West St. (Healdsburg Ave.) looking south with “Tourist Parking Here” and “Russian River Resorts” signs, c. 1935.

New Exhibition, “Destination Healdsburg”
Members’ Opening Reception, May 31, 5:30 pm

“Destination Healdsburg: the Surprising History of Healdsburg Tourism” will be the subject of our next exhibition, opening to the public on June 1. Modern-day Healdsburg has become widely recognized as a tourist destination, but most people don’t realize that the promotion of Healdsburg as a “Vacation Wonderland” goes much deeper than wine tasting and farther back in our history than today’s upscale restaurants.

In the early 1860s, stagecoaches from Healdsburg hotels transported travelers to marvel at “Nature’s Scenic Wonders” of The Geysers. In the 1870s, the railroad arrived, bringing vacationers galore to the Russian River and nearby hot springs resorts with special tourist promotions. In 1880s, Healdsburg was booming and, by the 1890s, began being touted as “San Francisco of the North.”

(continued on page 3)
History Matters  

by Holly Hoods,  
Executive Director/Curator

One of our key goals this year is to refresh and update the Museum website. We want to improve its functionality, appearance and content. We staff members have been meeting with Board members Lockie Gillies, President Ronnie Devitt and HMVA Co-chair Stan Becker to develop the scope of work. If you have thoughts about what you want to see more (or less!) of, we would welcome your input at holly@healdsburgmuseum.org.

Volunteer Kay (Schmidt) Robinson just added significant new content to our website with an update of our PastPerfect database online, adding photos from the L.J. Hall Insurance Co. (rural Northern Sonoma County properties), the Oak Mound Cemetery burial records (with an attached Excel file and map image) plus 800 additional photographs that we have added to PastPerfect since the last online update. Much of this new content has been manually scanned or typed into our records by Kay’s sister, Diane (Schmidt) Carriger. Kay added 1,346 new Photograph records, 1 new Archive record, 2,631 new photos, 5,554 new names and 148 new search terms.

For those of you who appreciate hearing about progress measured in numbers, this means that the Healdsburg Museum website now boasts: Photograph records – 20,539; Archive records (newspaper index catalog cards) – 6,241; Images – 28,654; People (names) – 18,955 and Search Terms – 5,748. Thanks to our wonderful volunteers for their valuable work. It can reach and potentially benefit so many.

Assistant Curator Whitney Hopkins and I post news, history and photos frequently on the Museum’s social media accounts. We would love you to join us for an insider view of the lively life of the Museum. Follow us (“Healdsburg Museum and Historical Society”) on Facebook and on Instagram. We appreciate reaching people beyond the Museum hours and outside the Museum walls.

Thanks to Our Latest Annual Appeal Donor  
Carole & Robert Rinne

President’s Corner  

by Ronnie Devitt,  
Board President

It’s time to plan and mark your calendars. Wednesday, May 31 is the members’ only reception for the opening of our new “Destination Healdsburg” exhibition. Regulars know that our Executive Director/Curator Holly Hoods gives us the top docent’s summary of the exhibition which makes a more meaningful viewing experience. The food has been getting better and better and the wine is always good.

Remember that the Antiques and Arts Fairs on the Plaza are fundraisers for the Museum from the space rentals charged to the vendors. Vendors want to come to Fairs where there are a lot of people browsing and shopping. The first Fair is Sunday, June 18. You can help make the Fair a prime destination for the best vendors to display their treasures. Come and invite your local and out of town friends and relatives.

Speaking of friends…whenever one of your friends, neighbors or relatives mentions having gone to a Museum, ask them if they have been to the Healdsburg Museum. “Museum Goers” go to museums. I am one of them and so are most of you reading this column. However, it is a sad fact that there are many “Museum Goers” in our community who never think about coming to our Museum even though they go to other museums all over the Bay Area and beyond. Let’s get those folks in! Tell them that we have local history, art, a fantastic collection of Pomo baskets and a centennial exhibition of the meaning of World War I in our corner of the world.

Finally, mark your calendar for the Langhart Awards/Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at Castelli Ranch on Saturday, July 8. If you haven’t been there, you must go to see the Castelli collections. Touring their home and out-buildings is like visiting museums within a museum.

Welcome Our Newest HM&HS Members  
Judy Wendt Chagnon  
Tracy Logan  
Brenda Pierce  
Dr. Daniel and Laura Sooy
Jon Lacaillade and Pam Vana-Paxhia invited Edson and me for a preview of the 1936 street scene diorama of Healdsburg that will be installed in our next exhibition, “Destination Healdsburg.” Studying a few of the period photographs from the Museum’s collection with a magnifying glass, Jon created five new building facades and 20+ scale model vehicles using recycled and other clever materials! You must see them to believe what he enjoys working on an average of four hours a day in his shop. The existing Plaza diorama will also be updated to reflect a 1910 scene with corresponding changes in the buildings and more vintage vehicles.

Our volunteer Christine Hyde reported that the volunteers at the Healdsburg Visitors Bureau are making a bigger effort to encourage Healdsburg visitors to stop at the Museum. Rack cards created by volunteers Tom and Ronnie Devitt provide good reminders and get lots of visibility.

Saturday, April 1, was a busy day. Assistant Curator Whitney Hopkins greeted the 90+ participants of the Tobes Memorial History Walk at the Museum at 6:30 am! (You can read more about the event in Whitney’s article on page 5.) At noon, the group gathered at the tiny Geyserville Museum and Visitor Center to view a display of old photographs including the early Main Street buildings. Harry Bosworth’s General Merchandise store window has a new display about his grandfather George’s funeral parlor business from 1900-1925. Many said they would be back.

At 12:30 that day, I hurried to Healdsburg Senior Living to join other quilt lovers to hear quilt expert Julie Silber’s presentation. Julie thrives on seeing unique quilts brought in by the public with stories to share. Julie also brought a spectacular 1823 quilt from the East Coast with fabrics that looked like new, the natural Indigo navy blue dye so permanent. I took a quilt in very good condition that I purchased last May at the Milton “Dint” Rose estate sale for the Geyserville historical collection. A small tag with priceless clues pinned to the quilt read, “Bear Claws quilt. Grandma Bryant pieced it (top) during pregnancy with Bertha. (She wasn’t well & on bed/couch last few months.)”

Bertha Elizabeth Bryant was born July 21, 1887, the second of three daughters born to John T. and Eleanor E. (Pritchett) Bryant, both early families in upper Dry Creek Valley and Geyserville.

Another example of how important it is to leave clues with your prized family treasures!

Thanks to Our Latest Cemetery Restoration Project Donor
Ted Robinson

Thanks to Our Latest Endowment Fund Donors
Sonja & Dan Erickson

“Destination Healdsburg” (cont’d from page 1)

Fitch Mountain started sprouting vacation homes, cottages and tents for summer tourists in the early 1900s. In the 1920s and ‘30s, tourist parking areas were designated near the Plaza; a neon arrow sign at the corner of Matheson Street and Healdsburg Avenue pointed the way east to Fitch Mountain and the “Russian River Resorts.” Travel along the Redwood Highway was encouraged by inexpensive “Auto Camps” and campgrounds.

The 1960s and ’70s promoted the scenic agricultural splendor of the region with “Prune Blossom Tours” of the surrounding valleys.

This exhibition will present historical artifacts, stories and photos from Healdsburg’s little-known tourism history. Of special interest will be a new scale architectural replica of West Street (Healdsburg Avenue) during the 1930s when tourist promotion was in its heyday. This display, handcrafted over many months by Jon Lacaillade with Maggie Bates, will take your breath away. You won’t want to miss it!
The Backroom at the Museum
by Jane Bonham, Office Manager

Those words might call up a certain image if you are of my generation and watched those ubiquitous westerns. The back room was where the gamblers played cards, with quick-draw reflexes ready to challenge the cheating snake across the table. I have had to update my files, because these days the term has cleaned up nicely and now refers to the accounting and administrative functions supporting a business. Who knew?

Many of you do know that an additional room downstairs is now available for new uses, because the Collection artifacts once stored there have been moved to a new home in our museum-quality, climate-controlled environment. (Three cheers!)

Referred to previously simply as the back room, there have been a variety of ideas brought forth for its new life. Perhaps it should be a larger office for Executive Director/Curator Holly Hoods? It would be nice to have a second table for meetings when the conference table is used for research, filled with Sanborn maps, while a researcher finds an ancestors’ lodging or a realtor tracks down a potential investment’s provenance. Could this additional space allow the research center to become a quiet room, if active conversations for both work and socializing moved to the back? How about a lunch room or snack space to protect the research room rug from further staining? “And don’t forget my desk-without-wheels and locking cabinet,” say I.

So many alternatives, preferences and visions offered! It seemed that making decisions would be a long way off. To the rescue, and not for the first time, Stan Becker brought his organizational skills and talents to “herding the cats” into a logical and practical decision-making process. He told staff that he would present 100 questions and moderate a meeting with Holly, Whitney and Jane, in order to move through the plethora of options. There were actually only 49 questions in eight categories, but it worked like magic over the course of two meetings. From this, Stan summarized our reasoning in each of the eight categories and produced a schematic drawing for each room. With these concrete tools, it will be much easier to move forward. Thanks Stan!!!

AAUW Homes Tour
Sunday, May 7
10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tickets: $35 in advance, $40 day of tour
http://healdsburg-ca.aauw.net

Internship Update
by Lauren Carriere

Every year the American Association of University Women (AAUW) hosts a Healdsburg Homes Tour to highlight some of the fabulous architecture in Healdsburg. The Homes Tour is a great way to recognize local homes and homeowners in addition to raising funds for local schools. One of the ways the Museum participates in this effort is by researching and writing descriptions of the homes included in the tour. This semester, my internship at the Museum focused on writing some of these descriptions.

I have been fascinated with the homes of Healdsburg since I started interning at the Museum two years ago. It is the history and variety of architectural styles that interest me most. I was excited to do this internship so I could learn more about architecture and the history of some of the houses in Healdsburg.

One of my favorite parts about writing for the Homes Tour is that I got to piece together small bits of information to create a larger story of the house. I combined architectural information, tax records, map information, newspaper records, resource surveys, current owner biographies and other previously done research to illuminate their colorful histories.

Though I still have a lot to learn about architecture, I am very proud of what I learned this semester. It was fun learning about architecture and historic homes research from Museum Executive Director/ Curator Holly Hoods. I hope to continue expanding my knowledge and refining my skills in future home research through the Museum.

If you find architecture, interior design, landscape design or Healdsburg’s history interesting, I suggest going on the Healdsburg Homes Tour. It will be a lot of fun and you will get to visit the houses we wrote about!
Tobes Memorial History Walk  

by Whitney Hopkins

On Saturday, April 1, I joined 90+ walkers on a 23 mile journey from Healdsburg to Cloverdale. The Jeff Tobes Memorial History Walk, organized by the Sonoma County Historical Society, honored the passionate walker and history buff Jeff Tobes who initiated the event 13 years ago. Tobes passed away in 2015. This year’s walk was organized by volunteers Ray Johnson and Sean Bressie.

The walkers set off from the Healdsburg Park and Ride south of Memorial Bridge in the dark at 6:00 am. We stopped at the Museum at 6:30 am, just as the sun was starting to rise. There, I unlocked the Museum so the group could take a quick walk through our exhibit gallery. Then everyone gathered on the steps of the museum to listen to some Healdsburg history before continuing on through the Plaza to Big Johns Market where breakfast was served.

The group continued out Chiquita Road and onto Lytton Springs Road. We made good time walking in the vineyards of Alexander Valley. We stopped at Isis Oasis in Geyserville before heading over to Bosworth and Son General Mercantile where Ann Howard, our intrepid Geyserville history promoter, had set up easels featuring vintage Geyserville photos and history. Ann was also there to greet the group and answer questions.

From there we continued to Hoffman Park, north of Geyserville for lunch. With a long walk after lunch, we were happy to arrive at Italian Swiss Colony at Asti (now owned by E.&J. Gallo) for a history and wine tasting (and water) break.

A final push took us on through Cloverdale, where delicious tamales were eaten al fresco in the park.

What Do Volunteers Do?  

by Pat McCracken and Margaret Dean

Many different tasks await our volunteers. Here is an example: Pat McCracken and Margaret Dean describe their recently completed project.

The collection of the Smith Robinson albums contains local newspaper clippings of our military personnel from World War II to the Korean War. Also, included in the albums were letters from many military officers thanking Smitty and Healdsburg for their support for the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry. Many cookies and goodies were sent to these soldiers to show our support for their sacrifices for our country.”

We completed entering 17 photo albums into PastPerfect (the Museum software that catalogues information for easy access). These albums were compiled by Smith Robinson and covered the period of the WWII through Korean War. There are many photos of the young men and women who served, as well as newspaper clippings relating to their experiences.

Many tragic stories and heroic moments are recorded in these albums. The photos are a snapshot in the time of life in the 40s and 50s. Smitty recorded almost on a daily basis, through photos, newspaper articles and letters, so many stories. The true horrific cost of war and the resilience of a small town are chronicled within these albums. It has been our privilege to participate in this project.
Tribute to Jeri Myers, a Memorable Museum Leader
by Holly Hoods

The Museum community was saddened to learn of the demise of Jeri Susan Myers of a heart attack at age 71 at her home in Healdsburg, February 2017.

Jeri was a two-term Past President of the Healdsburg Museum & Historical Society, and recipient of the prestigious Langhart Volunteer Appreciation Award. She played a significant role in the history of our organization.

Jeri led the Museum Board during challenging years post-1993 when the Historical Society struggled to keep the Museum doors open after the City eliminated funding for the Curator position and most Museum operating expenses. Her notable Museum contributions included creation of a history speaker program, implementation of new outreach events and oversight of a major gallery installation in 2000. She also helped establish and grow the Museum Endowment and was the longtime chair of our annual Barn Sale fundraiser.

Jeri was an intelligent, dynamic lady with an outgoing personality, bright red hair and a hearty sense of humor. She had a deep affinity for Lucille Ball, referring to herself as “Jeri Susan ‘Magillicuddy’ Myers” in homage to Lucy Magillicuddy Ricardo, Lucille Ball’s famous character in “I Love Lucy.”

Born in New Hampshire, Jeri was adopted and spent her early years in Falls Church, Virginia. She came to consider Menlo Park, California, her home. She spent ten years there, including her high school years. Jeri graduated from the University of Oregon in 1966, obtaining a BA in English. Two days after receiving her degree, Jeri went to work for Pacific Bell. She ended up staying in telecommunications for 27 years!

Jeri’s career took her through many technological changes and after 1984, the many challenges of divestiture. She initially managed long distance and directory assistance operators and then spent nearly a decade as a training specialist and troubleshooter, traveling throughout Central California cities. Her job took her to San Francisco in 1973, then Piscataway, New Jersey where she coordinated national task forces that developed Bell Systems standards for system development.

She traveled extensively during her career and maintained warm friendships across the country. In 1992, Jeri moved to Healdsburg in retirement from her successful telecommunications career. She remained in Healdsburg except for a brief interlude in Prescott, Arizona. Jeri returned to town in 2014, rekindling some old friendships, rejoining the Museum and taking up a regular seat at Singletree Café.

We will remember Jeri and long appreciate her many contributions. According to her wishes, no service is planned.

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In spring of 2006, I had the opportunity to write an article for the Russian River Recorder about Alexander Bennett (A.B.) Nalley, a pioneer Russian River Valley resident, and his descendants. When I conducted research for the article, I spoke with Barclay Nalley (b. 1926), the last Nalley who grew up on the family ranch on Eastside Road. At the time, Barclay fondly recalled his childhood – gathering eggs, feeding chickens, milking cows, saddling horses, and caring for orphaned lambs. His family moved into a house at 326 Matheson Street in 1943, when Barclay was a senior at Healdsburg High School.

After high school, Barclay joined the Navy, and then had a career in teaching 5th grade, mostly in Sunnyvale and Cupertino. Following his retirement in the 1980s, Barclay moved back to Healdsburg. He worked at Costeaux French Bakery for a period.

Over the years, I’ve enjoyed conversing with Barclay. Periodically, he would call to share his thoughts. Several months ago, he called the Museum to tell me how pleased he was that his mother Charlotte Reeves Nalley was featured in our World War I exhibit. (Her hat and photo are currently on display at the Museum.)

We were very sorry to hear of Barclay Nalley’s recent passing. Barclay’s close friends, the Seppi family, were responsible for his belongings after his death. Will Seppi kindly reached out to the Museum staff and invited us to visit Barclay’s residence to see if there was something of value to the Museum amongst his belongings. We were pleased to find some old photographs of Barclay and his family, a chair from the 19th Century Healdsburg Chair Factory, an art nouveau-style lamp (which still works!), as well as several vintage paintings by Lorenzo Latimer, an artist who grew up on Chalk Hill Road.

Barclay Nalley was one of a kind, and we will miss him. We appreciate the opportunity to add a few of Barclay’s belongings to the Museum’s Collection where they will continue to be enjoyed by others in our Healdsburg community.
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