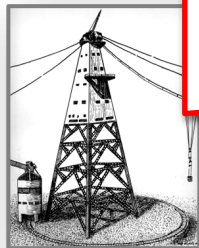




HELLO 2026!

HELLO AMERICA! SOON WE WILL CELEBRATE YOUR 250TH BIRTHDAY!



# HEADTOWER NEWS

BOOMTOWN MUSEUM NEWSLETTER  
Shasta Lake Heritage & Historical Society  
Volume 23 #66 February 2026

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025 AND THANKING ALL FOR A GOOD YEAR FOR THE BOOMTOWN MUSEUM AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

**"I REMEMBER THAT"** - 2025 October Dinner.. A sell-out crowd once again! A loving community of members and guests. Pat Karch was masterful tickling the ivories. Jean Naylor led us in singing the national anthem. Charlotte Bailey and Valerie Cantwell served the delicious wine donated by the Trinchero Family Winery in Sonoma. Shasta Lake Garden Project graced the tables with flowers. The Central Valley High School Key Club waited tables and the Kiwanians prepared a great buffet. The room hummed and vibrated with voices as people were greeting old friends and engaged in making some new. Many thanks for tables reserved by American Legion Post#720, Central Valley Alumni Association, City of Shasta Lake, Computer Logistics, Heritage Plaza Board of Directors and the Wintu Tribe of Northern California.



THANK YOU for the Raffle donations and/or for helping as worker bees: Donna Adams, Linda Beaver, Charlotte Bailey, Bill & Darlene Brown, Valerie Cantwell, Nicki Chambers, Melody Christenson, Pete Drosch, Scotty & Angel Dyer, Bert & Joan Fackrell, Mary Hale, Kay Kobe, Allen & Cheryle Mancasola/Farmer's Marketplace; Pam Morgan; Ann Morningstar, Lorraine & Gary Ramsden; Connie Strohmayer, Bill & Virginia Tavey, Leanne Westphal and Shasta Lake Garden Project members: Tena Eisenbiez, Tina Monk, Becky Butt VanSickle and Cheryle Yednak.



A short video was shown followed by a great raffle! SLHHS President Joan Fackrell engaged the audience in reminiscing our theme and encouraging everyone to tell a story (several people did) or write a memory - here is one memory turned in that evening from Janice. *There are written recollections from that evening on page 6 that should jolt memories for some of you!*



**Janice Powell:** *"I remember the A&W Root Beer stand that was located on the west side of Farmer's Marketplace (the lot is vacant now). Our family of six would pull up in the station wagon and order root beer floats in those heavy frosted mugs. The car hop brought them out on a big tray that attached to the car window. It was a very special treat (and trip) that ended up at the Dam to feed the deer!"*

**that attached to the car window. It was a very special treat (and trip) that ended up at the Dam to feed the deer!"**



**SWEET, SWEET AND MORE SWEET!!!** It was a great COMMUNITY BAZAAR!

The Boomtown Museum Candy Shoppe featured 23 different kinds of candy and other delectable goods! Thanks to *Donna Adams, Karen Alvord, Charlotte Bailey, Darlene Brown, Nicki Chambers, Melody Christenson, Nancy DeNayer, Sandy Estes, Mary Hale, Bonnie Hyatt, Kay Kobe, Pam Morgan, Ann Morningstar, Kathryn Muhr, Darlene Rumboltz, Judy Smith, Connie Strohmayer, Leanne Westphal, Joan Wetmore, Joan Wilburn, and Cheryle Yednak.*

Our fundraiser, these ladies donated their time, labor and "sweets" and with our Gift Shop sales, we made \$2121.00.

**Thank you all who shopped with us last November! We'll see you again this year.**



*We try to be accurate but we are not liable for any additions, omissions, errors and/or corrections that may occur in this publication. Any photographs or material used may not be reprinted or reproduced without contacting us for permission of use.*  
**Thank you, Darlene V. Brown, Editor**



(Our Museum display in November & December 2025)

## Voices Across the Front U.S. Army Signal Corps Radios in World War II

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, reliable communication became one of the most vital tools of modern warfare. The U.S. Army Signal Corps—first established in 1860—was responsible for keeping the Army connected from the front lines to high command.

At the start of the war, most units still depended on wired field telephones and messenger systems. But as combat spread across Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific, portable wireless radios became essential. The Signal Corps responded with a rapid wave of innovation, designing rugged, efficient radios that could operate in any environment.

One of the most famous of these was the SCR-300, introduced in 1943. Known to soldiers as the “walkie-talkie,” it was the world’s first practical FM backpack radio. Its clear, static-free voice transmission revolutionized infantry communication and proved decisive during operations like the D-Day invasion and the liberation of France.

For smaller units, the SCR-536 “handie-talkie” provided direct communication between squad leaders and platoons. Compact and reliable, it became a familiar sight in the hands of GIs across every theater of war.



Larger radios designed for more permanent locations, or in vehicles, had greater range and allowed headquarter units to have real-time contact with front line troops.

An SCR-284 radio set is being used by the soldier in the display now shown in the Boomtown Museum. The SCR-284 was introduced in Africa during Operation Torch and was the first radio set used for communications from the beach to the U.S. Fleet to coordinate naval gunfire and beach radio networks.

These radios allowed troops, tanks, and artillery to coordinate movements instantly—something that had never before been possible on such a scale. The result was a new kind of mobility and precision that gave Allied forces a crucial advantage. By the end of the war, the U.S. Ar-

my Signal Corps had produced over 500,000 portable radios, laying the foundation for the modern communication networks used by military and civilian organizations today.

*In the words of many soldiers, the radio became their “lifeline” — carrying voices, orders, and hope across the chaos of battle.*

Article (AI) and Museum display courtesy of John Duckett (pictured above).





**FEATURED AGAIN IN NOVEMBER 2026 WILL BE THE BOOMTOWN MUSEUM COLLECTION OF VETERANS' PHOTOGRAPHS.**  
**DO YOU HAVE A PHOTOGRAPH OF YOU or ANY FAMILY MEMBER THAT IS OR WAS A VETERAN?**

If so, please contact us. We will scan your photograph into our files; you do not have to give the photo to us. For the collection, we would like the name, rank and length of service if possible. Any additional information or story is welcomed.



Also featured in November and December was a military display case honoring the service of retired Major Jason D. Butler, United States Marine Corps, and an *Anderson High School graduate*. After graduation in 2000, Jason completed Marine Combat Training at Camp Pendleton, CA and Subsequent A-school and C-school in Florida. His first command was Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 39 (MALS-39) at Camp Pendleton. He served as an I-Level engine mechanic and collateral duty inspector on the AH-1W and UH-1N helicopters.

Butler was selected for the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP). He earned a degree in Criminology and was commissioned in 2006. In 2009, he was assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 469 (HMLA-469) as an AH-1W Cobra Pilot. In 2010, Major Butler deployed to Okinawa, Japan. In 2012, Major Butler deployed to Afghanistan where he conducted numerous combat missions. After Afghanistan, Major Butler reported to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Training Squadron 303 to serve as an AH-1W Super Cobra instructor pilot. In 2016, he reported to Helicopter Training Squadron 18 as an advanced helicopter instructor. He held the billets of Senior Marine, Safety Officer, Standardization Officer and Operations Officer before transferring to the staff of Training Air Wing 5 as part of the Fleet Integration Team. His decorations: the Air Medal with three strike awards and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with gold star. Major Butler accumulated over 3000 mishap free flight hours, is retired and lives with his family in CA.



Thanks to John Duckett who once again provided wheels - a 1943 Jeep - for Veterans, Bill Brown, US Army, and Pete Drosch, Retired Navy Sr. Chief.

The guys were promoting the Boomtown Museum in the Veterans Day parade. They wore Santa hats, carried a Christmas tree, and wished everyone an early Merry Christmas!



Contact: [s.rose@ammv.us](mailto:s.rose@ammv.us)

### Merchant Marine Legendary Cross Quilt

Scarlett Rose is a board member of the California Heritage Quilt Project. She is documenting quilts online for the organization, focusing on museums. She will be documenting the quilts we have in our collection. Scarlett is a long-time member of the Quilter's Sew-Ciety of Redding. Her Merchant Marine quilt was on display in our museum.

Her father and uncle are WWII Merchant Marine. Her father sailed during the Korean War and the Cold War. Her uncle was recruited back for the Vietnam War. In researching their service, she discovered and joined the American Merchant Marine Veterans Association.

With the Semiquincentennial celebration and the AMMV in mind, she designed a quilt and started collecting Merchant Marine signatures. Pictured holding the quilt, Scarlett is currently the Vice President of the AMMV for Region 8 (California/Hawaii/Australia).

The quilt has 11 signatures of WWII Merchant Marine Veterans unless noted otherwise: Dave Yoho, Charles Mills, Frank Mendez, Bill Balabanow, Bill Fairfield (deceased May 2025), George Koch, Don Pantone, Harold Seibel, George Norton (Navy Armed Guard), James Powell, and Standley Blumenthal (also Desert Storm).

4 Vietnam MM Veterans: Michael Gillen, Ken Delaney, Walter Fletcher (who was the Gulf War dignitary in the Veteran's Parade and served in Desert Storm) and Bart Bartholomew (Navy). 3 Merchant Marine in peacetime: Dave Myles, Michael Hyde, Steve Snyder and 3 Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom MM veterans: Jack Menendez, Chris Edyvean and Dru DiMattia. Contact Scarlett if you have a Merchant Marine signature to add.

\*\*\*\*COMING SOON.....

Plans are underway for LOCAL activities on the 3rd and 4th of July celebrating our Nation's 250th birthday. CHECK our website and FB for updates on events at Shasta Dam and on Shasta Lake. CHECK on LAKE SHASTA CAVERNS as "Elsie" will be part of a regatta.



## From the Lake Shasta Caverns: The Oldest and Hardest Working Member of our Crew – Elsie!

At Lake Shasta Caverns, we are fortunate to have a remarkable team, but perhaps the most distinguished and beloved member isn't a person at all; it's a boat. Our vessel, affectionately called "Elsie", is a WWII-era LCM-6, which stands for Landing Craft Mechanized, Model 6. She quickly earned her nickname after arriving at the Caverns.

When development of the Caverns began in 1959, it became clear that a reliable way to transport substantial quantities of materials across the lake was essential. That's when Elsie was brought in to fulfill this crucial role. With her impressive capacity of 32,000 pounds, she is perfectly suited for hauling building materials or any cargo that moves on treads or tires, making her an indispensable part of our operation.



Source: "U.S. Marine Corps World War II Order of Battle,"  
by Gordon L. Rottman

LCMs (there are many variations) have a practical design, featuring a flat-bottom hull and a ramp on the bow to facilitate easy access to the cavernous hold, allowing for efficient loading and unloading of cargo.

While working on Elsie one day, General Manager Matthew Doyle, Air Force Veteran in the reserves, discovered a stamped serial number inside her hull. Later, when Doyle was activated for Operation Enduring Freedom (9/11), he had the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Defense and obtained historical data about Elsie's past. **We are proud to share that Elsie played a role in World War II and saw service at the beaches of Normandy!** This history adds to the legacy and character of the boat that continues to serve us at Lake Shasta Caverns.



USDA Forst Service photo by Rusty Sexton

Elsie has sunk twice here on the McCloud arm of Shasta Lake, where the Caverns are located. Not due to a compromised hull or mechanical failure, but operational issues. Both times she was resurrected and continues her mission.

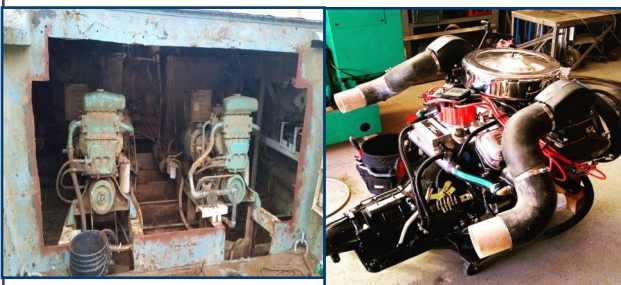


We have a saying here, "Maintenance

Saves the Day", and it was certainly true in bringing Elsie back to life.

In her latest incarnation, pictured left is the old Detroit 6-71 diesel engines that were replaced with two new 454 cubic inch Chevrolet big block motors.

**When she fires up, everyone knows!**



Elsie provides a variety of essential services on Shasta Lake. Owing to her considerable size and powerful engines, she has frequently assisted marinas and private parties in recovering stranded houseboats from the shoreline. Additionally, Elsie has been tasked with the transportation of vehicles across the lake.



Aged landing craft hauls over 12 tons of lighting equipment

Among Elsie’s distinguished passengers was Lawrence, a well-known European red deer who had accumulated two decades of experience in film productions. In January 1987, Elsie transported Lawrence, along with his photography and film crew, to Forest Service land near the Caverns Road for the filming of a commercial for the Hartford Insurance Company.

Lawrence was situated in a meadow and recorded using *a total of 12 tons* of lighting equipment, cameras, and related personnel, all conveyed by Elsie across the lake.

*An important part of Elsie's history includes facilitating the transportation of fire crews. On Wednesday, November 26, 1969,* a fire—ignited by a negligent hunter—erupted on the upper Pit River arm of Shasta Lake. The fire was only 20 acres, but stubborn. Elsie was promptly utilized to transport a team of 40 state prison conservation camp members to assist with firefighting efforts. The fire was quickly extinguished, and the California Division of Forestry arranged a Thanksgiving dinner for the crew at the Bonanza Restaurant in Redding.



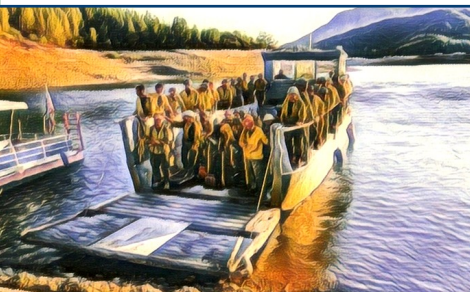
**On July 1, 2025,** the Green Fire broke out near Shasta Lake, which burned 19,022 acres. Almost 60 years later, Elsie again supported firefighting! An interagency fleet of boats was created to move crews and supplies.

When a helicopter transmission needed replacement, Elsie was called in to deliver it. Her versatility was recognized, and she was

added to the fleet. She completed several missions, repeatedly transporting up to 70 firefighters and delivering machinery and equipment across the lake.

*We’re proud that her call sign was “Omaha” during her temporary assignment,* where the fleet was headquartered at Jones Valley.

A Forest Service News Release **dated August 2, 2025,** recognized Elsie's contributions to the Caverns and the community: **“From wartime beaches to wild-fire zones, Elsie demonstrates that a commitment to safety and service spans generations. Thank you, Elsie, for your continued support.”**



*“Watching the hand crews depart was a little surreal. Of course, nothing could compare with Normandy, and I am loathe to diminish the sacrifices there, but these men and women are soldiers, hitting the beach to fight a different kind of enemy”. by “Cave Dave” Mundt -Lake Shasta Caverns*

Editors note: It makes the reader think about all those memories stored in Elsie’s hull. Memories left from more than 80 years ago by the fighting men on the beaches of Normandy to those left by the firefighting men on Shasta Lake last year.



Betty Crampton Leas: *"The Giant Orange". "Both of my children met their school bus there. We lived on West Street in Pine Grove."*

Joan Beaver Wilburn: *"The Ritz Beauty Salon - (my) Mom's shop". "Pike's Market". "TJ's". "Big Dipper". "Carriage House."*

VT: *"I grew up in Central Valley, left in 1958. At age 8, I helped my cousins load a wagon of different sodas and go to the sawmill and sell them for 25 cents. My fondest memory is the day after graduation from 8th grade. Bill Pike asked me if I wanted to work in his grocery store. I worked two summers for them."*

Janine Lewis: *"I enjoyed Juanita Sweeny's Art Museum one block south of Shasta Dam Blvd. Her guest book boasted visitors from not only our area but international guests as well. She created many pieces such as charcoal drawings, paintings, dolls, and furniture with her brother. Juanita painted a mural for the Veteran's Hall."*

Gary Bohn: *"Please have name tags next year!" "Teacher - Mrs. Hanson, 3rd grade. Toyon School 1945-49. Dr. Harold Bursell in the 1950s. The Big Dipper in the 50s-60s"*

Jeanie Naylor: *"I remember my first trip to the store for mom. She gave me a list and money and told me to walk to Mike's Market and pick up a few things. That very day I saw a red headed boy working at the store. He talked to me and I fell head over heels in love for the very first time. So far that love is still alive and will never end. Marrying a Valley Boy was a gift from Heaven."*

Don Spurgeon: *"Foster Freeze in front of the fire hall. I got paid 25 cents for a 50 lb. bag of potatoes. Great ice cream cones, milk shakes, fries and burgers."*

Sam Sowards: *"Big Dipper was the place to meet. Jim Evans was one of my best friends."*

Valerie Peterson Cantwell: *"How fun the Damborees were! My mom and dad were members at the Buckeye Grange. They made the best burgers! I loved CVHS! My dad taught there from 1957-1981. Such a great group we all were."*

Cheryle Yednak: *"Back in '64, my family visited the Dam while we were on vacation. We visited Sentry Market and the Caverns as well. When I moved here 10 years ago, I was amazed at seeing the market still standing looking as remembered. I've visited the Caverns several times over the last 10 years and (they're) always better each time. And of course, The Giant Orange."*

Kay Kobe: *"Cathy's Variety". "That store was Central Valley's 'Department Store'. They had everything - jeans, hats, sheets, craft items and smiles for everyone. The building still stands (remodeled) as the Old Mill Eatery and is one of the oldest buildings in the City of Shasta Lake."*

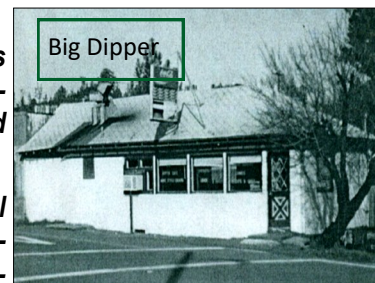
Teresa Burge: *"Big Dipper's banana split". "Dr. Hinman, the kind doctor who stitched up my leg. Mike's Market where I stole an ice cream bar - baddy!"*

Carol Burge Humiston: *"Hazel and I kicked around ole' CV in the 1950s as preteens and teens wreaking havoc; Froster Freeze in the phone booth fun! Jumping in puddles and giggling all the way. Then we grew up and married. John Sellars was my favorite teacher 1959-'60. His wife, Sally, later became my best friend."*

Gale Clarke: *"The Giant Orange". "When coming home (to Redding), it was always a treat to stop there. We were usually dirty, dusty, and windblown from riding in the back of a pickup. It was fun to watch the server squish the fresh cut oranges in that giant squeezer. The 'treat', best of all, was that wonderful cold juice. Just what was needed!"*

Debbie Rowland Brownfield: *"My grandpa helped build the dam and then he was a night watchman for many years. As a little girl, I thought it was my grandfather's dam! There were hundreds of deer. I remember the Big Dipper; they had black licorice ice cream. We always went to the A&W on Friday nites."*

Greg Watkins: *"George (Babel?) lived on First St. in Toyon and he maintained all 40 houses the USBR owned for the workers and families operating and maintaining Shasta Dam - 1960 era. The nice thing was if a window was broken or a heater did not operate, all one had to do was, 'Call George'."*



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*Editors note: These recollections were written at the dinner. Do they bring back memories for any of you?*

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**- Joan Fackrell**

I am so proud of the continued progress and positive momentum of our museum. Darlene has done a wonderful job working tirelessly to organize and update our collections. Thank you to Darlene and all of our volunteers, for your countless hours, dedication, and genuine love for the museum.



This year, we are honored to celebrate **250 years of our beautiful country**. If you live in Shasta County, please watch for opportunities throughout the year to commemorate this historic milestone. If you live elsewhere, please note the celebrations and activities in your community. Being involved is so important—it is one of the many ways we continue the legacy of civic engagement that helped establish our nation.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA!** My hope is that we will each take a moment to reflect on our role in this remarkable country as we give back through service and help bring hope to future generations. We invite you to visit the museum and see our small part of what we have captured from these 250 years of history.

Joan



**It's that time again to THANK our members for renewing their membership since the last newsletter and welcome new members!**

**YOU ARE WHY WE ARE!**

**INDIVIDUALS:** Renee & Michael Boehme/Redding; Theresa Burge/Redding; Mike Deay/Shasta Lake; Nancy Garr/Colusa; Skip Green/Lakehead; Carole Humiston/Redding; Josephine Lawson/Redding; Jean Naylor/Shasta Lake; Doug Russell, DDS/Shasta Lake; Mike Thomas/Buena Park; Ed VanVykt/Redding. **FAMILY:** Donna Adams/Shasta Lake; Charlie & DeeDee Kank/Gilbert AZ; Nancy Leslie/Cottonwood; Nancy & Sergio Mercado/Shasta Lake; Joe & Karen Pascoe/Hartford WI; Don Mills & Lynn Pascoe/Shasta Lake; Richard Roseberry & Francie Sullivan/Redding; Jesse & Tony Rogers/Shasta Lake; Joan Wilburn/Redding; **BENEFACTORS:** Wendell Baker/Grand Terrace; Bella Vista Farm Animals-Bob & Chick Miller/Cottonwood; Ed & Jonny Fish/Redding; Mary Hale/Shasta Lake; Roy & Cheryl Hull/Shingletown; John & Peggy Kenny/Redding; Betty Crampton Leas/Mt. Shasta; Irene Linkhart/Shingle Springs; Jessaca & Craig Lugo/Redding; Jim & Sandy Pope/Redding; Audrey Wyatt/Yerington, NV. **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:** Larry & Nancy DeNayer/Shasta Lake; Paul Jones/Redding; Ed McRae/Citrus Heights; Lennart & Sandra Lindstrand Jr./Redding; Kathy Reid/Shasta Lake; Stan Smith/Shasta Lake and Charity Tatlow/Shasta Lake.



**SHOUT OUT: THANK YOU** Benefactor *Heritage Plaza Board of Directors/Redding* for a \$300 check towards

a historical plaque; Central Valley HS '59, Benefactor/Dam Kid -*Dick Terry, Angel's Camp* for a \$500 check with a note that he sold a restored 1962 Pontiac, had fond school memories and wanted to share some of the profits with us; Benefactor CVHS '61 Wm. "*Bill*" Polf, *Pittsboro, NC* for \$500 from his estate planning (Author working on a new book); Benefactor/Dam Kid, *Dwain Harty/Redding* for \$500 from his estate planning. The *Shasta Genealogical Society* has disbanded; we are honored as the recipient of their monies—*Mary Harper* stopped by and gave us a check for \$1359.27; *Susie & John Woods* sent us checks for \$5000.00 each. The generous support for our Veterans and historical displays came with a note recalling fond memories of the people and the area. *Susie*, CVHS '63, was District 4 County Supervisor 1978-81 and John's father began the family business, Woods Plumbing, out of their home in Central Valley in the 50s.



**VOLUNTEERS! The life line of a museum Introducing- Joan Wetmore.**

Joan walked into the Visitors Center last year looking to volunteer for an organization in our city. We scooped her up before someone else did, lol.

Joan is from Rhode Island. In the 90s, she lived in Oak Run and now resides in our city. She has two sons. One son lives in Redding, and one in Rhode Island with grandchildren and great grandchildren in both states. "I enjoy being here, learning about the area and past history, and found great people to work with." We're so glad she found us!

Shasta Lake Heritage & Historical Society  
P.O. Box 562 Shasta Lake, CA 96019  
Visitors Center: *Boomtown Museum*  
1525 Median St., Shasta Lake  
530-275-3995 slhandhs@gmail.com  
www.shastalakehistorical.org  
501c3 non-profit organization



**What else is new?**

**The museum is temporarily closed until mid March.**

Call the office, check FB or the website for updates. We are installing new computers, training new volunteers and building displays. We **WOULD LOVE TO HAVE** more volunteers, so give us a call!

We will be sending out the *Behren's Eaton Museum* quarterly newsletter, a courtesy to our membership, *online only*. Give us feedback if you enjoy receiving it. We are working with the historical societies to promote their value, and preserve history for future generations.



We will have an entry in the Damboree Parade on Saturday May 2nd, thanks to Ed Hackworth and his 1927 Dodge! Perfect for our 250th Semiquincentennial celebration, it's a ride back in history.

New volunteers are doing data entry putting our photo collection into an online program—soon you will be able to access our collection online!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT. OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER WILL BE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16Th. Mark your calendars early to help us celebrate!**

***Love history?* Become a member.**

**Membership dues are renewable January of each year.**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**NEWSLETTER** -  email  OR paper?

**Please check the applicable boxes:**

Individual \$10  Family \$25

Business \$25  Benefactor \$100

**Board of Directors:**

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Vice President: Charlotte Bailey  
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Treasurer: Kay Kobe  
Directors: Linda Beaver, Donna Daniels,  
Sandy Estes & Rick Fox  
Director Emeritus: Del Hiebert