

Lake Havasu City Historical Society & Museum Newsletter

Volume 15 Number 5

“Preserving the Past, Educating the Future”

Fall 2011

Officers

President

Beverly Needle

Vice President

Lyle Matzdorff

Secretary

Betty Sosnovske

Treasurer

Steve Greeley

Board of Trustees

Archana Aliyar

Ed Walker

Bobbi Holmes

Stellene Matzdorff

Nancy Valenti

Judy Whelan

Museum Curator

Mike Riddle

Office Assistant

Phyllis Wagner

Store Manager

Dian Gibson

Membership Chair

Lorrie Riddle

Newsletter

Mike Riddle

Phyllis Wagner

Webmaster

Bobbi Holmes

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ **COMING EVENTS** ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

November 15th Program “History of London Bridge”

A presentation of the London Bridge-an historical account from Roman times to the present, will be shown by Mike Riddle, curator of the Museum, with other discussion topics and pictures about the Bridge at the November 15th meeting at the Museum.. The program starts at 7:00 pm. Admission is free. For information call 854-4938.

January 17th Program “Arizona” A Celebration of the Grand Canyon State”

Author and historian Jim Turner, a retired historian for the Arizona Historical Society, will be the speaker at the January 17th meeting. Arizona is celebrating its 100th anniversary of Statehood February 14, 2012.

Jim has a Masters Degree in U.S. History and has researched, written and taught Arizona History for over three decades.

The Museum is at 320 London Bridge Road and the meeting is at 7:00 pm. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. For information call 854-4938.

February 21st Program “Pioneer Cemeteries”

The Pioneer Cemeteries of Mohave and La Paz Counties will be the subject of our February Program.

Mike Riddle and a team of volunteers: Dick and Jenny Anderson, Gene And Linda Rohn and Charles and Mary Hughes have been documenting “Pioneer Cemeteries” for the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office. A “Pioneer Cemetery: is one over 50 years old. Many are on ranches tucked away in a small town or on private land and maybe in a ghost town. At least one is submerged.

A selection of some of them will be presented by members of the team. Additional historic information beyond the basic report will add to the session.

Election-November 15th

The Lake Havasu City Historical Society nominating committee is proposing the following officers and new board members for 2012: President, Ed Walker; Vice President, Cathy Wolff-White; Secretary, Judy Whelan; Treasurer, Jean Mucauley; Board Member, Scott Monnier; Board Member, Tim Montbriand. Additional nominations from the floor will be accepted at the November 15, 2011 general meeting. The election will be held at the same meeting.

**“BUNCO AT THE MUSEUM”
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2011
1:00 PM
TICKETS \$6.00
CALL THE MUSEUM 854-4938
FOR DETAILS AND RESERVATIONS
LIMITED SEATING**



16th Annual Queen's Tea February 26, 2012



The 16th Annual Queen's Tea will be held Sunday, February 26, 2012, 2:00pm to 4:00pm, at the London Bridge Resort, King Arthur Room.

The Tea will again feature Queen Victoria, Lord Mayor, Beefeater, Bell Ringer, and Ladies-in-waiting. All will be in costume.

As usual, real china tea cups will be used. These tea cups have been generously donated by members to the Museum to make the tea more authentic.

A style show is planned and there will be sundry entertainment, door and raffle prizes, and prizes for the most beautiful hat and most unusual hat.

The cost is \$25.00 per person. Tickets may be purchased at the Museum. Call 854-4938 for reservations or visit the Museum.

The proceeds from the tea will go toward the expenses of the Museum.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Fall has arrived and the museum is buzzing with activity. Some of the docents have recently arrived back in Havasu after spending the summer in the cooler climates. Volunteers continue to work on archiving and sorting of donated items. Some very interesting new items for sale have appeared in the museum store. Be sure to visit the store for Christmas gifts.

The curator has also organized some very interesting programs and events for the fall, winter and spring seasons.

We will be conducting tours for different school groups and for others who wish to visit the museum in a group. Bus Tour Companies occasionally will call requesting a guided tour of the museum. We love to tell them about how the London Bridge came to the desert!

The fundraising letter that went out this summer was very successful. Members generously responded with a total amount of over \$3,000. We are most appreciative. On November 7th we will have our second 'Bunco at the Museum' party. It's a fun time for all. Tickets are available at the museum.

A BIG THANKS to the members and friends who continue to support the Lake Havasu Historical Society and Museum.

Beverly Needle, President

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It's been a busy month here at the Best Little Old Museum in Arizona. Support for the London Bridge Re-dedication has been an ongoing task for the museum staff. Historical Society Board Members and volunteers donned costumes as part of the pageantry. Some of the artifacts from the original dedication ceremony were pulled out of storage and off an exhibit for use under the bridge..

I am working on the possibility of a vendor booth at the Balloon Fest in January as a fund raiser. It is a great opportunity, but I will need staffing for it. Volunteers will mostly hang out, talk to other folks, sell items from the museum store and watch the action. One hitch: you do need to show up rather early

We are playing host to several tour groups in the coming months. Local organizations as well as school kids.

We have an opportunity to work with 4-H on a number of educational projects. This is will be the foundation for add-on programs for the schools. Our theme for working with the kids is "History Begins in Your Own Backyard" along with Preserving the Past , Educating the Future. As school curriculums narrow down in our Schools, museums have an opportunity (if not, an obligation) to take up the slack.

Other areas we are exploring are actual classes for adults in Southwest Studies, History and Archaeology These are similar in nature and content to courses I taught at MCC a few years back. I have a lot of details to work out and maybe by next Spring we'll do a trial run

If you are a Face book fan the Museum could use friends. It is a good place to communicate daily activities, epic adventures ,and upcoming events.

Did I mention we need Docents if we are to make our plans a reality. lhmuseum@npgcable.com and say I'm In! We will get back to you.

Mike Riddle, Curator/director

BIG THANK YOU to Our Members

We give a BIG thank you to our members who responded to our Fall 2011 Donation Letter:

Dick and Jenny Anderson, Joan McKendrick, Ellen Chapman, Don and Donna Callahan, Jeannine Horner, Billy and Maxine Posey, Brian and Maureen Riley, Robert and Geri Rasmussen, Triple Properties, Rick and Beverly Stephens, Betty Jo Blanchard, Wanda Lukas, Jean Macauley, Marjorie Lauver, Frank Segall, Agnes Gulliver, Ken and Jude Moyer, Lois Haataja, J. A. Hobson, Sandra Schneider, Edith Walden, Gordon Bartlett, Don and Kathy Hodel, David and Avon Card, Roger and Patricia Schmitz, Robert and Marcia Vickery, Floyd and Amelia Hamilton, Ernest and Nellie Smith, Richard and Deborah Kane, Vicki Webster and Diane Bezanson, Monica Ball, Dub and Dorothy Campbell, Jean Steele, Stan Usinowicz, James and Delores Rucks, Linda Binder, Marian Olson. Hamie and Darlyne Ramos, Marion Olson, Robert and Frances McNary, Leon and Beverly Needle, Ed and Andrea Walker, Sally Hero.

We have received \$3515.00 to date

Curator's Corner

What in the world is that? This phrase has come up a few times as we begin to work our way through boxes of material acquired over the last 10 years or the occasional "artifact" dropped off with a Docent. Our latest is a huge stone axe (Fred Flintstone will be jealous) given to one of our citizens. We have photographed it and will return it to his wife.

Recently we received eleven severed heads as our legacy from the Bridge Rededication. Fortunately a local restaurant wants them for a display so we now have a touring exhibit and this is good. While they tour, I don't have to find a place for them. This brings up a technical issue since items like this are not valid items for our collections. They won't be accessioned into museum collections just inventoried as items for "Special Exhibits". Many items of personal memorabilia we find fall into this category. The real criteria for items taken into the museum's collections: does it help tell our story in a way that is meaningful to students and researchers.

We try to give each item a fair review and at times we look like a cross between History Detectives and Pawn Stars, or the "What in the World is That" mode.

Our wonderful volunteers are making progress with photographs, documents maps and videos we are reviewing and transferring oral histories to CDs and considering the use of dedicated flash drives. Technology, as you all know, at times outruns our ability to use it. Oh well there's probably an App for that I'll have to ask my Granddaughter.

Mike Riddle

Memorial Gifts

For: Bill O'Connor from Lyle & Stellene Matzdorff
 Bill O'Connor from Les Galst & Jo Black
 For: Damon Runyon from Judy Whelan

Highlights of London Bridge Rededication Ceremony October 14, 2011



Governor Brewer speaks..

Beefeater, Les Galst, who was part of the 1971 dedication, escorts Gov. Jan Brewer.



Kathy Hotel, creator of the "Heads" tells their story.



A standing room only crowd attended the Rededication Ceremony and was enjoyed by all. Many thanks go out to the committee; Kathy Hodel, Judy Whelan Linda Binder, Evie Cistaro, Les Galst, and Phyllis Wagner.

All so thank you to all participants in the program. Those who donated cakes and the London Bridge Resort and event sponsor Sundt Construction.



The Queen, Margie Snyder, Lord Mayor, Dean Barlow and Lady Lorie Riddle proceed to the stage.

WE HAVA-HISTORY

Museum Founders Highlights

Real Estate brought Lyle and Stellene Matzdorff to Lake Havasu City in 1963. Early pioneers to the area, they came to facilitate a dream and make their family proud.

Stellene's father, Chet Chenoweth, was living in Phoenix in 1957 and came across an opportunity to invest in some sections of land north of Lake Havasu City. He decided he would start selling his first section of land in one-acre parcels. The problem: no amenities and highway 95 dead-ended. So he called on his daughter's husband, Lyle, to lead the way. Lyle and Stellene, in their early twenty's, and their 11 month old son Lance, moved to the Crystal Beach area into a mobile home which was also his office for Continental Land Real Estate. They felt lucky to have the mobile home as many people were living on the beach in tents. It was tough. There was no television and the only telephone in the area was at Site Six and people lined up to use it. If Lyle made a sale that needed an escrow opened up, he had to go to Kingman or Phoenix. Stellene drove to a Needles laundromat to do diapers. The women shared a lot of the effort. Instead of car pooling, they did grocery pooling. If somebody was going to Las Vegas or Kingman or Needles, they would ask if anybody needed anything and would get it for them.

They moved into their newly built home in early 1965 and raised their three sons, Lance, Lonnie, and Lenny in Lake Havasu City. Things began to get easier for the rugged pioneers when businesses began to open. By 1971, there were 400 businesses in the city where a decade earlier only cactus, mesquite and palo-verde flourished.

In 1997 Lyle was voted in as the President of the Historical Society. At that time he stated "We have been having meetings for 25 years-plus without moving forward. I would be willing to finance the lot and building if everyone is supportive," which they were. Thus the plans were in motion.

Following is his first "Message From the President" for the Spring 1997 Historical Society Newsletter:

With the acquisition of our lot at London Bridge Plaza located next door to the Chamber of Commerce, it is now my hope and dream that we are now at the threshold of a new era for Lake Havasu Historical Society. With the work of our Board of Directors, it appears that we now have found a hope for our first chance to show what we have to tell about where we live and the history. Not just the birth of our city, but what took place in the past.

We have learned through our knowledgeable speakers, thanks to Ruth Brydon, our Program Chairperson, at each meeting what formed this area; mineral, mining, riverboats, Indian farming, and dam building which created Lake Havasu and was named by the Indians in this area.

Site Six, which was built during WWII for rest and recuperation for our pilots of the Army Air Corp.

How Vic and Corrine Spratt bought three sections of land from the Santa Fe Railroad and owned a small fishing village at Site Six.

When Robert McCulloch needed a place to test his new venture of boats and engines in fresh water, his corporate pilot, Jim Dyerly knew of such a place. . . Lake Havasu. It wasn't long until Mr. McCulloch saw this as a great place to live, even though it was remote.

I will not bore you any longer, but this is Our Story to tell.

We need a group to plan the new museum and to have everything displayed in a proper manner. Now is the time we should be planning for the interior. To make this work we need every ones support.

Things are happening. We now have a scholar whom we will be meeting with April 18th, where we will learn from him how to proceed in order for our society to receive a grant. This is due to the efforts of Judy Whelan, our Grant Chairperson.

The future of Lake Havasu Historical society is now becoming a reality. It is possible our new building could be built by the end of this year. . . 1997.

Lyle D. Matzdorff President



Stellene and Lyle Matzdorff

The building was not completed until January 20, 2000 when a Chamber Mixer was held in the new building to celebrate. In January 2001, Lake Havasu City purchased the Museum building and the Society paid a \$1.00 a

WE HAVA-HISTORY

A Sleepy Fishing Camp Became a City

By G.A.N. Correspondent from General Aviation News April 26, 1965

LAKE HAVASU CITY ARIZ.—Until very recently, air charts for the Southwest showed a field 25 miles north of Parker on the lower Colorado River as: “Site Six—Limited Facilities.”

Now, however, things have changed. FAA and Jeppesen charts now show the purple circle of a fully active airfield here, designated “LHU”—Lake Havasu City, Arizona.

This sudden revision of the charts reflects the startling changes that have taken place at Lake Havasu City in the past year.

Where an abandoned Air Corps landing strip and a sleepy fishing camp were the only signs of human habitation not long ago, a modern city is now taking shape.

The Army Air Corps created the landing strips during World War II to serve a rest and rehabilitation center known as Site Six for combat-weary aircrews.

After the war, the field was abandoned. Tumbleweeds took over the airstrip, and desert plants began growing through its cracks and craters.

When Robert P. McCulloch, outboard motor and chain saw industrialist, said “this is the place” for recreation of a new industrial-resort city, repairing the airfield was first on the agenda.

The crossing runways were smoothed and improved, and the main strip was lengthened to 6,500 feet, paved and made ready for all aircraft except large jetliners.

Recreation, an important factor in the growth of this “sportsman’s city,” is responsible for a good portion of the air traffic.

Fisherman, water skiers, boating enthusiasts, tourists, and vacationers from all over the West fly in for weekends on picturesque Lake Havasu.

Many of them keep boats and trailers here. They’ve found they can park their airplanes and be out on the lake in a matter of minutes.

The airport has all night runway lighting, and Unicom communications facilities on 122.8.

There is no charge for landing, parking, or tie down space.

Fueling and servicing is available all day, with both 80/87 and 100/130 octane's on hand.

An official U. S. Weather Bureau station will soon be established, and a new passenger terminal building is in the planning stage.

Located on the city’s peninsula, Lake Havasu City is almost completely surrounded by the blue waters of Lake Havasu and weather problems are almost unknown.



6,500-FT. LANDING STRIP PARALLELS LAKE

Lake Havasu Museum of History
320 London Bridge Rd
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
Phone: 928-854-4938
Fax: 928-505-2529
Email: lmuseum@npgcable.com
Website: Havasumuseum

VOLUME 15 NUMBER 5



Tenth Annual Christmas Tree Festival

November 29th starts our 10th Annual Christmas Tree Festival at the Museum.

Last year we had 14 trees on display making a festive time at the Museum. If you have a Christmas tree you (any organization or individual), would like to display in the Museum, call us at 854-4938. Theme trees are especially fun. Our Museum comes alive for the holiday season from November 29 to January 7.

Dian Gibson will be decorating "A Classic Christmas" tree and donating it to be raffled. The name will be drawn at the party December 7th..



Holiday Party Among the Trees

Come to our "Holiday Party Among the Trees" Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 4:00:PM to 6:00PM at the Museum.

Enjoy hot wassail, punch and Christmas cookies, Christmas carols and festive fun. Children are especially invited, so come and bring your family.

Buy a raffle ticket for the "A Classic Christmas" tree to take home that night and enjoy during the holiday season in your home. Free admission.

"Happy Holidays"

Do Your Christmas Shopping at the Museum!
Books-Toys-Jewelry-Purses-Hats-Games & Much More