

museum musings

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Museum Gets Spiffy New Website

At long last, our new website is now up and running! www.bellcountymuseum.org Please log on and view this exciting website. The project is a partnership between the Texas Historical Commission's Heritage Tourism Partnership Grant and the Friends of the Museum organization. Presley Design Studio of Temple created the website. We are proud that the home page features Ella Mewhinney's painting, *Gleaners of the South*, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Limmer, Jr. We hope to be able to set up our museum store through the PayPal system soon. The website also features our tour set-up form, membership form, and Charley's Page, a section geared especially for children. We really appreciate our partners in this project.

The Bell County Museum's new exhibit, *Will You Be Mine? A Guide to Weddings and Other Romantic Traditions*, opens on Thursday, February 14th, 2008. The exhibition, created by Museum Curator Amanda Dyer, will remain on view through July 26th, 2008.

♥ *Will You Be Mine?* ♥



In discussing the exhibition, Dyer said, "Almost everyone has been to a wedding, gone on a date, or received a valentine. But many today can hardly relate to the dating and marriage rituals of their grandparents, and can scarcely imagine those of 100 years ago or more." The exhibit will include information about the origins of courtship and wedding rituals, and artifacts from the museum collection will be presented. "We are fortunate to have a remarkable collection of clothing and other materials that will be exhibited to trace the customs and origins of western romance," Dyer said. Objects include the 1903 wedding ensemble of Mrs. Raleigh White, Jr. (Annie May Campbell) as well as the official portrait of the wedding party. Also included is a collection of letters documenting the courtship of Edna Spencer and A.G. Vick that date from 1901 until 1902, as well as Miss Spencer's 1902 wedding ensemble and their wedding portrait. An 1874 beige satin wedding dress worn by Amarillis Schellhaus, donated by Betty Anderson Goolsby, as well as the bridesmaid's dress which is lilac silk, will also be on view.

The Chisholm Trail Monument panels are in! Watch your mail for the dedication date.

The exhibit will also feature a special collection of valentines on loan from Marilyn and Robert Garber, and many interactive areas will also be in the exhibit. "We want museum visitors to enjoy the exhibit as well as learn from it," said Kristen Williams, Program Coordinator at the museum. "We will have a station where visitors can learn the romantic language of the fan and the meaning of flowers, make their own love letters, discover the history of etiquette, and more." The museum will celebrate the opening with a public reception on Saturday, February 16th, 2008, from noon until 5 p.m. Visitors will be able to make their own fans, practice writing a love letter using calligraphy, and make their own "hope chest." Refreshments will be served.

Christmas at Messer Ranch

The museum held its annual holiday fundraiser on December 15th at the home of Ann and Bill Messer, and netted over \$12,000 for museum programs. Sponsors for the event were Mary Jean & Paul Boston, Maryette Clifton, Janet & Roger Daniel, JoAn Musick-Dillard, First Texas Bank Belton, King's Daughters Hospital, Kathy & Griff Lord, Sue Mavborn, the late Dr. Ralph Wilson, Jr., Sharon Wilson, and Extraco Banks.

Over 200 people attended the party and enjoyed a holiday buffet by Elite Catering of Salado, music by Pam Bland, and tours of the interesting home. Built in 1990 to resemble an indigenous ranch-style Texas home of the 1850s, the house replicates period elements such as dimensions and details such as porch depth, roof pitch and window size. Furnishings in the home include family pieces, those with the Lone Star motif, and those based upon photographs of 1850s Texas furniture.

Bell County Museum Director Stephanie Turnham said, "We are just thrilled with the amount of money raised from this fun event. It would not have been possible without the generosity of our sponsors and of Bill and Ann, who are all big supporters of the museum and the community." Turnham added, "Funds raised from the fundraiser help the museum pay for traveling exhibition rentals, shipping fees, exhibit construction, and programs for children."



Claudia & Bill Clark, Wallace & Emmadell Vernon

We express appreciation to Ann and Bill as well as to our sponsors, those who attended the event and those who made other contributions to it. *Thank you!*

WELCOME, NEW BOARD MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome Clara Patterson and Allen Cloud as our newest members of the Board of Trustees. Clara and Allen replace Bill Clark and John Odom, who both served the museum faithfully during their tenures. We look forward to working with these new dynamos!

BIG BELL COUNTY GARAGE SALE COMING UP!

It happens every spring – the Big Bell County Garage Sale! The Sale is Saturday, March 8th, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Bell County Expo Center. Visitors will be able to find everything from collectibles to electronic equipment, fabulous antiques, vintage jewelry and textiles, furniture, house wares, and just great all-American junk.

"The Garage Sale has been characterized as one of the great people-watching events of the year. It is also a great opportunity to get out with friends and family members, do something fun, and find some real deals," Museum Director Stephanie Turnham said. "There's plenty of parking, food will be available, and children under twelve get in free. Admission is only \$2.00 for adults, so it's a great bargain that offers the opportunity to discover hidden treasures offered by the many vendors. Plus, every family member can find something here that they can't live without."

"We encourage non-profits to get involved in the sale," Turnham added. "This year, the museum is offering its traditional booth space to non-profits. The spaces are right at the entrance door, so everyone should do really well."

Proceeds from the Garage Sale help the museum fund exhibitions, educational programs, and also helps to preserve the collection for the residents and visitors of the Bell County region.

Please join us! Take part in preserving the rich history of the Bell County region by joining the Friends of the Museum Association. Your membership allows us to continue award-winning programming through exhibits and educational activities that enhance our county-wide community. Benefits of membership include discounts in the museum bookstore, invitations to special events, and the satisfaction of knowing that YOU are an important part of the preservation of Bell County and Central Texas history. Together, we make our community great!

- Yes! I want to support the Bell County Museum by becoming a member of the Friends of the Museum Association.
- \$10 Student
- \$25 Friend
- \$50 Family
- \$75 Advocate
- \$100 Patron
- \$250 Partner
- \$500 Associate
- \$1000+ Benefactor

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