Oregon Musicians Compete in 1919

Nearly 100 years ago, a group of Oregon musicians decided to right a wrong – long in the making. The state needed a song.

Where Are the Apple Orchards?

Author and DCHS board member Sue Fountain reminisces about summer activities at the Apple Orchards (a.k.a. Sawyer Park).

HIDDEN LOCAL HISTORY: THE PAINTING IN THE WALL

Local history can hide in the strangest places. Brian Goodwin had the surprise of his life as he was renovating his 1935 Bend house. Hidden behind several layers of paneling, he found a 6.4 x 4-foot painting. With plenty of patience, Goodwin slowly removed age-old wall panels to reveal a landscape painting full of Central Oregon features.

Brian Goodwin is a product designer and artist by day, and a home renovation buff in the evening and weekends. He bought the Pilot Butte neighborhood house about two years ago. It was a fortunate stroke of serendipity, according to Goodwin.

“Of all the homes on the market, I bought this house. As someone with a secret love of painting, an art form I have never pursued, I bought this house with a treasure hidden inside.”

The planned renovation of the house was meant to be down to the studs.

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1919 State Song Contest: Central Oregon Writers Compete

Nearly 100 years ago, a group of Oregon musicians set out to right a wrong they thought had gone on long enough. The state needed a song.

In the summer of 1919 - 60 years after Oregon had gained statehood - the Society of Oregon Composers in Portland put out a call to poets around the state for lyrics for a new state song. By the time the contest had closed in January 1920, exactly 213 entries from across Oregon had been submitted.

“The writers of these poems came from nearly every walk of life,” The Sunday Oregonian reported on March 7, 1920. “Physicians, lawyers, musicians, college professors, merchants, mechanics, farmers, etc.”

Exactly 108 of the poems came from women and 105 came from men. The oldest lyricist was an original 86-year-old Oregon pioneer and the youngest was a 16-year-old high school student. Entries came from not only Oregon, but Washington, Idaho, California and New York. Of the 213 submissions, 103 of them were from Portland.

And three were from Central Oregon.

John Andrew Buchanan, an Astoria judge and politician, went on to win the song contest with his poem “Oregon, My Oregon”, which eventually became the state song when it was later arranged with music by Henry Murtagh.

But the contest caught the imagination of writers across the state, including C. C. Wigmore of Bend, Albert Lowry of Prineville, and Pearl Ellis of Suntex, a small community just northeast of Burns.

— Beau Eastes
Where Are the Apple Orchards?

If you asked anyone who grew up in Bend in the 1950s and 1960s, they would know immediately. Today it is known as Sawyer Park, but we all called that area The Apple Orchards.

We rode our bikes there on summer days and walked about a quarter of a mile from the footbridge to a spot where there was a big rock you could jump from and land in a deep enough place to swim.

Of course, the Deschutes River is always cold, but we didn’t care. After the hot ride and the walk to get there, we jumped right in. There were lower rocks all around where we could sit out and suntan, and then go back into the water to cool off.

I heard about one time when a boy made a daring dive and hit his head on a rock. The ambulance and police had to come and take him to the hospital. After that we were cautioned not to dive from the rock, but no one told us that we couldn’t go there. In fact, I’m not sure our parents even knew where we went to swim. We just took off on our bikes, without any helmets, and rode out on the highway to Sawyer Park, aka The Apple Orchards. This was during the era when the only rule was that you had to be home for dinner.

At that time, the idea of floating the river downtown was unheard of. In fact, we were not even supposed to go near the river. It was too deep and fast there; the current could carry us away! One of the strangest sights for me when I moved back to Bend after being away for many years was seeing people standing in the water near the Tumalo/Galveston Bridge. I could not imagine what they were doing. Now I know that they were cooling off in the river just as we did years ago, but a few miles downstream.

Recently I walked downriver from Sawyer Park, looking for that swimming hole. We used to walk along the east side of the river, climbing over rocks and stepping in little potholes filled with water that had warmed from the sun.

I don’t know how far it was, but we had to go around a few curves in the river. Now I cannot find it. How had that big rock moved? Of course, I am talking about fifty or sixty years later, and I guess the river could well have changed course.

The location of the pool is a mystery to me as well as who named the area The Apple Orchards, or why. I don’t believe there is a single apple tree out there.

– Sue Fountain

Winter Comes Exhibit Comes to Nordic Northwest

The next stop of Deschutes Historical Museum’s Winter Comes – Oregon’s Nordic Ski History exhibition is at Nordic Northwest in Portland.

If you missed Winter Comes in Bend, here’s your chance learn more about the history of Nordic skiing in the Pacific Northwest. This is also the last opportunity to check out the Klamath trophy before it is returned to its permanent homebase at Umeå Museum in Sweden.

Winter Comes will be featured at Nordic Northwest between September 20 through December 31. The Portland exhibit is sponsored by Hans and Nancy Sohlstrom. The museum is located at 8800 SW Olesen Road. For more information about Nordic Northwest, please steer your Internet browser to scanheritage.org.
Painting in the Wall...

“I literally took out the floor, sub-floors, the rafters, and the ceilings,” said Goodwin. “My plan was to keep the house and eventually build this modern, white Danish-looking house and hang the painting on the wall.”

Goodwin realized there may have been a reason why he approached the renovation project with care.

“For some reason, I’ll never forget it, I was going very slowly,” said Goodwin. “Most people would have taken a sledgehammer to it, but I was slowly and meticulously peeling back layers of paneling.”

As the deliberate, slow-moving demolition work went on, Goodwin found something he didn’t expect.

“I peeled off two layers and suddenly I saw clouds, trees, and sky coming through. I just kept peeling it back to reveal this giant painting.”

Over the next few weeks, Goodwin methodically cleared the painting of old paneling. The treasure hunt started in the living room and continued on the other side of the wall to an added closet. The next step was to dislodge the painting from the attached wall. With a skill saw in hand, he carefully outlined the edges of the painting, going through walls and studs.

“I went to the back of the house, which was in a closet, and cut loose the backside of the painting,” said Goodwin. “I eventually dislodged it and it took three guys to lift it up. It was very heavy.

At first look, the landscape seems an odd mix of mountains, a waterfall, large Ponderosa pines, and open fields. As more details become evident, there is suddenly a feeling of familiarity. The waterfall could be Tumalo Falls, the mountains could be Mt. Bachelor and Broken Top.

“It’s a well-done piece of folk art. We have determined the medium is either oil or acrylic on what looks like construction paper,” said Goodwin. “You can tell this guy was passionate about the landscape.”

The mystery lies in how the artist interpreted Central Oregon’s natural landmarks.

“The imagery is distorted, but that’s what I love about the painting.”

Goodwin postulates the artist may have gone out with his sketch book and made notes. But when it came time to put the image on “canvas,” he interpreted the scenery in his

“The painting in the wall have mystified museum visitors since the unveiling in May. The unknown artist has included many Central Oregon landmarks on the canvas, but has interpreted the landscape to his own mind. See if you can find Mt. Bachelor, Tumalo Falls, Broken Top and other distinctive features.
Local News Items

Daybreak on Sunday was a surprise to all on the 13th of August. The morning contained more than a bit of dew; rain clouds threatened the museum’s Annual Cookout. But Sue Fountain, board member and committee co-chair of the cookout, proclaimed through email and entreaties to above, that there would be no rain that afternoon. Lo’ and behold there wasn’t a drop on the lawn of the Deschutes County Historical Society and Museum.

The weather held and the festivities, instead, “reigned”. Baldy’s Barbecue set up their colorful canopy. And soon a few other canopies appeared featuring beverages and the Silent Auction of iconic historical photos from the museum’s archives. Many thanks to committee member, Nancy McCarthy, who traipsed through Bend, taking photos of present-day scenes to compare with the vintage photos of what used to be in that area.

Down Range, our favorite bluegrass combo, made a welcome return appearance to entertain the diners. Joining them this year was a talented young musician, Quinn Fetrow. Down Range just released a new CD of their favorites, and generously offered a free copy to anyone signing up for a new membership that day. Thank you, Loren Irving and Jay Bowerman. And welcome, Quinn.

New this year, as many may have noticed, were several re-cycle bins. Deschutes County Historical Museum has joined other local businesses and organizations in the quest for eco-friendly, compostible products. Thanks to all for participating, seeking out the proper bins. Our appreciation and gratitude go out to Owen Mintz for introducing us to his company, LavaEdge, LLC, (also known as Oregon Green Products), and for donating the zero waste supplies for this year’s cookout. The museum will strive to continue his eco-friendly policy and products.

And last, but not least, a high-five to the committee: co-chairs, Andrea Dupree and Sue Fountain, Marsha Stout, Paula Simila, Nancy McCarthy, Susie Penhollow, Bonnie Burns and to all the volunteers who donated their time, and in some cases, items for the cookout. There are plans for new activities next year and we hope you will all continue to support the museum by participating.

The Deschutes County Historical Society celebrated its second annual Summer Cookout in August. Baldy’s Barbecue served up a delicious fare, Boneyard Brewing donated the beer, and Down Range entertained with a repertoire of bluegrass music. Inset from left: Quinn Fetrow, Loren Irving and Jay Bowerman.

SUMMER COOKOUT WITH GOOD FOOD AND BLUEGRASS

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Painting in the Wall...
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mind’s eye.

“A lot of people I have talked to see a likeness to national park postcards from the 1930s - 1950s. If you look at Yosemite postcards from the forties, it looks like that style.”

The painting is not signed and historical research about the home and its owners have so far yielded no indication of who could have been the artist. The home has been remodeled several times in the past. Throughout the renovation, Goodwin also found old photographs, an old gold bracelet, and other pieces of history from former homeowners. Or, “weird objects,” according to Goodwin.

“I think the house was haunted because it gave me lots of trouble,” said Goodwin. “I found bones underneath the kitchen floor. Who knows what they were – maybe old cooking bones.”

Since the interview took place, Goodwin has left Bend for Denmark and Copenhagen. He has lived there before, but this time the move to Scandinavia was prompted by the painting in the wall.

“Finding the treasure was a personal marker for me. Two years later, I’m moving to Copenhagen to pursue my love of art,” said Goodwin.

Goodwin has long-term plans for the painting. He is considering bringing it to the Oregon Historical Society in Portland to share it with a bigger audience.

“I think it is going to be an important project to share. There is a chance that it was a famous artist, and if not famous, someone who was inspired in what was going on at the time,” said Goodwin. “I saw it as a way to preserve this artist and the story of a historic house that most people would have just knocked down.”

– Tor Hanson

Mark Your Calendars

SEPTEMBER
26 HISTORY PUB: DETAINED BY MY COUNTRY. Presented by Mitzi Loftus. McMenamins Old St. Francis
Father Luke Room, 7 p.m., doors at 5:30 p.m.
We are requiring reservations for the monthly History Pubs at McMenamins. Reservations can be made on the museum’s website, deschuteshistory.org or by calling 541.389.1813.

OCTOBER
13-14 SAVE THE DATE
Historical Haunts of Downtown Bend.
See next month’s Homesteader.