The staff of Río Grande County museum wish you a Happy New Year and thank you for your support and interest throughout 2019. We are looking forward to an exciting year in 2020.

We are working on a calendar of events filled with new exhibits and programs.

Last year was filled with art shows, new exhibits and programs.

The Del Norte School art students show was the first show of the year. Over three hundred pieces of student art work was shown. Art teachers, Susie Carrasco and Gina Randolph worked hard with their students to show their skills in art. We are looking forward to showing their work again this spring.

We will particularly proud of a young volunteer, Brad Henderson, who spent two to three days a week with us, learning the jobs that the staff of a museum do. Brad spent about six weeks researching and pulling artifacts from the museum collections to do a “Communication Exhibit” which included everything from the piano to a computer.

For Covered Wagon Days we did the annual ice cream social. Carole and Kami Humphreys welcome the visitors while Steve Nicolais and Suzanne Bothell served the ice cream. It was a very busy day!!
The San Luis Valley Quilters were also present during Covered Wagon Days with over eighty wonderfully made quilts. This show was for two weeks and will be part of our Covered Wagon Days event again this year.

The quilt guild members use their talents to benefit several different charities in the San Luis Valley.

The next art show was with Nancy Harris who showed her work in collages and mixed media. Harris is a San Luis Valley artist who lives in Alamosa. She uses paper, paint and found objects to create abstract pieces of art. She has taught workshops and her work is shown in Colorado and New Mexico.

High Valley students helped to change the main exhibit room during the summer. They did the toy exhibit, tool exhibit, changed the Del Norte and Monte Vista exhibits and did the dress exhibit with wedding dresses from the 1880s to 1965. Their help was greatly appreciated and we hope that we can work again with High Valley to give these young people work experience within the museum and community.

In the fall, Richard Beatty from Las Vegas, Nevada and Kingman, Arizona brought 189 books from his late brother’s collection. Richard Beatty had started donating his extensive collection of historical and western books several years ago in the hope that the museum could use them as a library. Richard has informed us that sometime this spring, he will be bringing another 148 books to add to the collection. The Beatty family is from this area and particularly Monte Vista. Their parents were Grace and John Beatty. We are extremely grateful for these wonderful books. It gives the museum a resource library that can be used for research along with other documents and our newspaper collection.
With a large donation from Kay Berry and her family, we were able to do an exhibit of items from their family from the 1900s to the 1940s. These items were incorporated with items in the museum archives and we were able to use them to show a “house” of the past.

The final show for the year was the “Holiday at the Museum” art show. The opening reception was held on November 16th with a full house in attendance. The artists who showed their work included Craig Lehman, Nancy Harris, Darwin Thompson, John Patterson, Albert Kahan, Laura Lunsford, Marian Schlagbaum, Mary Susan Eldredge, Cath Morin, Jeannie Norwood, Martha Kennedy, Evelyn Sprouse-Row, Perla Kopeloff and Alex Colville. The photos show the Santas done by Darwin Thompson and the pirate is done by Laura Lunsford.

This event is one that we will be making an annual event to help promote the local artists.

On December 7th, Martha Kennedy did a book reading from her book As a Baby Duck Listens to Thunder. This was part of the “Holiday at the Museum” event. The reading was well received and she also did a chapter from another book which she had written. Martha will be working with us again this year to do two more readings and will be featuring the Swiss culture in the book as well as research on the Swiss families who came to and became part of the history of Rio Grande County.

The museum also was the location for the Farmers’ Union annual meeting in October. The group was able to tour the museum, eat and press apple cider. For the meeting the museum staff put the Centennial Farm exhibit back up. It is still in the main exhibit room. There are twelve Rio Grande County farms who have received this honor. The Scidmore farm which is in Alamosa County is also honored.
in the exhibit that is done from artifacts from Kay Berry and family. Kay is a daughter of Keith and Irene Scidmore.

Research was done with DeAnn Jacobs for the Hayride into History event of Covered Wagon Days. This year the tour was of Spruce Street homes and into the “industrial part” of Del Norte along what is now the Town Parks. We are still wanting to know if someone knows the location of the Del Norte Fairgrounds. It would be somewhat in this area of the tour, perhaps north of the Rio Grande.

One of the ongoing projects is the work on the local veterans of all wars and those who were in the military. The Rio Grande County Museum is a Blue Star Museum and the admission fee is waived for retired, active or anyone who has served our country with military service.

2020 Preliminary Calendar of Event

The Del Norte School Student Art Show, the Covered Wagon Days events including the ice cream social and the quilt show and the Holiday at the Museum art show have been already scheduled to take place. The dates and times are to be announced.

A post card show is scheduled for some time in the spring. This will feature postcards from the collections of Chuck Harbert and Morgan Williams. The postcards are the work of “Doc” W. H. Martin from Kansas and were used as
promotional work for land in the San Luis Valley. They feature home, ranches, farms, etc. that were here in the early 1900s.

In the fall, we are having an exhibit with the Old Spanish Trail and an art show with an artist from Virginia, Anna Kim, who will be painting art work with the use of our archival photos of the area.

The big project for the year is the Suffrage exhibit to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Rita and Louise have been working on this for several weeks and hope to have it in place by the end of January. The pathway to women being able to vote was not easy.

IN HER OWN WORDS

This project of the women’s suffrage has been an educational excitement for me, doing research and learning about the women’s suffrage. People, I say “people” because it wasn’t just women who enduring punishment, it was men as well. I learned in school about history but now that I’m older I can appreciate history more as it seems more real to me. As I study about people and learn their background on how they grew up and battles they had taken on in achieving goals, it makes me realize that a lot has changed, but a lot has not... Rita Trujillo

Rio Grande County Museum is located at 580 Oak Street. The hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The telephone number is (719)657-2847. We can also be followed on Facebook. We welcome groups to tour the museum.