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Signs of spring coming up beside the Centennial Annex.

We are pleased to offer High Tea at Home, a safe, fun, and delicious alternative to our usual Victorian Tea. You are invited to order a to-go pack that includes everything needed for a delightful afternoon tea party: sweet and savory homemade bite-sized creations, a selection of Republic of Tea bags, served with lovely china plates and vintage-inspired napkins. Proceeds will support preservation of the McConnell Mansion as well as local foodbanks.

Orders will be available for pick-up on Saturday, May 8th from 11am to 1pm at the McConnell Mansion. Quantities are limited, and orders must be received by May 4th, so don’t delay!

Visit latahcountyhistoricalsociety.org/high-tea to place your order.
Recently here at LCHS, we received an envelope in the mail full of early 1900s postcard prints from around the area. The sender, a woman from Wyoming, included a note explaining that her brother had found them in a flea market in New Jersey. Neither one knew what to do with the items, so she sent them to us. These postcards mostly show scenes around Bovill and Elk River, and are a perfect example of one of my favorite parts of working here: the occasional discovery of new information on a familiar topic. Take this image of the old Bovill School, for instance. The building is arguably one of the most distinctive in Latah County, with that prominent, stepped-roof entry. While I’ve seen many pictures of it, I’ve never seen one from this angle or distance. And what is the building to the left? What became of the school itself? When exactly was this picture taken?

Which brings me to another favorite (and sometimes maddening) part of working here: one new discovery invariably leads to more questions, and those questions lead to more questions, and suddenly we’re down the rabbit hole! It’s donations like this that make it possible for LCHS to assist you with whatever questions you might have about our shared history, even (and maybe especially) if it leads to a dozen more questions.

- Elaina

Interesting Office Finds

with the Office Coordinator

Recently acquired LCHS photo 02-03-055 showing the Bovill School Note the shadow of the camera and photographer in the road. It was probably a "travel camera," which became popular around 1900.
Crocus and daffodils, meadowlarks and robins! Spring is here, and the warmth and sunshine are great!

However, the pandemic is still with us and we are still dealing with the consequences. As more vaccinations are completed, we are making tentative plans for in-person events. We’ve really missed the varied face-to-face contacts with you that we’ve enjoyed for so many years. Stay tuned for developments.

As a cost of the pandemic, after nearly a full year of effort to balance pandemic concerns, remote and on-site job responsibilities, and at-home schooling and lack of childcare facilities for three active little boys, Zach Wnek resigned his position in February. We appreciate his seven years of dedicated service as curator for LCHS. The good news is we attracted a very strong pool of applicants to fill his shoes. After Zoom interviews the hiring committee narrowed the field to four candidates who will be visiting in person in April. We hope to be able to introduce you to a new LCHS curator by early June.

In the meantime, we have taken advantage of a reduction in other normal activities to address some longstanding collections issues made worse by the year-long upheaval due to the coronavirus. Dulce and Elaina have worked closely with some dedicated volunteers to reorganize spaces and process a backlog of donations that include objects, photos, documents and memorabilia. It has been my pleasure to become reacquainted with some of the many functions of our PastPerfect museum software in cataloguing new acquisitions. The goal of all this activity is to provide a fresh start for our new curator.

In March one whole year ago Zach hosted a meeting in the Annex to revitalize our collections committee. We designated a new chair for the committee and came up with an ambitious plan to clarify and redefine collections policies and procedures. Our next meeting, scheduled for April 21, 2020, was cancelled by the pandemic shutdown, and our ambitious plan was stopped in its tracks. As life returns to more normal and our new curator is hired, we will get back to work on the overall collections plan.

For now we continue to adapt. As with our Harvest Dinner last November, our traditional Victorian Tea in May has been creatively re-imagined by our talented team of directors (details and reservations on the LCHS website). Lula’s Library hopes to add an in-person option to the book club’s monthly Zoom meetings soon. You can learn more about our monthly book club by visiting our website. As always, we appreciate your participation and ongoing support.

Take care. We’ll meet again soon.

- LeNelle McInturff

Director's Remarks

There is a hopefulness in the air around our office. It must be because of the sunshine streaming through the windows at the Centennial Annex, or the first flowers of the season poking up around the building. It is surely because Elaina and I can greet each other with smiles fully on display, not needing to don masks during work meetings after receiving our COVID-19 vaccines earlier this year. It is also because we are slowly but surely moving donated materials from the To-Do pile to the Done pile, or welcoming a growing number of visitors to the McConnell Mansion for tours. It’s because of all these things and more that I am feeling truly optimistic about what 2021 has the potential to deliver.

It was difficult to lose our Museum Curator, Zach, in February. I respect his decision to prioritize the needs of his family. His efforts to digitize parts of our collection leave a lasting mark, and we know that the next curator will benefit from Zach’s work. LCHS is exemplary in many ways, and the long tenures of staff members should be celebrated.

As we look ahead to warmer weather, I hope you will save a few dates on your calendars.

Idaho Gives is right around the corner! This year the online celebration of philanthropy, which is organized by the Idaho Nonprofit Center, will run from April 29th through May 6th. You can give online by going to www.IdahoGives.org and typing “Latah County Historical Society” into the search bar. We are once again thankful for our friend Ted Curet of Allstate Insurance and his offer to match the first $500 donated. Your gifts, be they $5 or $50, even have the potential to win us golden-ticket style prizes.

If you are looking for a lovely gift to share with someone special (like a mom in your life), consider purchasing a tea party for two through our High Tea at Home event. This to-go style event replaces our usual Victorian Tea fundraiser, at least for this year, and will support ongoing preservation efforts at the McConnell Mansion. We also intend to share part of the proceeds with Moscow area foodbanks. You can find all the details on our website. Just be sure to order by May 4th.

I am so excited to share with you all that we are planning not one, but two, Suds with a Scholar! Mark your calendars for June 23rd to hear from Kathy Aiken about the life and legacy of Permeal French, and also for August 11th, when Keith Petersen will tell all about how Idaho got its shape. Things will look a little different than past Suds events, including moving the events outside to the Latah County Fairgrounds stage. The prospect of seeing our members and friends this summer brings me so much joy. Look for more details in the coming months.

Finally, I wanted to share a bit of wonderful news about someone to whom our organization is deeply indebted. Mary Reed, the long-time director of LCHS, has been selected by the Idaho Humanities Council for its Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities Award. This highly selective award recognizes Mary’s decades of dedication to Idaho museums and more specifically for celebrating the cultural history of Latah County. We are so pleased for our friend!

I continue to wish you all good health and good cheer. Together we will see this through.

With warm regards,

- Dulce