home of Debbie Rogers
 - * Holiday Bakery & Candy Sale - Metropolitan Market
 - * VCPA Annual Meeting & Potluck
 - * 1863 Montana Christmas - Living History in Nevada City
 - * Montana Picture Gallery Open House
 - * Gingerbread House Contest - Metropolitan Market
 - * MHC/Community Potluck - VC Community Center
 - * Kid's Ornament Making Party - Metropolitan Market
 - * Advent Program & soup dinner - St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- Making Nativity sets for families to use through advent.

December 8-12

- * Chili Cook-Off - VC Cafe
 - * Cookie Decorating - Victorian Sisters
 - * Holiday Feast - Metropolitan Market
 - * Ennis Community Choir Concert - St. Paul's Church
 - * Sledding Party - City Park
 - * "Olive Garden" Spaghetti Feed - Elks Lodge
 - * Advent Program & soup dinner -St.Paul's Episcopal Church
- Making Nativity sets for families to use through advent.

December 15-17

- * Holiday Notes and Treats - Virginia City ATM
- * Allyson Adams performs as Emily Dickinson - Elling House

SPECIAL INVITATION

The Montana Heritage Commission will host the
8th Annual Community Potluck
 Saturday, Dec. 2 – 5:30 p.m., Community Center, VC
 Bring the kids for a chance to burst the piñata.
 MHC will furnish meat, beverages, plates & utensils.
 Please bring a side dish to share.

December 15-17 (cont)

- * Variety Store Open House
 - * Ruby Chang's Open House
 - * Sisters at City Bakery Open House
 - * Rank's Mercantile Open House
 - * Handmade Ornament Contest - Variety Store
 - * Cookie Decorating - Victorian Sisters
 - * Joyful Noise Bell Choir - St. Paul's Church
 - * 1st Amer Title Hot Toddy Hour - Metropolitan Market
- December 24 - Festal Eucharist, Candlelight Service St. Paul's Episcopal Church

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- * Champagne brunch at the Bennett House Country Inn with author & historian, John Ellingsen – every Sunday at 11 am.
- * Shops open every weekend.

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Seasons Greetings from the
 Montana Heritage Commission
 and staff at
 Virginia City, Nevada City and Reeder's Alley



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