

# Pratt County Historical Society December 2009 Newsletter

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Mon – Fri 1 to 4 Sat – Sun 1 to 3

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President: Marvin Proctor Secretary: Marjorie Buck  
Vice President: Ulanda Stiebben Treasurer: Thad Henry  
Other Board Members: Darrel Brehm, Marion Fiegel, Don Fincham, Madeline Martin,  
Jerry Seimens, Gary Skaggs, Ulanda Stiebben and Rose Wehling  
Curator: Marsha Brown Office Manager: Sandra Hetrick PR Chairman: Eunice Proctor

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## THE YEAR AT THE MUSEUM IN A NUTSHELL

**JANUARY --** 2009 was Pratt's 125<sup>th</sup> birthday !!!! We've come a long way since 1884.

For Kansas Day we had more students than in the past: Haskins and Southwest 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, Southwest 4<sup>th</sup> grade class, Skyline 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and the kids from the Alternative School in Iuka.

Some of the people from Arrowhead West toured the museum earlier in the month.

**FEBRUARY --** It was a busy month for Marsha. The earlier part of the month, she helped out with the Laura Ingalls Wilder birthday celebration at the Pratt Public Library. This is an annual event for all the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in town. Rochelle Westerhaus, of the library, tells the kids about Laura Ingalls Wilder. (The author of the Little House on the Prairie books.) Marsha takes things for "Show and Tell" that the pioneers would have used in their everyday lives. Then, at the end of the month, she spoke at the Pilot Club's noon luncheon. She told of how she came to be at the museum, how much the museum means to Pratt, and ended with some funny stories about what kids say after they've taken the tour. Also, in February, the museum was the meeting place for the Chamber's Leadership 2000+ group.

**MARCH --** The month of the Historical Society's Annual Meeting... Madeline Martin and Don Fincham took over the positions on the Board that were vacated by Linda Brehm and Ross Hoener. Mildred Eubank was the guest speaker and told everyone about the history of Coats. The classes of Karla Ewing and Alan Albers from Skyline toured the museum.

**APRIL --** Marsha got up early to speak at the Kiwanis Club breakfast meeting. It's held from 6:30 to 7:30 in the morning! Marsha was heard later joking, "What I won't do for that museum!" Also, in April, Pat Brant brought her Home Ec class from Skyline into the museum.

**MAY --** It was the Skyline 2<sup>nd</sup> graders turn to come to the museum. They were all excited to go on a field trip and get out of class for awhile.

The Pratt High class of 1959 met at the museum the afternoon of the 16<sup>th</sup> as part of their 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion. Board Members Don Fincham and Gary Skaggs just happen to be members of that class. Wow! You guys are getting old! Keep up the good work on the Board!

**JUNE --** Ah! June! Pratt is busy the first week of the month with the Miss Kansas Pageant. Lisa Miller brought all the beautiful, young contestants in for a tour of the museum. The Miss Kansas display was a big hit with the ladies.

Members of the Heflin family took a tour, as part of their reunion weekend activities.

**JULY --** The Historical Society had a booth at the Pratt County Fair. The booth was a favorite place for fairgoers to stop for awhile and look at the old photographs of Pratt County towns. Everyone who wasn't a member of the Society, was encouraged to join. Those few days at the fair are always a pleasure to be a part of the Historical Society. You hear other people's stories of their family histories and of their home towns.

Members of the Rolf-Hearn-Hannawald families reminisced as they saw many of their family's heirlooms, when they toured the museum as part of their family reunion.

## IN A NUTSHELL CONTINUED.....

**AUGUST --** The Historical Society is a member of the South Central Kansas Tourism Region. (SCKTR) It is an organization that promotes tourism for this part of the state. The monthly meetings are held in the various towns. We were proud to host the meeting for August. The lunch was prepared by the 54 Diner and Catering. After the meeting and lunch, everyone enjoyed going through the museum.

The Museum was a stop on the Amazing Race, sponsored by the Methodist's "Build a Better World".

**SEPTEMBER --** The Pratt Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated their 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at their annual dinner. So, when they called and asked Marsha to look up some things about Pratt in 1929, she was more than happy to do it. (Any excuse to use the microfilm reader-printer!) She copied off articles from the Union and Tribune and made posters of the highlights of Pratt in 1929. Here are just a few: The building of the Hotel Roberts, the Municipal Building, the Barron Theater, the First Baptist Church and the castle-like Ortmeyer Lumber Company were all started in 1929. (They were all finished in 1930.) Two other places that were built were the Girl Scout log cabin, at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Hamilton, and the Phillips 66 station at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Ninescah (now part of Ayres-Calbeck Mortuary parking lot). Natural gas came to Pratt, so gas cooking and heating stoves were big sellers at the hardware stores. The Lear Airplane was built in Pratt. (NOT the Lear of now Lear-Jet.) Some of the businesses were: The Mecca Café, Pedigo and Thacker Hardware stores, Doan's Furniture, Utz and Townsend Shoes, Clay Skaggs Clothier, Fischborn Millinery, and the Calvert-Cheek clothing store.

Marsha made placemats from newspaper ads of Pratt businesses during 1929 for use on the dinner tables.

September in Kansas means it's time for the State Fair in Hutchinson. For the second year, the museum was represented in the SCKTR booth by Marvin and Eunice Proctor, Marji Buck and Dwight Adams.

**OCTOBER --** The Skyline 4<sup>th</sup> graders made it to the museum.

The Pilot Club's District Fall Conference was held at the museum, the second Saturday. Ladies from all over this part of the state attended the meeting. Their tables were all decked out with railroad items, to go along with their project of the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Park train.

Later on in the month, the ladies of the PEO had their district luncheon. Not to be outdone by the Pilot Club, the theme for their brunch was "toasters". Wayne Konkel, who's toaster collection is on display at the museum, was the guest speaker.

The Pratt High classes of 1954 and 1969 stopped by for awhile during their class reunion get-togethers.

**NOVEMBER --** The museum was open longer hours to be a part of the "Old Fashioned Christmas" festivities on the Court House lawn.

Residents of LakeWood Senior Living came one afternoon and a Cub scout troop came one evening as the setting for their meeting.

**DECEMBER --** Marsha was the guest speaker at the Rotary Club's noon meeting.

WHEW !!!! Bring on 2010 !!!!

**LOSSES IN OUR MUSEUM FAMILY THIS YEAR**

**Reta Hetrick** was a former Board Member, Host Coordinator and Museum Hostess. She was the mother of Vickie Howell and our office manager, Sandra Hetrick. During the last few years, she would sometimes come to the museum with Sandra on Tuesdays. She enjoyed visiting with the museum hosts and visitors. Reta was a wealth of Pratt county history and she is truly missed.

**Gene Rose** was a former Board Member and served as President. His carpentry skills continue to be appreciated throughout the museum.

**Vada Austin's** sudden death from brain cancer last September was a big loss to the museum family. She was a great hostess, who enjoyed the visitors, both young and old.

There were several people who were members of the Historical Society who passed away this past year, too. We at the museum extend our sympathies to the families of all these wonderful people.

**A BIG "THANK YOU" TO LU JEAN !!!**

For many, many years, Lu Jean Rosenbaum kept the obituary notebooks up to date. She would clip them from the newspapers, copy them off, and file them in the notebooks. This can sometimes be quite the task!

This year, she had to give it up for health reasons. Thank you SO MUCH Lu Jean for your many volunteer hours and your knowledge of Pratt County history that have helped so many people with their family history research.

Lu Jean is now a resident at South Wind Hospice Home. If you would like to send her a card, the address is: 496 Yucca Lane, Pratt, KS 67124. (The obits are now being kept up to date by Sandra.)

**MEMORIALS, DONATIONS, BEQUESTS**

We are always very grateful for those who continue to remember the Pratt County Historical Society Museum through memorials, donations and bequests. We have indeed been blessed through the years with generous supporters who have helped to make this into a first class museum.

For a memorial or donation from an individual or family, in the amounts of \$ 250, \$ 500 or \$ 1,000, you may make a request for a plaque on our "Memorials and Donations" wall of honor. Call the office and ask Marsha for the details.

Any monetary donation is tax deductible as the Historical Society is a non-profit organization.

**NEW MUSEUM HOST COORDINATOR**

After two years of being the museum's host coordinator, Liz Henry has decided to hand over the reins to Karla Ewing.

Karla taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Southwest Elementary school for 33 years. She retired in 2007. She has since worked part-time at Memories.

She and her husband, Marvin, enjoy traveling and spending time with their granddaughter.

Welcome to the Historical Society family, Karla!

**WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT VOLUNTEERS**

If you look up "volunteer" in a dictionary, it will say -- a person who offers himself for any service, of his own free will ." That describes our hosts perfectly. They give the museum two hours of their time. Some, only once a month. Others, three or four times a month. The Society appreciates them giving up their time to greet guests who come to tour the museum! We could not keep the museum open without all of you! You are more than just a museum greeter.... You are an example of the great people of Pratt.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! ☺☺

**MICROFILM OF PRATT COUNTY'S NEWSPAPERS**

The latest additions to our Research Library include 37 rolls of past Pratt County newspapers. Thanks to all the people who have contributed to the Microfilm Fund. Marji Buck, Jane Ann Starrett, Sally Etcheto and Ross and Jeanie Hoener pooled their donations to get all of the early day luka newspapers. Part of the Reta Hetrick Memorial got the rest of the Preston papers.

Now, a request goes out to the people with Coats ties, to pool THEIR money together, to get the 12 rolls of the "Coats Courant" from 1905 to 1948.

Also, for those of you would like to donate to the fund, there are still 10 rolls of the "Pratt Republican" from 1888 to 1920, that the museum doesn't have.

If we could get these last 22 rolls, the museum would have all of the microfilm of the past Pratt County newspapers that the Kansas State Historical Society has. The Pratt Public Library has the ones for the Pratt Tribune, and they continue to update them through the years.

Microfilms are such a treasure chest of history for people who are trying to fill in the missing parts of their family's history, not to mention people wanting to find out about the history of their hometown, a building or a business.

Call the museum today to be put on the list!

**CEILING TILE IN GALLERY # 1**

Or, if microfilm isn't your thing, you might want to contribute to the "Ceiling Tile Fund".

After many years since it was installed, the ceiling tile in Gallery # 1 is getting old. Because of this, the tiles harden and start to shrink, causing them to not fit properly and fall.

It is estimated, the cost to replace the tiles in the entire Gallery # 1 ceiling is \$ 1,500.00. Members of the Board and a few volunteers will do the work, saving on the installment costs. It will be a major undertaking, but we have faith that the guys will do a great job! ☺

**ITEMS ALWAYS WANTED FOR MUSEUM**

Remember the museum, whenever you're going through things at the house! We are always looking for old things of Pratt County to add to the museum's inventory. From the small business giveaways to the big tractor from great-grandpa's farm..... Call the museum and see if what you have is what we want!

**\$\$\$ MEMBERSHIP DUES \$\$\$**

If there is an '08 after your name on the address label, this will be your last newsletter. If there is an '09 after your name, please be sure to pay your 2010 dues after the first of the new year.

Individual .....	\$ 15.00
Lifetime .....	\$ 100.00

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE MUSEUM !!!

**CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

If you are out and about in the evenings, looking at all the Christmas lights, including Lemon Park, be sure and drive by the museum and see the Christmas tree display in the front window.

From all of us, to all of you ----

"MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL  
& TO ALL A GOODNIGHT!"