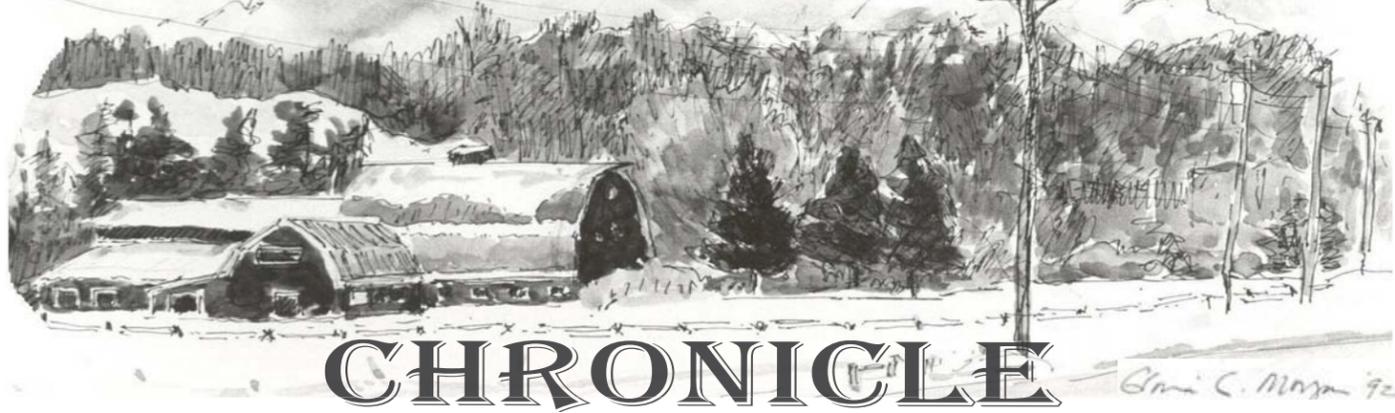


JACKSON HOLE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM



CHRONICLE

VOLUME XXX NO. 4

JACKSON'S HOLE, WYOMING

WINTER 2010-11

First Baptist Church of Jackson The First 100 Years

There is something about a campfire at a high country hunting camp which seems to ignite dreams and hopes in the soul of a person. Rev. Joe P. Jacobs was watching the glowing embers of the fire at Maurice Williams' elk hunting camp north of the town of Jackson, Wyoming and the seed of an idea sprouted into an enthusiasm which could not be quenched.

"Uncle Joe" was enjoying a well-deserved vacation from his responsibilities as Superintendent of the American Baptist Publication Society. Though his base of operations was in Kansas City, he was charged with the task of establishing Sunday Schools, setting up a network of itinerant evangelist-teachers, starting churches, and providing literature for all of these in an area that included all the territory west of the Mississippi to the edge of the Rocky Mountains.

As he sat at Maurice Williams' campfire that evening, he thought about this spectacular Jackson Hole country which had captured his imagination. Even as a first time visitor to the area, Joe Jacobs could foresee some changes which would surely come to the valley.

As the first decade of the twentieth century was coming to a close, railroads had shrunk the travel time across the vast plains. Cattle trails were being transformed into primitive roads which connected towns and railheads to the remote areas such as Jackson Hole.

Yellowstone National Park was drawing more tourists each year. Many of these visitors were spending more and more time in the region of the Teton mountains. Big game hunters like Rev. Jacobs were becoming more numerous each autumn. Several were staying on to try to scratch out a living on the homestead quarter sections that they had claimed. There was no doubt in the mind of Joe Jacobs that nothing could stem the growth which would surely come to this area.

The campfire dream which took hold of him that night was to establish a Baptist church in this valley. One that would minister to the residents of Jackson Hole, and one

that would be open to the visitors which funneled through the area each summer and autumn.

As soon as the hunting trip was over, Uncle Joe took steps to translate that plan into a reality. By 1910, there were five ministers called "Colporteurs" deployed throughout Wyoming. A Colporteur was a traveling teacher-evangelist who went to settlements, crossroads and ranches to share the Good News of Christ.

Each Colporteur was equipped with a team of horses and a sturdy enclosed wagon. That wagon was home for the minister and his family. It carried a tent and other camping



Photo taken from the Jackson Town Square, on Center Street looking north, Baptist Church on left. 1958.0564.001

gear, their food, a small folding organ, bibles, Sunday School materials, tracts and other religious literature. Bibles and some of the literature were sold at low cost. The other material was distributed free.

The practice was to travel wherever people could be reached by that team and wagon. The minister would hold a teaching-preaching service, and try to establish a regular Sunday School to be run by one of the local residents. Some of the Sunday Schools were so successful that they were later organized as permanent churches.

The Colporteur which Joe Jacobs had assigned to the western Wyoming area was Rev. Thomas H. Baxter, and he sent word to him about his plan to establish some Sunday Schools and a congregation in the Jackson Hole area. The Baxters immediately prepared to travel from their base in Evanston to this remote place which had so enamored their supervisor.

The trip was no easy matter for this

itinerant parson and his wife Ethel. They left Evanston on July 10, 1910 on a route which took them through Cokeville, LaBarge, Daniel, Kendell Wells, Union Pass and then down the Gros Ventre River, to the Lafferty Ranch to Kelly and, finally, to the town of Jackson. It was a journey of ten very tiring days.

The Baxters set out at once to establish several Sunday Schools scattered throughout the Jackson Hole area including the settlements of Zenith, Grovont, Cheney, and Kelly which met on a regular basis. Rev. Baxter was also holding preaching services in the Clubhouse in Jackson on Sunday evenings.

In March 1911, Rev. Jacobs returned to Jackson Hole and he was accompanied by Rev. George L. White of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Their mission was to hold a series of meetings with the express purpose of officially organizing a Baptist Church in this community. Records state that the organizational meeting was held on Thursday, March 16, 1911, and the name of Jackson's Hole Baptist Church was chosen.¹ Nine people took a step

of faith to become members that day, and a building committee was appointed. It must have given Uncle Joe Jacobs a great deal of pleasure to preside at that constituting session. His dream was taking definite shape.

After he left the area around the end of March, Uncle Joe Jacobs continued a nationwide lobby on behalf of the church and the area. In the April 13, 1911 issue of a widely-distributed Baptist publication called *The Central Baptist*, he gave a glowing description of the area that would shame the best efforts of an ordinary public relations manager. He assured the reader that a dependable stagecoach made regular runs from the railhead at St. Anthony, Idaho to Jackson. The fare was a mere \$6.50 per person and 25 pounds of baggage. Lodging along the way could be had for fifty cents a night, and a decent meal was available for

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Mission Statement

The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum collects, interprets, and preserves our unique heritage in an engaging and enriching manner.



The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum Chronicle is published quarterly for members and friends of the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.

Jackson Historical Society & Museum
P. O. Box 1005
Jackson, Wyoming 83001
(307) 733-9605, Fax: (307) 739-9019
e-mail: jhhs@wyom.net
www.jacksonholehistory.org

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Organizational News

Jackson Hole Native Kathi Davis Joins the Board

Kathi Davis is a fourth generation native and was born and raised in Jackson Hole. Kathi brings to the board a deep love and understanding of the valley and its history. After high school, she moved to Phoenix, Arizona to attend college and enjoy the culture and dynamics of a city. After working as Director of Human Resources for a large corporation based in Phoenix for fifteen years, Jackson Hole called her home. She moved back in 2002, and lives with her husband Steve at her family's inholding in Grand Teton National Park near Death Canyon. This property was purchased by her grandfather in 1942 and became the Circle H dude ranch. Her parents, Harry and Margaret Barker ran the Circle H after her grandfather retired. Kathi has three siblings, Steve, Bill and Ann, who enjoy frequent visits to their hometown.

After returning to Jackson, she went

to work for Spring Creek Ranch, and became the Controller after five years as Director of Human Resources. Her husband enjoys working for Grand Teton National Park in the Buildings and Quarters department.

Kathi loves being outdoors, riding horses (2 reside at her residence), hiking, fly-fishing and vacationing in Maui.



Make Your Donation Count

We are delighted to announce a giving opportunity where your donation will be matched. An anonymous donor has challenged us to a three to one match for our Annual Fund. We must raise \$90,000 by March 31, 2011 in order to receive the matching gift of \$30,000.

Your gift to our Annual Fund challenge will support our general museum operations this year. Thank you for helping us reach our goal. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Old Bill's Fun Run 2010 Donations Exceed 2009

Thank you to our donors who gave \$82,178.84 through Old Bill's Fun Run last September. Add to that our match award of \$13,530.00, and we received \$95,708.84, \$8,000 more than in 2009.



We appreciate the Co-Challengers and Friends, the Staff and Board of the Community

Foundation of Jackson Hole, the Run Committee, and all of the volunteers who helped make this wonderful community event happen!

Wish List for the JHHSM

- Funding for a Point of Sale system for the Museum store.
- Small flat screen tv with DVD player.
- Laminating machine.
- A volunteer to document programs using his/her own video camera.
- Historic rodeo equipment for an exhibition ~ call Robin at 733-9605.

Thank you for making our wishes come true!

Welcome First Time New Members and Business Partners (September ~ mid-December):

- Mary Affleck
- Beaver Creek Hat and Leather
- Judith Beckett
- Mary Lou and Dennis Brydon
- Frank Dill and Elena Chartoff
- George and Dorothy Eaton
- Julie and Fredrick Gaston
- Gonnella and Majors, PC
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- Chuck and Barbara Herz
- Marion Hudnall
- Anthony and Cynthia Huhn
- Tonya Lagana
- Moe and Irene Mellion
- Moose Head Ranch, Inc.
- Jeff and Rosanne Prince
- Alan and Shareen Pruitt
- Larry and Sandra Rodeck
- Signal Mountain Lodge
- Scott and Jean Spangler
- Jane Squires
- Francis and Carolyn Warziniack
- Anita Wilke

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thirty five cents.

After describing the wonderful productivity of the ranchland and the fact that this was a hunter's paradise, Uncle Joe proposed that this would be the perfect place to establish a large colony of energetic Baptists who wanted to make a new start in life. He offered himself as an information center and travel agent for all who wanted to move to this valley.

A little later he purchased two lots at Kelly in order to help stimulate this plan for a Baptist settlement. There is one person who might have been influenced by Rev. Jacob's promotion. About that time, Mr. Milt Kneedy, a devout Baptist, moved to the Kelly area. Mr. Kneedy was the father of Ida Chambers. A few years later, he and his wife Corabelle drowned in the Kelly flood.

If Uncle Joe's plan had succeeded, we might well have had a "Baptist Row" to parallel "Mormon Row" in that part of the valley.

Meanwhile, Rev. Baxter continued his faithful ministry to the people of Jackson Hole. Services of baptism during the winter months were always an adventure. During that first week the church was organized, a young woman, Mary McGuire, expressed a desire to be baptized. The service was held at the ice-fringed Snake River on a Sunday afternoon in late March, 1911.

The snow was reported to be four feet deep on the level and the river rocks were slippery. Several cowboys attended the gathering since this was the first service of its kind ever held in this area.

The Baptist executive, Rev. George White, was on hand to witness the baptism and became concerned that the Rev. Baxter might have a little problem with the slick river bottom. So, he approached the tallest cowboy in the audience and asked him to assist.

The cowpoke pulled off his big hat and said, "Well, that's a bit out of my line, Mister, but I'll help if I can."

He put a blanket over his arm and helped Mary down the slippery bank and out to midstream. There he was in his high cowboy boots with spurs, chaps, and six shooters on his hips, leading the young woman out to Rev. Baxter who baptized her. He then wrapped the blanket around her and gently helped her back to the snow-drifted bank. It is reported that the other cowboys lined the riverside, standing quietly with bowed heads during the entire service.

A lot was purchased for \$75.00 from Mr. Wiley W. Smith to be the site for the first church building. This lot was located just west of the Jackson State Bank (now the downtown Wells Fargo) on Center Street.

Raising money for this structure was a real concern for the small congregation. The Baptists Home Mission Society provided a "gift loan" of \$750. Around \$1,200 was raised locally, and some through an appeal in the *Missions* publication that went to every congregation in the denomination. The records from this period are sketchy at best, but it should be noted that in 1915, the minutes of a meeting tell of action by the congregation to finish the exterior of the building by installing wooden siding and painting the church. This project took some time, because notes taken at a meeting two years later show that sixty dollars was still needed in order to purchase paint for the exterior of the Baptist Church.

After the winter of 1912-13, Rev. Baxter asked to be relieved of his responsibilities as

pastor of the church, but he did continue to minister to the Sunday School groups meeting at Kelly and Zenith. He purchased a ranch on Ditch Creek near Kelly which he later traded to Dick Winger in exchange for the valley's only newspaper, the *Jackson's Hole Courier*. Besides publishing the newspaper for a while, he also assumed the position of Postmaster from November 16, 1918 until July 8, 1921.

In May 1913, Rev. C. Wardlaw was called to the pastorate of this congregation. He was to receive a salary of \$1,000. (\$700 of which was paid by the Baptist Home Mission Society and \$300 by the local congregation).

A service of dedication for the new church building was set for November 9, 1913. The day was marked by three full sermons and a picnic dinner. A photograph taken on that day shows that nearly seventy five people attended the dedication service.

Rev. Wardlaw resigned in 1914 and there followed a succession of missionary-pastors who stayed but briefly, usually from less than one year up to two years. Between 1914 and 1938 there were twelve ministers. Between 1925 and 1932 the church was pastorless and fell into a time of inactivity although Sunday School classes continued to meet regularly.

In January 1932, the congregation decided to resume regular worship services. Two laymen, Frank Poole and Loyd Teagarden, did most of the preaching. Occasionally, a missionary preacher from the denomination came to the valley to give assistance for brief periods.

Rev. Leslie Barbee, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, first came to Wyoming in the early 1920s. Uncle Joe took him on his first trip to the Yellowstone-Jackson Hole area as early as 1925, and Leslie enjoyed this place so much that he returned for an extended hunting and fishing trip in 1938. In the middle of 1939, the church at Jackson asked him to come and be their pastor. This began a long and productive ministry in this community.

For a while Rev. Barbee and his wife and daughter, Hazel, lived in the church building. The bedrooms were in the loft over the sanctuary, and the kitchen was in the rear of the church itself. There was some discussion about building a parsonage at the rear of the church but a decision was made to build it elsewhere. Mrs. Ida Redmond sold a parcel of land on East Broadway at a very attractive price, enabling the church to begin construction on their parsonage in late 1939. Rev. Barbee did much of the work on it.¹

In 1953, Bruce Porter approached the church to ask if a property exchange could be arranged. He wanted to secure the lot on which the church was located in order to square up some property he owned in that block.

In trade, he offered to deed over two lots in the Karns Addition, dig the same size basement as was then under the church, put in cinder block walls and foundation, pour a concrete floor, move the church, replace the furnace and utilities, and donate \$750 to the church.

On May 4, 1953, the trustees signed the agreement of exchange. Some details had to be worked out. At first, the Baptist Home

Mission Society was reluctant to agree to the exchange, but finally saw the wisdom in the move.

Then there was the matter of the location of the lots. Mr. Porter was under the impression that the lots were on the corner of Cache and Kelly Streets, but they were actually on the next corner west, Glenwood and Kelly. Effort was made to buy the Cache and Kelly lots, but that attempt was unsuccessful, so Bruce added another \$1,000 to his end of the trade. These negotiations took nearly two years to complete.

The church was completed by the spring of 1956, and about that same time the congregation voted to affiliate with the Wyoming Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Convention. The whole process of the negotiations and moving the church had been a draining experience for Rev. Barbee. He had faithfully served this congregation for nearly seventeen years. At the conclusion of this major project, he expressed a desire to retire.

Between 1956 and 1972, there were six pastors that blessed the church: Rev. Clifford W. Jervis, Rev. Paul Raycroft, Rev. Loyal Hiatt, Rev. Floyd Austin, Rev. Roy Plummer and Rev. Everett "Eb" Andrew. During this period, the congregation grew and was strengthened to the point that the church made resolve to work toward the goal of weaning away from its mission status and aim toward becoming a self-supporting fellowship. A parsonage located just south of the church on Glenwood Street was constructed with the help of volunteers from the congregation, and was dedicated on May 10, 1959. Adjoining property to the church was purchased which included the site where a new church building would be erected in 1979.

In the summer of 1972 the church called Rev. Daniel P. Abrams to become its pastor in the autumn of that year. Dan, Claire, and their two sons, David and Jonathan, came from Pennsylvania shortly after Thanksgiving Day. As the church grew, it became evident that new building facilities



First Baptist Church Vacation Bible School, Cache Creek, 1942.
Rev. Leslie Barbee is tall man on back row. 2005.0046.014

would be necessary to meet the needs of the fellowship. The first project was the expansion of the parsonage to include a garage and a new kitchen/dining area in 1977.

In 1979, a new sanctuary was constructed. The cedar structure also included office space in an upper wing, and a finished basement which provided seven classrooms and assembly room.

In 1985, the original church building was moved off its foundations and donated to the No Name Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist Fellowship which later became Jackson Hole

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Baptist Church. After resting in a vacant lot on the west side of town for a couple years, the church was moved to East Broadway, (just east of Redmond Street) where it has been completely refurbished and continues a useful service in the name of Christ.



The original building of First Baptist Church, now Jackson Hole Baptist Church. 1993.5033.001

As soon as the building was removed, it was replaced by a new fellowship hall, kitchen, and classrooms which connected to the existing cedar structure.

During Rev. Dan Abrams' tenure with First Baptist Church, the congregation grew to the point of needing an associate pastor. Rev. Abrams had a rich and fulfilling ministry in Jackson, and he endeared himself to the community. He retired in May of 1993, after leading First Baptist Church for twenty-one productive years.

Since Rev. Abrams' retirement, the church has been through a lot of transition. Three interim pastors—Rev. Milton Gould, Rev. Emmett Dozier, and

Rev. Donald Young (twice), and four senior pastors —Rev. Norman Walter, Rev. Steve Anthes, Rev. C.R. Macchi, and Dr. Richard Steeg filled the pulpit during the period of 1993 until present. Associate pastors, youth directors, and family ministers have come and gone. Each left an indelible imprint upon this church, and helped inspire incredible growth in the lives of the congregational members.

The years have brought inevitable changes—some which the Rev. Joe P. Jacobs could not even begin to imagine. The streets of Jackson are now paved. The congregation at First Baptist Church has grown exponentially. The building has been replaced by a much larger one and gone through several remodels.

But one thing has not changed. It was Uncle Joe's dream that a Baptist Church would be established which would maintain a vigorous mission of ministering in the name of Christ to the people of Jackson Hole. That



First Baptist Church today. Courtesy of First Baptist Church

mission of love and caring has not changed.

While the fortunes of the church have waxed and waned during these past one hundred years, there has been an unbroken line of faithful persons who have prayed fervently and labored diligently in response to that vision.

Note: The First Baptist Church is planning to have a number of events to celebrate its 100th Anniversary during the week of March 10 - 13, 2011.

The following resources of First Baptist Church were reproduced in this article, with editing and additions made by Liz Jacobson, newsletter editor:

Abrams, Rev. Daniel P. *The First Seventy-Five Years: The Story of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Wyoming*. October, 1987. (In his Acknowledgement, Rev. Abrams stated "In this brief history of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, every effort has been made to be accurate. The records prior to 1930 are sketchy at best, and there are some contradictory accounts of dates and events.")

Courtney, John. Addition to the church history as of March 16, 2004. First Baptist Church.

Additional Resource

"Jackson's Hole Baptist Church." Manuscript, Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum, 2002.0130.095.

Adventure Stories Continue with *Voices of the Valley* Programs

By Karen Reinhart

I flipped to the definition of "history" in my Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary recently. I expected to find something like "a chronological record of significant events" listed first. But, rather, two capitalized words held that place: "TALE, STORY."

While the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum (JHHSM) is the caretaker of many of the valley's written documents, photographs, artifacts, and other evidence of days gone by, we also gather and keep oral histories and stories for the future. It is these personal anecdotes that illuminate Jackson Hole's history.

This winter, the third installment of *Jackson Hole Stories: Voices of the Valley* continues to explore the stories of well-known valley residents and their high-energy adventures. The Thursday evening programs are held in JHHSM's new building at 225 North Cache from 7:00–8:30 p.m. beginning in mid-January.

Program dates and storytellers are:

January 20: Alpine Skiers: Howard Henderson and Benny Wilson, co-captains of the renegade ski club formed in the 1980s, the "Jackson Hole Air Force," share daring accounts of their pursuit of powder and out-of-bounds skiing. They will show clips from *Swift Silent Deep*, the ski-club-inspired documentary.

February 3: Ted Major and Georgie Morgan tell stories that reach back to the late 1930s, including skiing in Jackson Hole and an avalanche tragedy, as well as tales of the genesis of Teton Science Schools in 1967, and more.



Howard Henderson and Benny Wilson. Courtesy of Wade McKoy / focusproductions.com

February 17: Kit Deslauriers, extreme



Kit Deslauriers

ski mountaineer and **Jess McMillan**, extreme alpine skier, share their high-adventure exploits. Kit was the first person to ski down the Seven Summits (the world's

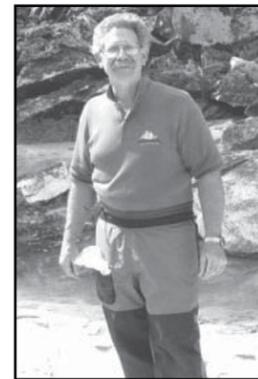
highest peaks) and also has extensive Jackson Hole backcountry skiing experience. Jess is a Kelly, Wyoming native. She won the Freeskiing World Tour and



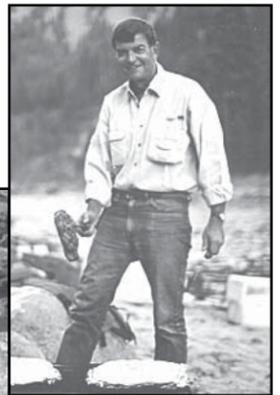
Jess McMillan. Courtesy of Wade McKoy / focusproductions.com

US Freeskiing Tour in 2007. A photograph of Jess is on the cover of a current Jackson Hole phone directory.

March 3: Wayne Johnson and Bill Guheen, longtime river guides, share stories of riding the waves of the Snake and Salmon Rivers. Both men have a long history of working for raft companies including Barker-Ewing and Grand Teton Lodge Co.



Bill Guheen



Wayne Johnson

Add warmth to your winter as you celebrate the valley's characters and their stories

as well as the completion of our facility. If you are not currently a member, join the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum—each of these storytelling programs is free for members of the organization. (See Page 5 for membership information.) Memberships are available at the door. Non-member admission for each program is \$5 per person. Refreshments are served. These programs have been very popular, so don't arrive late if you want a seat!

Our Goal to Double Memberships in 2011!

Four hundred and eighty-six members of the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum are the heart of our organization. More and more people are learning about the value of our mission thanks to our members. We want our membership to grow to engage more and more people in supporting a new, year-round history museum for our community, and to increase our potential to achieve our organizational goals. If you are not a member, will you become a part of our vision? If you are a member, will you invite at least one person to join? Below is an individual membership form to complete and mail in, or it is also available on our website www.jacksonholehistory.org. Thank you for your support!

WANTED

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Individual Annual Membership Application

Benefactor \$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/>	Family (children under 18) \$60 <input type="checkbox"/>
Sustaining \$500 <input type="checkbox"/>	Individual \$35 <input type="checkbox"/>
Contributing \$250 <input type="checkbox"/>	Senior (65 and over) \$25 <input type="checkbox"/>
Friend \$100 <input type="checkbox"/>	Student (K-12) \$10 <input type="checkbox"/>

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 P. O. Box 1005, Jackson, WY 83001

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- Two reusable employee passes to the museum and regular programs
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- Listing in publications and functions

CONTRIBUTING PARTNERSHIP: \$250

- The Above, Plus —
- \$25 gift certificate to the Museum Shop
- Choice of 8 x 10 historic photograph

SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIP: \$500

- All of the Above, Plus —
- Private Director's tour of the museum

BENEFACITOR PARTNERSHIP: \$1,000

- All of the Above, Plus —
- Free summer historical tour
- Listing/link on our website

Member Benefits	Annual Dues							
	Benefactor \$1,000	Sustaining \$500	Contributing \$250	Friend \$100	Family (Children under 18) \$60	Individual \$35	Senior Individual (65 and over) \$25	Student (K-12) \$10
Membership card	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Free admission Museum	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Free admission to programs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Twenty percent discount on purchases	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Quarterly Newsletter with historical stories	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Four one-time guest passes to the Museum	X	X	X	X				
\$25 gift certificate to the Museum Shop	X	X	X					
Choice of historic photographic 8 x 10	X	X	X					
Private Director's tour of Museum	X	X						
Free summer historical tour	X							

Upcoming Events

January	February	March
<p>Thursday, January 20 <i>Voices of the Valley</i>—Storytelling Howard Henderson & Benny Wilson New Museum Building 225 N. Cache Street, 7:00 pm <i>See article on page 4 for details.</i></p> <p>Thursday, January 20 Book discussion group sponsored by the Wyoming Humanities Council* <i>Rising from the Plains</i> by John McPhee</p> 	<p>Thursday, February 3 <i>Voices of the Valley</i>—Storytelling Ted Major and Georgie Morgan New Museum Building 225 N. Cache Street, 7:00 pm</p> <p>Thursday, February 10 Book discussion group* <i>What You See in Clear Water</i> by Geoff O’Gara</p> <p>Thursday, February 17 <i>Voices of the Valley</i>—Storytelling Kit Deslauriers and Jess McMillan New Museum Building 225 N. Cache Street, 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Thursday, March 3 <i>Voices of the Valley</i>—Storytelling Bill Guheen and Wayne Johnson New Museum Building 225 N. Cache Street, 7:00 pm</p> <p>Thursday, March 3 Book discussion group* <i>Windmill: Essays from Four Mile Ranch</i> by David Romtvedt</p> <p>Thursday, March 24 Book discussion group* <i>Where Rivers Change Direction</i> by Mark Spragg</p>

*Book Discussion Group

The Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum is again hosting a free book discussion group sponsored by the Wyoming Humanities Council’s “Reading Wyoming” program. This year’s topic is “Writing Wyoming.” The discussion will be held on Thursdays January 20, February 10, March 3, and March 24 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Jackson’s Old County Library, 320 S. King Street. Local humanities scholar Stephen Lottridge returns to facilitate the discussions. Space is limited to twenty participants, and as of press time the spaces are full. To check on cancellations, please call Loretta Scott at 690-6903 or 733-6903.

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