

Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC) Meeting
Tuesday, 21 January 2020
Board Room
2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Officers Present

Jean Drzyzgula	Chairperson
Frank Graham	Vice Chairperson
Dave Price	Secretary

Council Members Present

Jean Bennett	Collections
Jim Boehlke	Living History
Thad Grudzien	Naturalist
Martha Henderson	Ranger Station
Steve Murray	Bird of Prey
Jean Noosinow	Store / Gallery Attendants
Siobhan Sullivan	Newsletter
Aldine Thornton	BHTM
Marge Trayser	Admissions

Staff Present

Christina Morales	Volunteer Coordinator
Sara Siestream	Curator of Art and Community Engagement

Other Attendees

Barbara Wagner	Volunteer
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1. Prior to the meeting Jon Nelson gave VAC members a tour of the new mews building. The VAC meeting was then called to order by the chairperson at 2:00 pm in Board Room.
2. Staff Reports:
 - a. Curator of Art and Community Engagement—Sara talked about the *Kid's Curate* program. This year, the museum is working with students from a La Grande school to create wildlife art that will be exhibited in the *Desertarium* hallway in May. Sara is also working with Jason Graham, an artist and poet, on a *Museum without Walls* project. Participating students will deliver a poetry performance or an art mural as their project. Sara has been giving lectures on Native American arts and culture. The next *Winter Art Series* program will be held on 6 February. It will be a workshop and discussion on three-dimensional art objects.
 - b. Volunteer Coordinator—Christina reminded everyone that the museum has scheduled free admission days on 25 January and 29 February. She thanks all the volunteers who sign-up to work on those days. The introduction program for new volunteers is being revised. Class dates will be announced as soon as the new program is finalized. Also, the wildlife team is looking for new members.
3. Team Lead Reports:

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- a. Birds of Prey—Steve said the BoP team has started to work on the indoor *Sky Hunters* program which will be presented this spring. The new mews structure is complete. The next step is to spread gravel inside the enclosures; then, the birds can be moved into their new homes.
 - b. Collections—Jean Bennett said the collections team is inventorying the museum’s entire collection. The review will determine what artifacts must be controlled and what objects can be used or displayed in an uncontrolled environment.
 - c. BHTM—Aldine said the BHTM team is ready for *Free Day*. Also, she reported that Vivian Adams passed away. The BHTM team is considering how to honor her for her contribution the museum.
 - d. Ranger Station—Martha said Les Joslin has passed along documentation related to the Ranger Station. Martha is doing additional research on the Ranger Station’s history. She is also working on both a long-term and a short-term plan for the Ranger Station exhibit.
 - e. Admissions—Marge reported that museum attendance was excellent during the December Holiday season. Currently, attendance is low; however, a very large crowd is expected for *Free Day*. In the past, attendance on free days has ranged from 1,500 to 5,000. Last year, over 3,500 visitors attended the January *Free Day* while the February *Free Day* had just under 3,000 guests.
 - f. Living History—Jim said the *Prohibition Party* went very well with about 275 people attending. Many who attended were not museum regulars. This was good news since bringing new people to the museum was a goal of the event. Also, the next Mining Day is planned for 15 February.
 - g. Naturalist—Thad reported that team members have been participating in a series of coaching session to improve visitor engagement skills. Due to winter conditions, there have not been as many visitors going on the daily *Nature Walk* as normal; however, visitors who took the tour had a great experience.
 - h. Gallery Attendants—Jean Noosinow said the gallery attendant team is doing well.
 - i. Silver Sage Store—Jean Noosinow reported that store activity varies from day to day based on overall museum attendance. The store will start stocking some spring related items next month.
 - j. Newsletter—Siobhan said the newsletter has a new writer. As usual, the next edition will have a number of very interesting articles including a summary of the recent BHTM team’s field trip.
 - k. Desertarium—Jean Drzyzgula said that Burt Douglass built a new tortoise environment for the *Desertarium*. The next upgrade project will be to install front access doors on some *Desertarium* enclosures. Volunteers will soon be needed to help with reptile station training.
4. New Business and New Ideas:

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- a. Frank passed on another volunteer's suggestion that a team award be added to the museum's annual awards program.
 - b. Jean Bennett reminded everyone that the coffee cups in the breakroom belong to individual volunteers and are not for common use.
 - c. Aldine suggested that children visiting the museum might be encouraged to learn more about forest resources if there was a self-led scavenger-hunt that required a stop at the Ranger Station. Martha suggested a map-quest activity might be a good way to get students to visit the Ranger Station exhibit.
5. Old Business: At previous VAC meetings, members discussed and agreed that the VAC would be a good forum to review museum projects being proposed by volunteers. Jean Drzyzgula passed out a summary of the proposed project review/approval process along with questions that project advocates will need to address in their proposals. The VAC discussed the draft process and then voted to endorse the proposal. The next step will be for Jean to put together a final draft of the proposal and forward it to Christina. Christina will forward the proposal to Dana and request a meeting to discuss to it. If possible, Jean and Frank would like to accompany Christina to meeting.
6. Something Nice to Say about Someone or Something:
- a. Barbara wanted to recognize the museum's communication staff for the excellent advertisements being carried in local media.
 - b. Frank gave kudos to the facilities staff for their excellent work on the new mews.
 - c. Jim thanked Steve for arranging for the VAC to tour the new mews facility, and thanked Jon Nelson for giving the tour.
 - d. Marge wanted to thank Emily Agan for organizing the very successful *Prohibition Party*.
7. Reminder: The next VAC meeting will be on Tuesday/18 February at 2:00 pm in the board room.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Dave Price
VAC Secretary