

# The Happenings

St. Joseph Museum  
Pony Express Museum

Volume 18

1991

Number 2

*Dan Matlack*



## MIDDLE EASTERN TERMINUS OF THE PONY EXPRESS

This Pony Express station was constructed by members of the 139th Tactical Airlift Group stationed in Saudi Arabia.

# From the Director

One year ago last January, Mary Helen Burrowes was elected to the Corporate Board of Trustees of the St. Joseph Museum. She was subsequently interviewed for an article in *The Happenings* in which she was introduced to the museums' membership. During that interview, it was discovered that in her "spare time" since retirement, Mary Helen had been serving as proofreader for a written history of her church.



For many years before her retirement, Mary Helen had been a journalist with the St. Joseph News Press/Gazette. We immediately approached her about proofreading future editions of *The Happenings*. For many years June Swift and Marilyn Taylor had been performing that editorial chore. However both of them had taken on additional tasks leaving them less time for proofreading.

We approached Mary Helen without knowing how much she wanted to get involved, but she was very gracious and agreed to give it a try. Now, some three or four issues later, she has become an old hand in dealing with our style of writing. Her professional skills, from many years of experience, and her sensitivity to each author combine to make her a very valuable asset to the production of this publication. In addition, Mary Helen is a delight to work with. She is neither intimidated nor demanding. When she returns with the corrections there is always a lively and fun discussion regarding her suggestions. In one instance, Mary Helen was concerned about a word that I had used in an article. I used the word, "curate," as a verb, and Mary Helen (and Webster) said it is a

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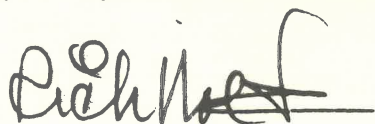
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Mike Fisher.....Archaeological Research Associate  
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Mike Weichman.....Archaeological Research Advisor

noun. However, within the museum profession curate is frequently used as a verb, i.e., the responsibilities of a curator are to "curate," or care for, the collections. When I used curate as a verb, Mary Helen challenged me, and as we talked about it, it became obvious that she was correct. I should not use the word as a verb without an explanation.

In that particular article, we changed and restructured the sentence using different words. I promised not to employ curate as a verb without describing its museological use. This seems like a convenient opportunity for the explanation. Unfortunately, I now have to explain that even if Webster does not include the word, "museological," it is commonly used within the museological community!

Mary Helen's goal is to assist us in communicating with our audience. She frequently helps to clarify a message. Too often when a professional is writing, they take for granted that the audience knows more about the subject than they actually do. Because Mary Helen is relatively new to the museum profession, she can look at the articles to insure that they communicate to the lay person. Mary Helen's professional editorial skills are greatly appreciated. No less appreciated are her bright smile and always present sense of humor. Thank you very much, Mary Helen.

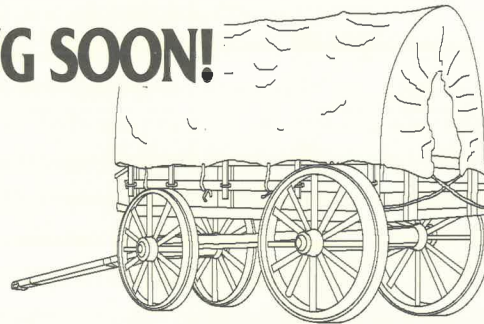


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## SPECIAL TRAVEL GUIDE SUPPLEMENT

### COMING SOON!



This issue of *The Happenings* is late because it was to be a special edition with the second and final part of the travel guide that follows the St. Joe Road of the Oregon/California Trail to its junction with the Independence Road. The first part of the travel guide was published in *The Happenings* in the spring of 1990. As Jackie Lewin and Marilyn Taylor, who are writing the travel guide, began to near completion of the narrative for the second part, it became apparent that the guide had grown beyond a size that could be accommodated by the museum's newsletter. The decision was made to put together a smaller *Happenings* that would contain the usual newsletter articles.

The second part of the travel guide will be added to the first part, and they will be published as one volume. The combined narratives, numerous photographs and comprehensive maps will be an interesting and informative addition to the information about an important era in St. Joseph's history. It is anticipated that the travel guide will be completed by the middle of the summer. Upon its completion, copies will be mailed to museum members. Additional copies will be available for purchase in the museums' book and gift shop.

# NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM RENOVATION BEGINS

In recent issues of *The Happenings* you have read a lot about the Pony Express Museum. You have read about the archaeological dig, the new plan of expansion and the new board. However, we would like to take this opportunity to let you know that a great deal is being accomplished at the St. Joseph Museum. Work at the St. Joseph Museum continues as the new Pony Express project develops.

You might remember an article that appeared in the newsletter previously. That story told about the deteriorated condition and many of the exhibits on third floor and our plans for a renovation of these exhibits. We also told about the detailed story line that had been worked out and the hours of research that had gone into it.

Now, we are happy to tell you that the planning phase is drawing to an end, and the physical aspects of the project have commenced! The first exhibit space to be worked on will be the room that used to house the coyote diorama. The old diorama has been dismantled and the room is prepared for the installation of new exhibits that will depict and interpret the upland forest habitat.

The emphasis of the new story line is to show the diversity of habitats and wildlife in northwest Missouri, and also to encourage wise conservation practices to ensure the safety of these. Exhibit areas

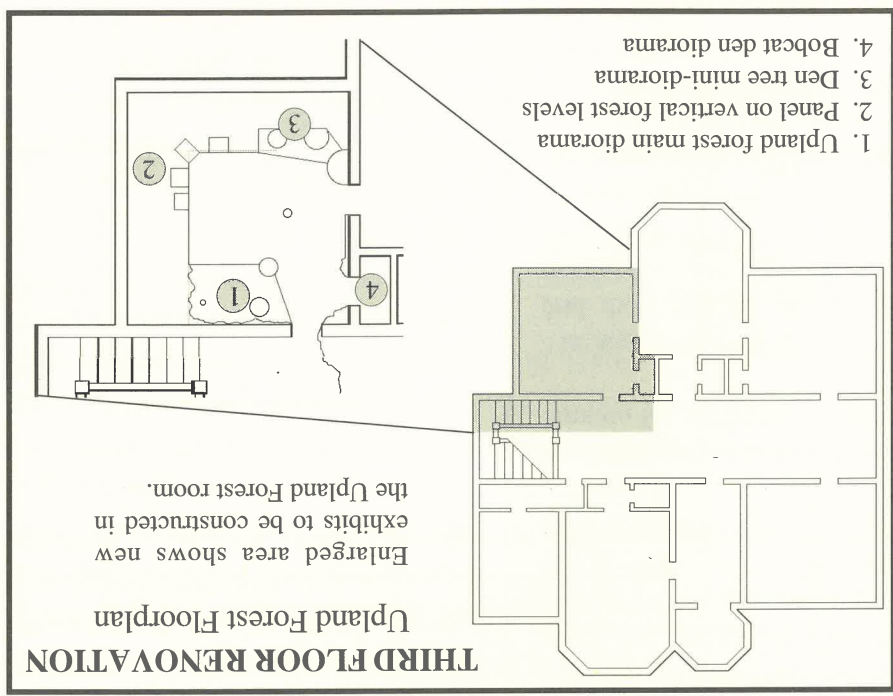
will be divided into 11 main habitats: 1) upland forest; 2) pasture grassland; 3) crop sod; 4) edges; 5) ponds; 6) small rivers and streams; 7) loess bluffs; 8) Missouri River; 9) floodplain forest; 10) marsh; 11) urban.

The new exhibit plans include a main diorama in each of these areas that shows an example of that particular habitat. Incorporated with the main diorama will be a series of smaller interpretive exhibits that explain the different aspects of the habitat. To accomplish these goals all of the exhibits on third floor will be dismantled with the exception of the Squaw Creek diorama. It is our feeling that this diorama is in good condition and only needs some touching up.

Third floor will remain open during this renovation. We will carry this

plan out one room at a time in such a manner that visitors will be able to view the progress. They can also see a model of the room in its completed state. These scale models serve a dual purpose. Not only do they allow the visitor to see what the completed room will look like, they allow us to set the exhibits in place. This helps establish a flow plan and work out any physical problems that may occur while installing the exhibit. Due to the meticulous work it takes to recreate these habitats, we are scheduling work on only the first two rooms during the coming year. This encompasses the pasture grassland/crop sod habitat as well as the previously mentioned upland forest. Our plan at this point is to begin exhibit construction within the next month.

*Robbie Sipes, Curator of Exhibits*





# MEET THE STAFF

We want to take the opportunity to introduce to you two of our newest staff members, Sarah Elder and Chris Fisher. Sarah Elder recently accepted a full-time position

as research assistant. She has worked part-time for the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums, first as a receptionist and then as a staff assistant, since July 1990. Sarah will be continuing her work with Bonnie in collections and documents, as well as assisting Jackie in researching the Pony Express and working with Mary in the photo lab. Prior to working on staff, Sarah volunteered at the museums. Several years ago she worked with the crafts classes for children, ages 5 through 10, and was always ready to lend a helping hand at many Prairie View Festivals.

After graduating in 1986 from Central High School, Sarah attended Northwest Missouri State University (NWMSU) and obtained a B.A. in History, graduating in 1990. Her favorite time periods include the Civil War and the American West (1880s). Sarah is known as a hard worker throughout the community. She was a volunteer with the St. Joseph Safety Council's "Safety Town" program for ten years and worked four summers for the St. Joseph School District while attending NWMSU.

Working at the museums enables Sarah to do something she "loves." "I love history," she said. "It's fascinating. I could be happy sitting in a room full of dusty books doing research, and working at the gift shops I get to meet so many interesting people, not only from other states but countries. I get to ask them how they heard about St. Joseph!" A true fan of western history, Sarah's favorite shows include "Young Riders" and "Guns of Paradise." When Sarah is not hard at work you can probably find her reading a book, taking a walk, swimming or spending

time with friends (i.e. partying). Sarah's avid interest in history, her ability to get along well with others, her positive attitude and willingness to pitch in make her a real asset to the St. Joseph/Pony Express Museum staff.

Chris Fisher joined the St. Joseph Museum staff in October, 1990, as maintenance engineer. Although new to the staff, Chris is not new to the museum as he virtually grew up

coming to the St. Joseph Museum. His love of old buildings, especially the Museum, comes through in the attention he gives to his work. A 1972 graduate of LeBlond High School, Chris is getting close to completing his first semester at Missouri Western State College. In his spare time Chris enjoys birding, canoeing, camping and almost any outdoor activity.



David Mead

Chris enjoys doing repair work, and as he looked around the St. Joseph Museum, he saw there were plenty of ongoing projects to challenge him. His primary focus has been cleaning and upgrading the facilities and the grounds of the museum. One project he has tackled has been the refurbishing of the beautiful handrails throughout the interior of the museum.

Chris enjoys the flexibility of his new job and the challenges of working in a historic building and the museum. Always ready to lend a helping hand, Chris offers many skills to help keep the museum running. His friendly personality and positive attitude make him a valuable addition to the staff.

*Reva Rocha, Public Relations Assistant*

# PONY EXPRESS STATION EAST

A new station has been added to the Pony Express Route - in Saudi Arabia.

As many of you may have noticed in a recent edition of the *St. Joseph News-Press/Gazette*, a new station has been added to the Pony Express Route, east of St. Joseph—WAY east to be exact. Members of the 139th Tactical Airlift Group (TAG) from Rosecrans Air National Guard Base stationed in Saudi Arabia constructed a Pony Express station that looks remarkably like the Pony Express Museum.

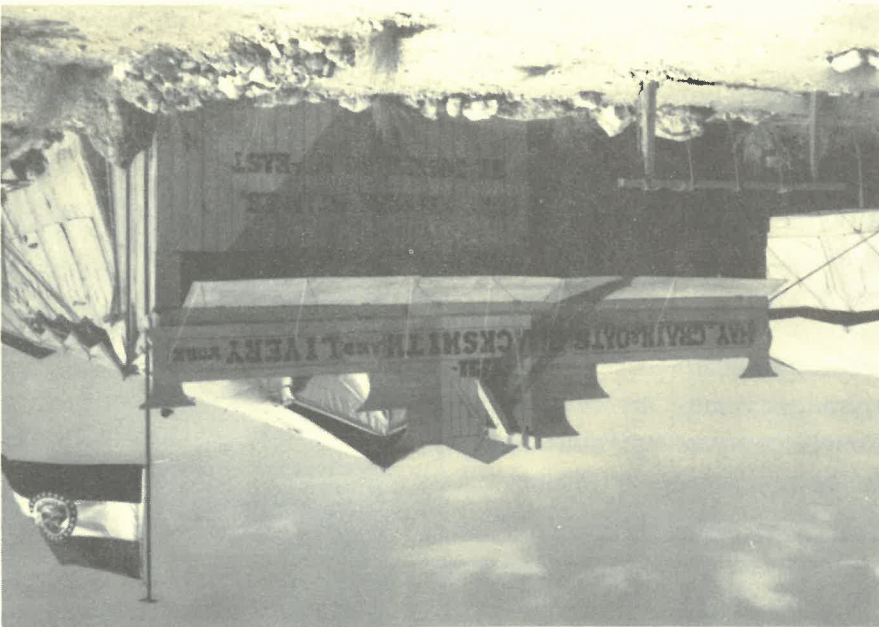
We received a letter and photographs from Staff Sergeant Dan Matlack explaining their reasons for building the station. He said they needed a "hometown identity" in their "new home in the dunes, which looks like a gold rush town." He also said that their stable had "become a favorite watering hole for those who enjoy coffee and catching up on CNN news." SSGT Matlack expressed the hope that we didn't mind that the men living in the stable were designated "Honorary Express Riders." Plus, the men have promised to take the "Rider's

Oath" as soon as they get home. (Just for the record - we didn't mind at all).

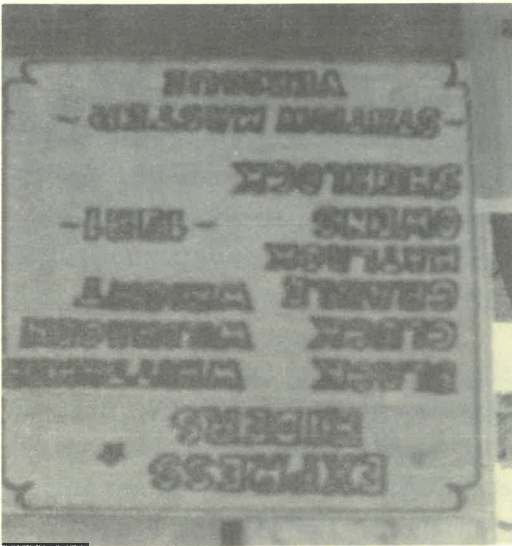
When we received the letter, it was suggested by several members of the staff that we send something to these men to show our appreciation for choosing the Pony Express Museum to represent their hometown and, more importantly, for their efforts in the Persian Gulf. We decided to send T-Shirts, with a depiction of the "First Ride" on them, parchment posters of the "Rider's Oath" for each "Rider" listed in the letter, and postcards showing the Pony Express Trail, Pony Express Museum and the advertisement for "young, skinny, wiry fellows."

We greatly appreciated the letter and photographs from SSGT Matlack and the other members of

MIDDLE EASTERN TERMINUS OF THE PONY EXPRESS-This is the new home that members of the 139th TAG constructed for themselves in Saudi Arabia.



Dan Matlack



Dan Matlack

"HONORARY EXPRESS RIDERS"-Merlin Black, Robert Cluck, Glenn Grable, Dan Matlack, Noel Wildhagen, Jim Wright and Station Master Bernard Versue.

the 139th TAG stationed in Saudi Arabia. We are proud of them and all the other St. Joseph servicemen and women serving overseas in support of Operation Desert Storm.

Sarah Elder, Research Assistant

## GOOD NEIGHBORS

### **PENN group promotes tourism**

Mayor Glenda Kelly and City Councilman John Shea attended the March 15 meeting of the Pony Express Neighborhood Network (PENN) held at the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, 12th and Penn Streets.

Mayor Kelly spoke to the group of twenty-five PENN members about the St. Joseph 2000 commission. The 2000 Commission was created to "articulate a vision, set goals and develop a business plan, moving the city boldly toward the next century." Under the direction of the Commission Steering Committee, chaired by Mayor Kelly, are eight task forces.

Councilman John Shea, a PENN member, serves as Chairman of the Tourism Task Force. Mayor Kelly noted that PENN, because of its relationship to the Pony Express Museum, Patee House Museum and Patee Park, is very involved with the tourism issue. Donna Cagg stated that the neighborhood is the focal point for visitors to St. Joseph.

A business meeting followed the mayor's presentation. Discussion centered on Patee Park improvement and beautification plans. The group voted to plant flowers in the park for the enjoyment of visitors this summer.

*Heidi Hornaday, Development*

### **Museum Hill Neighborhood Association**

The February and March meetings of the Neighborhood Association were held at Barbosa's Restaurant.

The membership drive/contest is now completed with Tom Rinderknecht's team the winners. Rudy Clark's losing team must serve the winning team a steak dinner at a date that will be decided later. Sixteen new members were recruited by the group during the contest.

A five to six-foot hawthorne tree will be purchased and placed in Smith Park in memory of Ralph Lawnick, a Museum Hill resident until his recent death. Mr. Lawnick had urged that a hawthorne tree should be in the park since it is the state tree.

The nominating committee reported the following nominations:

President—Jan Bumgardner  
Vice-president—Cole Woodbury  
Secretary—Martha Clark  
Treasurer—Ginny Rinderknecht  
Director—Jessie Stone

Further nominations from the floor may be necessary if more board vacancies occur. Dues must be paid in order to vote in the upcoming election in April.

*Bonnie Watkins, Curator of Collections*

### **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS**

**February 25** - Jackie Lewin presented a program to 40 members of the St. Joseph Archaeology Society at the Bank of St. Joseph. The topic was the St. Joe Road across Kansas, a major emigrant trail during the mid-1800s.

**March 5** - Denny's was the setting for a program on St. Joseph History given by Jackie Lewin. There were 20 members of the Lioness Club present.

**March 18, 19 & 20** - Marilyn Taylor gave a program on Native Americans to 100 students in the Rainbow Gifted Program. The students were in grades three, four and five in St. Joseph public schools. The program was held at Skaith Elementary School.

**April 3** - Jackie Lewin gave a presentation on the beginning of the Pony Express, April 3, 1860. The presentation was held at the Francis Street Methodist Church with 25 members of the Shepherd's Center of St. Joseph in attendance.

*Melissa O'Connell, Secretary*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 25** - MEAS will sponsor a Riverfront Ramble.

**May 27** - The St. Joseph Archaeological Society will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Bank of St. Joseph, Woodbine and Faraon.

**June 15 & 16** - *Tentative dates* for a prairie workshop and field trip to be co-sponsored by Missouri Western State College and the St. Joseph Museum. The focus of the workshop will be various aspects of the natural history of northwest Missouri prairies. Following the workshop will be a field trip to nearby prairie areas to identify native flora and fauna. Details for this event are still being worked out at date of this publication. Watch for further notice or contact David Mead at the St. Joseph Museum or Dr. Rushin at Missouri Western State College.

**June 24** - The St. Joseph Archaeological Society will meet at 7:30 p.m. at the Bank of St. Joseph, Woodbine and Faraon.

**June 29** - MEAS will sponsor a Bluebird Trail Tour.

**July 16 - 17** - Overnight field trip to Kansas City which includes a tour of the Federal Reserve Bank, the historic Wornell House, the Candy Factory, the play "American Excess" at Tiffany's Attic, the Board of Trade and an afternoon of fun at the Woodlands. The group will be staying at the Embassy Suites which includes evening cocktails and a buffet breakfast. Tentative plans also include the Liberty Memorial or the City Market and Grandma's Cupboard and Grandpa's Saloon.

*Reva Rocha, Public Relations Assistant*

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## POWELL GARDENS FIELD TRIP

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The first field trip of the 1991 season occurred Thursday, May 9. The group was first given a guided tour of Powell Gardens, a natural resource center on an 807-acre tract of land thirty miles east of Kansas City. The gardens, which were launched in 1984 with a generous gift from the Powell Family Foundation, are devoted to promoting the art and science of gardening and the appreciation and

conservation of nature. Many tulips, pansies, azalias, irises and other annual flowers were in full bloom for our visit.

Lunch was at V's Restaurante in Independence which specializes in excellent Italian cuisine. The group was able to enjoy a selection of entrees in addition to a delicious dessert.

The next stop was at the Vaile Mansion, also located in Independence. This ornate thirty-room home, built in 1881, is said to be one of the best examples of Victorian architecture in the nation. It was built by Harvey M. Vaile who was a local entrepreneur and U.S. mail contractor. Vaile lived in the mansion until his death

*Bonnie Watkins, Curator of Collections*

# "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler"

## Museum Adventures

The St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums are visited by a large number of school groups each year. It is a common sight to see children exploring the museum on any given afternoon. However, once in a while something special happens, as it did this past February. We received a request for a different kind of a tour from Ms. Cathy Gann's fifth grade class at Co-Cathedral School. They had just finished reading a book about a sister and brother who became tired of the chores they had to do at home and decided to run away and live in a museum. As part of their book report, Ms. Gann wanted her students to see for themselves what it would be like to live in a museum.

The book, "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler," by E. L. Konigsburg tells the story of Claudia and Jamie Kincaid and their adventures while staying at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. In the book, the children stand up on the commode in the bathrooms so the guard will not see their feet as he closes the museum for the night. They must also be up and dressed before the staff of the museum arrives in the morning. They learn to cope with these and other problems as they explore living on their own in a big city. For the tour, the class wanted to see all the good hiding places in the St. Joseph Museum and learn as much as they could about the duties of the staff.

It was by far the most unusual tour I have ever given and one of the most enjoyable afternoons I have ever spent while working for the museums. First they looked over the public areas and decided exactly where a small person could go unnoticed. Then they investigated the kitchen and everything that can be stored there. Then we went to check out the director's office.

The next step seemed to be a look in the basement, so the class headed downstairs where the furnace room, photo laboratory, dark room and various storage rooms are located. The boys enjoyed a peek into the taxiidermy refrigerator. The girls were not as impressed. They poked their heads into the mice room where the food supply for the live reptile exhibit is kept.

To the surprise of the curators, we invaded the collections office and the exhibits office that occupy the basement, and I pointed out that a model of an exhibit is constructed before the actual exhibit is built. The small models on the shelves held the children's interest for several minutes, then it was off to the carriage house where documents are

When the tour was over, we said our goodbyes. Then later that afternoon I saw a boy now familiar face at the front door and one of the students from the class handed me an envelope with a lovely thank-you note and a copy of "From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler" for me to read.

In return, I would like to say thank you to Ms. Cathy Gann and Johnny Culbertson, Eric Willoughby, Joe Bernard, Nathan Bigelow, Andrea Ward, Lisa Schermehorn, Melissa Francis, Kylee Dillon, Mary McMurray, Brian Francis, Lucas Bockelman, Brandon Hatley, Jimmy Edwards and Angel Miller for the book and the fun. It is really good to see the museum through fresh eyes.

Kathy Reno, Membership/Gift Shop

This has been an exciting time for the staff of the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museum shops. The orders that were placed at the Kansas City Gift Show in January have begun to arrive, and unpacking the shipments has been a pleasure.

For the Pony Express Museum shop, we were fortunate to find two new Pony Express sculptures in pewter at the Kansas City show. The largest one is a 7 by 8-inch rider and horse on a black base. The other is the perfect size for use as a paperweight.

Also new this spring is a collection of wonderful handmade wooden horse bookends, shelves, clothing racks and stick horses from Papa Jake's Woodshop. The quality and workmanship of this new line must be seen to be appreciated. These items are great for adding the warmth of wood to a child's room.

By far the most exciting find of all has been a source for authentic Native American pottery, woven rugs and Kachina dolls. For the

past few years we have been unable to purchase the traditional style and quality we wanted and our inventory was down to only a few pieces. Fortunately, a customer who collects Native American pottery was buying one from the St. Joseph Museum store and gave us a suggestion. His information led us to an artists' representative who works directly with Native American artists to create a market for their work.

This was a wonderful opportunity for us to continue to carry the very best in Native American crafts. We were able to select over twelve new pieces for the pottery display and two new Kachina dolls. We will receive additional Kachinas and a few weavings in the near future. We will also have books available on Native American pottery skills for those who are interested in learning more about the various tribes. The pieces we now have cover a wide range from small bowls to a large, beautiful Hopi wedding vase.

Other arrivals in the St. Joseph

## NEW AND REINSTATED MEMBERS

The St. Joseph and Pony Express Museum staff and board of trustees would like to welcome **Dana C. Loyd, Kyle L. Carroll and John G. Hoff** as new members. We are very grateful for their interest in the museums and we appreciate their generous support.

Museum shop include jewelry, stained-glass kaleidoscopes, scented pottery candles and hand-painted animal letter openers and magnets. We also carry a new line of handmade marbled paper covered products made of the finest Italian marbled paper. We have pencils, lined notebooks and blank hardbound books with cards which explain the process of creating marbled paper.

One of the most popular additions this spring has been our new scented pottery candles from Our Secret, Limited. The pottery candles and saucers come in either terra cotta or white. The terra cotta has the look and feel of dark rich earth and the white pottery has the look and feel of white sand. They are filled with fabulous, unusual fragrances such as: "western wildflower," "pioneer passion," "country cedar," "Indian fry bread," "mountain meadow," "Indian apple," "hillside heather," "prairie pumpkin," "canyon cinnamon," "mountain berry," "breeze" and "desert sunset." The fragrances are distinctively different. Visitors frequently ask, "What smells so good in here?" The vibrantly colored candles are available at both the Pony Express and St. Joseph Museum shops.

If you have a chance this spring, give yourself a treat and stop in to see and smell what is new in the museum shops.

## COLLECTIONS

### Recent Donations

**Lester and Della Watkins** - Archaeological artifacts excavated from the Watkins' garden, which is a portion of the King Hill site, during two digs that occurred in 1989 and 1990.

**Clark and Nancy Hampton** - a book, *The George Catlin Book of American Indians*, with many illustrations of his work in this area.

**Bruce and Lillian Clark** - various *St. Joseph News-Press/Gazette* newspapers, covering several subjects, but mainly the draft in Buchanan County during World War II.

**Gage County Historical Society** - an advertising card for Lumberman's Supply Company, 21st & Olive Steets., St. Joseph, MO, circa 1960.

Since we have finished the cataloging of the document collection, we have been searching the other areas of the collections that are yet to be done to see which one we will work on next. A decision has been made to attack the photographic collections next because they most need the immediate attention. Work has already begun in the Pony Express subject area and we have now proceeded to the other sections which include: history, ethnography, birds and mammals and archaeology.

The photographic collections are more complicated to deal with than some of the other areas because it is necessary to cross-reference negatives and their prints efficiently. With the help of staff members, Sarah Elder and Mary Packard, and various volunteers, however, the cataloging of the photographs should go smoothly.

*Bonnie Watkins, Curator of Collections*

## JOIN THE ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM!

The St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Museum are cultural institutions established for the purpose of preserving our history. We strive to provide top quality interpretive exhibits, preserve our priceless collections and act as an educational resource for our community and beyond. Our goal is to keep abreast of current exhibit techniques, provide educational programs for youth and continue our work in the areas of collection and research. To succeed, we need you. You can contribute through a donation of your time (**as a volunteer**), materially (**adding to our collections**), or your membership donation (**monetary contribution**.) Together, we make the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Museum institutions we can all be proud of. All monetary contributions are equally divided between the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Museum unless otherwise specified.

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

Members of the St. Joseph and Pony Express Museums have the benefits of receiving museum publications, free admission throughout the year, museum gift shop discounts and discounts on museum sponsored field trips. Members also have the opportunity to attend "Members Only" events such as exhibit openings, autograph sessions and tours of storage areas.



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### MEMBERSHIP FORM

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#### *I wish to make the following membership donation:*

|                                    |         |                                   |             |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000.00 | Patron  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 | Donor       |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> 250.00    | Sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> 25.00    | Sustaining  |

I wish to help by pledging to donate \_\_\_\_\_ hrs. per week.

I prefer \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week).

Please make your check payable to the St. Joseph Museum or Pony Express Museum and mail to:

ST. JOSEPH MUSEUM  
11th and Charles Streets  
St. Joseph, Missouri 64501

Please call me at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone #)  
at \_\_\_\_\_ (time of day).

I wish to help materially. I have a (Historic)(Ethnological)(Scientific) material contribution which I would like you to consider.

NOTE: If you have questions, please call the St. Joseph Museum at 232-8471 and ask for the Coordinator of Volunteers to make an appointment.