THE JOURNEY TO IRREVERENCE

This has been a whirlwind year for the Aspen Historical Society – and it is gratifying to look back at what has been accomplished. However, in the spirit of progress we are focusing on the future of our past and that is what we hope to communicate with our new look and attitude.

We entered into a strategic planning process just a year ago. Both the Board of Trustees and the Staff put hours of discussion and research into a plan that will help us keep pace in this new century. We are amassing the tools we need to be leaders in the telling of our community story as well as to meet the standards and expectations of the professional museum community.

One of the key points in our new vision was to shed the baggage left from a long struggle to keep the Society solvent and to adopt a bright new “brand” to accompany our optimistic attitude. Some felt strongly that branding is only for big private corporations and felt it was not appropriate for a small non-profit. However, the concept of developing a new public face prevailed because those of us who were most intimately involved recognized that WE needed a fresh start, even if our constituency did not. We had been bogged down in the bunkers of a difficult financial struggle for so long that we yearned to explode into the daylight with a statement of celebration.

Finding the Spirit.

What a process – we started with a day-long retreat - the goal to synthesize our previously stated vision into a statement of purpose which could identify the way we want to be perceived in the community. So many history museums are viewed as stuffy and dusty and boring and we knew we are none of those things. We wanted to break the stereotype and try to get to the kernel of what makes our town (and therefore our mission) different.

After much brainstorming and discussion, we selected the key characteristics that best define our culture. These brand drivers are: Informal, Irreverent, Individuality, Characters, Provocative, and Adventurous.

Implicit in these words is a whimsy...a sense of humor that separates our Aspen from any other mining town. It is amazing to see how our attachment to these words is reflected in the direction we take when planning programs and events. It is actually downright fun, not to mention rewarding to see all of the fractured pieces of this project finally come together as we present to you our new look and our new programs and scheduled events for the summer season and beyond.

Steering us through this journey with calm and expertise and an uncanny insight to help us get where we wanted to be has been Tim Braun, principal of local marketing communications company b2. inc. and graphic artist Cindy Noel of Noelhouse Creative. They deserve immeasurable kudos for their efforts, patience, and the conceptual manifestation of our ideas. We cannot find enough superlatives to express our respect and our gratitude for their leadership.

Our New Look.

Graphically, our new image began with some traditional style suggestions, but didn't really reflect the hodgepodge of traits that we had come to use to define our “Aspen.” Cindy went back to the drawing board. We expected her to return with slight variations on a similar predictable theme. Instead, she and Tim came back with the capricious, stylish, somewhat quirky logo you see throughout this newsletter.

It was love at first sight. With the usual Aspen penchant for opinions, there were plenty of suggestions for tweaks, but what you see is very close to what was originally presented. It is as unruly as our community, don't you think? We couldn’t be more delighted.

We love our new logo and the “brand strip” too. The strip is an informal timeline – rather than trying to be too literal we just wanted to remind everyone of the eras we talk about as we “hike off into the future.” We had Lots of fun finding “real” local photos to use instead of canned art. The characters in the silhouette are an integral part of our character. Recognize anyone?

We are launching our new look this month – we can’t wait until it is ubiquitous and immediately recognized as a whole or in “pieces and parts.” We are exceedingly enthusiastic about the results.

JOIN US FOR A COMMUNITY PARTY!

Coates Reid and Waldron / ResortQuest present:
“Archive the Good Old Days”
A nostalgic journey into the fifties honoring CRW founders
Kay and Roy Reid
Sunday, July 1st, 2007
Wheeler/Stallard Museum Grounds
620 West Bleeker Street
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

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The Aspen Historical Society is introducing a bright new “brand” to accompany our optimistic attitude.
Meet the Team

With new exhibits, special events, and a summer of programs and tours at four sites—while in the midst of planning for a fifth—the staff of the Aspen Historical Society is rarely “at ease.” We would like to introduce you to us.

COLLECTIONS

Tim McElroy – Curator  Tim keeps us on track with formal process and oversees exhibits as well as the curatorial staff. In addition to being a new dad, Tim has managed to keep his sense of humor as his one-person job duties have expanded to be more like a three-person list. He quietly just gets it all done and manages to keep his family priorities in place at the same time.

Anna Scott – Archivist  Anna, too, has given birth since the New Year. Anna, with an anthropology background, juggles all of the archive research requests for materials and continues to help with the updating of our records. She might rather be home with Savannah but we are glad she gives us some attention too. We missed her when she was on maternity leave.

Edna Adeh – Registrar  Our Collections Department and Archives have a few years’ worth of work ahead to properly accession and catch up on the backlog of items that have piled up during years without staff. Lisa has made a huge dent in a very short period of time.

OPERATIONS

Edna Adeh – Office Manager & Database  Edna is the person who really keeps the office running like a fine Swiss watch. Edna single-handedly tackles all of the staff internal needs, manages our database (a story for another day), fulfills membership correspondence and mailings, oversees production of materials, and fields phone calls too. She is the official facilitator for the staff internal needs, manages our database (a story for another day), fulfills membership correspondence and mailings, oversees production of materials, and fields phone calls too. She is the official facilitator for our Aspen Historic Parks & Recreation Special district, which is no small accomplishment just by itself.

Barbara Bossart – Site Director  On a good day Barbara is researching and writing new living history tours, juggling gardener schedules, checking light bulbs, and making sure that our volunteers are properly trained and where they need to be. On a better day she is also pricing and ordering merchandise, shaving off the grounds to prospective renters, and helping with the phones. Barbara never lets up.

Tom Egan – Communications Director  Tom’s job is to keep us in the news—in your face so to speak. Tom is a longtime valley resident whose love of history and enthusiasm is contagious. He organized the branding project and he will lead the AHS infusion into community dialogue as we move forward.

Georgia Hanson – Executive Director  Georgia brings leadership and a solid vision for the future to the table. Georgia has steadfastly set about to ensure a creative and befitting vision for our Society and keeps us on an elevated optimistic plane.

Cherie Haynes – Bookkeeper  Cherie keeps the books balanced while working with an extremely tight budget. Besides cracking the budgetary whip, she oversees cash flow, monitors expenses and enthusiastically pitches in for many events. Cherie was formerly Operations Manager and moved to this part-time position in order to accommodate her desire for less face time on site.

Kip Hubbard – Director of Education & Programming  Kip oversees our school tours, develops seasonal Speaker Series and the new AHS Summer Camps, as well as overseeing new tour development and special event plans. He has established an active Education Committee which meets regularly to develop ways to expand our education programs. Kip keeps us focused on details when we are flitting around in disarray.

Sheila McKenney – Senior Docent  Sheila began as a volunteer and is now Senior Docent—a seasonal position that allows us to present a “living history” tour of the Victorian. Sheila meets and greets and smiles and soothes and keeps the front of house on an even keel even when we are in the back behind the curtains tearing our hair out. Watch us—our goal for the Aspen Historical Society is to continue to be great among many great Aspen non-profit organizations and a primary reason for visitors to come to our historic mountain hamlet.

We also want to acknowledge Kathy Chaloupka, who has diligently shown up eight hours a week, assisting Edna with the database for several years. Although Kathy is moving on, she has been an integral part of our team and will be missed.

STAR VOLUNTEER

Larry Fredrick - Official Historian

LIFE TIME TRUSTEE

Mary Eshbaugh Hayes

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Christine Aubale Gerschel
Ann Hodges
Jane Jenkins
Rick Newton
Martie Sterling
Ruth Whyte

ENDOWMENTS

The Hodges Gift
The Ruth Whyte Fund

STAFF

Georgia Hanson, Executive Director
Tim McElroy, Curator
Lisa Hancock, Registrar
Anna Lookabill Scott, Archivist
Tom Egan, Communications
Edna Adeh, Office Manager & Data
Kip Hubbard, Education and Programs
Barbara Bossart, Site Director
Sheila McKenney, Lead Docent
Cherie Haynes, Bookkeeper

INTERNS

SUMMER 2007
Matthew Benton
Megan Carson
Kristin Strid

From left to right: (back row) Tim McElroy, Tom Egan, Georgia Hanson, Kip Hubbard (front row) Anna and Savannah Scott, Barbara Bossart, Max, Lisa Hancock, Edna Adeh and Cherie Haynes as Tinkerbell over there in the corner. Gone Camping—Sheila McKenney
Did you ever wonder what on earth goes on in the archives or what happens to a collection that isn’t on permanent display? Well the details are tedious and the process for recordation is lengthy. Suffice that considerations are many and care is critical in order to ensure a future for Aspen’s artifacts and photos.

The Archives building—the “little carriage house out back”—was built in the 1970s when museum standards were not considered and before the long-term negative effects of heat and light were identified. Our collection has grown and the space simply no longer can accommodate it. We have hit such a critical point in both storage needs and updating to meet basic standards that a remodel is required.

Our current building lacks preservation basics including fire protection, flood protection, environmental control, safety measures for staff and visitors, and proper work and storage space. We have a long-term goal to become accredited by the American Association of Museums and these changes are in step with national standards. (With accreditation there are many doors that open up for grants and traveling exhibits that are beyond our reach now.)

Our plan is to make substantive but not fancy building renovations that will protect our precious contents, accommodate multiple researchers, better serve the elderly and disabled populations and provide staff with work space.

We are pleased to have a stellar Advisory Council who have stepped up to help us make this happen with their keen oversight and contributed expertise. We are extremely grateful for their collective willingness to help and the project (which is in the drawing stages) has already benefited immeasurably from their input. Similarly, the project cannot be realized without your support. Call us at 970.925.3721 for more information about your contribution will help secure Aspen’s roots forever.

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**Society News**

**ARCHIVES BUILDING RENOVATION**

When planning started for this exhibit, we knew it would be important to present an exhibit that would appropriately embody the soul of our new attitude. The idea to use Tom Benton was a “no-brainer.” We believe that character and characters are what make our home town unique. It was logical and obvious to select Tom, who not only fits the bill but also deserves our attention and respect.

We were fortunate to spend some quality time with Tom before he was hospitalized. We reviewed a basic plan, walked the gallery space with him and heard him talk about his body of work and his antics. Little did we know that it was the last time we would see our friend. Gratefully we have the advantage of his insight to steer us.

**Exhibits**

**BENTON RETROSPECTIVE**

The second floor of the Wheeler/Stallard Museum will hold a treasure trove of artwork and artifacts as we present a historical perspective through the work of artist Tom Benton. The only disappointment is that we won’t have Tom with us to enjoy this tribute. Tom passed away in May.

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**Staff Update**

**CURATOR TIM MCELROY EXPANDS FAMILY COLLECTION**

Curator Tim McElroy and his wife Hannah have accessioned another addition to their family with the birth of Benjamin Wesley McElroy on March 9th. Benjamin joins brothers Peter and Sam in the McElroy collection. Young Benjamin has already proven to be a born collector – perhaps an indication he may one day join dad in the museum field – by amassing what has been referred to as “the largest collection of toys west of the Divide.” Please join us in congratulating Tim and Hannah on their newest addition.

**LISA HANCOCK BACK IN THE FOLD!**

Registrar Lisa Hancock is once again part of the Aspen Historical Society’s staff. Brought on board to fill an important gap in Collections coverage, she came just in time to help keep the Archives running smoothly while both Archivist Anna Scott and Curator Tim McElroy were growing their families. Gratefully Lisa is adept at handling the various aspects of both positions when necessary. And her institutional knowledge of Aspen and its history is invaluable for the occasional hard-to-solve mystery photo or fact. She has done her job well over the last couple of months that few outsiders even realized anything different was happening in the Archives.

This is not Lisa’s first rodeo. She returns to the Society having worked here from 1990 to 2000 when she wore many different hats by default as the museum staff shrank to bare minimum. Her attention to detail is notable and we have the occasional hard-to-solve mystery photo or fact. She has done her job well over the last couple of months that few outsiders even realized anything different was happening in the Archives.

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**Ghost Stories**

Independence is just one of hundreds of mining camps in Colorado from the 1800’s. Founded on the 4th of July in 1879, this site marked a new era of mining on the Western Slope. Previously, mining had taken place mostly on the eastern side of the continental divide, on lands that were ceded to the United States government. By early in 1880, the remaining Ute Indian land was thrown open to picks and shovels. Now settlers and miners hauled all of their supplies over Hunters Pass, which is now known as Independence Pass. The original switchbacks down the western side of the pass are still faintly visible.

With a lust for gold, miners and merchants streamed in to the valley. One such man was Theodore Ackerman. Being the first person to bring a wagon of supplies into Independence guaranteed Ackerman a large profit. Although he began in a tent, soon he owned a store, a boarding house and a boarding house. For two dollars a day, more than half a miner’s wage, you could stay in Ackerman’s boarding house and enjoy a hot meal.

Many other businesses also catered to the miners and travelers coming from Leadville. Clothing stores, hardware shops, restaurants and the Bank of Pitkin County all provided service for the 1,500 residents of 1882.

Join us at the town site of Independence. Look for gold in the creek, talk to our on-site interpreter, and imagine life at 11,000 feet. For the summer season, starting on June 16, an on-site interpreter will be available to answer questions and tell the stories. Be aware that weather can change quickly so bring a jacket.

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**Benton retrospective**

We are also delighted to have guest curator Michael Cleverly, who has been charged with ensuring that we are appropriately irreverent in our approach for this exhibit. And of course we are working closely with Marci, too. Marci has been a strong advocate for the project and we thank her.

The Benton Retrospective will begin installation on June 15th with an official opening July 14th. We hope you will be there to celebrate and honor one of Aspen’s true characters!
COLORADO IN CHARACTER  
SUMMER CHAUTAUQUA SERIES

This summer, the Aspen Historical Society presents “Colorado in Character,” a Chautauqua program underwritten by Colorado Humanities. These programs are free and open to the public and designed to inform the audience about the lives and work of historical figures, as well as offer a basis for lively discussion about the relevance of these people and their ideas in today’s world. Scholars will perform first-person dramatizations of literary and historical figures in period costume, and then will answer questions “in character” as well as provide scholarly commentary. Programs are presented at the Wheeler/Stallard Museum beginning at 5:30 p.m. on the east patio.

CHAUTAUQUA SPEAKER SERIES dates are as follows:

THURSDAY, JULY 19
Mary Jane Bradbury
performs Martha Maxwell

THURSDAY, JULY 26
Mary Jane Bradbury
performs Augusta Tabor

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2
Opalanga Pugh performs
Aunt Clara Brown

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9
Dick Osur performs
Jerome B. Wheeler

SUMMER TOURS

WHEELER/STALLARD MUSEUM AND GARDEN TOURS:
Take a trip back in time through the Wheeler/Stallard Museum’s current exhibits or stroll the Museum’s grounds and gardens. New in the summer of 2007, the “Victorian Aspen” exhibit features period furniture and artifacts along with tales of the many storied characters that have owned or occupied this residence since 1889. The Museum’s gardens feature heirloom vegetation, native trees and unique plantings as well as quiet picnic spots and a variety of board and lawn games for public use. Docents are available to take visitors through the house, answer questions or provide information of historical significance. Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1:00 – 5:00 pm.

ASPEN’S WEST END WALKING TOUR:
Get the inside scoop on Aspen’s most notable Victorian architecture. Learn little-known facts about the homes themselves, who lived where and what may be buried inside or underground! Homes include those of H.P. Cowenhoven, Eugene Wilder, John Crosby, Harold Ross, Jerome Wheeler, L.A. Brown and others. Call 925-3721 for current tour schedule.

HOLDEN/MAROLT MINING & RANCHING MUSEUM TOUR:
Aspen’s mining boom lasted less than two decades, yet the story of mining in the Roaring Fork Valley lives on at the Holden/Marolt Mining and Ranching Museum. A dedicated group of volunteers has completed the latest phase of the museum’s development including a mining assay office display, a sawmill shelter, a steam engine shelter, a series of interpretive computer terminals, a birds-eye map depicting the Holden/Marolt museum property, and a circa-1890 Leadville bank vault door. Located just over the pedestrian bridge off Seventh Street, the Museum offers more than 20 exhibits and displays providing a fascinating tale of silver’s boom and bust. Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1:00 – 5:00 pm.

2007 SUMMER HISTORY CAMPS

Children in your family can experience a unique camp experience this summer. Our “Summer History Mystery” experiential camps provide a peek into Aspen history while exploring our beautiful valley. These insightful programs will stimulate each child’s creativity and help them realize the truly unique place in which they reside. The camps, for kids age 9 to 13, begin July 10th and run for four weeks. Sessions are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Participate in one or all four camp sessions. Join the Aspen Historical Society as a member and enjoy discounted camp registration fees. Camp fees: $295 for members, $325 for non-members. Scholarships available. Call Kip Hubbard at 925-3721, extension 105 for more information and to enroll.

SESSION 1:
JULY 10-13 “ROOTS OF ASPEN: PLANTING AND TENDING HERITAGE FRUIT TREES”
Working with Basalt-based Jerome Osentowski, founder of the Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute and the Heritage Fruit Tree Awareness Project and Heather Henry of Design Workshop (and an AHS board member), participants will learn the history of fruit trees in the Roaring Fork Valley and then will help design and construct a permanent heritage fruit tree garden at the Wheeler/Stallard Museum in Aspen. For all you blossoming gardeners out there, this is “hands-on” permaculture at its best.

SESSION 2:
JULY 17-20 “TELLING HISTORY: STORIES OF ASPEN’S PAST”
Bring history to life through the magic of storytelling. Uncover for yourself, from rumor to reality and from miners to mountaineers, what makes Aspen so special. Create your own story about it! Aspen historians and Historical Society staff will help you research, interview and organize your material, while Spellbinders storytellers will help you fashion your story into a “living history” performance. Process and performance will be recorded on DVD for Historical Society archives and as your own keepsake.

SESSION 3:
JULY 24-27 “FROM ORE TO LORE: ASPEN’S RICH MINING HISTORY”
The mining era had a short but powerful impact on the Roaring Fork Valley in the late 1800s. We will map the mine sites, tunnels, smelters and processing facilities that brought vitality to the city of Aspen during the mining days. Aspen’s mining heritage reaches back to a time where settling this Valley required courage, perseverance and lots of soap. We’ll be on the move, discovering the special places and colorful characters who made Aspen a mining boom town.

SESSION 4:
JULY 31-AUGUST 3 “CAPTURING TODAY FOR TOMORROW: ARCHIVING ASPEN IN PHOTOS”
We will spend the week with professional photographers learning the principles of photography and then delving into the Historical Society’s archives to find photographs representative of Aspen’s past. Based on these photos, we will select locations to shoot our own photos of an evolving Aspen, and then will compare our results in a presentation gallery at the Wheeler/Stallard Museum at week’s end.

ASPEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
620 W. BLEEKER ASPEN, CO 81611

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