

# P. L. Historical Society & Vaile Museum News

*Serving The Tri-Lakes Area Since 1956*



## The "State Fair Express"

By: Gary Coleman

On Saturday, August 25, 2007 the Union Pacific Railroad sponsored a trip from Denver to Pueblo and back on the "State Fair Express." Originally, U.P.R.R. planned to use their "Challenger," the world's largest operating steam locomotive which weighs 1,000,000 lbs., measures 122 feet long and has a wheel arrangement of 4-6-6-4. Instead, the "Northern" steamer, #844 with a wheel arrangement of 4-8-4 which means eight, driving wheels, each 84 inches in diameter, rolled through Palmer Lake around 10:00 am.

Four fire trucks and hundreds of onlookers waved as the vintage passenger train chugged

on to Monument hauling a normal engine tender or the water/fuel car. The "Northern" pulled a second tender just to be safe. Each tender carried about 6,200 gallons of fuel oil and 23,500 gallons of water. The engine consumed about 160 gallons of water per mile. The "Northern" was helped by diesel engine #1985 which is one of six painted diesels that represent the six railroads that merged with U.P.R.R. It assisted the "Northern" on the steep grades between Pueblo and Denver. Behind the engines were 15 beautifully matched passenger cars of which four were dome cars.

During the '50's and '60's the dome cars were the ultimate

luxury in travel. Prior to the 1950's, special trains often had an open end observation car at the rear of the train as did the "State Fair Express." These cars, used by politicians on whistle stops, were seen in movies and were used by Harry Truman in his successful whistle stop campaign in 1948.

Many Monument and Palmer Lake residents heard the chug of the steam engine and its distinct whistle as it rounded the curves and passed through Palmer Lake on its return trip to Denver.

### In case you wanted to know:

- Museum hours: 10-2 PM Sat. and 1-4 PM Wed., June to Aug.
- PLHS President: Phyllis Bonser
- Vice-President: Dee Kirby
- Secretary: Bob Kirby
- Treasurer: Victor Vaile
- Museum Director: Roger Davis
- Cougar: Old Disappearance
- For Membership Information call 559-0837 or see our website.

### Inside this issue:

What's New at the Museum ~ Space: The Final Frontier	2
A Message from the President	2
PLHS Upcoming Events and Programs	2
A Recap of PLHS programs for July, August & September	3
The Boathouse at Palmer Lake	4

## John Fielder & Chuck Pyle Dec. 12, 2007, One Night Only

On December 12 The Palmer Lake Historical Society is holding its annual fundraiser in cooperation with the Tri Lakes Center for the Arts. This year we have found a unique combination of history and art, of the visual and the auditory, of John Fielder and Chuck Pyle.

The first time ever they are together, they will perform a show with songs and pictures of Colorado, touching upon Colorado's history and beauty. Chuck will give a mini-concert based on his

new CD "Higher Ground: Songs of Colorado" and John will present a show with a great selection of his wonderful photographs of Colorado. A cash bar will be available for refreshments. Of course, you can also stock up on great Christmas gifts with their CDs and books!

**December 12 at 7pm until 9pm.**

Tri Lakes Center for the Arts in Palmer Lake (the Kaiser Frazier building on 105)

Tickets: \$10 members of TLCA and PLHS, \$12 non-members

Pre-order tickets at TLCA (719) 481-0475 or buy at the door.

Learn More:

<http://www.chuckpyle.com>

<http://www.johnfielder.com>

“I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to earth.”

- J. F. Kennedy
- May 25, 1961

## What's New at the Museum?

By: Sharon Jarnagin

It seems hard to grasp that 38 years ago on July 1969 Apollo 11 landed on the moon. I personally witnessed the take-off while living in Florida and shall never forget Neil Armstrong's famous words heard around the world. “That's one small step for man. One giant leap for mankind.”

A timely and historic exhibit is currently on display in the Vaile Museum. Featured are original photographs of Gemini spacecrafts VI, VII, VIII, Agena, Apollo and other items.

Palmer Lake is proud to have been a summer residence for

Colorado's first astronaut, Mercury astronaut M. Scott Carpenter, the second American to orbit the earth. His grandparents own a cottage in Glen Park. He still visits friends when he's in our area. He is a gracious man who signs autographs and poses for photos with our Docents when he visits the Museum.

The exploration and conquest of space continues today. Recently, the space shuttle Endeavor returned from a rendezvous with the International Space Station. Our space exhibit is a must see when you visit the museum.

## Space: The Final Frontier

If you have a collection that you'd like to display for our guests enjoyment, please contact Sharon at 481-2488.



John Fielder, Author & Photographer

## A Message from the President

Your Historical Society continues to work on many projects. We have completed the historical plaque which commemorates Father Dyer's contribution to our local history. It was presented to Tri-Lakes Cares and will be mounted at the entrance of the building. Jim Sawatzki made the presentation for the PLHS. Thank you Jim.

This month begins our advertising sales campaign for the PLHS Calendar. Volunteer rep-

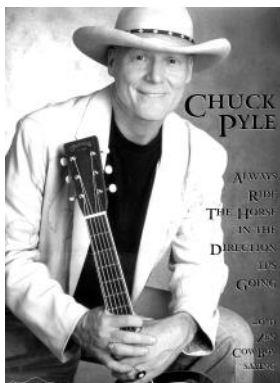
resentatives will visit local businesses to fill the advertising spaces. If your company has not participated before but would like to contribute, leave a message on the museum phone (719-559-0837). A committee member will contact you. PLHS is very excited about this project as it is so well received by our community. PLHS has some wonderful pictures of the past to share with you.

Looking forward to seeing eve-

ryone on the third Thursday of the month.

We are most excited to host John Fielder & Chuck Pyle at a benefit for the Historical Society. This historic pairing on Dec. 12 at the TLCA is a first for our area.

Phyllis V. Bonser



Chuck Pyle, The Zen Cowboy

## PLHS Upcoming Events and Programs

PLHS upcoming events held at the Palmer Lake Town Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. All are welcomed free of charge. Doors open at 6:30 PM. The program begins at 7:00 PM. Refreshments are served.

**October 18: "The 1911 Colorado Springs Ax Murders."** Learn who-dunnit from Detective Dwight Haverkorn (ret.) CSPD

**November 15: "Chuggin' Through the Divide"** by Gary Coleman. He will show his copy of a 30 minute film that describes the trip of #833 from Denver to Salt Lake City by way of Palmer Lake, the Royal Gorge and Leadville in June of 1997.

**December 12: John Fielder & Chuck Pyle at the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts.** Benefit for the PLHS

**January 17: Annual Potluck begins at 6:30. Show and Tell: "Tunes, Art and Tales"** by Joe Bohler. He will play piano, talk about some of his paintings that will be on display and share anecdotes.

## July: Colorado: An Illustrated History of the Highest State

Excerpts from Diane Sawatzki's article to Our Community News

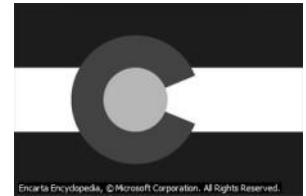
"Doctor Colorado has served up doses of Colorado's history for decades. Dr. Tom Noel, professor of history at CU Denver, presented a slide show of some of the compelling people and places featured in his new book, "Colorado: An Illustrated History of the

Highest State. Co-written by Debra Faulkner, this recent work highlights some real winners. Like Cripple Creek's Bob Womack, who sold his priceless claim for \$500, and Spencer Penrose, a Philadelphia family's black sheep who set a Harvard record for beer drinking."

"Noel commented on the convoluted process of land-marking historic buildings:

"They must continue in their original use," he said. "That poses a problem with structures like brothels. The next best thing is to install a law office in it."

Dr. Colorado currently writes a column for The Denver Post, teaches, and conducts historical walking tours



Colorado State Flag

## August: The Palmer Lake Chautauqua

Excerpts from Diane Sawatzki's article to Our Community News

"Long before silent movies, radio, and television, rural Americans flocked to hundreds of Chautauqua stages for their cultural entertainment. Beginning in the late nineteenth century and running through the 1930's, these people's universities provided speakers, music,

Sunday school instruction, and outdoor recreation to over 45 million enthusiastic participants. Born in upstate New York, Chautauqua was named for an Iroquois word meaning "a gathering together."

"Palmer Lake resident Professor Joan Fairchild spoke on the Palmer Lake Chautauqua, the oldest in Colorado. "They had campfires,

songfests, and evening services. By 1887, they had an auditorium that seated 700 people, a dining hall, Verano Lodge, and tent cottages. A 21-meal ticket sold for \$6, season tickets for activities went for \$2.50, and a round-trip fare on the train from Denver ran \$2.25."

"Theodore Roosevelt said, "The most American thing in America is the Chautauqua."



Prof. Joan Fairchild

## September: John Albert, Mountain Man – 1806 ~ 1899

By: Dee Kirby

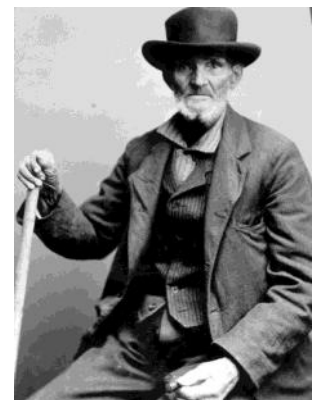
John David Albert, a mountain man who traded in furs and later became a Colorado rancher was one of two men to escape the Taos Massacre in 1847.

Sam DeFelice talked about his great, great, great, great grandfather's narrow escape from Turley's Mill with only his gun, shooting bag, a knife and the clothes on his

back for he had forgotten his coat and lost his hat to a bullet. DeFelice said that before Albert could reach safety he faced 140 miles of mountain roads to cross in the dead of winter. Albert's flight over the mountains is a harrowing story of bravery, determination and an indomitable will to live.

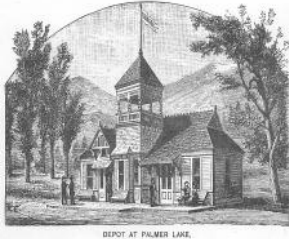
In an interview, Albert said, "I never look back to the dark hours of that day and

to my sufferings in the days following, but the devil gets in me bigger than a wolf."



John Albert

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*Serving The Tri-Lakes Area Since 1956*

**Visit Us At:** <http://www.ci.palmer-lake.co.us/plhs/>

## The Boathouse at Palmer Lake

By: Jim Sawatzki

Back in the heyday of the Chautauqua era of the late 1880's, there was a boathouse on the western shore of Palmer Lake near the train depot. It was a concession owned by the Denver & Rio Grande railroad for visiting tourists who came for the day or a weekend excursion. For a fee one could rent a boat to row about and enjoy the scenic mountain backdrop, maybe do some fishing, or court a young lady at a leisurely pace. For excitement, one could row around or through the 60-foot tall fountain spray near the center of the lake. Several years ago, when lake

levels were at dramatic lows, the skeleton of a rowboat appeared in the shallows on the northeastern shore. One could only imagine what stories it could tell of its last outing before it sunk to the murky bottom.

Most of the early railroad structures such as Judd's Eating House, the large dance pavilion, and the boathouse are all pleasant memories of Palmer Lake's colorful past. Learn more about the Chautauqua era at the premiere of "Summer Sojourn" on **Sunday, October 21st at 1, 2 & 3 p.m.** free showings will be at the Palmer Lake Town Hall.



The Palmer Lake Boathouse & rowboat navy. Ca 1905

