



CHANGE. The fall season in the Pikes Peak region signals a time of transformation, as green Aspen leaves turn to golden reds and drift down, blanketing the ground with autumn’s beauty. This season brings mixed feelings—we say farewell to our lively mountain summers full of activities and visits from friends and family. As the trees turn, many in our community close up their cabins for winter, and quiet settles in.

By definition, change means replacing something old with something new. And this fall, our community experiences it firsthand: We bid farewell to President John and Deb Rakowski, who are heading to Longmont, Colorado. While John’s presence is irreplaceable, we are thankful that Scott Adams will carry forward the legacy and energy of the Pikes Peak Historical Society.

One of my favorite quotes feels just right: “We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.” And so the Florissant community (which means people from all over the States that have family members that homesteaded here to newcomers that are drawn to the Pikes Peak region) will adjust our sails with the Rakowski’s move.

Lois Voeltz

In this newsletter:

Community Happenings

He Rocks

Our docents

Information

Thanks

Families of Florissant

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

October 19

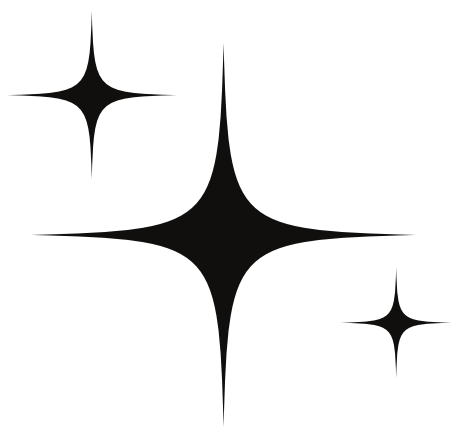
October Chautauqua, Scott Stalnaker The story of William “Billy” Westall, the hero of the rails. In story and song.

2:00 pm

Lake George Charter School



HOURS
CLOSED
FOR THE
SEASON



2025 PPHS Board of Directors

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

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Marianne Mogon
Robyn Williams
Wayne Orłowski
Darice Zimmerman
Kathy Gue, Cemetery Chair

Other Chairs

Wayne Johnston, Facebook & Website Chair
(Open position), Chautauqua Chair
Sheila Naviasky, Museum Docent Chair
Kathy Perry, Geocache Chair

Advisory Board

Jeff McCammon	Sally Maertens
Brian Stewart	Celinda Kaelin

Newsletter Committee

Eva Miranda eva.miranda717@gmail.com
Robyn Williams

Tribute to a “Rock”

By Scott Adams

With this newsletter, we bid a fond farewell to John and Debbie Rakowski, or should I say ‘Rock’owski. A “Rock” because John and his wife Debbie have been leaders and contributors to the local communities like few others...not to mention John’s expertise in Geology.

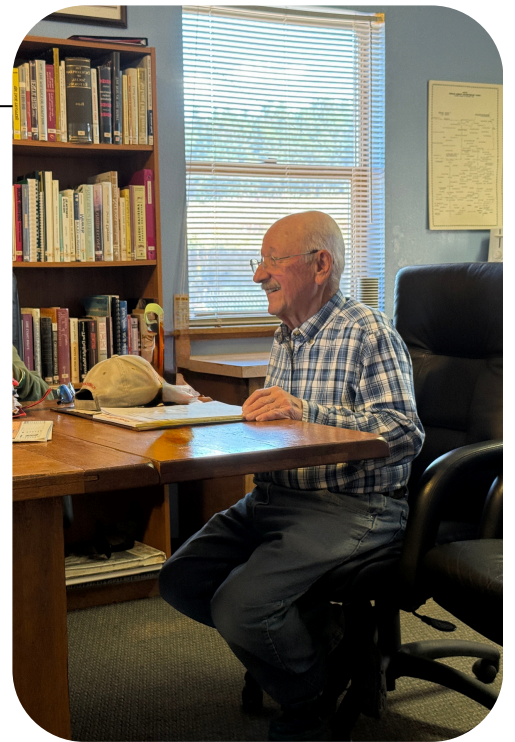
I have seen much of what John has done, even though I was not a part of all the efforts. It really doesn’t matter how much I say about what John did, because I will miss a lot and no quantity or quality of written words could capture the effort, and expertise, he put into all he did.

As President of the Lake George Charter School Board, John pursued funding and approval for the current Lake George Charter School. I was a substitute teacher in the old and new buildings and I saw how John always put in an immeasurable amount of energy, time and his usual healthy dose of common sense and engineering skill to enhance the project’s design. The school has been able to grow and expand its reach beyond even what was imagined.

In the same way, John established programs and encouraged the talented people in the Lake George Gem and Mineral Club to improve an already active and vibrant club. Their educational meetings, field trips, Gem and Mineral Show and Pebble Pubs, have left an impression on the community, a generation of children, and is still going strong.

John still leads the way in presentations, seen lately in his well-attended and widely acclaimed Rockhounding 101 Chautauqua last August. The gift of the Museum’s fantastic gem and mineral collection populated by the Lake George Gem and Mineral Club leaves every visitor awestruck.

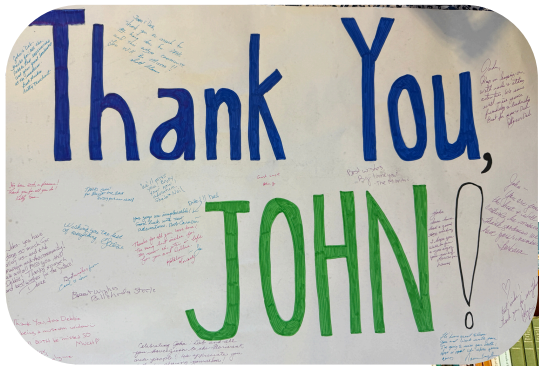
But, John’s efforts as Pikes Peak Historical Society President are where I am most familiar. John took over presidency from the larger-than-life founder of the PPHS. There didn’t seem much to do as the collection was settled in a new home, the parking lot had been newly paved and things seemed settled. However, John led the PPHS into new territory.



John began a continuing effort to better document and clarify use of space in the cemetery. After a lull in Heritage Day activities, John established an attainable and sustainable level of activities so that the PPHS is once again participating and interspersing history into the Day.

John's two visible achievements led to capital improvements to keep PPHS assets in top shape. We were able to re-roof the PPHS Museum and gain funding to renew, in period-style, the windows and doors at the Teacherage. But John's lasting legacy has to be his vision and effort to creatively fund efforts to pay off the mortgage on the museum building. His leadership put the PPHS in a financial position to successfully weather the COVID pandemic intact and thriving.

Deb's volunteer work with the Lake George and Florissant libraries and the Lake George Charter School, as well as her unending support and companionship supporting John and his "rock-solid" efforts will make us miss this couple who leave a very broad, visible and lasting impact on the Florissant-Lake George Metroplex.



Docent Recognition

Our organization is very special because of our volunteers. Our docent-run museum is unlike anywhere else in Teller county, and I might even say the state.

In recognition of the very special people we have in our organization, we wanted to include a list of names in this newsletter.



Betty Merchant
Bob Carnein
Carol Sharp
Cynthia Parsons
Darice Zimmermann
Debbie Rakowski
Elaine Godsoe
Francine Blume
Hickok, Barbara
Jeff McCammon
Jim Sharp
John Rakowski
Kathleen Moriarty
Kerri LuBell
Laurel Clark
LeRoy Trusty
Lisa Eisenhardt
Marianne Mogon
Mary Mavon
Norma Engelberg
Orlowski Deborah
Pam Adams
Rosemary Gebhardt
Scott Adams
Shavano Wyckoff
Sheila Naviasky
Bill & Linda Steele
Stephanie Scoville
Stephanie Wade
Trina Garcia

A special thank you, also to Sheila. Her organizing and communicating is invaluable!



DONATION INFORMATION

Monetary donations keep PPHS running and keep our museum open. Did you know that you can have part of your Required Minimum Distributions from IRA accounts sent directly to PPHS as a donation? If so that amount is not included in your AGI total which may lower your tax rate on other income.

Ask your mutual fund customer service for details on how to do this. Usually, it's an easy form to take to a bank for a Signature Guarantee. Also, if you are a retiree from a medium to large company have you checked to see if they match cash donations you make to qualified charities? In some cases, companies may also make a cash grant to a qualified non-profit if you volunteer a certain number of hours of work for the non-profit. Therefore PPHS would benefit from your volunteer work even more!

GEE, THANKS!

Thanks to CORE for a \$200 contribution.

Thanks to all made the time to bid farewell to the Rakowski's (and Robyn and Lois for arranging a great cake!

**THANK
YOU!**

FLORISSANT HERITAGE DAY

Many people from the area enjoyed the traditional Florissant Heritage Day

158 visitors at the museum
111 visitors at the Teacherage
25 visitors at the Cemetary

Thank you to everyone who helped make Florissant Heritage Day a success. From the museum, to the cemetery, to the Teacherage. Your time and contributions created a welcoming and engaging place for our community!

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you have questions or need to make any changes to your contact or mailing information (including receiving this newsletter by email or regular mail) , call 719-748-8259 and leave a message for a call back. Of course, you can always contact Lois Voeltz, Membership Chair at PPHSMembers@gmail.com.

With any questions, you can visit the website and use the **Contact Us** form to get in touch. Our website is www.pikespeakhsmuseum.org
Membership may be renewed either on our website using PayPal or via U.S. Mail at PO Box 823, Florissant, CO 80816



FLORISSANT PIONEER CEMETERY

634 County Road #421 (Upper Twin Rocks Road) in Florissant, Colorado
Florissant's cemetery received its first permanent "guest" in 1874. This is not surprising, as the town of Florissant was established 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 719-748-8529 to secure your future at this historic site.

Families of Florissant

By Lois Voeltz

Special THANKS to Celinda Kaelin (Pikes Peak Backcountry; The Historic Saga of the Peak's West Slope) Leo Kimmett (Florissant) for their extensive research on the Houghton families and the Mary McKinney Mine. If per chance, any reader has information on these families, I would appreciate learning more.



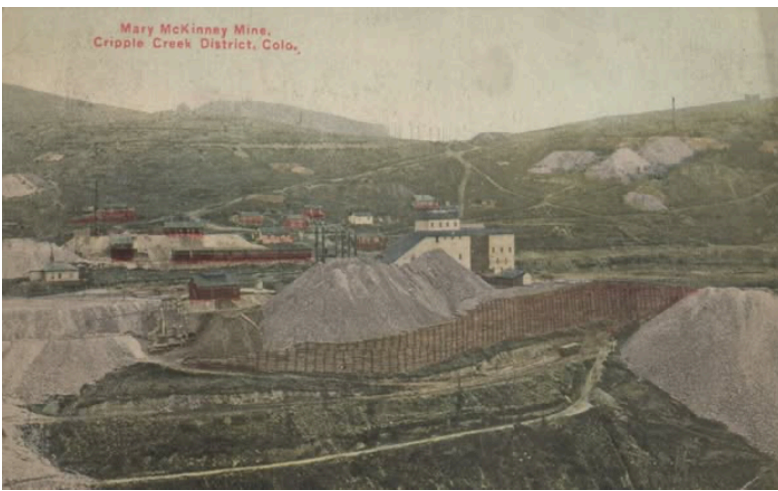
Kaelin and Kimmett wrote in their books that Richard and Mary McKinney Houghton and their four children homesteaded in 1884 on East Oil Creek Trail (now Wildhorn Road), a mile north Florissant. Known as "Uncle Dick" and a former Civil War Veteran, their dairy farm supplied fresh milk and churned butter for the residents. Richard and his brother Thomas F. served and were influential as Board Members of newly built school in Florissant.

There were lots of rumors in the area that mining could add to one's riches. Richard's brother Thomas and Frank Castello filed a claim in the Cripple Creek area so Richard and his sons John and Haddon decided to give mining a try. At the north end of Guyot Hill (Squaw Gulch) they found hopeful evidence of minerals and filed a Claim in 1891 naming it Mary McKinney after his wife. The men mined while Mary ran the dairy business.

Sadly, Uncle Dick had some continued health and drink problems, the mine was not producing, and as a result he built up a \$30 bill at Frank Castello's Florissant Mercantile. Frank Castello felt sorry for Mary and Richard so he accepted the Mary McKinney Claim Title in 1891 to clear their debt.



THANKS to Cindy Buckner for her permission to use photos she posted on the Colorado Mining & Mines. Their Places, Pictures & History Facebook page for this article.



Frank's friend Patrick J. Ryan, a telegraphy Depot Agent for the Colorado Midland Railroad, agreed to pay Castello the \$30 debt for half interest in the Claim Title of the Mary McKinney mine. These two business men formed their own mining company and the Mary McKinney became one of Cripple Creek's top producers.

These men made millions of dollars. *It is said Houghton, though not without a share in the mine, died poor....* *Gazette-Telegraph 18 April 1937*

Atlanta Thompson wrote in her book *Daughter of a Pioneer* that soon after the Mary McKinney claim was traded, Mary Houghton was very ill, was taken to Denver to be cared for by a medical doctor and Richard took the Keely cure/injections of bichloride of gold for alcoholism. Mary died about a year later from cancer.



1910

1910

1913

Colorado Midland Railway

Mary McKinney Mine



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