las Plumas

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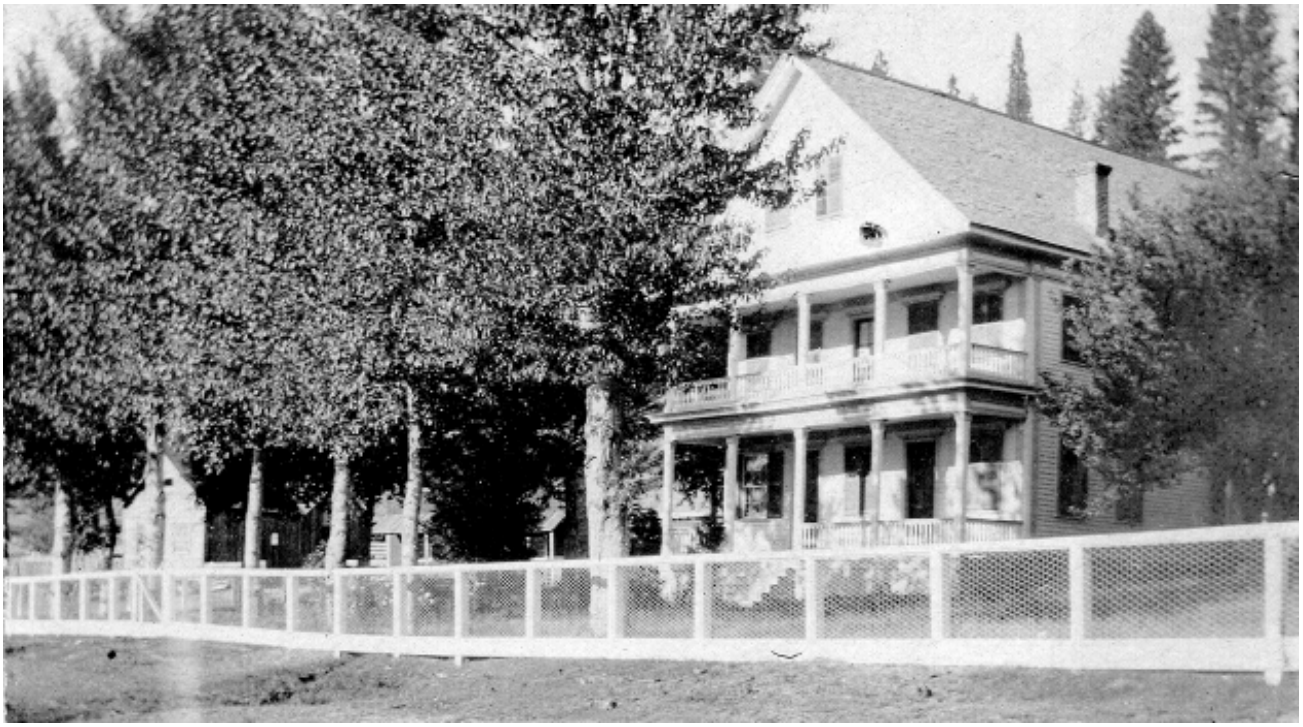
Historic County Landmark Faces Possible Demolition!



White Sulphur Springs Ranch, near Clio, California, circa 1900.

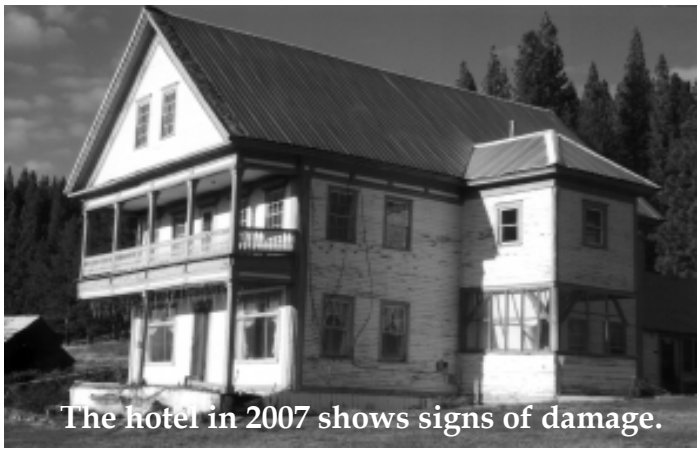
One of Plumas County's oldest and until recently, most well preserved landmarks is facing demolition. The White Sulphur Springs Ranch, long a landmark and an icon in the Mohawk Valley in East-Central Plumas County, was purchased by Bay Area entrepreneur Stephen Luczo in 2003. Since that time the circa 1860s three-story ranch house-hotel has been left to deteriorate. Earlier this year, removal of support posts on the front porch was stopped by county officials. According to a representative of the owner, Mr. Luzco would just as soon tear the down hotel and build something new and more economically viable. Although he claims to be open to community involvement in fixing the building, he says he will not spend any of his own money on it. This is an unfortunate attitude given the fact that the ranch is a registered historic property, and was advertised as such to all potential buyers.

White Sulphur Springs Ranch, viewed South, 1890s. Today's Hwy 89 passes on the right.

As historical background, it was in 1852 this ranch of about 400 acres came into existence through the efforts of three men, whose names were Gould, Friend, and Jamison. They worked at developing the ranch for a few years then sold to another pioneer, Mr. Fred King, who according to one source noted that he began running the ranch as a hotel in 1858.

GEORGE S. McLEAR.

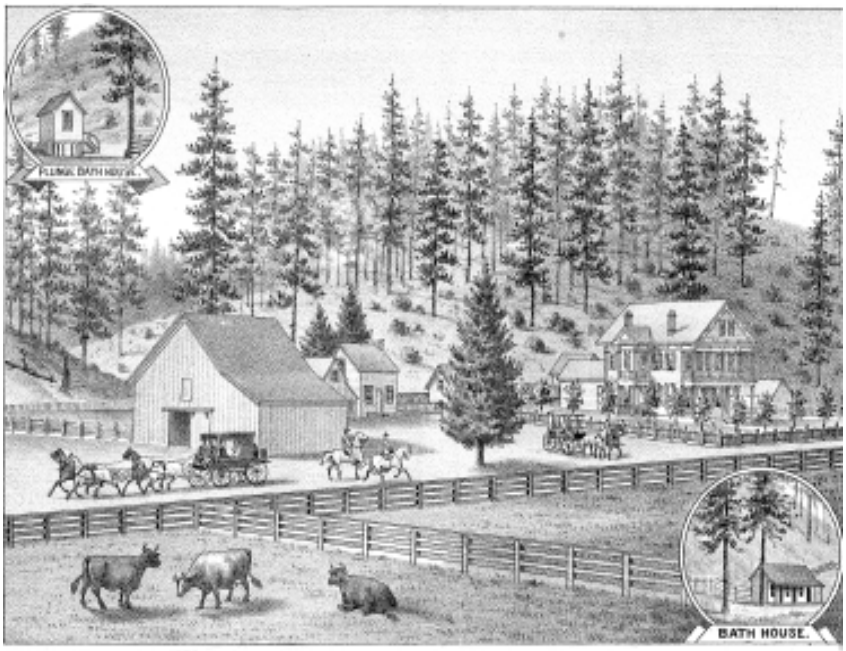
The exact date of construction of the combination ranch house-stagestop-residence is unknown but is thought to be between 1857 and 1867 when George McLear, a Jamison City merchant, purchased the property from King on the latter date. From that time until the sale in 2003, the property had remained in his family and with the family of close associates. Long recognized as an important piece of Plumas County history, the White Sulphur Springs Ranch has been listed as a historic property in the Plumas County General Plan since at least 1983, and was formally dedicated as a historic ranch by E Clampus Vitus in 1979. The forced auction and sale of the property, house, and contents in 2003 ended the long tenure of family and associates. Local realtors involved in the sale of the property ran large ads to make sure that potential buyers were aware that the property was historic. After the sale of the property, in 2004 the new owner without warning or required county permits, razed three houses and several outbuildings on the property. Later damage to the hotel itself resulted in the county issuing a red tag on the building. (See photo at left and next page).



The hotel in 2007 shows signs of damage.

According to local historian, Edward C. Brown, now deceased:

The road in front of the ranch is now Highway 89 and paved, but it was dirt and not much of a road when White Sulphur Springs Ranch came into existence. That was in 1852.



SULPHUR SPRINGS HOTEL, GEO. S. McLEAR, PROPRIETOR,
MOHAWK VALLEY, PLUMAS CO. CAL.

It was first a stagecoach stop, hotel for travelers and ranch, serving the stagecoach line that ran between Quincy and Truckee.

The ranch and property, originally some 400 acres, was purchased in 1867 by George Spear McLear, a native of Pennsylvania. McLear, born in 1828, was trained in the east in carpentry and furniture making. He set sail from New York in 1855, bound for San Francisco. Prior to arriving in the Mohawk Valley area, McLear lived in El Dorado County, Weaverville, and Yreka and had been occupied at several trades, including carpentry and mining. He gave up a merchandising operation to purchase the Sulphur Springs Ranch, which subsequently took on his name.

During the same month he bought the ranch, on October 17th 1867, George McLear married Mrs. Mary J. Purdom. The McLear-Purdom marriage produced four children, Edith, Maud, Isabel (Bel), and George, Jr.

In 1879, George McLear was appointed to serve the remainder of a vacant supervisor term and, in 1880, was subsequently elected to the office, in which he occupied several successive terms. While engaged as a county supervisor, McLear continued the various operations at the ranch, maintaining its status as stagecoach stop and hotel. He died in 1890.

Fariss & Smith's 1882 History of Plumas County described the ranch as follows:

"At the head of the valley, close up to the encircling mountains, is Sulphur Springs ranch and hotel, property of George S. McLear, a member of the board of supervisors for this district. This is one of the most beautiful and attractive mountain resorts of Plumas. It lies on the sunny side of the valley, 5,000 feet above the sea, overlooking fine meadows, beyond which rise the lofty, snow-capped peaks of the Sierra summits. The water of the spring is warm, and known as white sulphur. It has never been analyzed, but is believed to closely resemble the famous springs of Virginia. The hotel building contains three

These historic buildings, seen from the hotel porch, were part of the White Sulphur Springs Ranch and were razed soon after the property sold, without benefit of a county building permit.

stories, is finely furnished, and pleasingly managed by Mrs. McLear and her estimable daughter Frankie (from a previous marriage). It is located on the stage road from Quincy and Plumas Eureka toTruckee, and the Sierra Iron and Quincy R.R. Co. will soon have a narrow-gauge track connecting the valley with Reno."

George McLear died in 1890, leaving the ranch and its operations to be continued by his four children, none of who were ever to marry. McLear had begun raising cattle on the ranch and this became an increasingly important factor in the maintenance of the ranch. The four McLear offspring continued to live at the ranch for the remainder of their lives, each in turn dying there. Bel, the last of the McLears, died in the early 1950s, leaving the ranch to Harry McKenzie's family. Harry McKenzie received the ranch in 1974 and continued to maintain it in the historic style it had enjoyed for over a century. He and his wife Lea also installed a forced air heating system that utilized the 80-degree hot water from the sulphur springs. His step-children, Don Miller and Linda Vanella were the last of his family to own the property when it was sold to the present owner.

Over several generations, local residents have admired and enjoyed this beautiful ranch and its naturally warm water. The photos on this page show locals partaking of the pool in the 1930s, complete with ranch-supplied wool bathing suits.

Unfortunately, there are a number of instances in Plumas County where out-of-area buyers have purchased historic properties here and then torn them down or left them to rot. When contacted about the properties, most claim they had no idea the property they purchased was historic! The 1860s Knoll Ranch on the Taylorsville Road is another historic ranch that is in grave danger. Keddie Hotel and the Mohawk Hotel are also ones that will probably never see restoration or renovation. These are just a few of a number of endangered historic county landmarks. For more information on how to help historic preservation, call the museum at 530-283-6320 or email us at pcmuseum@psln.com.

Memorial Donations

When a Memorial Donation is made in a loved one's name, a Museum Memorial card is sent to the family, the person's name and biography is entered into the Perpetual Memorial Volumes, and the donor's name is added to the Memorial. Since the last newsletter, donations have been given to the museum in memory of the following people:

Dave Bissell, *Quincy;* Connie Foster, *Sonora;* Evelyn McKevitt, *Quincy;* June Olson, *Quincy;* Mike Serpilio, *Quincy;* Norman White, *Quincy;* Lloyd Woods, *Quincy*

New History Books Coming Soon!

Several new local history books will soon be available. One is ***Saga of a Mountain Meadow: A History of Bucks Ranch & Bucks Lake*** by Scott Lawson. This pictorial history of the mile-high lake should be out in about two months. The other is ***The History of the Timber Industry in Plumas County***, coauthored by Daniel Elliott and Scott Lawson. It will be available in March of 2008. Also a pictorial, it will cover the development of the logging and sawmilling industry in Plumas County from its earliest days to the present. Other recently arrived books on the Museum's shelves include ***Too Many Irons in the Fire, A History of Cattle Ranching in Northern Plumas County*** by Cheryl Haase; ***The Lake Almanor Story*** by Tim. I. Purdy; ***From Slave to Superstar of the Old West, The Story of Jim Beckwourth*** by Tom DeMund; and Images of America's ***The Towns of Mt. Lassen.*** Be sure to stop in and browse the Museum's large selection of local and regional history and natural history books for the holiday season.

Scenes from our 2007 Bus Tours

Sierra Valley tour participants braved a freezing wind to hear Mark Dotta's history of the Dotta Ranch and ranching in the Sierra Valley. Dave & Doris Goss, Don Guidici, and Gary Bullis also made us welcome at their ranches. The Williams House Museum and the Jim Beckwourth Cabin Museum were also stops on the tour. **(See next page)**

Despite the rain and hail, everyone enjoyed the buffet lunch and toasty woodstove at Reilly's Saloon & Cafe on the La Porte bus tour.

New Members

Thank you to all our new and renewing members!
Your continued support is appreciated greatly and among many other things, helps fund this newsletter.

Individuals: Constance B. Hagen, *Carmichael, CA,* **Susan-Marie Hagen**, *Pacifica, CA,* **Alice Kingsworth,** *Sacramento, CA,* **Linda McDermott,** *Quincy,* **Harold McGrath,** *Clio,* **Richard Page,** *Portland, OR,* **Antoinette Ryan,** *Quincy,* **Arthur Thompson,** *Meadow Valley,* **Barbara Wanish,** *Roseville.*

Family: Heather & Lafe Alexander, *Meadow Valley,* **David & Suzanne Bergum,** *Arnold,* **Bob & Barbara Emert,** *San Carlos*, **Terry & Leah Feay,** *Quincy,* **Daniel & Theresa Giosso,** *San Carlos,* **Richard & Melissa Stevens,** *Paradise,* **Mike & Karen Thompson,** *Clio,* **Joe & Heather Way**, *Quincy,* **Jack & Jan Zygner,** *Clio.*

Patron: Nancy Gambell Ferrell, *Quincy*, **William & Jennifer Seibold,** *Quincy.*

Corporate: Walton's Grizzly Lodge, *Portola.*

ARTIFACTS DONATED

We would like to thank the following people for their generous artifact donations:

Barry Bailey: 1913 Sacramento Bee newspaper clippings of trial of F.G Hail; **Dee Barbea**: Various World War I & II photo prints, books, and magazines; **Dick Bari**: Pneumatic mining drill with stand; **Bob & Lou Boschee**: Velvet table cover; **Jeri Burzloff**: The Pine, 1915 and 1925; **Robert Canby**: 1851 Rich Bar oil painting; **Jan Cayot**: Walnut pump organ, circa 1864; **Mary Chappell**: Early Canadian chain saw; **Richard Clemons**: Dry ear corn kernel remover, Hudson sprayer, portable bedside oil heater; **Pat Cook**: Fagg's Ranch School wooden porch post; **Sandy Coots**: B.F. Goodrich ice bag, empty tin of Milk of Magnesia tablets; **Karen Cole Correll**: Postcard of fire in Crescent Mills; **Jeff Crawford**: Master thesis on the African American Mill Workers of the Quincy Lumber Co. 1926-1955; **Don Dailey**: Coprolites and gastroliths, California wildflower book; **Bob Fitzsimmons**: List of sawmills from the 1930's-1940's, Plumas County Bank check book, "A Pictorial Record of the Big Snow of '52" booklet; **Peggy Frisen**: Handmade gold smelting pot from Plumas Eureka Mine; **Irwin & Carol Fust**: Two 1910 Plumas newspapers; **Ruth Gardiner**: Two copies of the Mountain Messenger from 1887; **Ron George**: Double drum winch; **Ruth Van Gilder**: Six glass electric insulators; **Leon Gloeden**: Collection of Great Western Power & P.G & E. photos and papers; **Gold Nugget Museum**: Plumas County cartoon map; **Chuck & Diana Goubert**: Sally Posner oil painting, Janet Gogue oil painting; **Becky Herrin**: Water project reports; **Norman Herring**: Photos of Indian Valley & Caribou, voter registers, newspaper clipping; **Jerald Holland**: Five elementary school books used in Plumas County; **John Issac**: Toy longboard skis, Gill Family photo album, Three photo albums of various areas in Plumas County, Poetry book by Flora Penman Gill, Genealogy notebook of Penman and Gill families; **Don Johns**: Steam shovel plaque, bolt shaper; **Dean & Diane Lawson**: Quincy High School Pine 1945 yearbook; **Bob Lowery**: One Odd Fellows auto bumper display placard, Quincy Water Works wood water pipe, Summit Lake sign; **Marna Markham**: Fourth grade geography book; **John Marvin**: Plumas Antique Auto Club archives 1952-1992; **Jay Mills**: Photo album of Lakes Basin, Blairsden, Lake Almanor areas; **Len Mosley**: Blacksmith iron tongs, hand-forged tongs; **Karen Olmstead**: Three railroad passes Quincy RR & Indian Valley RR; **Plumas County Clerk**: Indian Valley Bank ledgers, checks, records, circa 1912-1943; **Plumas County Sheriff**: Three Plumas County Sheriff's Jail Registers, 1913-1948, Seven Plumas County Sheriff's Register of Auctions, 1914-1959; **Robert Ridley**: Collection of sketches by Stella Billings, various photos of areas in Plumas County, 1932 James Billing diary, various documents, map & book, iron wheel from wheelbarrow; **Ronald & Dorothy Rund**: World War I U.S. Army uniform, Navajo blanket; **John Sheehan**: Bell-shaped souvenir for highway promotion; **Keri Taborski**: Chinese coins, American Legion cap; **Marilyn Tolen**: One book, "Good Indian" by B.M. Bower; **Jackie Yoachum**: Agriculture Extension books; **Stanley & Louise Young**: American Legion Auxiliary of Dewey F. McElroy Unit 304 applications.

About the Museum...

Our series of bus trips highlighting many of Plumas County's historic and scenic places this summer were very popular and successful, and based on the feedback we received, we are contemplating offering them for this coming year. We will be reviewing their logistics and how to improve on areas with shortcomings. We may also explore holding the tours on weekdays rather than weekends to hopefully resolve potential conflicts with weekend events. Despite the sometimes unruly weather, participants took it in stride and enjoyed their experience. Stay tuned for more information.

We are still in great need of help for our wagon sheds on our lot behind the 1878 Variel Home. The sheds are needed to provide protection for our sleigh, water wagon, and hearse, as well as a number of ranching and farming artifacts. Any donations of sound lumber, timbers, plywood, construction materials, or cash will be greatly appreciated. The plan will allow visitors to enter some sheds, as well as walk a pleasant pathway around the buildings. Picnic tables will be available for lunches and other functions.

During August and September ***Timothy*** exhibited his sculptures, taxidermy, basketry and other artwork. During October the Museum exhibited its collection of artwork by local artists. Pieces ranged from 1890s watercolors and oils to 1990s acrylics and pastels. For November and December Taylorsville artist ***Sally Yost*** is exhibiting "***40 Years of Art***," a retrospective of her career in pastels, oil, watercolor, and prints. A reception held on November 2nd in conjunction with Quincy's Art Walk was well attended and greatly enjoyed. Be sure to drop in to see Sally's exhibit before the end of the year. And remember, her works are for sale, and she does offer lay-away.

During the past few months, JoAnn Filippi, who retired from the Museum several years ago, has been filling in for an employee on medical leave. JoAnn has completed the monumental task of sorting, cataloging, boxing and labeling the hundreds of historic records of Plumas County's legal past. As of this writing, we are happy to announce a partnership between the Museum and Feather River College. Feather River College is providing a student employee to work at the Museum on a part-time basis. Angelique Cordes of Taylorsville is working on her history major and educational credentials and is excited at the prospect of working in the Museum's Archival Collection. Angelique will be accessioning and cataloging thousands of photographs, scrapbooks, diaries, letters, business records, legal documents, and much more. Angelique is enthusiastic and should prove to be a huge asset for the Museum's ongoing cataloging and inventory projects.

There have been many changes at the Museum of late, so be sure to drop by for a visit soon!

We would like to thank these generous people for donating to the Museum's monetary fund:

Donna Jean Agnew, Andy & Gayle Anderson, Dorris Beck, Nicholas Becker, Louise Bertocchi, Patricia Carlson, Patsy Carpenter, Thelma Drybread-Olson, Bob & Barbara Emert, Gerals & Rose Engler, Charles & Margaret Goodart, Edmund G. Hampton, Marianna Hoolhorst, Ted & Betty Hoskins, Richard & Jane Jacobs, Joseph P. Kenyon Jr., John & Nancy Koppel, Larry & Marna Markham, John & Marge Murray, David Myrick, Joan Normington, Betty Penland, Orphie & Kay Pierson, Terry & Toby Reeson, Vincent & Lisa Reiser, Bob & Inez Robbins, Elmer & Helen Roberti, Burl & Billie June Rodgers, JoAnn "Neubert" Turner, Tom & Diane Uchytil, Jim & Bunny Woods.

Please join these wonderful people by sending your donation.

Scenes from the Sally Yost Reception

A guest partakes of art and refreshments at the Sally Yost Reception on the Stella Miller Mezzanine Gallery.

Artist Sally Yost and exhibition assistant Ruth Jackson share some conversation at Sally's art reception.

From the Director

This past season has certainly been a busy and productive one. The Museum, along with the Quincy Chamber of Commerce and the Plumas County Visitors Bureau hosted a number of large group tour busses from the Sacramento area. On October 20th, the same day I was giving a Museum-sponsored bus tour of the Sierra Valley, Assistant Museum Director Lori Simpson took on three huge bus tours back to back! Over 130 people toured the Museum and enjoyed the displays and the fall colors.

Over the years our docent pool for various reasons has declined. We rely extensively on these generous folks, so if you would like to volunteer at the museum, please call Lori Simpson at 283-6320 for information. We can always use help with the Exhibit Yard, Blacksmith Shop, construction of wagon sheds, indexing, etc. Speaking of volunteers, our railroad gang has restored our logging railroad locomotive to running condition!

The 1864 Taylorsville School is now in much better shape than it has been in over fifty years thanks to the efforts of Bruce Livingston, John Walker, and Mitchell Easterday who together were able to repair much of the damage from vandalism and age. Major work still needed is the electric hookup and water and sewer. We are always looking for volunteers to help on this great old structure.

Our Exhibit Yard displays have all received a generous coating of linseed oil as a weather repellant, the Variel Home Garden is winterized thanks to Mary Bird, DeAnne Mosley, and Melissa Shelton, and the Blacksmith Shop saw some service this year with Ray Nichol demonstrating for various groups on several occasions.

The 43rd Annual Wassail Bowl will be held at the Plumas County Courthouse on December 14th to celebrate the season. The late Lloyd Woods began another tradition some years back with the Gingerbread House Contest. This year, Zona Morgan has stepped up to the plate to oversee the contest, so all of you bakers and decorators get busy with your gingerbread building plans! Awards in the various categories will be given at the Wassail Bowl with the houses available for viewing at the Museum.

In closing, I would like wish everyone happy holidays and invite you all to drop by for a visit to YOUR Museum!

Scott J. Lawson, Director

TREA$URER'$ NOTE$

Susan Payne of Meadow Valley is currently keeping the books for the Museum Association and Ken Barnard, a Business & Tax Consultant and Museum Association Trustee is preparing our taxes. Enclosed in this newsletter you will find a renewal form to use in renewing your membership and in making donations to the museum. We really need and value your support, any amount you can offer will be greatly appreciated and put to very good use. Thank you for supporting the Plumas County Museum!

Bob Edwards, Treasurer
Plumas County Museum Association, Inc.

The Spanish Peak Lumber Co. Railroad Locomotive is Alive!

As we noted in the Summer 2007 issue, the Spanish Peak Lumber Company No.2 Railroad project is still on track. But, due to some unforseen circumstances, we have done some renegotiating with the Fair and may have to run our track on the east side of Fairgrounds Road until such time as we can clear an area south of the grandstands.We can always use donations, so give freely and often!

A look at the newly refurbished interior of the locomotive's cab.

Len Mosley, one the SPLCo No.2 volunteers tightens a nut on the engine.

MUSEUM BOOK STORE

Some of the books for sale at the Museum.

Don't forget the Museum Book Store when you are looking for a gift. We have over 100 titles on local, regional, and natural history, as well as cookbooks, cards, and souvenirs. We also carry an extensive line of handcrafted gold jewelry created by Frank Augugliaro. Frank recovers the gold himself directly out of the frigid waters of Nelson Creek during the summer, then creates his fine jewelry during the winter. We also have local artwork for sale during most artist shows on our Mezzanine Gallery. Be sure to check us out on your next shopping expedition or visit our online store at www.plumasmuseum.org!

EXHIBITS on the Mezzanine

Nov-Dec: Sally Yost, "40 Years of Art." Pastels, drawings, etchings, sketch books.
Call the Museum at 283-6320 for the 2008 mezzanine schedule.

TRUSTEES:
Ken Barnard, Graeagle
Charlie Brown, Quincy
Don Clark, Graeagle
Patrick Cook, Graeagle
Marc Eastman, Quincy
Bob Edwards, Quincy
Ginger Gramm, Greenville
Jerry Holland, Quincy
John Larrieu, Portola
Doug Miller, Chester
Gaye Porter, Quincy

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Ann Harrigan, Taylorsville
Don Johns, Sr., Oroville
Norman Lamb, Greenville
Doug Miller, Chester
Helen Roberti, Beckwourth
Nat Snyder, Cromberg
John Weddle, Quincy
Two seats are vacant. Call if interested in serving.
(One in Quincy, one in Indian Valley)

STAFF:
Scott Lawson, Director
Lori Simpson, Asst. Dir.
Laure Gage, Registrar

www.plumasmuseum.org

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Individual $25, Family $35, Patron $100, Sustaining $1000, Corporate $150

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