

Winter 2025

Virginia City Preservation Alliance, Inc.

Volume 28 Issue 3

VIRGINIA CITY, MONTANA

100 YEARS OF KEEPING TIME (1922-2022)

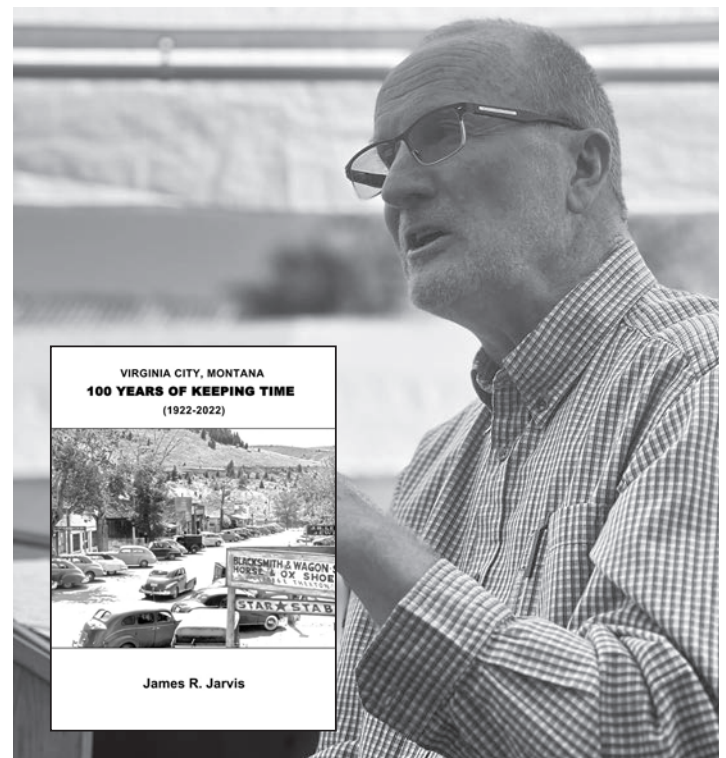
James (Jim) Jarvis, a longtime Montana resident and historian, has compiled a graphically rich chronology of the development of the Virginia City heritage tourism experience. A 100-year long account of the serendipitous events and cooperative efforts by various individuals, groups, and agencies responsible for the creation of the Virginia City National Historic Landmark and one of Montana's most popular heritage tourism attractions. The author has spent the last 25 years living, working, and studying this unique story.

In 1863, in a remote valley in southwestern Montana known as Alder Gulch, one of the largest placer gold deposits in the continental United States, was discovered and a classic gold-rush began. A discovery so rich that it took over 60 years to fully exhaust using the best-available, mining technology of the period. By the 1920s, however, the rich gold deposits of Alder Gulch were playing out, and its principal settlement, Virginia City was starting to resemble a ghost town – more dead than alive. At this point, the story took an interesting turn. The few remaining residents of Virginia City, recognizing that the era of mining-related prosperity was quickly coming to an end, and the very survival of the community was

in jeopardy - embarked on a bold new endeavor, and the Virginia City heritage tourism industry was born.

Relying on previously unpublished research materials, historic photos and images, and personal interviews with local residents, both past and present, the manuscript documents and explores this incredible story from the perspective of historic preservation, heritage tourism, and community development.

Please join Jim at one of the below presentations to learn more of this untold story. ☘



Jim Jarvis presents an open air lecture during the Bozeman Trail Event in 2023. Credit: Bob Bayley

SATURDAY, MARCH 29

Thompson Hickman Library, V.C.

6 - 6:30 p.m. Mix & Mingle, Presentation following

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

Sheridan Senior Center, Sheridan

1:30 - 2 p.m. Mix & Mingle, Presentation following

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Madison Valley Public Library, Ennis

3:30 - 4 p.m. Mix & Mingle, Presentation following

About the Virginia City Preservation Alliance.

VCPA Organization. The Virginia City Preservation Alliance is organized and operated in accordance with the Montana Nonprofit Corporation Act and the tax exemption requirements of Internal Revenue Code Section 501(0)(3). The VCPA maintains the following website:

www.virginiacitypreservationalliance.org

VCPA Board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month in the undercroft of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 102 E. Idaho Street, Virginia City, at 7:00 PM (except that meetings for December-March are held at 12:00 Noon).

Virginia City Nugget.

The Virginia City Nugget is published by the Virginia City Preservation Alliance to communicate with Members about VCPA activities and events, as well as to provide Members with historical information on relevant topics involving Virginia City, Alder Gulch and the western mining frontier.

Mission Statement

The principal purpose of the Virginia City Preservation Alliance is to preserve, restore and put on public display structures and artifacts relating to the history of the town of Virginia City, Montana; to tell the story of the western mining frontier; and to protect the integrity of the local community.

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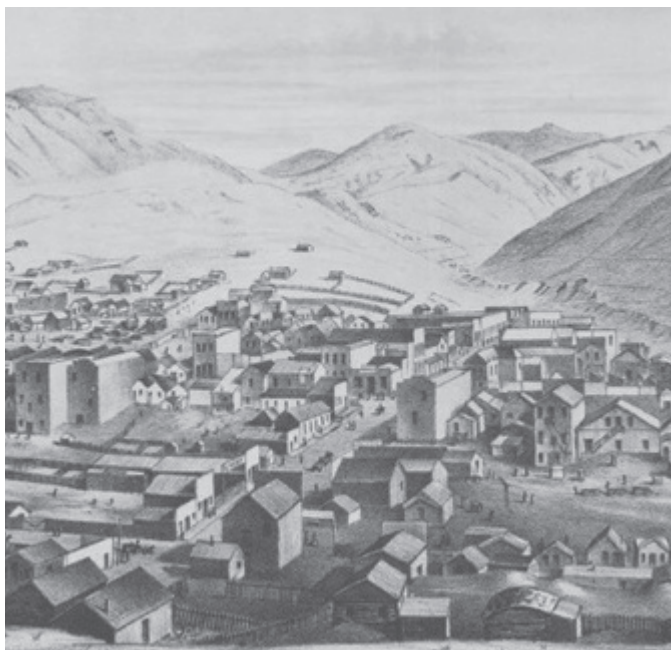
PARTNERSHIP CORNER

The Virginia City Preservation Alliance would like to regularly highlight local groups and foundations that are dedicated to preserving Montana's rich history. Discover the inspiring work they're doing to protect and promote our cultural heritage! This month we are featuring the Montana Historical Society's National Register Sign Program.

ALLEN AND MILLARD BANK

Virginia City National Historic Landmark District

COURTESY OF: MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Federal Reserve Bank of Montana identifies the Allen and Millard Bank, which opened here in 1864, as the first real bank in Montana Territory. While other businesses in the territory called themselves banks, most were actually express companies that exchanged gold for cash or offered storage space in their safes.

ALLEN AND MILLARD
CONT. ON PAGE 3

Allen and Millard, in fact, had the power to write drafts on a New York bank. The building itself, beautifully maintained, is one of Virginia City's oldest and best-preserved stone buildings. Although the original French doors and tall, narrow windows were replaced circa 1900, the front façade features the original ashlar stone, bracketed wooden cornice, and wooden window heads, allowing the building to retain its 1860s appearance. The bank operated as Hall and Bennett into the early 1900s and then became the Madison State Bank, which did business until 1930. ❧



*Hall and Bennett Bank, Virginia City View of five unidentified men standing on a boardwalk in front of a large stone building, one man is holding up a bicycle. Source: PAc 956-097, Montana Legacy Photograph Collection, Montana Historical Society Research Center Photograph Archives, Helena, MT.
Creator: Unknown photographer Date: ca. 1895*



*Allen and Millard Bank, streetview Bank built by Allen and Millard in Virginia City, Montana, later Hussey, Dahler and Co. Source: Catalog # 956-098, Montana Historical Society Research Center Photograph Archives, Helena, MT.
Creator: Photographer Taylor Date: no date*



*Allen & Millard Bank, Virginia City View looking southwest at building facade on Wallace St. Source: Courtesy of Montana Heritage Commission
Creator: Kate Steeley, Montana Heritage Commission Date: Oct 2019*

HIGHLIGHTED PROPERTY

Tootle, Leach & Company Warehouse

COURTESY OF: MONTANA HISTORY PORTAL, MONTANA STATE

A curious stone structure fronts Idaho Street with a collapsed roof with only remnants of its previous self-remaining. Located at 216 West Idaho on the south side of the street on privately owned property, it is set as a lone ghost of a commercial-type building with its character hard to discern. A quick dive into the Final Report of the Architectural, Historical and Archaeological Inventory of the Virginia City National Register Historic Landmark (Dames and Moore Report) written by Paul D. Friedman of Dames and Moore Engineering Company and dated August

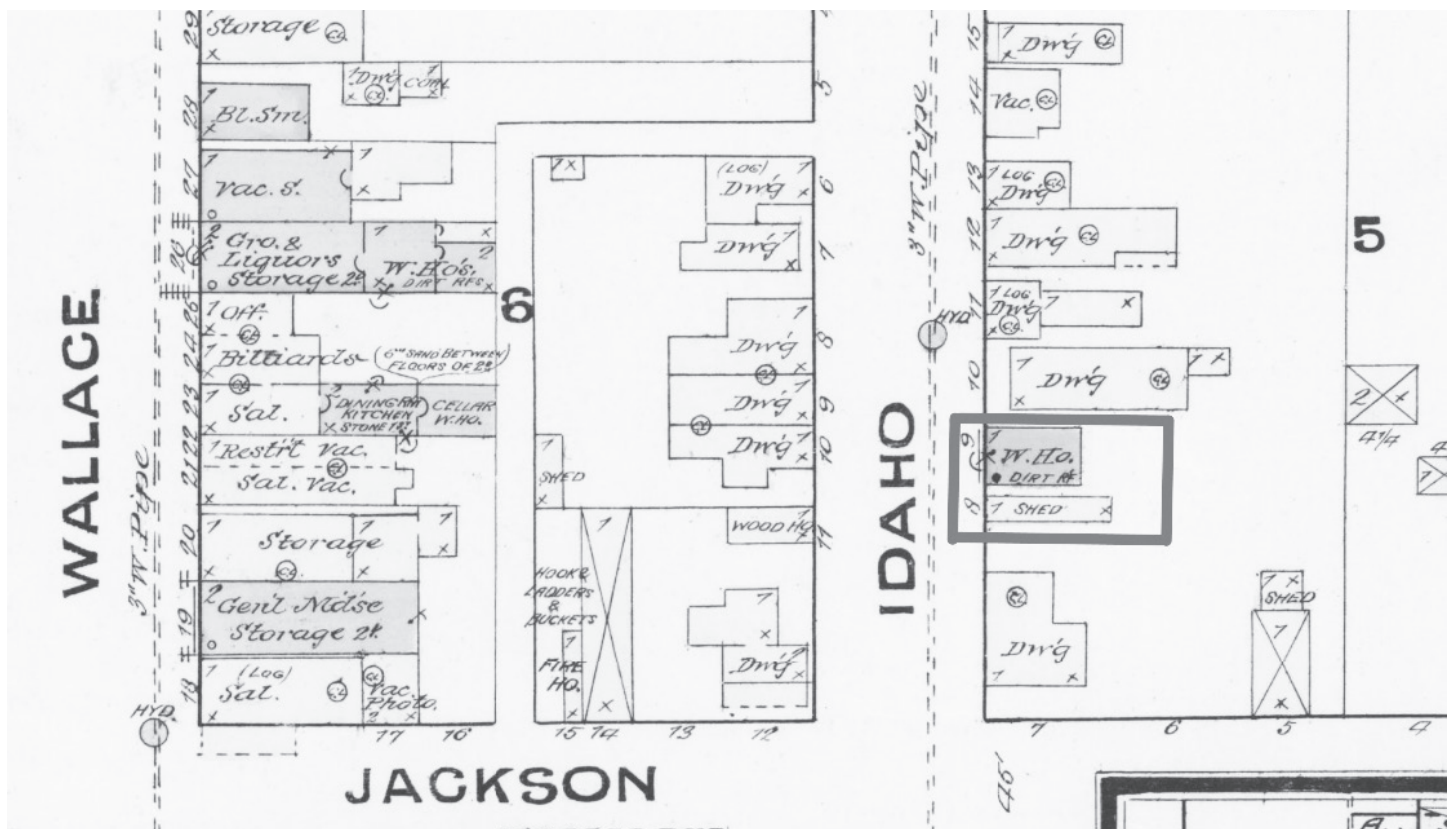
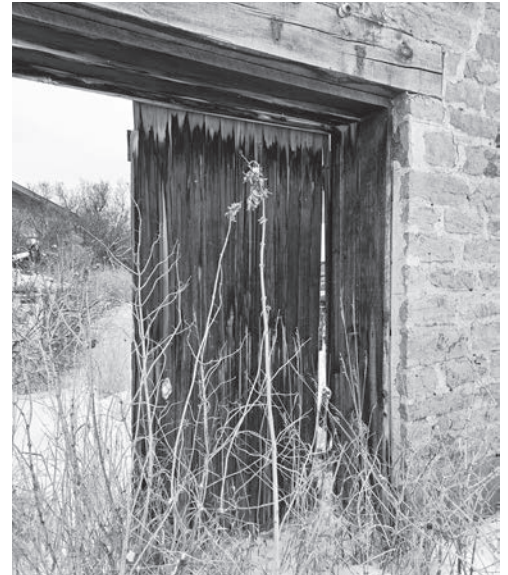
9, 1990, begins to shed light on its purpose. The original owner was Tootle, Leach and Company who, as stated in the document, "...was a mercantile firm established in Virginia City in 1863. Their main store was on the corner of Idaho and Jackson Streets adjacent to this warehouse." One of the first businesses to open in Virginia City, Tootle, Leach & Company, supplied some of the finest goods in town and the basics as well. Their time at the corner of Idaho and Jackson Streets was short lived however, moving

TOOTLE, LEACCH & COMPANY CONT. ON PAGE 5



their storefront to the more visible, newly constructed, Pfouts building (1865) storefront on Wallace Street by 1867. The 50' by 25' one-story stone warehouse building originally with dirt roof continued to serve as a warehouse and was noted as such on early Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1884) and subsequent maps later.

A large portion of the north facing façade and remnants of the east wall are all that remain of the building noted as contributing to the Virginia City National Historic Landmark District. The rectilinear cut stones, most likely cut from the local quarry up the hill to the northeast of town and located near the Bozeman Trail, were laid with linear coursing set in a wide buff colored mortar with a coarse aggregate. Stones with visible iron rusting are loosely laid comprising the top courses of remaining stone. A timber lintel spans a wide, wood-framed opening that appears to have once contained a pair of doors built of vertical wood planks. Fronting on Idaho Street, this large entrance would have easily provided a loading and unloading area giving easy access to stored mercantile inventory. Historically, Its stone construction and dirt roof provided a relatively fire-resistant construction type keeping its contents safe. Placer miner and stone mason Stephen J. Gainan constructed the building in 1864 for the mercantile company. Just a mere eight years later, Toole and Leach had dissolved their partnership and had moved on from Virginia City. ❧



THE VIRGINIA CITY *Preservation Alliance* 2025 SUMMER EVENTS



2025 LINDERMAN CABIN SERIES

Prominent places & prominent people

June 8, 2pm

"The Madison House Hotel and the Murder of William Ennis" by Gary Forney.

July 13, 2pm

"General Sheridan and His Namesake Town." by Bill Lev.

August 10, 2pm

"The History of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, its prominent members and clergy" by Amy Grice.

BOZEMAN TRAIL EVENT

All day presentations on this historic trail

Saturday, July 19 at 8:30 am - onward

Wallace Street, Virginia City



GRAND VICTORIAN BALL

A step back in time...

Saturday, August 16

Ball Dance Lessons 1 pm

Registration at 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Promenade at 6:30 pm. Dance at 7 - 10 pm.

Community Center, Virginia City

BREWERY TO BREWERY TOUR

A unique day of history, site-seeing and beer { purely optional! }

Sunday, September 7. Time 12 noon to 5 pm.

Check our website and/or Facebook for updates!



VIRGINIACITYPRESERVATIONALLIANCE.COM



If someone can identify this item, we will publish in the next issue of the Nugget. The first to identify the item correctly will receive a copy of the VCPA publication "Nuggets in Time".

Do you know what is in this picture?

A member of the VCPA found it at her home (the Bob Gohn house) in V.C. and is hoping one of our readers can identify it. If you know or want to take a guess, please send your answer (or guess) to vcpamt@gmail.com!



Current Board Members

Pat Jacobs - President
Gary Forney - Vice President
Chris Leonard - Treasurer
Bill Lev - Secretary
Mary Stassi
Marge Antolik

Ashley Polk-Sutherlin
Hannah Brook
Becky DiGiovanna

ADVISORY BOARD
Bob Bayley
Barbi & Tom Donnelley
Mark Weber
Lyman Bennett



Recipe Corner



SUBMITTED BY MARY STASSI

AUNT BETTY'S GREEK RED RICE RECIPE

Ingredients

1 POUND GROUND BEEF

1/4 POUND BUTTER

ONE MEDIUM ONION

1 CAN TOMATO PASTE

2 TABLESPOONS CINNAMON

1/2 TEASPOON SALT

1/2 TEASPOON PEPPER

2 CUPS WATER

2-3 CUPS WHITE RICE

Instructions

Brown butter and onion.

Add meat and brown.

Add can of tomato paste, salt, pepper and cinnamon.

Mix in 1 cup of water.

Cook awhile...

Next, add 2-3 cups of rice.

Cook awhile until some of the water is absorbed by the rice.

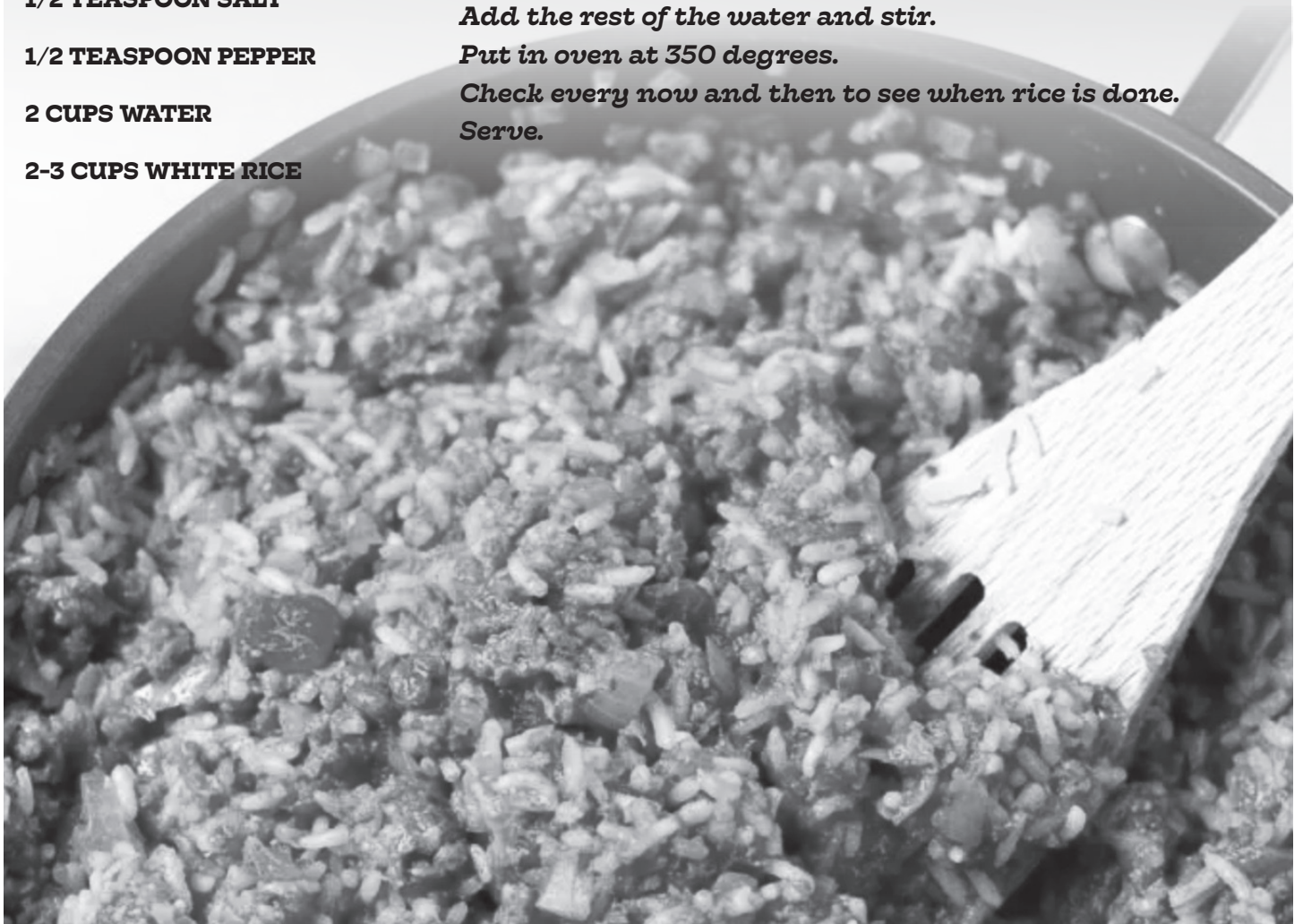
Put in a baking pan.

Add the rest of the water and stir.

Put in oven at 350 degrees.

Check every now and then to see when rice is done.

Serve.





ECHOES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Thanks to our friends at The
Madisonian, we have been given
permission to run old clippings
from their archives!

We will run advertisements,
article clips, cartoons and more!

This Bob's Theatres ad ran in the
November 4, 1938 issue of
The Madisonian.

Stay tuned for the next
installment!

BOB'S THEATRES

Bob's Theatres

15c and 35c

TWO SHOWS EACH WEEK

IN ENNIS, TWIN BRIDGES AND VIRGINIA CITY

Ennis, Sat., 8:15 p. m.
Twin Bridges, Sun., 8:00 p. m.
Virginia City, Mon., 8:15 p. m.

Ennis, Tues., 8 p. m.
Twin Bridges, Wed., 8 p. m.
Virginia City, Next Fri., 8 p. m.

Martha Raye
and
Bob Hope
in
**GIVE ME
a SAILOR**
with
BETTY GRABLE
JACK WHITING
J. C. NUGENT

The Fleet's in and
Martha's Out . . .
to Catch a Mate
Heaven Help
the Poor Sailors!

Also News
and
"Learn Polikeness" and
"Win, Place or Show"

LAFF-TIME HIT
of a LIFE-TIME

**SWING
YOUR
LADY**
with
WARNER BROS.
HUMPHREY BOGART
FRANK McHUGH
LOUISE FAZENDA
NAT PENDLETON
PENNY SINGLETON
ALLEN JENKINS
and
The Weaver Bros. and Elviry

Newsreel and Three Shorts

VIRGINIA CITY TONITE
ALCATRAZ ISLAND

FOLLOWING WEEK'S SHOWS
Sat., Sun., Mon.—"Gold Diggers in Paris"
Tues., Wed., Fri.—"Rhythm of the Saddle" and "Arson Racket Squad"

Prices 15c and 35c

Annual Meeting RECAP

SUBMITTED BY PAT JACOBS

The Annual Meeting of the VCPA was held on November 17th, 2024 at the Elling House Arts and Humanities Center. The meeting was preceded by a reception with light refreshments for all attendees. President Pat Jacobs welcomed guests and briefly shared the state of the organization recognizing the board of directors for their commitment to the organization's mission. In keeping with its annual preservation awards tradition, Pat presented the President's Award to Kate and Donny Steely for their many years of service to the Montana Heritage Commission and their dedication to the preservation of the Virginia City community and its valuable historic resources.

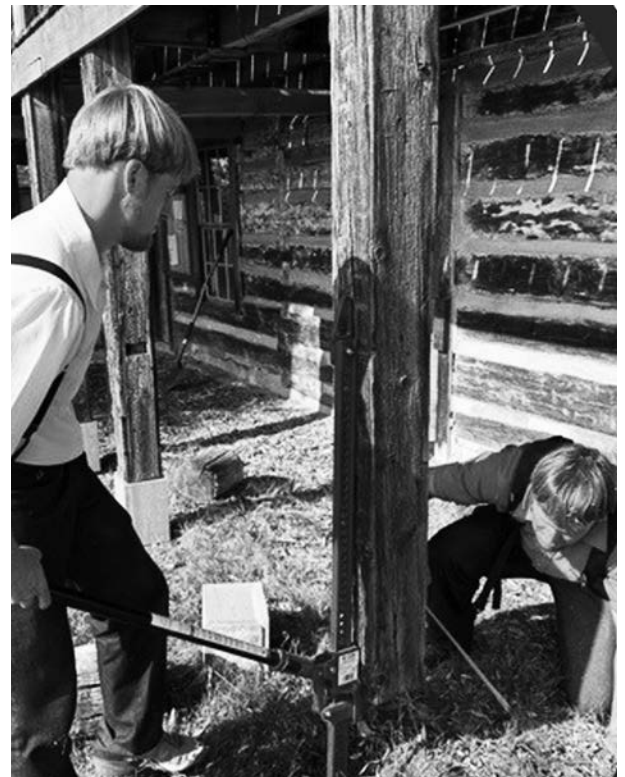
Nominated to the board for re-election were Marjorie Antolik, Gary Forney, Chris Leonard, and Mary Stassi. New board nominee Becky DiGiovanna agreed to serve again on the board after many years of previous service. Through a unanimous vote, the VCPA welcomed the newly elected members. Treasurer Chris Leonard next shared the Treasurer's report which was followed by a slide presentation of some of the 2024 highlights including the success of our summer events and a recap of the property improvements accomplished over the year. The culmination of the day was a fascinating presentation by Jim Jarvis discussing one aspect of his forthcoming book titled, "100 Years of Keeping Time", scheduled to be released in March. The title of the program was, "Virginia City, Montana and the U.S. National Park Service" where Jim shared the long commitment of the National Park Service to the preservation of Virginia City. The VCPA was one of the financial sponsors of Jim's work. Look for more information on his book in this issue.



*The Steeley Family.
Credit: Pat Jacobs*



*The Gilbert Brewery during Brewery to Brewery Event in September, 2024.
Credit: Pat Jacobs*



*Summer maintenance at Robber's Roost.
Credit: Pat Jacobs*

“To preserve, restore and display structures and artifacts related to the history of Virginia City, to tell the story of the western mining frontier, and to protect the local community.”

Join us in preserving the history of Virginia City! The Virginia City Preservation Association (VCPA) is dedicated to safeguarding our community's historic buildings and captivating stories. Our goal is to restore and showcase the artifacts that narrate the western mining frontier while protecting our local heritage.

As a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we invite you to become a member. Enjoy our quarterly journal, the Virginia City Nugget, featuring association updates and intriguing historical tales. Membership requires an annual contribution at any gift level, with dues due by January 30 each year.



Make checks payable to VCPA

OR



Renew your membership online at:

<https://www.virginiacitypreservationalliance.com/join>

To join, complete the form below (or go online!) and send it with your tax-deductible contribution to:

Virginia City Preservation Alliance

P.O. Box 55

Virginia City, MT 59755

Together, let's celebrate and protect the legacy of Virginia City!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Email Address: _____

Phone: _____

How would you like to receive your copy of The Nugget?:

- ☐ Hard copy via US Postal Service
- ☐ Email only
- ☐ Email and hard copy

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- ☐ Individual: \$20.00
- ☐ Family: \$30.00
- ☐ Supporting: \$50.00
- ☐ Contributing: \$100.00
- ☐ Associate: \$250.00
- ☐ Sustaining: \$500.00
- ☐ Patron: \$1000.00
- ☐ Charlie & Sue Bovey Life-Time: \$5000.00

Thank You!



Virginia City Preservation Alliance
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