



CORNVILLE COURIER

Published by the Cornville Historical Society

P.O. Box 1200, Cornville, AZ 86325

Issue No. 21

February 2023

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Annual Meeting Set for March 16:**
—*Railroad History to be Featured*
- **President's Message**
- **Once Upon a Creek:**
—*Arizona Statehood Day Cornville Style!*
- **Membership Renewal Time**
- **Memoriam: Virginia Greenwell Loy**
- **Holiday Fundraiser Celebrated**
with Author Roger Naylor
- **Society News Tidbits:**
—*Historic Markers*
—*Amazon Smile Ends*
—*A Cornville History Place Needed*

President's Message

Thank you everyone for coming to our Eleventh Annual Holiday Fundraiser in December. Everyone enjoyed our special guest speaker, Roger Naylor, Author and Arizona Travel Writer.

Thanks to all of you, our raffle of gift baskets was another success!

As a reminder, the State of Arizona just celebrated its 111th Birthday! Learn how Cornville celebrated the original statehood event on February 14, 2012 in our "Once Upon the Creek" feature.

Happy Birthday, Arizona!

—Sharon Morehouse

Annual Meeting Set for March 16

The 16th Annual Meeting of the Cornville Historical Society will be held on Thursday, March 16, 2023 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, 1090 S. Page Springs Rd., In Cornville. The agenda will include CY 2022 Reports, CY 2023 Budget Approval, and Election of Board members. Board nominees for reelection are Cheryl Chamberlain and Cindy Snyder. Muffy Vallely and Cindy Traverso are nominees for a new term. Continuing Board members are Sharon Morehouse, Diana Stipek, Nita Rinehart, Karen Wilkens and Patricia Nomm. The program will feature Allen Montgomery, who will talk about the Cornville facility that features an extensive model of the Wyoming Division of the Union Pacific Railroad. The public is welcome. After the meeting, the new board members will elect officers for the 2023-2024 term.



Railroad History to be Featured: If you've ever wondered what is happening at the big building at 1249 S. Eastern Drive in Cornville, now is your chance to learn! The CHS Annual Meeting includes a presentation by guest speaker Allen Montgomery representing the Wyoming Division Historical Society, a railroad club that has an amazing HO gauge layout right here in Cornville! The layout models the Union Pacific from Cheyenne, WY to Ogden, UT as it was when huge steam engines pulled long trains that required helper service through the mountains. The facility and layout, developed by Verryl Fosnight, features scale-model structures and geographic features that match the actual Union Pacific route. **The public is welcome.** Refreshments will be served.



Membership Renewal Time

It's that time of year again, when membership renewals are due! Dues must be paid in order to be a voting member at the Annual Meeting. This year, the Board is reaching out to local businesses to increase their representation in the Society. New members are always welcome. Go to www.cornville-historical-society.org to learn more about us. Sign up now!

Memoriam: Virginia Greenwell Loy

We honor the memory of Virginia (Greenwell) Loy, who passed away December 5 at her home in Cornville at age 95. Virginia was born in Clemenceau; raised on the Greenwell Ranch on Oak Creek, and attended the one-room Oak Creek School in Cornville from 1934 to 1941. She graduated from Clarkdale High School as the 1945 Salutatorian; received her BS degree from the University of Minnesota in 1949; and married Robert Loy, another Arizona native, in 1951. They raised five children and were married 67 years when he died in 2018. They lived in Tempe, WI, CA & KY before returning to their Cornville roots. Virginia loved art & nature, sharing her knowledge of local history with the Society. Rest in Peace, Virginia!



Holiday Fundraiser Celebrated with Verde Valley Author Roger Naylor

The Society's annual Fundraiser event, held at Oak Creek School on December 4, was an especially enjoyable event attended by an audience of about eighty supporters of the CHS. The guest speaker was Roger Naylor, noted travel writer and Verde Valley resident who entertained the guests with a presentation about "The Kolb Brothers of Grand Canyon". Naylor is a dynamic and humorous speaker who held the audience interest throughout with his animated humor and excitement about the of the famous brothers who accomplished amazing feats during historic times in the Grand Canyon. The fundraiser netted about \$800 from the raffle of baskets, a traditional feature of the annual fundraiser event. After a couple years of pandemic, it was great to see so many people out for a Sunday afternoon of entertainment, gifts and social time.

Cornville Historical Society 2022-23 Board of Directors
Officers: Sharon Morehouse (*President*), 928-634-8927 or stevsharmor@msn.com —
Diana Stipek (*Vice President*), 928-639-3632; Cheryl Chamberlain (*Secretary*), 928-639-0865 or wormworm@earthlink.net; and Cindy Snyder (*Treasurer*), 928-649-9628 or CindySnyder9550@gmail.com
Directors: Veronica Moody, 928-634-9221; Pat Nomm, 928-821-0040 or patnomm@hotmail.com;
Nita Rinehart, 928-963-1990; and Karen Wilkens (*Membership*), 920-650-1702 or kewilkens500@gmail.com

Society News Tidbits

Historic Markers: CHS has four historic signs placed in Cornville. Two mark the historic sites of the Old Cornville Post Office; and two mark the James Page Homestead and Page Gas Station and Store in Page Springs. The signs have all now been in place for ten years or more and showing wear. The Society is now reaching out for replacement sign estimates.

Amazon Smile Ends: The special rewards program offered by Amazon for a share of purchases to go to non-profit groups has ended. Therefore, your purchases will no longer be shared with CHS.

A Cornville History Place Needed: Looking ahead to the future, the CHS is in dire need of a "place" to house records, conduct research and interviews, host meetings, and carry out the Society's business. Since our beginnings in 2004, records and supplies have been stored in private homes or commercial storage units, making our work awkward and ineffective. To that end, CHS is filing grant applications to find matching funds to lease a suitable space within the community. If you have any ideas about an available space, please contact us!

ONCE UPON A CREEK



ARIZONA'S STATEHOOD DAY ... Cornville Style!

The Girdner name is certainly well-known in Cornville's history. J.P. (Jim) and Nola Girdner purchased land from Captain Andrew Jackson, one of the first homesteaders in the area (known back then as "Lower Oak Creek"), settling on Swinging Bridge Road in 1908. They planted orchards and gardens and raised their family there. One son, Stanley, was twelve years old when Arizona became a state in 1912. At the age of 86, he wrote a story that appeared in the *Arizona Republic* on February 15, 1987. He died at the Pioneer Home in Prescott at the age of 100. His story is reprinted here.

'I am glad that I was there'

Arizonan recalls the day statehood news reached his rural area: 'We must celebrate!'

By Stanley Girdner

There were about 25 families living along lower Oak Creek in 1912 who, on Feb. 18, got the news that Arizona Territory had become a state.

The news traveled slowly in those days, taking four days from Phoenix. Immediately, my mother told my brother Dale to get on our black horse and go tell Lee Johnson, Uncle Henry, the Tilsons, the Coxes and the Dickinsons that Arizona is a state now and we would be celebrating down by the creek below the Schnebly place.

"Tell everybody that you see, and act fast for we must celebrate today! Tell them to bring anything that they might have on Arizona's territory, history or progress, or anything of interest to our new state. Bring a picnic dinner and prepare for making history in a formal and hilarious manner."

My mother quickly made dresses for my sister, Eva, and Loris Tilson, using red, white and blue material, which my sister still has today. They really looked nice and fit the occasion so beautifully. She also picked out some appropriate songs and poetry for them, which they spoke most eloquently.

Our school of about 15 kids dismissed after the teacher explained the importance of the occasion. She coached some of the better orators to make some good fundamental speeches that might even help form a foundation for our new state.

By noontime we had gathered for a gorgeous picnic. We ate homegrown meats, vegetables and fruit. Then followed our National Anthem and patriotic speeches intermingled with words of wisdom and hopes for a better land.

At 12 years old, I heard some of the Constitution of the United States read for the first time, which really meant something to me.

Next was the hilarious part as we quickly moved into a homemade rodeo. George Dickinson, Gene Lee and Frank Flores made their burros buck furiously. Even the burros seemed to know that now Arizona was a state.

We had sack races that seemed like they would never quit. Everybody enjoyed themselves.

There were races of all kinds, even foot-and-burro races. Sometimes the runners would beat the burros because the burros were so keyed up they would stop running to buck awhile. This was not planned but was plenty funny.

With few people in the country those days, everybody was important. We shouldered our responsibilities well; even the kids were important and most certainly anything but slouches. They knew what work was. They were educated and grown when they finished the eighth grade. They made the very finest citizens that any state could be proud of.

I am glad that Arizona is a state and I am glad that I was there to help celebrate its statehood day. Look what Arizona is now, with the admiration of almost (e)very citizen of every state.