

# HOLE IN THE ROCK news

Preserving the History and Sharing the Legacy



BLUFF FORT, PO Box 476, Bluff, UT 84512, 435-672-9555

hirf.org

Fall 2014

Volume 15

## New Directors

Beverly Black

We would like to introduce ourselves. We are Dale and Beverly Vowell Black and have recently been called to serve as the 2015 directors of the Bluff Fort.

Dale is a native of San Juan County. He grew up in Blanding, Utah, but after attending college, moved to Monticello, Utah, where he lived and worked for Black Oil Company for 42 years. Community service has been a big part of Dale's life.



Serving as Monticello Mayor, Planning Commission Chair, Chamber of Commerce President and Board Member, he knows the meaning of hard work. Even though Dale isn't a *Hole-in-the-Rocker* by birth, he has a great love for pioneer history and is looking forward to reading and learning all there is to know

(Continued on page 3)

## The Dream Continues

Trudy De Angelis

What a year we have had! We have seen record breaking numbers of visitors at the Fort this summer. From the time we opened on March 10 through September we have had 27,941 visitors. We have been visited by 12,581 foreigners and 4,643 from the state of Utah. How fun it has been to greet these visitors, hear their stories and see the light come into their eyes as they hear and come to understand the story of the faithful and courageous Hole in the Rock pioneers. *England: "What a tale of courage, endurance and faith."*

We have added much to the Fort experience this year. Visitors can stop in the craft center to dress in pioneer costumes and have their pictures taken by one of the Service Missionaries working there. The children love it, but we often see adults participating in the fun also.

*France: "We really loved dressing up for the photos."*

Wooden horses have made an appearance in the yard and these have been a big hit. Children play cowboys as they ride the horses and rope the wooden calves that stand near. There is also a new pergola outside the back door of the Co-op. It looks great and gives visitors a shady place to stop and rest for a while.

*Switzerland: "Just fun! The kids like it! We too!"*

Our home-made cookies, English toffee and soft-service ice cream have been a big hit. I believe we have sold about 3,000 cookies this year. Once our visitors taste the samples, they have to buy such wonderful treats. Our Co-op Pop (old-fashioned root beer) stops many foreigners as they ask if it is real beer. Some are brave enough to try it, but it is not a flavor

that is appreciated by foreigners.

*England: "Love the cookies."*

The new movie is still in the making and some day soon it will be delivered for all of us to enjoy.

*Utah: "Film made me cry. So amazing they made it."*

Each cabin has been fitted with a push button sound system. Stories of the pioneers can be heard in 5 languages (English, German,

French, Italian and Spanish).

*Germany: "Very interesting video. We were surprised to watch it in German."*

Bluff Fort entered a float in the 4th of July parade in Blanding and won a trophy for 3rd place. We also entered a carriage, pulled by horses under the hood of a truck, in the 24th of July celebration held in Monticello.

We sponsored a hot air balloon

for the Annual Balloon Festival held in January (four of us got to ride in the hot air balloon) and helped with the Bluff Arts Festival in October.

*England: "So touching hearing the stories."*

Bluff has become more than just a dot on the map in Southeastern Utah. It is now a stop and a destination for many people as they travel through San Juan County.

*California: "We've been traveling for days and have seen lots of museums. This is the best yet."*

If you haven't been to the Fort in the past year, you really need to stop and see what we have. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

*Germany: "Favorite place in the world."*

*Arizona: "What a find."*

*Germany: "The ingenuity and fortitude are the necessity of everyone's life. When I think of quitting I hope I remember here."*



Stone is put on the Co-op

## Family Reunions

Frank Rowley

What should you do for your family reunion? It's boring to just meet at the Church, eat dinner and hear reports about family issues and events. You want something that people will be excited about doing!

Come to Bluff. There are many exciting things to do at Bluff Fort. You could also go to San Juan Hill or maybe Salvation Knoll. Those would both be wonderful day-hikes. Some may even like to hike to Wolfman Panel up Butler wash. If that's not to your liking, you can hang out at the Fort. The Fort now has new videos that tell the story of the Hole in the Rock pioneers. The kids can pull handcars, dress up in cowboy and cowgirl clothes, ride the wooden horses, and rope a calf. Family pictures can be taken in real covered wagons while you are dressed in pioneer clothes just

like your great, great grandma & grandpa used to wear. A tour of the cabins is so enlightening and you can even do a scavenger hunt as you visit each cabin. There are stories you can listen to as you make the rounds. All you have to do is push a button. When the family wonders which kids belong to which ancestor, walk into the Craft Center and pull up your Family Tree.

A kitchen is available, and you can either eat outside under the covered porch or go upstairs in the new Co-op Building. Ice cream, homemade cookies and English Toffee are for sale and there are gifts galore that you can purchase. Wow, that simplifies things! Just make your reservation and come on down! The Nielsons, Holyoaks and Bartons did and they had a BLAST!

## Craft Center

LaRue Barton

Who would think you would need a "craft center" at the Bluff Fort Historical Site. After completion of the new visitor's center, the former building was changed from the visitor's center to the busiest spot at the Fort. At any time during the day women are there sewing, quilting, knitting socks, and making rag rugs, rag dolls, pioneer bonnets, aprons, and stick horses. You name it and we are working on it. When I checked into our progress I found that we had sold over 160 pioneer bonnets by the end of September. The women, and an occasional man, have quilted five queen-sized quilts and five or six baby quilts all by hand. None of that fancy machine quilting for us. We have three sergers and eight sewing machines (five different brands), two ironing boards and countless scissors, pins and other necessary items.

The Craft Center also houses the family history center where visitors can look up their ancestors, read the stories and add pictures, etc. Many of the foreign visitors have been introduced to family history at the Craft Center.

Probably one of the most exciting things that happens in the Craft Center is that visitors can dress in pioneer clothing and take their pictures in a covered wagon. I wish we could understand all they are saying as they laugh and joke about how they look! They really have a fun time! Occasionally they wear the clothing as they wander around the Fort taking pictures in the cabins, teepee and hogan. If you haven't seen the Craft Center, you need to plan a visit and be sure to add a little extra time to help quilt or weave a rag rug.

## What the Future Holds

LaMar Helquist

Much has been accomplished at the Fort this year by Church Service Missionaries, docents and other volunteers. The Foundation expresses deep-felt thanks for all that has been accomplished. The question has been asked about plans for next year.

Camp Sticki-ta-tudy will continue to be improved. Plans are to plant some trees for shade and windbreaks.

A monument to honor the four scouts is in the planning stage and a monument honoring those

who came answering church calls after the first group and before 1883 is almost finished. With the help of designers from Thanksgiving Point, an exhibit is being planned which will tell the story of the pioneers' effort to bring life-giving water from the river to their crops. As part of this exhibit the story of Bluff's gold rush days will be told. Visitors to the exhibit will be able to try their hand at panning for gold. Maybe Bluff's gold rush days will return. The Kumen Jones ruin will be stabilized and a

## Friday Night at the Fort

Maureen Brandon

1686 visitors have enjoyed the entertainment provided free of charge each Friday night at the Fort.

Talented local San Juan County residents shared their talents singing, dancing, reciting poetry and histories, and playing a wide range of musical instruments. Visitors also appreciated a taste of Native American culture through demonstrations, music and dance as well as food.

A community dance was held twice this season and was well attended. This year we tried something new that we called a variety show where several entertainers performed on the same evening, ensuring something for everyone's palate. Friday Night at the Fort has been a great service to the community and to the visitors alike. We thank all of those who so freely shared their talents with us.



roof will be placed over the home to protect it from further deterioration.

You are invited to help with these projects through volunteer labor or financial contributions.

"When the time is right, it will happen"

Corinne Roring

## New Directors

(Continued from page 1)

about the San Juan Mission.

Beverly, having grown up in Blanding, was delighted to move "back home" in 2010 after living in St. George, Utah, for 27 years. Working for 31 years as a high school secretary, she retired just prior to returning to Blanding. From the time she helped build the replica of the Perkins cabin at the Bluff Fort (summer of 2009), she grew to love the Fort. What a joy it was for her to become better acquainted with her great-grandparents, Benjamin and Sarah Perkins, through serving as a HIRF docent and HIRF newsletter editor during 2010-2013.

The Blacks are a newly-wed couple of one year and nine months. Both of their spouses (Elizabeth Hurst Black and Thomas L. Vowell) passed away in 2011. Between the two of them they have 6 children plus their spouses, 25 grandchildren, and 1.5 great-grandchildren.

The Blacks feel that their recent experience as Service Missionaries at Martin's Cove, a Mormon historic handcart site in Wyoming, will help them in serving at the Bluff historic site. Bev is a social butterfly and loves being around people. Dale is a "Jack of all trades and a master of tons"! They hope these two attributes will give them a good start at learning the "tricks of the trade" as Directors of the Bluff Fort.

## It Takes All of Us

Trudy De Angelis

Words are not sufficient to express our thanks to all the people who have made Bluff Fort what it is today. First and foremost are our Hole in the Rock Foundation board members. Under the leadership of Corinne Roring they have moved forward and will continue to do so to make Bluff Fort an inspiring tribute to those first pioneers. This year we have been blessed with 11 couples of Church Service missionaries and numerous docents who have faithfully sewed, baked, sawed, hammered, dug pits, poured cement, manned the Visitor's Center and told the story to interested and wide-eyed visitors from all over the world. Instrumental in the success of the Fort this past year have been the directors, Frank and Elaine Rowley (Coolidge, AZ). They have had the energy necessary to guide the CSMs and docents in



their labors with an eye toward the final outcome of sharing the story in the best way possible. Frank and Elaine have served as directors for two years and we truly thank them for their hard work and consistent dedication to the Fort.

To all of those involved in any way with the success of the past year we say: "We couldn't have done it without you."

One visitor put it correctly when he said: "Those who were here are looking down and smiling."

### 2014 CSMs

Joe & Maureen Brandon (Tooele, UT); Gianfranco & Trudy De Angelis (Monticello, UT); Rex & Patty Edwards (Santa Clara, UT); Bob & Sylvia Healey (Mt. Pleasant, UT); Tharon & Kathy Judd (Orem, UT); Royce & JoLynn Mason (Aurora, UT); Barry & Barbara Meekins & Austin Gorham (Clayton, DE); Keith & Jerri Nielson (Provo, UT); James & Vicki Orr (Morgan, UT).

### Church History Missionaries:

Stuart & Kristi Matheson (Salt Lake City, UT)

## Camp Sitkie-ta-tudy

Frank Rowley

It was just a dream, a dream for a place where youth could experience the life of some of their ancestors. A place where handcarts were the mode of travel and protection from the elements was a thin canvas cover they called a tent. Cooking would be done over an open fire, not in a microwave or an oven.

In February 2014, equipment started moving dirt. Paul Sonderegger had been hired to build a perimeter road, a gravel road so you wouldn't get stuck in the sand. Pit run gravel formed the road base. It was finished with crushed gravel. Vaults for two outhouses were installed. Cement pads for two large pavilions were poured by Kendall Shumway and crew. Vance Seely and crew laid the cement block for the restroom walls. The Church Service Missionaries constructed the roofs and installed partitions for restrooms, built a pump shed, helped Shumway erect the pavilions and install the roofs. Waterlines were installed by Clark Bayles. The design was drawn by Kristi

and Stuart Matheson and overseen by Lynn Stevens and Mike Roring from the HIRF Board of Directors.

There it stands, awaiting the arrival of youth,



but something is missing, "the youth!" The BLM is still floundering in their attempt to issue permission to travel with handcarts for the most part on graded county roads.

Camping would be on State lands leased by the

Hole-in-the Rock Foundation. Cultural clearances were completed on the campsites leased from the state. So what are the issues?

The application was filed in 2011. Amendments and meetings followed and things ground to a halt. In February 2013, the application was refilled. Meeting after meeting has occurred, but no permission has been granted.

Youth continue to wait for permission to pull handcarts down county roads to get a glimpse of pioneer life. Camp Sitkie-ta-tudy awaits its guests, ready to be of service, but, at present, is greeted only by silence.

# 2014 Youth Conference

Stuart Matheson

The Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation ([www.hirf.org](http://www.hirf.org)) hosted a youth conference this past June 5<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> with youth and leader participants from the Arlington Hills LDS ward in Salt Lake City, Utah. The expressed purposes of these youth conferences include educating today's youth about the history and legacy of the San Juan Mission and providing opportunities to experience in a small way what others did because they had a testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Utilizing the facilities at Bluff Fort as their base, these youth and leaders toured the buildings on the Fort property, learned about the relations between the early pioneers and the Native Americans and participated in an exploring adventure where the youth replicated the role of the early explorers in finding a trail over the slick rock for a wagon road. The youth and leaders spent many hours working on a service project for the benefit of the Bluff Community / Senior Center. The participants, clad in life vests and

tethered to the shore, floated a small section of the San Juan River. One of the most popular activities was an outdoor dance. The Arlington Hills ward combined with the Hamilton Fort ward from Cedar City for a group of over 100 youth and leaders and were joined by some of the Foundation's board members and Church service missionaries. Perhaps the highlight of the conference was the drive down Comb Wash to San Juan Hill, the last major obstacle for the

pioneers. The youth and their leaders all climbed to the top and sat together to listen to an address and testimony. A sense of peace, calm and reverence pervaded these active youth as they began to feel and understand how the Lord helped these wonderful pioneers overcome their difficulties and that He would also help each of them in their modern-day trials.

Bluff and the Hole in the Rock trail have become sacred to these youth just as they are to the descendants of those faithful pioneers and the Native Americans. The Bluff Fort and Camp Stickie-ta-tudy facilities are available for youth activities and family reunions.



**How do you get to the Hole in the Rock?**

Our facebook page can be found at Hole-in-the-Rock Pioneers  
 Thanks for all or your support and donations.  
 If you would like to donate, you can do that on our web site or by mailing a check to  
 HIR Foundation, PO Box 476, Bluff, UT 84512