

The Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS) thanks Ouray County Plaindealer, for their assistance in printing and distributing our newsletter.

# HISTORIAN

NEWSLETTER  
WINTER ~ SPRING 2014

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS) is dedicated to preserve, protect, procure, exhibit, and interpret whatever relates to the natural, social, and cultural history of Ouray County and the adjacent San Juan Mountain Region of Colorado.

## Annual message to our beloved members

The OCHS is looking forward to a successful new year as well as we prepare ourselves for the grand “unveiling” of our new museum annex on Main Street in Ouray. Many of our members have followed with great interest the acquisition of our new archival space in the historic Story Block building in central Ouray. This structure will house our entire collection of historic books, geology books, maps, documents and vintage photos. Moreover, the facility will serve as a research facility for all those interested in acquiring more knowledge about the history of our region. The space was acquired in December of 2012 but the remodeling did not start in earnest until early spring 2013. In addition to housing our entire archival collection, the space was also designed to place a museum store in the front, viewable from Main Street. We had a “soft” opening of the store on the 4th of July with limited hours thereafter. Our goal is to have a prosperous store in 2014 that will aid in our continued efforts to enlarge our endowment. Please tell your friends and neighbors

about the store and visit often when you find yourself in Ouray.

This past year has been notable in many other ways as the OCHS continued with its tradition of sponsoring quality events and learning opportunities for our members and the public at large.

Once again our Evening of History lecture series, organized by Don Paulson, was met with rave reviews by all who attended. In the early season the museum had an Otto Mears and a San Juan Photography exhibit on display while the mid-summer months had the annual walking cemetery tours as well as the Corkscrew Railroad Bed and Turntable hikes. Later in the season we had two events which surpassed our wildest expectations as fundraisers and education opportunities. Here I speak of the Geology Field Tour organized by George Moore and Robert Stoufer as well as the John Fielder Photography Workshop in late September. These two events earned acclaim and rank as possibly



▲ The John Fielder Autumn Photography Workshop was held last September.



**President's Message  
By Kevin Chismire**

the two highest fundraising events we have ever sponsored. None of these events could have been accomplished without the support of our loyal members, such as yourself. On behalf of the entire board of directors, I wish to thank you for your continued patronage and invite you again to come and visit our ever changing museum (always something new to see) as well as our new museum annex on Main Street.

See you there!

Cordially,  
Kevin J. Chismire  
President  
Ouray County Historical Society



▲ The OCHS Geology Tour held last August was coordinated by George Moore and Linda Cracraft.

### Rairdens donate workshop scholarship



▲ Members Jack and Barbara Rairden donated a student scholarship for the John Fielder Photographic Workshop.

### OCHS Receives Grant from History Colorado's State Historical Fund

The Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS) has received a \$15,000 grant from the History Colorado's Colorado State Historical Fund. The grant will provide an assessment of the Ouray County Museum building that was built in 1887 as the Ouray Miners Hospital. It served as Ouray's full service hospital until closing in 1964. OCHS purchased the building in 1976 and it has housed the museum ever since. The grant will provide preservation planning and documentation needed to begin undertaking a complete rehabilitation of the facility.

This project will assess the condition of the building's many historic features, create a prioritized list of deficiencies and establish a phased preservation and rehabilitation plan with



associated costs. Historic architectural features such as exterior decorative elements, windows and doors, the character-defining roof eaves and decorative brackets, and porches, have been

impacted by moisture infiltration, heavy use and old age. There are also potential issues with settlement of the foundation and the decay of mortar joints.

## CURATOR'S REPORT 2013

Much of our work in 2013 involved moving the paper archives, photo archives and Ross Moore Library over to the new Research



**By Don Paulson**

In early January we organized the 1500 volume Charles Neill geology collection that was donated in early November of 2013.

2013 was also a banner year for donations of historic Ouray County items (over 2000 separate items were donated).

The biggest single donor was Don Orcutt who gave us 337 historic Ouray items including legal documents, letters, photos including a Frank Rice family photo album, post cards, stock certificates, maps, etc. Orcutt, who was raised in Ouray, also gave us his 1955 Ouray High School letter sweater that is on display in the school hallway (see photo). Other important donations include a Western Electric mine telephone used in the Idarado mine, high resolution copies of historic Emil Fischer mining maps from the late 19th century, an 1876 Centennial Winchester Rifle, wooden Ouray grocery boxes from the early 20th century, a collection of 40 antique electrical insulators, a 100-year old Ouray County ballot box, two crank telephones used in Ouray in the early 20th century, a 100-year old industrial pedal sewing machine used by Gus Mechler for over 40 years in his Ouray Men's Furnishings store, a 1910 Ridgway International Order of Odd Fellows (Lodge 158) ornate members ribbon and badge, Elks Club tokens, commemorative mining badges, and many other unique

items.

During 2013 we put up over 50 new informational signs in the museum. Our museum is very unique in that 100% of our historic artifact collection is on display for visitors to see. We try to put signs up for all new items and we are working on signage for items already in the collection without informational signs. The history only comes alive when the artifacts are described. A simple survey tool might be somewhat interesting but when you know that Richard Whinnerah, for many years the Ouray County Surveyor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, actually used it on a daily basis, it really becomes much interesting.

I am working on another outstanding Evenings of History for this summer. Already lined up are talks



▲ Don Orcutt donated his 1955 Ouray High School letter sweater along with over 300 other items to the Ouray County Historical Society.

on The Uncompahgre Valley Ute Archeological Project; the Mountain Top and Grandview Mines; Mesa Verde National Park; and Historic Grocery Stores of Ouray County.

Our museum only grows better as people make donations of historic items to the museum. If you have any historic Ouray photos or documents in your family collection we would be happy to scan them and return the originals to you along with copies of the scanned files. If you haven't been to the Ouray Museum in a few years you will be surprised at the many new exhibits.



► Ouray County Historical Society curator, Don Paulson, offers his familiar smile in showing off his new desk.

Do you recognize this building?



The building was constructed around:

- a. 1880
- b. 1890
- c. 1900
- d. 1910

The first owner of the building was a man named:

- a. Albert Jeffers
- b. Judge Story
- c. Thomas Walsh
- d. George Wright

What type of business first occupied the retail space?

- a. Saloon
- b. Groceries
- c. Dry goods
- d. Hardware

Today, this building is occupied by the:

- a. Ouray County Plaindealer office
- b. North Moon Gallery
- c. Columbine Mineral Shop & Lindsey & Co. Realty
- d. Cimarron Books and Coffee House

Answers on page 3.  
◀ OCHS Photo Gregory Collection.

## 2013 Raffle Quilt Winner

The OCHS 2013 raffle quilt now resides in the Deep South. Cynthia Thornbury, holder of the winning raffle ticket, lives in Ponchatoula, Louisiana, a small town about 55 miles northwest of New Orleans.

The quilt arrived at Thornbury's home soon after her winning ticket was announced at the annual Quilter's Tea last September. "I was completely surprised and delighted to receive the call from Ouray that I had won the Cathedral Window quilt," she said in a phone interview. "I plan to display it prominently as a reminder of my visits to Colorado, a place I've always loved."

Thornbury purchased six raffle tickets this past summer during a visit to Ouray. She was attracted to the Cathedral Window design partly because she had once attempted the challenging pattern herself.

"I only completed four little squares of the lovely design because it was so time-consuming," she said. "I was very proud of those four squares! I never dreamed that I would one day own an entire Cathedral Window quilt."

The raffle drawing took place at the OCHS Quilter's Tea, held September 27 at St. John's Episcopal Church. The popular annual event offers quilters and quilt-lovers the chance to socialize, partake of fancy tea-party fare, and learn about the history of quilting. Author Jo Ann Glim, who wrote a memoir of her childhood in western Colorado, shared

quilting memories and drew the winning ticket. Sue Hillhouse, OCHS Quilt Committee chair, called the winner to break the good news.

The rainbow-hued Cathedral Window quilt was displayed at the Ouray County Museum Store at the Research Center throughout the summer and made appearances at special events including the recent Sneffels Fiber Festival. The OCHS sold over 3,000 raffle tickets from May through September. All proceeds from the raffle benefit the nonprofit OCHS.



▲ Cynthia Thornbury proudly displays the quilt she won as the holder of the winning raffle ticket.

Each year Hillhouse coordinates a team of local quilters to design and stitch a unique raffle quilt. She also organizes the museum's annual quilt show and serves as Master of Ceremonies for the Quilter's Tea.

# Michael McCullough Weaves History into Legendary Art

The bronze miner that towers over the Miner's Memorial Wall in Ouray embodies the brawny vigor of the area's mining heritage. The man who sculpted the monument is as inspiring as his creations.

Sculptor and multi-media artist Michael McCullough, a fourth-generation Coloradoan, has lived in Ridgway since 1972. His sculptures enhance natural spaces and urban thoroughfares, from Telluride's terrain parks, to Grand Junction's Main Street. McCullough's handiwork even adorns the front fenders of tricked-out Harley Davidsons throughout the country.

Locally, he is known for his

sculpture, clay sculpture models and Boody's vibrant felted scarves fill the former fire-truck garage. Silver flames shooting from an aluminum skull catch the morning sun. The fiery skull is one of McCullough's signature motorcycle accessories sold under the brand, "King's Armor."

Outside, his abstract, metal figures and Boody's miniature fairy environments draw curious visitors to the firehouse garden.

"Nothing is sacred to us," he said of his and Boody's creations. "Nearly all media can become art.

Picasso used to sculpt with bones from the fish he just ate."

Primarily self-taught (he took one semester of sculpture instruction at Florida State University) McCullough was a builder for 40 years. "It paid for my art habit," he explained. He built portions of the Cascade and Portland Creek flumes and poured the concrete vault that houses Ouray County records in the courthouse.

His artwork has steadily grown in demand over the years. He has sculpted ten commissioned representational monumental bronze statues for the people of Ouray, Telluride, Ridgway, Montrose, and Grand Junction. His bronze likeness of Walter Walker, with son Preston on his shoulders, stands prominently on Main Street in downtown Grand Junction. Walker, for whom Walker Field Airport was named, was publisher of the Grand Junction Sentinel from 1911 to 1956. Children delight in spinning the kinetic statue by turning a disc near the base.

By Kate Kellogg



McCullough's ability to capture athletic grace in motion appears in his kinetic statue of the late freerider, Hoot Brown, at the top of Telluride's terrain park. Three more of his monumental bronze statues---a woman skier, snowboarder and a hand-steel miner---reside in Mountain Village Plaza.

Ouray's San Juan Miner statue is perhaps the most iconic local landmark shaped by human rather than geological forces. The sculpture is the focal point of the Ouray Miners' Memorial at the entrance of the Hot Springs Pool. "Life-and-a-half size," in McCullough's words, the statue is nine feet tall, not including the rock pedestal and drill steel. (The miner is posed changing the bit on his drill.) The semi-circular wall behind him bears plaques honoring San Juan miners, both living and deceased.

About 14 years ago, community members proposed the installation of a memorial to keep Ouray County's mining heritage alive. Teri Blackford, Sandy Zanett, and Barb Muntyan, all from mining families, commissioned McCullough to sculpt a bronze likeness of a 20th Century hard-rock miner.

Local men who had worked at the Idarado, Camp Bird, and Standard Mines served as McCullough's models for the monument. He posed each as a stope driller, the miner who drills over a stope or "hot hole" above an ore vein. His rough early sketch of the monument is still visible on the kitchen wall in the firehouse.

Dedicated in 2003, the commanding figure and miner's wall honor the labor and sacrifice of many generations. Hundreds of community members recently came together at the memorial to grieve for the two

miners who lost their lives last November in the tragic Revenue Mine accident.

A lifelong supporter of the arts, McCullough was instrumental in helping Ridgway achieve Creative District designation from the state of Colorado in 2013. Along with other local artists, community leaders, and volunteers, he believed art to be an integral part of a county-wide economic development plan.

"We saw Ridgway as a little diamond in the middle of nowhere," he said. "We knew we had enough going on here to compete with the bigger towns. The Creative

District designation enhances our community of artists, artisans and craftspersons of all types and ages."

McCullough and Boody helped launch the Ridgway Sculpture Contest, Public Art in Ridgway, Alley Poems, Alley Art, and the popular Hotties Calendar, which showcases artistic processes that involve heat. The couple remains active in events such as monthly "Moonwalks," self-guided tours through Ridgway's creative enterprises. Weehawken Creative Arts partners with the Creative District to present these evening outings for the public.

Diagnosed with lung cancer last year, McCullough continues to live life fully and enthusiastically. Following a recent Moonwalk, the firehouse nearly overflowed with McCullough's and Boody's friends: artists and art-lovers who expressed their support appreciation for McCullough's many contributions to Ouray County's artistic renaissance.

"I don't know how much longer I have here," he said. "I'm responding well to my treatments. However long it is, I intend to make the most of each day."



bronze renderings of muscular miners, athletes, and amazingly life-like animals. One of his red fox sculpture won the People's Choice Award as part of Montrose's Public Art eXperience (PAX). His flying eagle in front of Ridgway's historic firehouse on Lena Street is comprised of 120 welded pieces.

"I was born an artist and will always be an artist," he said, surveying the creative chaos inside the firehouse, his home and studio. He shares the space with partner and muse Lucy Boody, a fiber artist and painter. The two artists welcome visitors and offer tours of the old firehouse, grounds and jail.

Water color paintings, wood

## Please consider being a member of the OCHS! Help preserve the history of Ouray County

Your membership is vital so that the Society can maintain not only our historic Museum building but our new Research Center and Archive. All membership levels include Free admission to the Museum, a 10% discount on items for sale in the gift shop and Museum bookstore, free admission to the OCHS Evenings of History series, and receive newsletters and special announcements.

Please fill in below: (Please Print)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (If Business Member) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid \_\_\_\_\_ by (check one) Cash \_\_\_ Check \_\_\_ Credit Card \_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Levels

- Silver King \$30 (Individual)
- Guston \$40 (Family)
- Revenue \$50 - \$99
- Grizzly Bear \$100 - \$249
- National Belle \$250 - \$499
- Yankee Girl \$500 - \$999
- Camp Bird \$1,000 - Up
- Business Member \$50 - Up

Please return to: OCHS, P.O. Box 151, Ouray, CO 81427 Or Phone with Credit Card info to: 970-325-4576

### OURAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Chismire, President	Bud Zanett, Treasurer	George Moore	Gail Saunders
Tom Hillhouse, Vice-President	Teri Blackford	Don Paulson, Curator	Robert Stoufer
Joey Huddleston, Secretary	Gail Jossi	Walt Rule	Ted Zeggers

## Answers to Quiz:

The Jeffers building, vintage 1890, is located at 633-5 Main Street in Ouray. The Jeffers family operated a dry goods store in this location for about 10 years. The building has also housed the selective service office and a sporting goods store as well as restaurants and shoe and millinery shops. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffers lived in an upstairs apartment. Today the building is occupied by Lindsey and Co. Real Estate Inc. and the Columbine Mineral Shop.



Information on the building from the book *Ouray's Historic Main Street: Early Visions by Wild Times* by Ann C. Hoffman and Committee.

# Miner's Memorial Wall Honors Area's Proud Mining Heritage

The Miner's Memorial Wall is a moving tribute to those miners whose hard and often dangerous work sustained both the historical and modern Ouray area. Last fall, the wall underwent some major renovations. The impressive results reflect the work of talented community members and memorial founders.

Located at the entrance of the Hot Springs Pool near the Ouray Visitors' Center, the memorial is a small park featuring Michael McCullough's larger-than-life bronze statue, known as the San Juan Miner. The statue is surrounded by a semi-circular wall of plaques honoring more than 350 individuals who worked in the mines of the San Juan

from the Zanett and Skelding Foundations, the group commissioned McCullough's work on the statue, while Speedy Scott and Clark Williams installed the wall. The memorial was dedicated in 2003. Families and friends of San Juan miners purchased plaques to honor those individuals, both living and deceased, at \$50 per plaque. Together with the grant money, the plaque sales comprised a fund to pay off the statue and maintain the memorial.

Since the dedication, the memorial wall has undergone several iterations of upgrade, due to moisture problems and issues with the materials. After the Ouray County Historical Society took over ownership in 2009, Blackford, a member of the OCHS Board, and Sandy Zanett continued to monitor and maintain the memorial. Last summer they discovered scratches on a number of plaques (vandalism) as well as weather damage.

The OCHS decided a complete overhaul was necessary. Ridgway metal artist Lisa Issenberg installed metal framework and new powder-coated, weather-resistant metal plaques. The statue reserve fund paid for the improvements.

Blackford is very pleased with the results. "I feel that the wall is a really fitting commemoration of the area's miners," she said.

The refurbished Miner's Memorial is truly a community project, as it was from the beginning. The mural on the back of the wall, a panorama of the San Juans, is the work of local artist Denise Lindsey. Ouray County residents collected mineral specimens from area mines and donated their findings to the memorial. The ore samples are affixed to the top of the wall.

Blackford is now brainstorming ideas for a spring fundraiser that will replenish the statue fund. Appropriately, the event will likely be a traditional miner's dinner that celebrates the region's mining heritage.



▲ The San Juan Miner statue is located at the entrance to the Hot Springs Pool in Ouray.



▲ OCHS has completely overhauled the Miner's Memorial Wall.



▲ Michael McCullough's kinetic sculpture of the late free-rider, Hoot Brown, located at the top of Telluride's Terrain Park.

Mountains. They were employed as miners, mill workers, assayers, geologists and in various other mining capacities.

The idea for a miner's memorial grew out of the Ouray Highgraders, a nonprofit organization that presents the annual Highgraders Holidays in Ouray. Since 1996, the popular two-day festival has held friendly competitions in traditional mining skills at Mining Heritage Park. Some of the organization's core members—including Teri Blackford, Sandy Zanett, and Barb Muntyan—envisioned a permanent, year-round memorial to commemorate the

area's mining heritage.

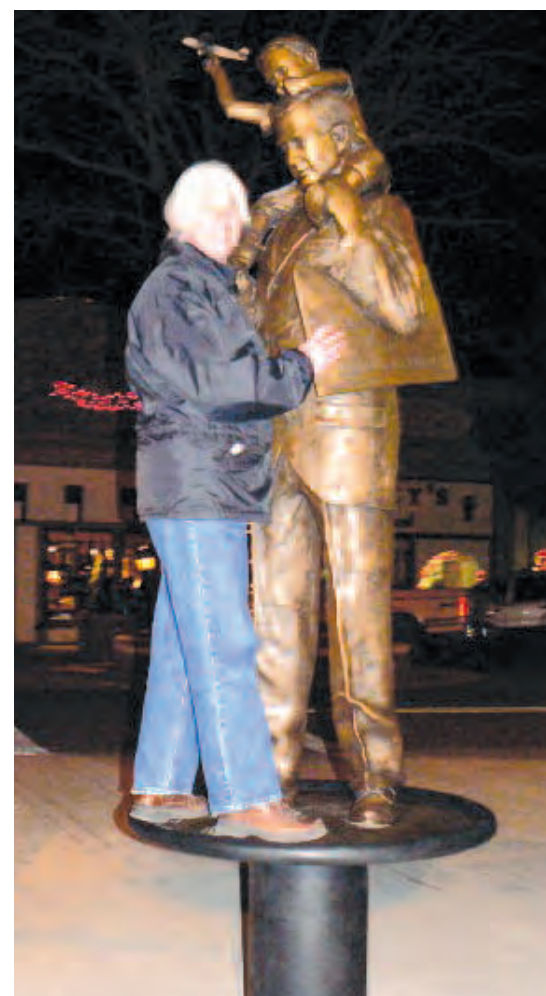
Thanks to grants



▲ Ridgway metal artist Lisa Issenberg installed metal framework and new powder-coated, weather-resistant metal plaques.



▲ The Telluride Miner, a work by Michael McCulloch.



▲ Michael McCullough's statue of Walter Walker adorns downtown Grand Junction.