

Greetings From the New Editor

A short introduction from the new editor of the newsletter

Hello! My name is Jeanne Gripp and I am excited to be taking over the duties of newsletter editor.

My husband and I are new to the Pikes Peak region but we have called the Colorado mountains home for many, many years. I was born and raised in the San Luis Valley, where my relatives settled while Colorado was still a territory. My father worked for the U.S. Forest Service and my mother was a librarian and a huge history buff. Growing up with these influences, it's no wonder that I love to read, learn of our history and explore the mountainous world around us.

I am a mixed media artist and sculptor, as well as the creative consultant for a decorative concrete business in Pueblo. My work can be found in Cripple Creek as well as purchased online. When I am not busy in the studio, I enjoy gardening, writing and spoiling the grandkids.

I am looking forward to many new friendships and reveling in the stories that can be found in this unique area.

Over the Fence...

Musings from the Editor

I often ponder how the early settlers must have felt upon traveling to this country. From their first sighting of Pikes Peak while still out on the grassy plains, to the awe inspiring vistas along the trails and rails to the mining camps of the Rockies. Did they feel a thrill of excitement? Or did trepidation encroach upon their thoughts?

These folks were adventurers. The mystery of what might be around the next corner and the exhilaration of discovery drove these hardy pioneers to explore the unknown. They did not let fear dampen their enthusiasm or hinder their explorations.

I like to think that same spirit lives on in many of us today. We are the summer and weekend explorers. The ones who wander down paths well-worn and marvel at many of the same vistas and natural wonders that the pioneers took notice of.

My husband and I like to take day trips and short excursions to visit and explore the area around us. While others may go vacation elsewhere, we have always found that the history and beauty of where we live can be as fascinating as visiting abroad. So much can be found right at our own doorstep!

The Summer issue of the Pikes Peak Historical Society's newsletter is filled with ideas for day trips or short overnight jaunts. From flowers and wildlife to rocks and fossils, from history and architecture to the wild and wacky – Colorado has something to offer everyone. We are fortunate to live in a state that has an abundance of hiking, history and beauty. Be a pioneer! Go explore!

Jeanne Gripp

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Summer Joyrides and Jaunts

Ideas for daytrips and short excursions

Remember when you were a kid the excitement you felt when the words **Summer Vacation** were mentioned? Or the thrill you got later in life when someone mentioned **‘Let’s take a road-trip?’** Rekindle that spark this summer!

Colorado has an eclectic mix of landscapes, museums, and other attractions – something for everyone! And we are lucky to live in this area, a place where so many people from all over the world come to visit. Take a peek at this short list of unique Colorado get-aways to get you in the mood.

Summer wouldn’t be Summer without at least one road-trip, one picnic, or one trip of exploration. So pack the picnic basket, gas up the car, ready the road map, and let’s go!

Short Drives for Scenery and Geology

1. Oh My Gawd Road – Officially known as the Virginia Canyon Road, this steep, winding dirt road connects Central City to Idaho Springs. It was originally built in 1861 as a toll road between the two mining towns. Breath-taking views of the Rockies can be seen at every turn. With steep drop-offs and sharp turns, visitors over this road are given a true taste of what pioneer travel was like. The OMG Road can be found by traveling south from Central City or north out of downtown Idaho Springs.

2. Sphinx Park – This steep canyon, through which runs Elk Creek, is filled with granite monoliths. The true size of these massive rocks can be felt when a person climbs to the bottom of the canyon to cool one’s hot, tired feet in the creek! Located not far from the Denver & South Park Railroad, Sphinx Park was established in the late 1800’s as a summer community. Today many of the original cabins can still be seen perched precariously on the cliff. Sphinx Park is located north of Buffalo Creek on Hwy 83.

3. Garden Park Fossil Quarries – Located north of Canon City on what is known as **Shelf Road**, this area was one of the most important locations in the United States for the study of Jurassic creatures – dinosaurs, mammals and reptiles. Besides the ‘old bones’ which can be seen here, this spot is also good for bird watching, wildlife viewing and the viewing of rare plants species.

Ghost Towns

1. Altman – Located at an elevation of 10, 629 feet, Altman claimed to be the highest incorporated town in the world in 1896. The town was platted in 1893 by Sam Altman, a sawmill owner who later built the area’s first stamp mill to crush gold ore. By 1897, the town had a population of nearly 2, 000 people. But the Miner’s strike in 1904 brought about the departure of many of the residents and by 1908 only a 100 or so people still lived there. Altman is located on a graded dirt road between the town of Victor and the American Eagle Mine.

2. Goldfield – Known as the “City of Homes”, Goldfield was founded in 1895. Because of its close proximity to the Cripple Creek/Victor mine fields, Goldfield became a family town and had a thriving business district plus three railroads went through town. The town’s population grew to 2000 people within a year of its founding. Eventually Goldfield merged with the nearby town of Independence. The majority of the ore mined in the area was shipped out of Goldfield. Today, many original structures remain and some are even being lived in.

3. St. Elmo – Named after a novel by Augusta J. Evans, the town of St. Elmo is one of the best preserved ghost towns in Colorado. The economy of St. Elmo was not entirely based on mining. The town was situated at the junction of several toll roads and freighting became big business. Located near both gold and silver mines, St. Elmo flourished. But like so many mining towns before, people and businesses moved on to greener pastures when the mines dried up. St. Elmo is located west of Buena Vista on Chaffee County Road 162.

Odd & Unusual Destinations

1. Paint Mines Interpretive Park – This well kept secret is located in northeastern El Paso County near Calhan. It is a badlands-type landscape located in a grass prairie. The colorful clay deposits located here form an eerie, out-of-this-world landscape. Native Americans traveled here to collect the various colors of clay for their use. Most of the trails are ephemeral streams; so be wary of the weather!

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Have an idea for a story? Got a tidbit or two you'd like to share? Or maybe you just want to say "Hello!" Email the Editor at woodespryte@gmail.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Chautauqua - "My Life as a Miner/Prospector" with Rich Fretterd
Sun, June 8, 2:00 pm
Florissant Library

**Dedication of "Brothers Crystals" and
Museum Parking Lot Ribbon Cutting**
Sun, June 8, 4:00 pm
Pikes Peak Historical Society Museum

Chautauqua - "Divide Depot Museum" with David Martinek
Sun, June 15, 2:00pm
Florissant Library

Heritage Day Celebration July 26
FVFD Pancake Breakfast 7-11:00 am
10:00am-4:00pm Activities at Florissant Cemetery, Grange,
Museum and Schoolhouse Museum

Tabeguache Utes Dance at FFBNM
Sat, August 2, 7:00pm
**Florissant Fossil Beds Nat'l Monument **
For info call 748-3253 or 748-3562

PPHS Annual Volunteer Brunch
Sat, Sept 13, 12:00pm
Florissant Library

PPHS Annual Auction
Sat, Oct 11, 2:00 pm
Florissant Library

Veteran's Day Service
Florissant Pioneer Cemetery
Tues, Nov 11, 10:00 am

"Attie Thompson"
Portrayed by Donna Knudtson
Sun, Nov. 16, 2:00pm
Florissant Library

PPHS Christmas Party
Sat, Dec 13, 12:00pm
**Twin Creek Ranch, Florissant

Chautauquas are a public service of the Pikes Peak Historical Society. There is no admission and refreshments are served.

Chautauquas are normally held at the Florissant Library unless otherwise noted.

2014 Pikes Peak Historical Society Board of Directors

President: Celinda Kaelin

Vice-president: John Rakowski

Secretary: Marcia Eremus

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Docents Needed!

The PPHS Museum is staffed by volunteers. These wonderful individuals make it possible to share our knowledge, photographs and unique artifacts of the Pikes Peak area with the public. The generous gift of their time makes it possible keep the doors of the museum open. But they can't do it alone. Volunteer today!
For more info please contact Scott (719)748-9035 or Sheila (719)748-0102

Vacation Photos from Years Past



Odd & Unusual (cont.)

2. **UFO Watchtower** – The San Luis Valley has always been a location of myths and mysteries. And the unique structure located not far from the town of Hooper only adds to the mystique. A small dome-shaped gift shop with a metal catwalk and viewing stand connected dominate the landscape. And from this viewing stand, a person might just catch a glimpse of one of the mysterious lights that are said to frequent the skies.

3. **Great Sand Dunes National Park** – A most unique formation, the Great Sand Dunes are the tallest sand dunes in North America. Created less than 450,000 years ago, the sand found here was picked up by the winds crossing the San Luis Valley and then deposited against the base of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range. Despite its apparent arid landscape, waterfalls and spring fed streams can be found here. These oases are home to many wildlife and plant species. The Great Sand Dunes are located north of Alamosa and east of Mosca.

FLORISSANT PIONEER CEMETERY

Florissant's cemetery received its first permanent "guest" in 1874. This is not surprising, since the town of Florissant was established by Judge James Castello in 1870. What is surprising, however, is that Frank, James' son, waited until 1886 to incorporate a Florissant Cemetery Association. This was probably in anticipation of the boom that would come to the area with the arrival of the Midland Railroad. The Pikes Peak Historical Society maintains this tradition of stewardship with its management of the Florissant Pioneer Cemetery on behalf of Teller County. If you meet the residency requirements, you may also secure a final resting place in this historic cemetery. Donations of \$300 are requested for a full burial, and only \$150 for cremains. Call Harold Kaelin at 719-748-3562 to secure your future at this historic site.

Pikes Peak Historical Society Schedule Florissant Heritage Days – Saturday July 27, 2014

- PPHS Museum, 10am – 4pm
- Ute Legends in the Tipi, 10:30am
- Panning for Gold, Children's Area (fenced yard) of Museum, 10am – 3pm
- Schoolhouse Museum, 10am – 4pm
- Florissant Pioneer Cemetery, "Civil War Veteran's", 2pm

CELBATING 15 YEARS OF RETURNING THE TABEGUACHE UTE
TO THEIR ANCESTRAL LANDS

Ute visit scheduled
For Saturday
Aug 2

Florissant Fossil Beds

7:00 pm

FREE ADMISSION

Seating is limited

For more information
Call
719-748-3562



Climbing Pikes Peak *and* dancing makes one sleepy!

SECOND GIANT CRYSTAL ADDED TO MUSEUM'S MINERAL EXHIBITS

© Andy Weinzapfel May 2014

The Pikes Peak region is well-known by gem and mineral collectors for its exceptional mineral and fossil treasures. Clusters of blue-green amazonite and smoky quartz crystals, found in cavities within the Precambrian (1 billion year-old) Pikes Peak Granite, are considered the finest in the world. They can be found in many mineral museums worldwide. The Pikes Peak Granite also yields excellent crystals of topaz, fluorite, goethite, and other minerals too numerous to mention. The Cripple Creek-Victor mining district, producing from an unusual Oligocene (30 million year -old) volcanic-intrusive rock called “phonolite”, is one of the most important gold and silver districts in the United States. Exquisitely detailed plant and insect fossils occur in lake beds within the Eocene (34 million year-old) Florissant Formation. These fossils represent a time in Earth’s history much warmer than today’s climate. The museum at Florissant is located on the outcrop of this formation, and nearby Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument was established to showcase these local fossil treasures.

The Lake George Gem and Mineral Club partnered with the Pikes Peak Historical Society, with the goal of educating the public regarding the rich mineral endowment of the area. Miners and other interested individuals were challenged to donate some of their finest specimens to the museum. In a single day, December 5, 2005, a first-class collection was born. It has expanded significantly since then. Today the collection includes two truly remarkable “twin” crystals of smoky quartz, which are thought to be the *largest intact, well-formed smoky quartz crystals ever discovered in North America*. One behemoth weighs 439 pounds and stands 4 feet tall [donated by Richard Fretterd, aided by a grant from the Cripple Creek & Victor Gold Mine.] Its skinnier “twin brother” weighs 345 pounds and is 4 feet, 3 inches long. [Donated by Richard Fretterd.]

The “geology wall” at the museum offers a unifying explanation, termed the “Florissant Lineament” hypothesis, linking the genesis of many of the mineral and fossil treasures on exhibit. A lineament is a linear feature of regional extent expressed in the topography, influenced by the underlying geology. When several discrete geologic elements occur in a straight line over tens of miles in length, a major fault should be suspected. Big fault trends are usually really swarms of complexly interconnected parallel lesser faults, reacting to periodic regional stresses due to plate tectonic motion. These faults are often re-activated over considerable geologic time. It is postulated a deep crustal tear exercised control over the rise of mineral-rich magma, forming four Precambrian, mostly circular intrusive features north of Florissant, which are likely the exposed roots of a now-eroded billion-year-old volcanic chain. South of there, the fossil-rich Florissant valley, which is filled by the relatively young Florissant formation, is likely preserved from erosion in a down-dropped fault block, called a graben. Farther south, the Cripple Creek mining district is also roughly aligned with the same linear system. Together, the above geologic elements of the Florissant Lineament are responsible for the exceptional fossil and mineral treasures found in Pikes Peak backcountry.



The “Brother Crystals” at PPHS Museum



MEMBERSHIP

The Pikes Peak Historical Society is a non-profit corporation organized under IRS Code Section 50(c)(3). The purpose of the Society is to encourage the preservation of the history of Florissant and the west slope of Pikes Peak, and to educate the public regarding this historical legacy.

The Pikes Peak Historical Society (PPHS) is funded solely through memberships and donations, and supports its mission through volunteers who serve on its numerous committees.

PPHS owns and operates two museums; The Pikes Peak Historical Society Museum, at 18033 Teller County Road # across from the Florissant Post Office, and the Schoolhouse Museum located at Teller County Road #3 and Wildhorn.

Our Cemetery Committee manages the historic Florissant Pioneer Cemetery on behalf of Teller County. Our Beautification Committee sponsors an area-wide clean-up each spring, cleans along Highway 24, and plants flowers throughout the town of Florissant. Our Chautauqua Committee sponsors free educational programs each month, and our Trails Committee support these efforts in the area. The Tree Committee records Ute Culturally Scarred trees.

The volunteers and members of the Pikes Peak Historical Society make all of these community projects possible. Your membership entitles you to our tri-annual newsletter. Life Members receive a ten percent discount on all items at the gift shop.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (please print):

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Membership Type

_____ Sustaining Member	\$20/year
_____ Family Membership	\$30/year
_____ Supporting Member	\$50 or \$100/year
_____ Castello Life Member	\$200

Committee Interests

Museum	_____
Cemetery	_____
Beautification	_____
Chautauqua	_____
Trees	_____
Trails	_____

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR \$ _____ DATE: _____

MAIL TO: PIKES PEAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 823
FLORISSANT, CO 80816

For more information, call Celinda 719.748.3562



Pikes Peak Historical Society
P.O. Box 823
Florissant, CO 80816

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