



When Pandemic Recedes, A Musical Treat Awaits

Visitors to the exhibits at the Bastrop County History Museum can examine dozens of artifacts (up close or behind glass) that may help them understand the community's storied past, but down in the museum's basement, "just shy of 2,000" more objects have been catalogued for potential future exhibitions.

Now, BCHS Volunteer Curator Robbie Sanders and Library and Preservation Manager Carol Kysar are setting about identifying which items in the archives are best suited to be repaired or refurbished.

Among the items recently repaired and restored is a functioning Victrola phonograph console that was constructed sometime between 1906 and 1925 by the Victor Talking Machine Co., according to Kysar's research.

Unlike the famous photo of the dog Nipper staring into a gramophone, this model Victrola featured an internal horn inside its attractive Queen Anne-style upright cabinet.

Interestingly, there are no knobs to control the volume – just doors.

"If a listener wants to increase the sound, one would just open the door a bit so that the sound could escape more," Kysar said. "If you wanted to turn the sound down, you just have to close the door some, to muffle it."

About 40 inches tall, the phonograph player is powered by a hand crank and features two record racks inside its cabinet.

Kysar said the device was donated to BCHS back before the organization developed



its extensive computer-based cataloguing system.

"It was among the many items that were moved when the museum was relocated from our prior location farther south on Main in 2012," she said.

"We have no indication of who gave it to us or when."

The cabinet was in poor shape and the player didn't work, until recently, when BCHS hired W.C. Estes Elgin Furniture Refinishers to take it on. It is now "like new."

But a phonograph player is only useful if there are suitable phonograph records to play on it.

That's the project that longtime Bastrop historian Ken Kesselus has taken on. He is systematically playing the old 78 rpm wax discs on his own phonograph player at home to see which are still playable, or too scratched to endure.

Over the years, more than 250 old records have been accumulated from various donors. Most are from the first half of the 20th Century.

"Sometimes a collection will come in and include a record or two in the donation to the museum and other times we may get a dozen or more at once," Kysar said.

While the restoration is complete, social distancing concerns are delaying its coming out party.

"Post-Covid, we will identify a public function or other opportunity to put it on display," she said. "It's a treasure that people will enjoy seeing, and hearing." ★



Local Student Checks Files

At Cedar Creek High School, 17-year-old Hannah Harvey is working to obtain National Honor Society recognition, a feat that requires pitching in to provide volunteer help for a community non-profit.

She is achieving that opportunity by working four hours every week with a determined, systematic effort to confirm the accuracy of BCHS' extensive computer records – more than 8,000 documents and photos that are catalogued in the organization's extensive computer files.

That means for each catalogued item, she is determining where the computer record states an item can be found, and then going to the appropriate file cabinet to see if the document or photo is indeed there. If necessary, she then corrects the record.

"We work hard to keep our records straight but sometimes, mistakes happen," noted BCHS Library and Preservation Manager Carol Kysar. "Hannah is doing a great job helping us confirm everything is in its place."

When she graduates high school in 2022, Harvey is considering a science-based career, perhaps in cardiovascular radiology or as a marine biologist. ★



2020 Leading Members

(As of Dec. 18, 2020)

BENEFACTORS:

Sarah and David Johnson
Glen Long

MEMBER OF THE MONTH:

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Betty Dunkerley
Eagle Pest Control
First National Bank
Frontier Bank of Texas
Maxine's Cafe
Medack and Oltmann LLP
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Osborn Plumbing, Inc.
Pinky Promise
Sweet Lucy Ranch

HERO:

Adjust/Dr. Matthew Mix
Sandy and Ron Barclay
Ann and Larry Brown
Capital of Texas Roofing and Siding
Barbara and Andrew Coy
Glenda Dayton
The Dentists
Sherri Gilmore
G & C Printing and Forms
Doris and James Kershaw
Ofelia M. Mayo and Micheal VanDusen
Janis Penick/Penick Properties LLC
Willie Pina and Stella Haecker
Connie and Frank Reichert
Nancy and Tom Scott
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L.C. Wright Land and Cattle Company,
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Aqua Water Supply Company
Bastrop Opera House
Ella and Mark Bedford
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Sara and Tom Clayton
Judy and Lonnie Enis
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Cynthia and Charles Pence
Gloria and Win Perkins
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Kaye Sapikas
Carol and Joe Shull
Catherine and Rodney Turner
Barbara and Alex Vana
Derek Van Gilder
Kay Wesson

Let's Capture the Moment: A Call for Participation

We're all in this pandemic together. We can't let history forget just how it went down.

In a time of constant uncertainty, everyone is experiencing and trying to cope with Covid-19 in their own personal ways, from coordinating mutual aid efforts to developing new creative practices at home.

BCHS wants to hear how you are responding to this moment, how you are processing the experience, and how it is affecting your life.

Are you making art at home, writing music, stories or poems? Have you read any good history books or tried preparing a new cuisine? Are you doing creative projects around your neighborhood? Did you design an artistic "we're closed" sign for your business? Are you developing creative ways of communicating – at a distance – with friends or family?

Whatever special cultural practices you're engaging in right now, we want to hear about it, to showcase the creativity and resilience of Bastrop County's response to shelter-in-place and the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Through your stories and items (photos, artwork, creative pieces, etc.) to share, we will explore the ways that creativity and community can support us through times of uncertainty.

To participate, all you need to do is write down what's been going on in your life during the pandemic and send it to BCBS Director Kaye Sapikas via email at kaye@bchs1832.org by March 1. At some point – in the future – we will report back on the highlights of what is submitted.

Join us – Let's Capture the Moment. ★



Bastrop Public Library found a new way to share a story through the program StoryWalk® which lets you read a story while you walk the river trail. December's featured book includes lots of familiar animals!

BCBS would like to thank...

Ken Kesselus for his monthly webinars titled "Uniquely Bastrop", a virtual series of talks.

Candiss Lawrence for making four Christmas wreaths for sale in the gift shop.

Win Perkins for editing Ken Kesselus's webinar on "Uniquely Bastrop".

Lisa Holcolm for providing the venue for "Uniquely Bastrop".

Lynn Kysar and **Pat McKay** for going to Elgin to pick up and deliver victrola to the Museum.

Maribel Mast for editing and preparing Bastrop Christian Church window panels for printing for January special exhibit.

Debi Moore for donating trees for our outdoor exhibit for "Making Bastrop Bright" lighting campaign.

Landen Minardi for donation of four snowmen for "Making Bastrop Bright".

Dianna Greenwood for helping put out Christmas items in the gift shop. ★

Research Library Volunteers

Susie Blume Duncan Charlton Judy Enis Hannah Harvey
Kenneth Kesselus Pat McKay Dianne Mills

Visitor Center Volunteer

Judy Enis

Museum Acquisitions

Cheryl Bruns – Large collection of photos and documents relative to the Miller, Hemphill, Bernard, Eliff, Morgan and Elliott families

Ken Kesselus – Large collection of books, documents and photos

Charlotte Sanders Dawson – Quilt made in 1918 by Ruby Waggner Sanders

Neomi Delgado – Scans of photos of Vidal Soza and family, coal miners, newspaper article and map of coal mines ★

Role of Churches is This Year's Theme

The significant impacts that houses of worship have had on Bastrop community life is the theme of BCHS' special exhibits in 2021.

The history of the 125-year-old Bastrop Christian Church at 1104 Church Street will kick off the year's theme with an exhibit opening Jan. 15 running through March 31 at the BCHS History Museum at 904 Main.

Among the highlights of the exhibit will be key elements of the church's lovely outdoor garden, including a replica tree that was carved into a cross and a meditation bench from the garden.

Other exhibit features will include:

- photos of historic community leaders who were church members;
- replicas of the church's unique stained glass windows;
- a timeline of significant developments in the church's history;
- original wallpaper from the 125-year-old church; and
- various church artifacts, including the original, handwritten recipe for fruitcakes that were baked and sold to purchase the church's original pews.

The project is being prepared by Church members Earl Ellisor, Jennifer Leisure and Vicki Benson.

Special Exhibits Manager Michal Hubbard said the focus on churches in 2021 is based on their historic impact on community life around the county.

"Throughout our past, churches have played a crucial role. They were among our earliest institutions in the community, where people socialized, turned to each other in times of trouble, where they raised their kids together – all sorts of ways," Hubbard said. "It's hard to get a full picture of how Bastrop County has become what it is without knowing about its religious institutions." ★



A tree carved as a cross welcomes visitors to the garden of the Bastrop Christian Church, see a replica when you visit the exhibit opening January 15, 2021.

2020 Remote Rendezvous Sponsors

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STEPHEN F. AUSTIN:
Sandy and Ron Barclay
Bastrop Family Eye Care – Pam Solly
Geoffrey Connor
Betty Dunkerley
L.C. Wright Land & Cattle Co., LTD
Mary Maynard McMurrey
Maxine's Cafe
Nancy and Tom Scott
Tracy's Drive-In

BARON DE BASTROP:
Cindy Aarvig and Larry Hill
Aqua Water Company
Bastrop Florist
BCHS Staff
Nancy and Joseph Beal
Deborah Cartwright
Caspro Builders
Sandra Chipley and Chuck Kellogg
Glenda Dayton
Judy and Lonnie Enis
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Sherri Gilmore
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Michal Hubbard
Frank Huffman and Lucy Todd
Jane and Rob Hunt
Toni and Ken Kesselus
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Sue and Rev. Bob Long
Jamie and Curtis McDonald
Osborn Plumbing, Inc.
Gloria and Win Perkins
Suzanne W. Sanders
Charlie and Connie Schroeder
Tuck Law Group
Lucinda Wilcoxon

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Michal Hubbard Doris Kershaw Mary McMurrey Joe Grady Tuck Jane Wright

SOCIETY STAFF

Kaye Sapikas, Director Barbara Vana, Office Manager
Carol Kysar, Library and Preservation Manager Traci Frary, Archivist
Gloria Perkins, Visitor Center Manager Candiss Lawrence, Visitor Center Associate

Members to Consider Board Leaders

BCHS members present at the January 28th quarterly meeting will consider the following current board members for re-election: Betty Dunkerley, Mary McMurrey, Sherri Gilmore, Jennifer Leisure, and Joe Grady Tuck. In addition, members will consider the new slate of officers: Jennifer Leisure, President, Sherri Gilmore, Vice President, Betty Dunkerley, Treasurer, Glenda Dayton, Secretary.

Homes on Popular Christmas Calendar will be Subject of Quarterly Meeting

The pandemic-induced cancellation of last year's historic homes tour inspired the creation of our popular 2021 Historic Homes Tour Calendar, featuring beautiful photos of a dozen of the homes that the tour has ever highlighted.

"Instead of just one quarterly speaker, this time homeowners who currently live in these historic structures will tell their favorite stories about events or persons who once lived in these medallion homes, and perhaps personal stories about what their own lives are like living there," explained Robbie Sanders. "Many will be un-told stories." Sanders and BCHS board member Sandra Chipley are co-hosting the event.

Homes pictured in the calendar are the Ancient Oaks Ranch (Wylie Hill House), P. C. Maynard House, Wallace-Holme House, Brooks-Wilbarger House, B. D. Orgain-Morris Mansion, Elbert S. Orgain House, Dimon-Erhard House, White-Turner House, Adolph A. Erhard House, Allen-Fowler House, Fehr-Haynie-Allbright House and the H. P. Lockett House.

Safe in-person attendance for up to 70 people will be at the Bastrop Opera House, 711 Spring Street, or online via Zoom. To access the live event, viewers may view Facebook Live or Youtube, with "how-to" details at www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com. ★

Elbert S. Orgain House



built 1914-1915

P. C. Maynard House



built 1916

H. P. Lockett House



built 1892

Fehr-Haynie-Allbright House



built 1955

Safe in-person attendance for up to 70 people will be at the Bastrop Opera House, 711 Spring Street, or online via Zoom.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28 AT 6:30 P.M. BASTROP OPERA HOUSE 711 SPRING STREET BASTROP

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of the Bastrop County Historical Society

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