



# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

## Home Sweet Home

It's All Ours!



PPHS photo

We are celebrating! The mortgage on our museum is all paid off. A lot of hard work, donations from visitors to the Museum, donations from many PPHS members, another successful auction . . . it has all paid off and the Museum building is free and clear. Many thanks to John Radowski and all the other hard-working members of the Pikes Peak Historical Society who have worked tirelessly to get us to this point.

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## Editorially Speaking:

### What's Happening?

Things always slow down in the winter, but it is time to start thinking about Spring. The Museum is still closed for the season (you can always call and make an appointment to visit in the off-season), but our opening day is just around the corner. We have scheduled a Cleanup Day at the Museum at 10:00 am on March 21. Plan to come help, it is a fun day with a lot of good people and a good way to start off the season.

A sad note is the passing of longtime PPHS member Betty Thomas. There will be a Celebration of Life at noon to 4:00 pm on Saturday, March 14, at 455 Shavano Creek Trail, Florissant, CO 80816. There will be snacks, sweets, and music before a Remembrance Ceremony at 2:00 pm. For more information, please call Shavano Wyckoff at 719-476-0030.

We have had several fun events since the last Newsletter:

We had a lot of fun at our Volunteer Luncheon. There were almost 40 volunteers present and we thank them and all the volunteers who were not able to attend for all the work they do for PPHS.

The auction was well attended and helped greatly in our final push to pay off the mortgage. We are still looking for someone willing to ramrod the auction this year. Please call John Rakowski if you are interested.

In November we had our Veteran's Day Ceremony at the Florissant Pioneer Cemetery, and another great Chautauqua on Genealogy. And in December we enjoyed our Christmas/Holiday Party.

Looking into 2020, Toni Ratzlaff is working on scheduling interesting and informative Chautauquas for us. The first one, Colorado Midland Railway Wildflower Excursions, presented by Mel McFarland, was on February 16. We have dates scheduled for the rest of the year, but topics are yet to be determined. All Chautauquas will be at the Lake George Charter School.

Robyn Proper will be taking over management of the Museum Gift Shop with the help of Jeff McCammon. Thank you, Robyn and Jeff!

### 2020 PPHS Board of Directors

John Rakowski, *President*  
Scott Adams, *Vice President*  
Carolynne Forster, *Treasurer*  
Barbara Hickok, *Secretary*

#### Members at Large

Lois Voeltz, *Membership Chair*  
Diane Burton, *Board Member at Large*  
Robyn Proper, *Board Member at Large*  
Jeff McCammon, *Board Member at Large*

#### Other Chairs

Wayne Johnston, *Facebook & Website Chair*  
Toni Ratzlaff, *Chautauqua Chair*  
Sheila Naviasky, *Museum Docent Chair*  
Kathy Perry, *Geocache Chair*

#### Advisory Board:

AJ Hotchkiss	Lenore Hotchkiss
Celinda Kaelin	Brian Stewart
Sally Maertens	Susan Weinzapfel
Andy Weinzapfel	

#### Newsletter Committee:

Darice Zimmermann	daricezimmermann@gmail.com
Robyn Proper	robynproper@gmail.com
Donna Knudten	





# 2020 Calendar of Events

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## Pikes Peak Historical Society

(all events at Lake George Charter School unless otherwise noted)

**Chautauqua #1: Mel McFarland, Colorado Midland Wildflower Excursions**  
Sunday, February 16, 2:00 pm

**PPHS Annual Meeting**  
Saturday, March 14, Noon

**Chautauqua #2:**  
Sunday, April 19, 2:00 pm

**Chautauqua #3:**  
Sunday, May 17, 2:00 pm

**Memorial Day Ceremony**  
Monday, May 25, 10:45 am Florissant Pioneer Cemetery

**Chautauqua #4:**  
Sunday, June 14, 2:00 pm

**Florissant Heritage Day:**  
Saturday, July 25, 10:00 am-2:00 pm

**Chautauqua #5:**  
Sunday, August 16, 2:00 pm

**PPHS Annual Volunteer Brunch**  
Saturday, September 12, 12:00 PM

**PPHS Annual Auction**  
Saturday, October 17, 2:00 pm; preview begins at noon

**Veterans Day Ceremony**  
Wednesday, November 11, 10:30 am Florissant Pioneer Cemetery

**Chautauqua #6:**  
Sunday, November 15, 2:00 pm

**PPHS Christmas/Holiday Party**  
Saturday, December 12, 12:00 pm

**Mark your Calendars now and plan to attend these fun Pikes Peak Historical Society events.**



*Photos from our PPHS Volunteers Luncheon (above and left) and Annual PPHS Auction (below). All photos courtesy of Carolynne Forster. Thank you, Carolynne!*



## A Brief History of PPHS

*By Marianne Magon*

After thirty-one years of hard work and dedication, the Pike's Peak Historical Society has hit another milestone; the mortgage on the building at 18033 Teller County Road 1 is paid in full.

Early in 1988, a group of ambitious citizens in and around Florissant got together and formed the Florissant Heritage Foundation with goals of developing a physical structure for historic preservation and presentation, acquiring and maintaining the historic Florissant Cemetery, and to restore and preserve the Florissant School Complex.

In 1990-1991 restoration of the main school building took place. The school was initially built in 1887 and was used until 1960. The restoration came about after a furnace malfunction and with the help of volunteers and grants, the furnace was repaired, restrooms were added, and the porch was converted into a kitchen. 1991 ended with Teller County District Court naming FHF Trustee of the Florissant Pioneer Cemetery.

The residence of the school teacher, called a teacherage, was moved to the school in 1900. Some believe it may have been the Florissant Post Office prior to that. The small residence

was moved to Woodland Park in 1960 and used by the Middle School. In 1992, the Woodland Park school superintendent offered to donate the building to the foundation for \$1.00. The Florissant Grange signed a 99-year ground lease for land under the historic teacher residence. The residence was moved back to Florissant to a new foundation, new support beams, new siding, paint, and eventually a new roof. The residence then became the primary museum.

In 2001, the Florissant Heritage Foundation changed their name to the Pike's Peak Historical Society, Inc. and having fulfilled the goals of FHF, they identified new purposes to encourage and stimulate preservation of the historical integrity of Florissant and the west slope of Pike's Peak and to educate the public regarding the same.

2005 was a very productive year for the PPHS starting in March when a three-year operating lease at a cost of \$20K with option to purchase a building for \$240K to create a museum. The 2220 square foot building was constructed in 1992 as the Betticoat Junction Restaurant with a Real Estate office on the west end. In 1996, the building was converted to Real Estate and Insurance Company office space. Officers and Board Members made a courageous decision to acquire the building with the expectation that it could be financially feasible. "There were a few panic times along the way, but our fantastic volunteer membership carried us through each crisis", said John Rakowski the current PPHS President.

In August, the teacherage was refocused as a school with desks and other pieces after the museum building was acquired. On the twelfth of August, the PPHS museum was formally opened with a ribbon-cutting in the midst of a thunderstorm with 200 guests including Mayor (donkey) Paco Bell.

The following year the option to purchase was exercised with a mortgage of \$82K held by Park State Bank. The total value of the building was



*PPHS photo*





*PPHS photo*

\$240K and \$25K was spent on repairs and upgrades. Community and member cash donations along with grants provided the remainder of the purchase. Among the grantors were the Penrose, Boettcher, and Pikes Peak Community Foundations, the Cowan Matching Grant and a prominent donation by the family of Charles Walts, direct descendant of Count Louis Otto de Pourtales.

The parking lot was paved and other outside improvements were made at a total cost of \$113K from grants and gifts. And as of December 12, 2019, the Pike's Peak Historical Society owns the museum free and clear.

"The payoff was accelerated over the 2015 to 2019 time period because of generous donations from many of our members", Rakowski said. He continued to explain that over the years, they had superb cooperation from Teller and Park County businesses, individuals, and PPHS members in providing attractive donations for the annual auction in October, which helped ensure payments of mortgage principal, interest, and insurance.

PPHS owns and operates two museums; The Pikes Peak Historical Society Museum, at 18033 Teller County Road 1 across from the Florissant Post Office, and the Schoolhouse Museum located at Teller County Road 31 and Wildhorn. Volunteers serve on various committees to support the local area including: a cemetery committee that manages the historic Florissant Pio-

neer Cemetery on behalf of Teller County, a beautification committee that sponsors an area-wide clean-up each spring along Highway 24 and planting flowers throughout the town of Florissant, and a Chautauqua Committee that sponsors free educational and interesting programs six times each year.

The museum hosts a variety of exhibits featuring artifacts and highlighting historical moments in the settlement of the area and development of local natural resources. On display are a pair of giant four-foot-tall smoky quartz crystals found 6 miles north of the museum. They are reportedly the largest smoky quartz crystals documented to be found in North America. There are also gems and gold ore from the area in addition to examples of other minerals. The section dedicated to the Ute Indians will soon be expanded. The Utes were the inhabitants who called this area home for many years prior to the arrival of the Spaniards and Europeans. The interior entrance area is dedicated to Count Louis Otto de Pourtales who had a homestead here in addition to information about his cousin James Pourtales who had the dairy farm which later became the Broadmoor Hotel property.

The museum doesn't have regular open hours from November to March. Regular weekend hours will begin in April 2020. However, they will gladly open upon request. Call 719-748-3861 to schedule a day and time at least two days in advance. Admission is free.

## Gee, Thanks!

We always have people and businesses to thank for their contributions to PPHS in the form of money, time, energy, materials; so:

## Thanks!

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Thanks to Toni Ratzlaff and Rick Favinger for repairs to our Tipi.

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Thank you to everyone who worked at and otherwise helped make our Annual Auction the success it was.

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Thanks to all our volunteers and members for all you do to keep PPHS going strong.

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Thank you to Kathy and Rudy Perry for keeping our Geocaching program going strong.

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Thanks to Fritz Voeltz for mowing the Cemetery.

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We don't say it enough, but a HUGE Thank You to John Rakowski. Your tremendous energy keeps us all going strong

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Thanks to Robyn Proper and Jeff McCammon for taking on the Museum Gift Shop..

## Amazon Smile Program

Do you shop on Amazon? Did you know that you can benefit the Pikes Peak Historical Society every time you shop? Amazon has a program to support your favorite charity: Amazon will donate 0.5% of most purchases to your chosen charity, and PPHS is now registered as participating charity. Just go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to get started, and select Pikes Peak Historical Society from the list of charities.

## Membership Information

If you have questions or need to make changes to your contact information, members may call 719-748-8259 and leave a message for a call back; or call President John Rakowski at 719-748-3861; or contact Lois Voeltz, Membership Chairman, at [PPHSMembers@gmail.com](mailto:PPHSMembers@gmail.com); or use the 'Contact Us' form via the website:

[www.pikespeakhsmuseum.org](http://www.pikespeakhsmuseum.org)

Memberships may be renewed either online through the PPHS website using PayPal or via the U.S. mail (PO Box 823, Florissant, CO 80816).

Remember you have the option of receiving your Newsletter by email or regular mail.

ATTENTION! The Editor is always looking for articles, old clippings, old photos, and story ideas for upcoming newsletters. Email the Editor with your submission. [daricezimmermann@gmail.com](mailto:daricezimmermann@gmail.com)  
Please send us your memories of our area "back in the day."

## 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 \$400 are requested for a full burial, and only \$200 for cremains.

Call Pikes Peak Historical Society at 719-748-8259 to secure your future at this historic site.

## MEMBERSHIP



The Pikes Peak Historical Society (PPHS) is a non-profit corporation organized under IRS Code Section 501(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.

Pikes Peak Historical Society 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 CR1 (across from the Florissant Post Office) and the Schoolhouse Museum, located at Teller County Roads CR31 and CR3 (Wildhorn Rd.).

Our Cemetery Committee manages the 1874 Florissant Pioneer Cemetery on behalf of Teller County. Our Beautification Committee sponsors an area-wide clean-up each spring and plants flowers throughout the town of Florissant. Our Chautauqua Committee sponsors free educational programs during the year. If you become a Docent (Museum Volunteer), you act as host at the Museum, and meet wonderful, exciting people from all over the world.

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 10% discount on all items at the Museum Gift Shop.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (please print):

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail1: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail2: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer Newsletter by: Email \_\_\_\_\_ US Mail \_\_\_\_\_ both Email and US Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP TYPE

\_\_\_\_ Sustaining . . . . . \$20/year

\_\_\_\_ Family . . . . . \$30/year

\_\_\_\_ Supporting . . . . . \$50/year

\_\_\_\_ Castello Life . . . . . \$200

### COMMITTEE INTERESTS

\_\_\_\_ Auction      \_\_\_\_ Beautification      \_\_\_\_ Cemetery

\_\_\_\_ Geocaching      \_\_\_\_ Hwy 24 Cleanup      \_\_\_\_ Museum

\_\_\_\_ Refreshments for Chautauqua

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR \$ \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

OR JOIN ONLINE AT:  
[www.pikespeakhismuseum.org](http://www.pikespeakhismuseum.org)

For more information, call John at 719-748-3861. Thank you.

( Updated 02/14/2020 )



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

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Permit No.
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*Addressee or Current Resident*