

Bella Vista Vision

Newsletter of the Bella Vista Historical Society

October – December 2021

Editor: Xyta Lucas

The Bella Vista Historical Society was founded in 1976 in order to “discover, collect, preserve or restore materials and artifacts concerned with our community’s heritage.”



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Website: www.bellavistamuseum.org Facebook: Bella Vista Historical Museum

THE BELLA VISTA BYPASS OPENS FROM BENTONVILLE AR TO PINEVILLE MO!

The Bella Vista bypass, now designated as Interstate 49 north to Kansas City, opened on October 1 after literally decades of planning. While we feel sorry for those residents who are close enough to the new bypass on the western side of Bella Vista to get some of the traffic noise that we used to get at the museum, we are glad that nearly all of the 18 wheelers have stopped using 71. Once the traffic signal was installed at our intersection of Kingsland and 71, for which we are grateful because it is easier now for visitors to go south on 71 when they leave the museum, it became very noisy inside the museum when the 18 wheelers would start up again after stopping for a red light. The traffic noise is so reduced now, and we really appreciate the peace and quiet.

Some history tidbits: An article in the Weekly Vista dated Feb. 28, 1990, quotes an employee of the Ark. Dept. of Transportation as saying there were no plans to reroute the highway around Bella Vista. But that position had changed by 1993, with various plans over time discussed and then discarded, including routing the new highway around the east side of Bella Vista (July 1996), a possible elevated structure (Jan. 1997), or perhaps a toll road (Oct. 1999). Finally a western route around Bella Vista was selected but it took years to reach the point where both Arkansas and Missouri had the money to proceed!



We were told they had a humorous moment at the ribbon cutting when no one could find the scissors!

LAKE BELLA VISTA DAM

We are still waiting to hear the outcome of the Arkansas Court of Appeals ruling on the Lake Bella Vista Dam, which concerns the lawsuit filed by Cooper Communities against the City of Bentonville. The Bentonville City Council met on September 28 and approved a resolution by a vote of 7-1, with one Council member absent, in favor of removing the dam and allowing Little Sugar Creek to become a free flowing stream. The resolution included the statement, *"Said plan for dam removal and stream restoration will contain educational elements of the history of the Lake Bella Vista dam and other amenities that existed in the past at the current site."*

George Spence, the Bentonville City Attorney, said the dam cannot be removed until the lawsuit is resolved. David Wright, the Bentonville Parks Director, commented that if the Court rules that Bentonville is required to rebuild the dam, the cost would be about four million dollars. Anticipated cost for dam removal and stream bank repairs range from three hundred to five hundred thousand dollars.

The Bella Vista Community Television station did a program about the lake and dam on October 20. Xyta Lucas presented the history of the lake. Bentonville City Council member Octavio Sanchez and Trailblazers Executive Director, Erin Rushing (www.nwatrailblazers.com), were also guests on the program.

DOCENTS NEEDED!

When we re-opened the museum in the fall of 2020 after being closed for 7.5 months due to the pandemic, we decided we needed two docents per shift (1:00 to 5:00 p.m.) to help monitor the flow of visitors and have someone available to show visitors the Settler's Cabin. We are very happy to report a number of new docents have signed up this year, but we still need more to be able to once again be open on Wednesdays. Since the end of June, we have been open Thursdays through Sundays but want to add that fifth day back to our schedule.

The docent role consists of welcoming visitors to the museum, giving a little information about Bella Vista history, explaining how the museum exhibits are laid out, and handling gift shop sales. We look for men and women who like interacting with others, enjoy learning about Bella Vista history, and are fully Covid vaccinated. We ask that they read Gil Fite's book that was published in 1993 on the history of Bella Vista, and the new pictorial history book, Images of America Bella Vista, published earlier this year. Anyone interested in becoming a docent is welcome to contact Jill at jrwerner@cox.net or 479-721-3122.

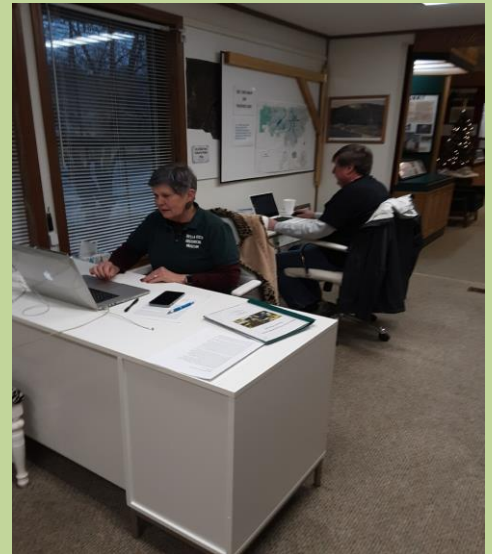
NEW MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

New docent Debbie Sorensen has graciously agreed to become our new Membership Coordinator, a role that hasn't been filled on a regular basis since Diane Schoenbaum retired a few years ago. Debbie also volunteers with the Property Owners Association to coordinate quarterly Meet & Greet meetings for new residents. Debbie is recording our memberships, sending out thank you emails to each member as they sign up for or renew their membership, and contacting past members to ask them to renew their membership.



NEW FURNITURE DELIVERED

Now that we have two docents per shift, we needed more seating space in the gift shop area for them. We are happy to announce the purchase of a second chair and desk (we caught a sale at Office Depot at just the right time), and the success of contractor Bill Pickett from The Maintenance Company, in assembling the new desk for us. It was not an easy task! JB Portillo and Dale Phillips are pictured here as docents on December 17.



BAPTISM SCENE



7-28-1938 (some say year was 1940)
 Location: Sugar Creek, Dog Hill Church Group, L.C., Telford,
 Left to Right
 1. Evelyn Bertschy Lammert
 2. Kathleen Cash
 3. Nadine Leggett Hobbs
 4. Effie Leggett (Nadine's Mother)
 5. Dora Bertschy Dodd
 6. Vivian Bertschy Allen
 7. Marge Bertschy Lamb
 8. Edna Squires (being submerged)
 Minister from
 First Baptist
 Church Bentonsville
 Arkansas.
 This picture was taken
 by Lillian Green who lived in Bella Vista

Some of us have looked at this picture over the years and wondered who was in it. All we knew was that Bella Vista photographer Lillian Green had taken it at Little Sugar Creek in the late 1930's. We liked it so much that it was selected to be included in the Images of America Bella Vista book published this year.

Now we know at last! This fall two visitors came to the museum, sisters Linda Enlow of Kansas City and Theresa Brands of Colorado Springs. They saw the picture in our book, and said, "Our mom is in that picture, and we have an original copy of it!" She's the last one standing on the right, Marge Bertschy Lamb. They loaned us the picture so we could scan the back of it, identifying every participant.

BELLA VISTA CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

The Bella Vista Civil War Roundtable is continuing its monthly meetings at the museum, the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public. Speakers have already been scheduled for all of 2022 and half of 2023!

The October speaker was Tom Wing, Asst. Professor of History and Director of the Drennen-Scott Historic Site at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith. The title of his program was "A Rough Introduction to this Shiny Land: The Diary of Pvt. Henry Strong".

For the November meeting, the program was "Civil War Music" as performed and interpreted by the Loco Focos, a musical group from Tulsa. Their spokesman explained how they came up with their name by telling the story of loco focos matches, popular in the early to mid 1880's, and why the matches ended up having a political party named after them. The program began and ended with songs by Stephen Foster, the American song writer known in the mid 1800's for his parlor and minstrel music. Xyta Lucas posed with the group in the dress and bonnet she made 60 years ago in 1961 for the centennial of her home state, Kansas.



The scheduled December speaker was unable to make it but Dale Phillips jumped right in and put together a very well received presentation on what was to have been the original speaker's topic, the Confederate submarine CSS Hunley, which carried out the first successful submarine attack on an enemy warship in the history of warfare. If any groups are looking for a speaker, they should ask Dale to do that presentation for them...he can be reached at 812-899-2049. Dale was with the National Park Service for 41 years before retiring to Bella Vista, and two of his duty stations were Jean Lafitte National Historical Park (New Orleans, LA) and Fort Sumter National Monument (Charleston, SC). These two places represent the beginning and the ending of the story of the CSS Hunley. At the meeting, Chuck Pribbernow and Joe Rainey (they along with Dale were the founders of this Roundtable) proudly backed up to the camera to show off their Hunley T-shirts!

Dale



Chuck



Joe



DONOVAN/NOTT CEMETERY

This small cemetery for years has been known as the Nott Cemetery since it started with the burial of Cyrus Nott's daughter, Jennie Freeman, when she died at age 28 in 1900. His wife Francis died in 1907 and is buried there, as is Cyrus. But when he died in 1921, his obituary stated he was buried in the Donovan Cemetery. Because of that and because the cemetery is on land once owned by William Donovan, we have begun calling it the Donovan/Nott Cemetery. It is located off the end of Brims Ness Lane, off McGrath Drive in the Highlands.

This past summer, as noted in the June 2021 newsletter, Malachi Sequichie took up the challenge of replacing the fence around the cemetery as his Eagle Scout project. His Eagle Court of Honor ceremony was held on November 27.



This small world story is presented by Xyta Lucas:

"One of my best friends when we were growing up in Kansas was Rita, and we have remained good friends over the years. Rita had written me that she remembered hearing her grandmother in Kansas talk about her half sister, Goldie, but she didn't know anything about how her grandmother ended up with a half sister. She had learned, however, that Goldie's mom was buried in the Donovan/Nott cemetery in Bella Vista.

Cyrus and Francis Nott had a daughter named Jennie. The three of them are buried in the Donovan/Nott cemetery. Jennie married George Freeman, and had a daughter named Goldie.

According to Ancestry.com, Jennie was George's second wife. George grew up in Kansas. He and his first wife there had a daughter named Mary. So Mary and Goldie were half sisters, and Mary was my friend Rita's grandmother. So Rita, who now lives in Texas, is the granddaughter of a woman whose half sister is the daughter of a woman buried in Bella Vista, where I have lived for 26 years. What is that they say about the 'six degrees of separation'?!"

Mary died in 1978, and is buried in Augusta, Kansas. Because there's another Goldie Freeman listed on Ancestry.com, whose facts someone has mixed up with this Goldie, we don't know when this Goldie died or where she is buried.

Rita and her husband have been to visit us in Bella Vista but we didn't know about this connection at the time. Next time she comes to visit, I'm going to take her to see the Donovan/Nott cemetery!"

OTHER CEMETERY NEWS

Work Detail Teams from the Benton County Jail, under the direction of Deputies Tom Hall and Jake Taylor, in early November built a fence around the Beavers Cemetery, located just beyond the City limits at the west end of Edinburg Road, at our request. Our thanks go to Gary Black for donating the corner posts for it. Now that the bypass is open nearby, we expect future development to occur in that area and wanted to get the boundaries of the cemetery defined before then. We also had a load of topsoil delivered for the men to fill in the holes animals had dug throughout the cemetery to help avoid anyone falling or twisting their ankle when they visit the cemetery. The truck driver expertly backed his truck all the way up the hill to the cemetery to be in a position for easier unloading.



The Funk Cemetery fence project was announced in an earlier newsletter. Novella Funk Carlton is shown here on the right admiring the new fence in November. She is the granddaughter of May Funk who was the first burial there in 1922. We appreciate volunteer Norma Rhodes who continues to provide decorations for the cemetery.



In 1988, a Questers chapter discovered an overgrown Summit Cemetery near Metfield off Aveton. They took on the big challenge of cleaning it up and finished their work by hanging a sign for it.



The Bella Vista Historical Society now owns the Summit Cemetery. In October 2021, volunteer Jim Lucas made a new sign for it. The old one was put on display in the museum.



JAN BURGESS, AWARD WINNING COLUMNIST



While visiting the Plaza Apartments earlier this year, this editor was privileged to see the binders of columns that Jan Burgess had kept from her days of writing for the Weekly Vista when she worked there, and suggested that they be donated to the museum's scrapbook repository. She graciously agreed to our request and then contacted us at a later date to arrange to drop them off. We accepted them and she also told us about the awards she had gotten from the Arkansas Press Association for some of her columns. That led to a temporary exhibit that is in the Cooper Room, and an article in the latest quarterly newsletter of the Arkansas Press Association.



THE JAM MAKER

Jill Werner, our Volunteer Coordinator who wears several other museum hats too, has continued to make her many flavors of jam to give away in exchange for donations to the museum. She has donated almost four thousand dollars this year! She announces on her Facebook page, TheJammerBellaVista, when she's going to have her jams at the museum. Our thanks to volunteer Suzanne Evans for donating this very appropriate table cover.

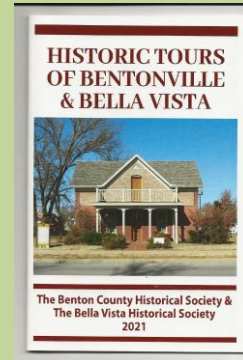


FORMER AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING

Dale Phillips and Xyta Lucas, representing the Bella Vista Historical Society, signed a parking lot agreement on November 4 with the investors who purchased the former American Legion building next door to the museum. We will continue to split the costs of maintenance of the parking lot and share the lot with whatever business leases the building. We were told a lease was close to being finalized with a restaurant operator. There has been some recent activity visible at the building so we expect an announcement to be made in the near future.

SELF GUIDED DRIVING TOUR BOOKLET

Leah Whitehead, president of the Benton County Historical Society in Bentonville, requested partnership this year with our Bella Vista Historical Society to update the self-guided tour map of Bentonville and Bella Vista that had been published in the 1990's. The printing company's rep suggested a booklet instead of a map so we could include more pictures. The booklet is now available for free at several locations including the Bentonville office at 306 NW Second, shown on the booklet cover, and at our museum. The Benton County Historic Preservation Commission paid for the cost of printing.



FUNDRAISER DRIVING TOURS OF HISTORIC SITES

Our first fundraiser driving tour since before the pandemic was conducted by Dale Phillips on November 6 with JB Portillo as his assistant carrying the placards. The turnout was small but enthusiastic. Dale's next tour is planned for Saturday morning March 5. To get a place on the list for it, call Dale at 812-899-2049. The tour lasts about four hours and costs \$15/person or \$25 for two. Participants meet at the museum and then car caravan to the various historic sites. In these pictures they are at the former Bolain Barn and in the parking lot alongside Lake Bella Vista.



CUB SCOUTS HISTORY LESSON

Dale Phillips conducted a history lesson for a Cub Scout troop on the grounds of the Wishing Spring Gallery on October 26.



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON THANK YOU

After cancelling our annual thank you luncheon for our volunteers last December due to the pandemic, we decided to hold it this year since we have required all of our volunteers to be Covid vaccinated. We ended up with 35 people present, with each volunteer welcome to bring their spouse or guest. Also present were special guests Tom Judson and Corinne Morin from the POA, Mayor Peter Christie, and Fire Chief Steve Sims. Everyone enjoyed a great buffet at Papa Mike's Restaurant. Music was provided by the Highlands Winds Clarinet Quartet, made up of Jean Kittelson, Marland Thurston, Robert Betts and Char Sorenson. Our thanks to Chuck Pribbernow for arranging to have the quartet with us. We also appreciate Paul Beran, Chuck Pribbernow, Gary Reynolds and Steve Morrow for volunteering to help with the cost of the meal by contributing the wait staff's tips.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

We are very appreciative of our volunteers who decorated throughout the museum and the Settler's Cabin for Christmas. Gina Kietzmann and her husband Kenny, Debbie Sorensen and Geri Ehrlich did the actual decorating. Also contributing decorations were Maci Echols, Fran Boulware and Xyta Lucas. Debbie and Geri are shown working on the cabin porch, and you can see the paper chains that Maci and her family put together for hanging inside the cabin, after strings of popcorn were ruled out to avoid attracting the mice!



Inside the museum, in addition to the usual Christmas tree and decorations throughout, we had a display of festive Christmas trains and Santas with trains, as well as sitting Santa stocking holders to brighten up the rooms.



DUG HILL BUILDING NEWLY LEASED

The Village on the Lake Writers and Poets Group recently announced that they have signed a lease with the Dug Hill Cemetery Association, which owns the old Dug Hill church located just south of the Goodwill building in Town Center. The Writers and Poets, which formerly met at the Artists Retreat Center before it was sold, were looking for a new home. They do not limit themselves to authors and poets, they include musicians also, and held a concert at our museum on December 8, featuring Bella Vista cellist Christian Serrano-Torres. Preceding the program, Xyta Lucas and Dale Phillips presented a slide show about the history of Dug Hill. The Writers and Poets announced they are accepting donations to help pay for the renovation of the Dug Hill building. For more information, call 608-642-1294 or email bvvillagewriters@gmail.com.

Christian Serrano-Torres with his 20 year old cello, Morgan.



Ralph and Virginia Squires headed up the Dug Hill Cemetery Association for many years. He died in January 2017; she died three months later and they are buried at Dug Hill. This picture of them was taken in 2012 by Xyta Lucas.



Ralph and Virginia's daughter, Helen Hurst, is one of the trustees who now heads up the Dug Hill Cemetery Association. This picture of her with her maternal grandfather, Lee Jackson, was taken in 1951. His house stood about where Harps Grocery is now. In the background on the right the Dug Hill church is just barely visible. When she was a little girl, Helen remembers there were no church services being held at Dug Hill but her grandfather taught Sunday School there. Over the years, several congregations have leased the church. The most recent one was Country Harvest who met there for a few years starting in 2014.



OUR THANKS THIS QUARTER GO TO...

...Brian Mobley who did a great job of washing the changeable letters highway sign we had at the time, only to have it later irreparably damaged in a big windstorm.

...Chuck Pribbernow, who again focused on museum needs for his annual birthday fundraiser on Facebook. He's asking for contributions to help with the cost of our new changeable letters highway sign. As of this writing, he's well over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to his goal!

...Paul Beran and Chuck Pribbernow for their leaf blowing around the museum and Settler's Cabin.

...Patrice Murphy who has continued to keep our plants and flowers pretty through the fall season.

...Jack Kellogg, who continues to help any time we have computer or security system issues.

...Christy Jacobson, who donated a large photograph taken in the early 1980's of the Bella Vista Men's Chorus which was left to her by her father, Evans Jacobson, a member of the Chorus at the time.

...Ann Boyd of Springdale, granddaughter of C.A. Linebarger Sr., who donated more materials from her grandfather's papers this fall, and her sister, Charity George of California, who visited the museum in October and brought their other sister, Carole Harter of Fayetteville with her, to share stories of their childhood.

WISHING SPRING GALLERY

The Wishing Spring Gallery is a big part of Bella Vista History. The exact date the old barn was constructed is not recorded but it is known to have roof work done in the 1930s, and C.A. Linebarger Sr. converted it into a dairy barn about 1941. In the 1950's, Linebarger sold it to E. L. Keith who also purchased Lake Bella Vista to continue the resort the Linebargers had opened in 1917. When John Cooper, Sr., decided to build a vacation retirement village in the area and began buying up farms in the early 1960's, he bought the Wishing Spring dairy farm from Keith. This early picture of the barn was taken when the caretaker's cottage was still standing in front of the barn and before the road was moved to the left.



The farm became known as "Buffalo Flats" because a friend of John Cooper Sr. gave Cooper a pair of buffalo (actually they were bison but everyone referred to them as buffalo) in 1966, and before long, the pair evolved into a herd. But by the late 1970's the animals were gone and the barn was abandoned.

The Village Art Club (now known as the Artisan Alliance) was looking for a place to exhibit their members' works of art and arranged with Cooper Communities to lease the barn. Paul Parish and others spent two years of hard work cleaning up and remodeling the barn, then opened the gallery in the fall of 1984. In 1999, Cooper donated the building and the surrounding five acres to the art club, stating it was to be used for arts and crafts related purposes for the next ten years, and if that ceased, the property would revert to Cooper. Once the ten years passed, the property became permanently owned by the art club. At some point, the legal description of the property was changed to Wishing Springs, but the gallery still bears the original name of Wishing Spring.

Pearl Williamson and the Wishing Spring Gallery again provided space in October and early November for book signings of our pictorial history book published this year. Their cooperation is much appreciated!

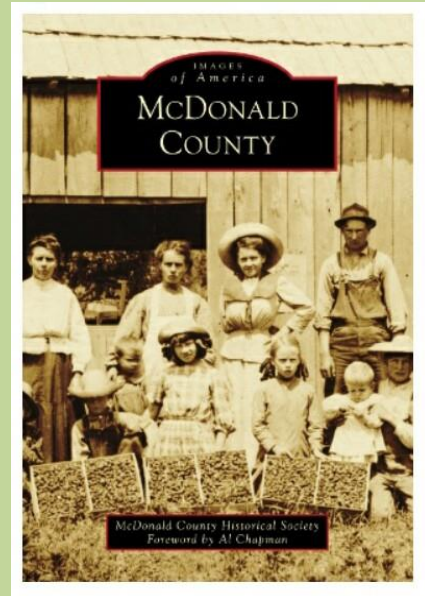
MORE BOOK SIGNINGS

More book signing opportunities arose for Xyta Lucas and Dale Phillips in October. They participated in the Bella Vista Business Association Fall Festival in the Riordan Hall parking lot on October 9, and presented to the Bentonville Rotary Satellite Club on October 18. They also showed their support of a neighbor, the McDonald County MO Historical Society, by attending the launching of its own “Images of America McDonald County” book in Pineville on November 14. Both the Bella Vista book and the McDonald County book are available in our museum gift shop along with other regional history books from the Northwest Arkansas area.

Bella Vista Business Association Fall Festival

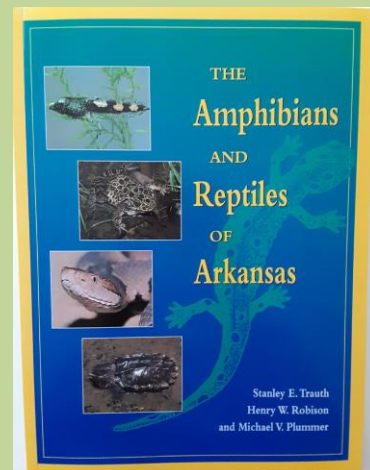
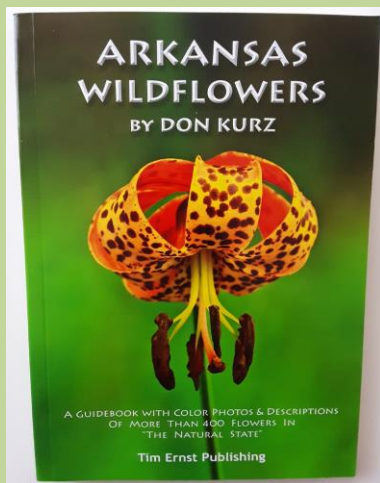


McDonald County Historical Society's new book



MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

Speaking of books, our museum gift shop now has an entire range of Arkansas nature books. The latest additions are these two:



We also continue to carry a variety of Bella Vista souvenirs as well as locally produced honey, plus a wide selection of items donated to the museum as fundraisers. We are adding new merchandise on a regular basis.

CHRISTMAS IN OLD BELLA VISTA

We will close off this newsletter with a summary of the last few days of December. Since we cancelled our annual Open House in October due to the pandemic, Volunteer Coordinator Jill Werner suggested that we schedule "Christmas in Old Bella Vista" for December 23 and 24. We were open extra hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and ended up with 75 people in the museum over the two days! In addition to the usual tours of the museum and the Settler's Cabin, we had a sale in the gift shop for those last minute Christmas shoppers, Xyta Lucas and Dale Phillips did a book signing for their pictorial history book, volunteer Maci Echols brought in her 1920's hand cranked record player and was there both days to play old time music for visitors, volunteers Suzanne Evans, Virginia Reynolds and Fran Boulware provided delicious homemade goodies for refreshments, and Jill Werner donated banners announcing the event, which Brian Mobley expertly hung. We were very pleased with our gift shop sales of over \$460 and concluded overall that the two day event was a success!

Brian hung this banner and one on the front porch.



Dale updated the highway sign.



Maci and her husband Rick Echols delivered her 1920's record player.



Visitors and volunteers enjoyed the refreshments.



AROUND TOWN....

Festive Christmas decorations were in abundance all over the City of Bella Vista this year. Here are some delightful ones. The first one is from Dr. Cheryl Hull's medical office lobby, the second one was spotted on Barrhead Lane, and the last two were seen on Basildon Drive.



MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Bella Vista Historical Society is based on the calendar year, so it is now time to sign up or renew your membership for 2022. Renewal is always due January 1 of each year. You may mail your check to us, or stop by in person when we are open to pay by check, credit card or debit card.

By becoming a member, you support the preservation of Bella Vista's rich and unique history, and help us educate the public. Benefits include receipt of our quarterly newsletter and an invitation to our annual membership meeting usually held each March. Our newsletter is available by email or snail mail, but of course we would prefer to have your email address so that we can avoid mailing costs. If you don't have email, however, we will mail our newsletter to your home address. We have no paid staff, so all revenue, including membership dues and donations, is applied to our general operating expenses unless you specify a particular project. We very much appreciate the financial support we receive from the City of Bella Vista, which helps us pay for major operational expenses, but we still need your individual membership dues and donations to help us to continue to improve the museum in every way we possibly can. Thank you!

Bella Vista Historical Society
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Bella Vista, AR 72714

(479) 855-2335
www.bellavistamuseum.org

Date: _____

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email Address: _____

Membership Fee:

Individual \$15 _____

Family \$25 _____

Corporate \$50 _____

Donations in excess of your membership dues are very welcome also.

The Bella Vista Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization and donations qualify as tax deductible.

Thank you for your support!

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