



Water, Water, Everywhere...

*But which water do we
want to drink? See p. 2*

Historian of the Future

*Meet our featured volunteer
Lily Alexander See p. 4*



The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—July 2021

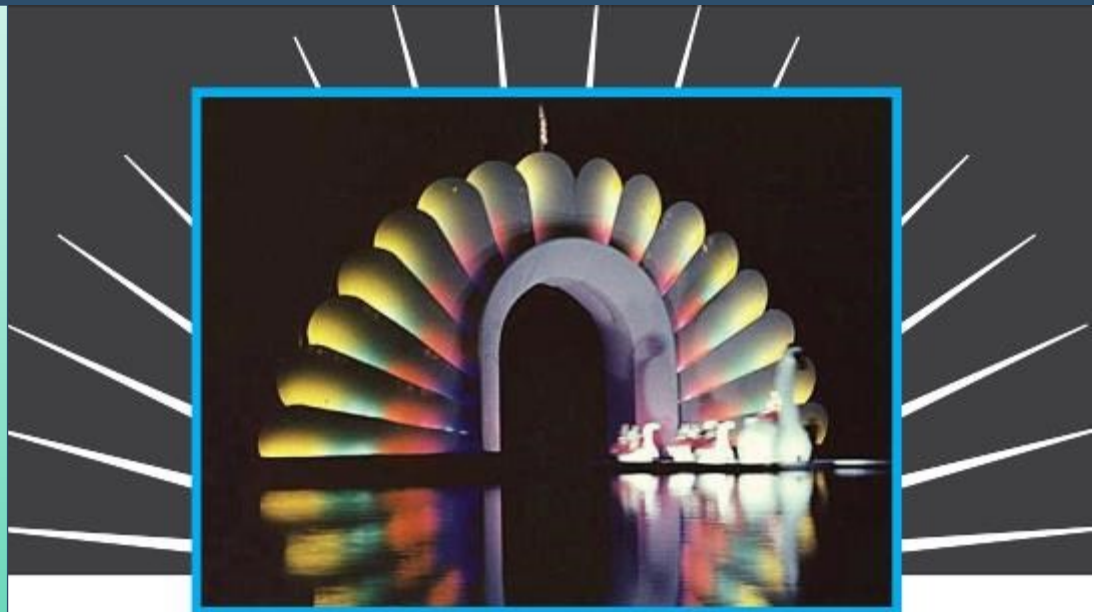
Deschutes Historical Museum

CLOSED JULY 4

The Pet Parade has been cancelled this year and there are no activities planned for the park because of COVID restrictions.

Due to these cancellations, the DCHS Board of Directors made the decision to be closed on the 4th of July. In previous years we have attracted a good sized crowd after the parade to celebrate the museum's birthday and they have been rewarded with ice cream and a free tour of the museum. We hope to return to that tradition next year when we celebrate our 47th anniversary.

The museum is open during its regular hours Tuesday through Saturday. Please come visit and check out the exhibits. We have missed seeing all of you.



Central Oregon Daily to Air Deschutes Historical Museum Documentary

July 3 and 4, 2021

This 4th of July weekend, Central Oregon Daily will screen the Deschutes County Historical Society's 2020 release *Let There Be Light: The History of Bend's Water Pageant*, a short film by Future Filmworks.

Using the archives of the Deschutes Historical Museum and interviews with former pageant royalty and organizers, the film details the unique night-time parade of floats on Mirror Pond that married theater and historical pageantry between 1933 and 1965 and was the main attraction in Bend over the 4th of July holiday. The film was funded through a generous gift from Cascade Heritage Foundation.

**The program airs as follows: Saturday, 7/3: KBNZ at 10am and KOHD at 5pm
Sunday, 7/4: KBNZ at 10am and KBNZ at 5pm**

For more information, call the museum at 541.389.1813 or email at ino@deschuteshistory.org

Mountain Water—1924

By Sue Fountain



Competing headlines from the two prominent newspapers in Central Oregon in June of 1924, each promoting their solution to Bend's water woes

From stinky water to sinkholes, water has always been an issue in Central Oregon. Every day lately we hear about the scarcity of water and the possibility of drought in our region. When the founders of Bend first set up a system for drinking water and irrigation, they believed that there was an unending supply of water rushing down the mountains and into our rivers and streams.

As with many historical events in Bend, water delivery systems started with Alexander Drake, founder of Bend. He could see that the growing town would need power and water, so he established the Bend Company. He hired T. H. "Tom" Foley as an electrician, and together they planned and built the power dam on the Deschutes River that created Mirror Pond. In 1910 the business district of Bend had its first electricity.


When Drake left Bend in 1911, he sold the company to Clyde McKay, and Foley moved into the role of president and general manager. Under Foley's leadership it was renamed the Bend Water, Light & Power Company. In 1919 he hired Percy Drost as his foreman.

At that time, drinking water for Bend was piped from the Deschutes River, and in the spring of 1924, it started to smell bad—so bad that people did not want to drink it. If you boiled it, the odor was even worse. Instead, they would drive out Shevlin Park Road to a well and fill up buckets and milk cans with clean, better-smelling water.



Ad from June 5, 1924 Bend Bulletin, placed adjacent to article about smelly drinking water from the Deschutes River

- Continued on page 3

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|  <p>Deschutes Historical Museum</p> <p>129 NW Idaho Avenue Bend, OR 97703 Open Tuesdays-Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. 541.389.1813</p> | <p>Museum Staff:</p> <p>Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director Vanessa Ivey, Museum Manager Rebekah Averette, Collections Manager Tracy Alexander, Membership Officer</p> <p>• • • • •</p> <p>2021 DCHS Board of Directors:</p> <p>Sue Fountain, President Adrian Bennett, Vice President Jane Williamson, Secretary/Treasurer</p> | <p>Board Members:</p> <p>Mike Berry, Mark Capell, Paul Claeysens, Tony DeBone, Beau Eastes, Dan Ellingson, Terry Foley, Greg Fulton, Karen Green, Loren Irving, Heidi Kennedy, and Susie Penhollow,</p> <p>• • • • •</p> <p>Complete minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors are on file with the Museum office.</p> <p>• • • • •</p> <p>www.deschuteshistory.org info@deschuteshistory.org</p> |
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Continued from P. 2— Mountain Water

The problem with the water from the Deschutes River stemmed from a dam built at Crane Prairie. The dam slowed down the water, which allowed algae to grow, causing an objectionable odor. State health officials said the water was safe to drink, but that did not sway people.

The smell of the water caused a big stink! It became a huge controversy with two opposing sides. One side was led by Robert Sawyer, editor of *The Bend Bulletin*, and the other side was led by the editor of the competing newspaper, *The Central Oregon Press*. Every day in May and June of 1924 there were front-page articles and editorials. The Press argued that Bend needed a new water supply, and *The Bulletin* claimed that they just needed a new filtration plant.

When it was suggested that they open the dam at Crane Prairie, the Press's rhetoric intensified. "That means that all the filth, pestilence, and disease stashed at Crane Prairie reservoir will be dashed in one flood into the Deschutes River."

The Bulletin then brought in a bacteriologist to test the water. He claimed it just needed to be filtered in a better manner. Sawyer did not deny that the water smelled and tasted bad, but he thought buying land around Tumalo Creek for a new water supply was too expensive.

The Press continued daily front-page articles

about the need for pure water. Their catchphrase was "We want mountain water; we will get mountain water!"

Meanwhile, Tom Foley offered to sell Bend Water, Light & Power to the city. The city was willing to purchase it and make it a municipal operation. City officials believed they could deliver water to the citizens of Bend at a lower rate than they were charged by the private company.

Eventually, the city council agreed to put the issue to a vote in two parts: Do the people of Bend want their own water supply and clarification and distributing system? And do the people of Bend desire that a change of water supply be made to a source other than the Deschutes River?

On June 18, 1924, the citizens of Bend voted overwhelmingly to purchase a new water source on Tumalo Creek and to make water distribution part of the city. The tally was 1,367 for the measure and 172 against it—the largest turnout for a vote that Bend had seen. It appeared that drinking smelly water brought people to the polls.

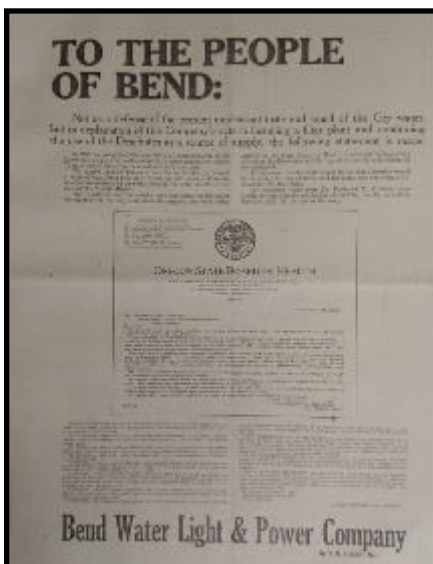
It took a few years to negotiate the deal with Bend Water, Light & Power, but by 1927 the city owned the company. Percy Drost worked as superintendent of the water department until 1969, continuing the work of developing and building Bend's water system. Tom Foley was instrumental in negotiating a sale of the power and light part of the company to Pacific Power and Light. He transferred to that company and became manager of it until his untimely death in 1925. These early leaders of Bend had a vision for Bend's infrastructure and growth.

As *The Central Oregon Press* proclaimed, "We are so situated here that there is no excuse that our city should not be able to advertise to the world over that we have the BEST of drinking water." The citizens asked for mountain water. They got mountain water.



---While the taste and odor are still present this analysis shows that the water is safe.
---We are doing everything possible to find means to eliminate the taste and odor.

Ad placed by Bend Water, Light & Power Company in June 3, 1924 *The Bend Bulletin* with lab results of water tests by the Oregon State Board of Health



Full-page ad in June 5, 1924 *Bend Bulletin* with letter from the Oregon State Board of Health promoting a new filtration system.

Volunteer Corner

Lily

Museum volunteers come in all shapes, sizes and ages. Their reasons for volunteering also vary, but teenager Lily Alexander has history and museums in her blood. It is only natural that she would follow in the path of her ancestors. Though born in Bend, Lily is a 6th-generation "Museum Person" as her mother, Tracy Wild Alexander, calls it. To begin with, her great-great-great grandmother founded the Honolulu Museum of Art. Since the 1920s, each generation has contributed a "museum person": founders, archaeologist, teachers, administrators, volunteers, and board members.

From an early age, Lily more or less lived with history as her background. She accompanied her mother to work and diligently helped, learning and absorbing the language and lore of museums.

Lily is a multi-talented woman in her own right. Her high school studies included an International Baccalaureate Program, and she was captain of her speech and debate team. She used her sewing skills as head costumer for the drama department at Bend High School, as well as creating historical costumes for members of the community. When she is not studying or sewing, you may see Lily flying high as an aerial silks artist!

In 2018, Lily became an "official" volunteer at DHM, and being a quick learner, she tackles whatever needs to be done. You can find her at the reception desk, taking store inventory, transcribing oral histories, waiting tables at the Chili Feed, and even leading Haunted History and downtown walking tours. Her artistic talent provided an illustration for a special COVID issue of *The Homesteader* (May 2020).

Lily graduated from Bend Senior High School in June, and she will be heading clear across country to Massachusetts to Mount Holyoke College. She will study Art History with the goal of earning a graduate degree related to museum and library archival sciences.

We at the Deschutes Historical Museum are as excited as she is to see what lies ahead for her. Lily's experiences volunteering with DHM exemplify the various ways that embracing history can inspire and enrich our lives, no matter what our age.

Alexander

By Bonnie Burns



Tyne Griffin:

How Volunteering Leads to Self Discovery

by Vanessa Ivey

I first met Tyne Griffin the summer of 2016 when he was a teenager. He came by the Deschutes Historical Museum in search of an obituary. Thankfully, Tyne had the year and the name to assist his search, but not much more. I escorted Tyne to the third floor where the museum houses *The Bend Bulletin* newspaper archives in bound volumes.

The heavy, cloth-bound tomes are mammoth in size, 15 inches by 24 inches, and vary in thickness, sitting on bookshelves specially constructed for them. Located in nearly every room on the third floor, the large books are stored by year, each volume composed of several weeks of daily papers. As Tyne approached the year he required, one of the books in the set was pulled partially off the shelf. He pushed it back in and took a volume from the beginning and end of the year. As he worked his way through the newspapers, he finally found what he was searching for in the volume he had initially pushed back onto the shelf.

"When I told Vanessa where I finally found the obituary she laughed and said it must have been George trying to help and that I should listen to him next time," Tyne relayed. It was his first experience with the Historical Society and its paranormal resident, George Brosterhous, whom many of us know helps the staff and volunteers find things.

This only piqued Tyne's interest in the museum and it wasn't long before this shy, quiet-spoken young man volunteered to assist with our annual Historical Haunts of Downtown Bend walking tour. He thought it would be the "coolest thing ever" (his exact words) but was unsure if he'd be able to talk in front of people.

No need to worry, Tyne's tours were popular. He found his voice. With a new confidence, he moved to Portland to attend university and got a job as a guide for the city's underground ghost tours. Each October, he still returns to Bend to guide tours for the museum's haunt walks.

Last month Tyne stopped by the museum to say hello. The pandemic shutdown afforded him time to channel his interest in the "other world" and his love for the written word into a new novel, *Ghost King*. He wanted the museum to have a copy and to thank us.



Volunteers Lily Alexander (L) and Tyne Griffin (R) at the Historic Haunts of Bend event in 2018

"I never imagined the day I stepped through the front doors that it would change the trajectory of my life... I was incredibly shy when I volunteered here, but everyone was so kind to me. The Historical Society will always have a fond place in my heart."

Along with Tyne's kind dedication, the staff, George and the museum make appearances in his book, and we are tickled to accept the novel as a new addition to the collection of the Deschutes Historical Museum.



Memorials

George Poetschat

Mary Berrigan
Cathy Poetschat

Marsha Stout

Tracy Alexander
Ed and Jo Ann Barnum
Eric Cadwell
Alyce Dawes
Leslie and Sandra Ogg
Sandra and Barry Ongley
LeAnne Roberts
Margaret Roberts
Jane Williamson

Tributes

Ralph C. Curtis

Jean Rotter



410 E Cascade Ave.
Sisters, OR

threesistershistoricalsociety.org



SATURDAY, JULY 10
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

The Three Sisters Historical Society will be displaying two historic quilts from the Sisters area at the Sisters Museum on Quilt Show Day, July 10th. One quilt was created in 1913, and the other in 1935. Both quilts belong to the Deschutes Historical Museum, which has graciously loaned them to the Sisters Museum to display for the day.

Each quilt is made up of squares sewn together in a “crazy” patchwork design, using multi-colored cotton and silk, with many unique stitching patterns. Each square was made by women who lived in the Cloverdale and Plainview areas, and most of the squares have the quilter’s signature embroidered within. Many of the women who created squares for the 1913 quilt also created squares for the 1935 quilt, 18 years later.

The Sisters Museum will be open on Quilt Show Day from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There is no admission fee, but donations are always welcome.



Mark Your Calendars

JULY

- 1 RESCHEDULED: “LET THERE BE LIGHT” PREMIERE SCREENING**
7:30 p.m. Tower Theater www.towertheatre.org for tickets
- 3 HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Reflections of History: An Architectural Tour**
10:30 a.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Soul of the City: A History of Drake Park
2:30 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

“LET THERE BE LIGHT” SCREENING
10:00 a.m. on KBNZ and 5:00 p.m. on KOHD
- 4 DESCHUTES HISTORICAL MUSEUM 46TH ANNIVERSARY**
CLOSED FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

“LET THERE BE LIGHT” SCREENING
10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on KBNZ
- 10 HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Early Days of Bend**
10:30 a.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Soul of the City: A History of Drake Park
2:30 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

SISTERS OUTDOOR QUILT SHOW
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Hood Avenue, Sisters
- 17 HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Reflections of History: An Architectural Tour**
10:30 a.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Soul of the City: A History of Drake Park
2:30 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum
- 24 HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Early Days of Bend**
10:30 a.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

HERITAGE WALKING TOUR: Soul of the City: A History of Drake Park
2:30 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum



Bend Water Pageant, 1958

ADVANCE RESERVATION IS REQUIRED FOR TOURS
SIGN UP MUST BE BY 4 p.m. THE DAY BEFORE TOUR

Call 541-389-1813 or register online
DESCHUTESHISTORY.ORG
Tours are subject to change and cancellation