Here's Jackie!

There's a new friendly face at the front desk

See p. 4

Making a Splash

Dip your toes into the history of river recreation

See p.2

The Homesteader

Deschutes County Historical Society Newsletter—APRIL 2025

A NOVEL IDEA READ TOGETHER

READ // CREATE

April 5-May 10, 2025

We are excited to announce the opening of the 2025 Novel Idea: Read/Create exhibit featuring artwork inspired by this year's titles: *Murder by Degrees* by Ritu Mukerji, and the youth edition, *The Queen of Ocean Parkway* by Sarvenaz Tash.

Murder by Degrees is a thrillingly atmospheric tale of intrigue, featuring a brilliant female doctor who's ahead of her time. Set in Philadelphia, 1875, the debut novel by Ritu Mukerji, Dr. Lydia Weston is preparing for the start of a new term at Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, when the body of a young woman is fished out of the Schuylkill River. The death is ruled a suicide, but Lydia is suspicious. As the investigation unfolds, Lydia puts to use all her diagnostic skills and autopsy table acumen to pursue the killer.
Right: "Chapter One" art quilt by Martha Sanders.

The 2025 Novel Idea Youth Edition, ***The Queen of Ocean Parkway*** tells the story of eleven-year-old Roya, the superintendent's kid of a regal Brooklyn apartment building. An aspiring reporter, she knows just about everything about the building's residents. It's a good distraction from the problems in her own life. But when Katya Petrov, one of her favorite tenants, goes missing, it's up to Roya and a new friend to make their own headlines as she searches for Katya and attempts to break the Petrov curse once and for all.

Visitors are encouraged to show their library card for free museum admission while 2025 Novel Idea: Make/Create is open.

The Homesteader: Volume 51; No. 4. Published monthly by the Deschutes County Historical Society, 129 NW Idaho Avenue, Bend, Oregon 97703

A History of Recreation on the Deschutes River

By Glenn Voelz

From the beginning of Bend's history, the Deschutes River has been a vital economic resource as well as a place for leisure and recreation. However, during the last century, those uses often came into conflict as the river's waters were harnessed for irrigation, electrical power, and logging. For nearly eighty years, large sections of the Deschutes around Bend were closed to recreation as industrial users took priority and transformed the river's natural state. But in recent decades, efforts to reclaim sections of the river for recreation have made it an important part of the region's burgeoning tourism industry. In many respects, the river's rebirth as a place for recreation fulfills the vision of Bend's early leaders.

Early Recreation on the Deschutes

George and Dorothy Binney Putnam sitting next to their canoe on the Deschutes River. Courtesy of the DCHS.

Almost as soon as George Palmer Putnam arrived in Bend in 1909, he began promoting the Deschutes River as a recreational destination. The future publisher of *The Bulletin* and the town's third mayor was an avid fisherman. Putnam claimed that he came to Central Oregon "to do a bit of fishing...One thing led to another, and I became a Bend resident." His passion for the river soon became a professional preoccupation.

In 1909, Putman penned a full-page article in the *Oregonian* celebrating the wonders of the Deschutes, declaring it a "sportsman's paradise" that offered unparalleled opportunities for fishing and outdoor activities. Of the Northwest's rivers, Putnam considered the Deschutes "the richest of them all in scenery and pleasurable attractions." His "booster" work helped put the Deschutes on the map as a recreation destination soon after Bend's establishment as a city.

A "swan float" participating in Bend's first water pageant on Mirror Pond in July 1933. Photo by Leonard Peoples, courtesy of the DCHS.

Within a few years, the arrival of the railroad and automobiles brought the first wave of tourists to Central Oregon looking for adventure on the river. At the time, most recreational activities centered around fishing and camping. But even as early sportsmen discovered the Deschutes, sections of the river were already changing in ways that would limit access to recreation.

In 1910, the Bend Water, Light & Power Company dammed the river near Newport Avenue to provide the growing town with electricity. That was followed five years later by the dam at Colorado Street. Starting in 1916, the Shevlin-Hixon and Brooks-Scanlon lumber companies claimed much of Bend's riverfront for their new mills. For the next eighty years, logging operations closed the river to recreation from just above Drake Park upstream to Lava Island Falls.

With much of Bend's riverfront dominated by industrial use, Mirror Pond was one of the few spots open for recreation. During the 1920s, Bend residents used the area for boating, fishing, and swimming -- occasionally to the dismay of local authorities. In 1932, Bend's chief of police declared that Drake Park had turned into a "nudist colony" with shameless swimmers changing in the open. In response to citizen complaints, he vowed to arrest anyone "treating Drake Park as a Garden of Eden."

Fortunately, more wholesome fun could be had during wintertime when locals used Mirror Pond for ice skating as conditions allowed. During the bitter winter of 1932,

- Continued on page 3

Deschutes Historical Museum

129 NW Idaho Avenue
Bend, OR 97703
Open Tuesdays-Saturdays
10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
541.389.1813

www.deschuteshistory.org
info@deschuteshistory.org

Museum Staff:

Kelly Cannon-Miller, Executive Director
Vanessa Ivey, Museum Manager
Rebekah Averette, Collections Manager
Tracy Alexander, Membership Officer
Michelle Patrick, Visitor Services

●●●●●

2025 DCHS Board of Directors:

Jane Williamson, President
Karen Green, Vice President
Heidi Kennedy, Secretary/Treasurer
Adrian Bennett, Past President

Board Members:

Paul Claeyssens, Tony DeBone, Greg Fulton,
Eric King, Brad Lemmon, Julie Lowy,
Liz Rink, Glenn Voelz

●●●●●

Complete minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors are on file with the Museum office.

Continued from P. 2— History of Recreation on the Deschutes

adventurous residents cleared a mile-long path upstream from Newport Bridge for ice skating. Mirror Pond was also the site for community events and celebrations like the famous Bend Water Pageant, starting in July 1933.

While locals enjoyed such activities around Mirror Pond, by the end of the 1930s, industrial use was already harming water quality and limiting recreational opportunities. In 1940, Oregon's famed photographer and naturalist William Finley gave a pointed assessment of these tradeoffs in the pages of the *Oregon Journal*, writing that the Deschutes is "one of the finest fishing streams to be found anywhere in the world, notwithstanding dams, irrigation ditches, and destructive logging operations."

River Recreation in the Post-War Era

Because recreational access to the Deschutes was already limited after the war, it was the ski area at Mount Bachelor that started Central Oregon on the path to becoming an outdoor tourism destination in the late 1950s. Nevertheless, by the 1960s, the Upper Deschutes was known as one of the premier fly-fishing areas in the Pacific Northwest, attracting visitors from across the county.

Boys sailing near the Drake Park footbridge in 1966. Photo by Vince Genna, courtesy of the DCHS.

That reputation helped Portland land developer John Gray market a new resort community at Sunriver in the mid-1960s. The community's location on the river was an important selling point for investors. Gray realized that the Deschutes was such an asset for his recreation-based community that he refused to sell lots along the water, insisting that the river belonged to "everybody and should be left in its natural state."

Around the same time, recreation on the Lower Deschutes was entering a period of rapid growth. The area around Sherar's Bridge had long been a famous spot for fishing. But by the 1970s, it was also becoming a hotspot for kayaking and whitewater rafting, attracting tens of thousands of visitors each summer. In 1970, the lower hundred miles of the river were designated an Oregon Scenic Waterway, helping expand access for recreation. However, by the early 1980s, there were growing concerns that users were "loving the river to death" as the area became inundated with thousands of rafters each summer. By the early 1990s, the Lower Deschutes saw around a quarter of a million recreational visitors each summer, prompting the introduction of a permit system.

The rafting and kayaking scene was slower to take hold around Bend, given that much of the river was still inaccessible due to logging operations and dams. But in the late-1970s, an adventurous group of outdoor recreation pioneers began exploring opportunities to open sections of the river for paddle sports. Around that time, Bob Woodward, Gary Bonacker, and Dennis Oliphant began kayaking stretches of the Deschutes in and around Bend when only a handful of other paddlers were on the water. The crew honed their paddling skills in the waters around First Street rapids.

In 1979, Woodward brought in a truckload of twenty "slightly blemished" Hollowform kayaks from California, helping inspire interest in the sport. Soon, Woodward and a few other paddlers completed the first nonstop run of the Deschutes from the Riverhouse to Tumalo State Park. Around the same time, Brad Hunter, a local schoolteacher and paddler made one of the first kayak runs down the now-famous stretch of rapids known as the Big Eddy. That section of the Deschutes, between Aspen Camp and Lava Island, offered several stretches of Class III rapids and eventually became the epicenter of Bend's commercial rafting business in the late 1970s.

During that time, Kirk Sandburg was instrumental in opening the Upper Deschutes for commercial rafting. He moved to Bend in 1977 to work as the Director of Recreation at the Seventh Mountain Resort. Sandburg received the first commercial rafting permit to guide on the Big Eddy and sent some 4,000 rafters down the river that summer. The following year, Sandburg hired three other men, including Dennis Oliphant, who arrived as a recreational intern from the University of Oregon, to help him guide rafting tours through the Big Eddy. Sandburg eventually invited Oliphant and Randy Elder to partner with him in expanding the rafting outfitter company Sun Country Tours.

By the early 1980s, interest in rafting on the Deschutes exploded, with customers doubling almost every year. The Big Eddy had its Hollywood debut in 1984 in the widely panned adventure comedy *Up the Creek*. The movie was filmed on location in Bend, where Sandburg and his river guides provided technical assistance for the rafting sequences. A *New York Times* reviewer described the film as a "ridiculous ordeal," though "not in the way filmmakers intended."

Fortunately, the negative reviews didn't damage the river's rising reputation as a playground for watersports. By the mid-1980s, there were three commercial rafting operators in Bend and Sunriver, guiding over 20,000 visitors down the river each summer. On top of that, several thousand private rafters and kayakers were also using that stretch of the river.

Cleaning up the Deschutes

By the mid-1980s, as the logging industry faded, recreation and tourism were increasingly important to the region's economy. While Mount Bachelor remained a significant draw during winter, the Deschutes River

Bend whitewater pioneers Tom Brey (left) and Bob Woodward (right) guiding a group of Japanese visitors through the Big Eddy in 1982. Courtesy of Bob Woodward.

- Continued on page 6

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Jackie Souza

By Rebekah Averette

Get to know April's featured volunteer, Jackie Souza! Jackie has volunteered for a number of museum events, such as the Annual Chili Feed and Raffle and the Historical Haunts of Downtown Bend tours, but she only recently took on the role of front desk volunteer. What a delightful addition she is! Jackie warmly greets every visitor to the museum, immediately strikes up a rapport, and makes all guests feel welcome.

As the staff have gotten to know Jackie, we have discovered a caring, fastidious, and inquisitive people-person with a passion for history. She also goes out of her way to find ways to help around the museum, dusting, tidying, and generally making sure we put our best foot forward.

Jackie and her husband John recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and have two daughters and a son. Their eldest daughter lives in Allyn, WA with her husband and their children, Oliver, and Maddie. Jackie's son and younger daughter, their spouses, and youngest granddaughter, Dahlia, live in Bend.

Jackie worked in the retail sector, at Nordstrom, for years until she decided to go to work for herself in the restaurant business. She started a candy and ice cream shop in Bremerton, CA named Goodies (no relationship to our own Goody's in Bend), "after my grandmother who always made what she called 'goodies' for her grandchildren when she came to visit." The shop organically evolved into a restaurant when her customer-base began asking for lunch items and baked goods. Jackie owned the store for 10 years until she retired and sold it to a gentleman who was looking to invest money he won in the California lottery!

Jackie and John have been residents of Bend for fourteen years, choosing to retire here after falling in love with the area in the 1980s. John was a "newspaper man," an advertising director for the Don/Rey Media Group and The Seattle Times throughout his forty-year career. It was a career that moved their family many times, to places including Auburn and Seattle, WA, Alta Loma and San Juan Capistrano, CA, Twin Falls, Idaho, and as far as Carlise, PA.

Deschutes County has always held a special place in the heart of Jackie and her family. They began vacationing in the Bend and Sunriver in the 1980s and even then, Jackie and John knew that they would retire here and make Bend their forever home.

Jackie's innate interest in American history sparked her interest in becoming a museum volunteer and she has even spent time here researching the history of her own historic Bend home. Jackie's favorite activities include reading, attending concerts and films, gardening, and spending time with her family. She also has a fascination with anthropology and the origin of humans. Jackie says that meeting and hearing Jane Goodall speak in Seattle was one of the biggest highlights of her life. Goodall's book "In The Shadow of Man" continues to be one of her favorite books.

Jackie looks forward to meeting all friends and volunteers of the museum. She would love for readers to stop by and introduce themselves to her at the front desk on Wednesday mornings!

Remembering
Bob
"Woody"
"Reverend Lester Polyester"
"Art Deco"
"Lars Klister"
Woodward

Journalist. Photographer. Author. Skier. Mountain Biker. To be precise, a Mountain Bike Hall of Famer. Mayor. Legend.

Bob Woodward lived a life to be envied. He was all of the above things and more. It was the privilege of the Deschutes Historical Museum to work with Bob to capture not only Nordic skiing history, but the history of mountain biking in Central Oregon. "Klunkers and Stumpjumpers" was Bob's baby, and he served as the exhibit's guest curator. He was so incredibly proud of the exhibit. He wouldn't want us to focus on him alone, even in a eulogy, so we hope you all have an opportunity to visit the exhibit that he worked alongside us to create, and hear his story in his own words.

Museum staff also spent the last two years carefully working with Bob to gather and create a legacy archive of his work in the collections of the museum. Former intern Hayden Larsen was especially honored to play a role, "Working on the Bob Woodward collection opened my eyes to the vast history of mountain biking in Bend, Oregon. I was surprised to learn that Woodward also had some old bike race logs from Marin County California, where I grew up...Archiving the Woodward collection was a great experience because not only do I get to keep this history alive and maintain his legacy, but it was also fascinating working through the collection and looking at all of the amazing photos he took throughout his career."

We are honored to care for and keep the Bob Woodward Archive. There was only one Rev. Lester Polyester, Bend's Mountain Biking Mayor, Bob Woodward. Rest easy, Rev.

Congratulations to the 2025 Pioneer Queen, Andrea Hunnel-DuPree

The 2025 Annual Members' Luncheon saw nearly 80 friends join to celebrate local history, community, and the newest Pioneer Queen, Andrea Hunnell-DuPree.

Andrea shared her family's long history in Central Oregon, as well as many memories of being the daughter of a local school principal.

A challenging game of Deschutes County Jeopardy found the winning table to be populated by DHM volunteers and engaged members.

Thanks to the Bend Elks Lodge for a delicious meal, let's do it again in 2026!

Past Pioneer Queens Left to Right: Sharron Rosengarth, Ann Reynolds, Shirley Kilpatrick, Harriet Langmas

Tributes

Ralph C. Curtis

Jean Rotter

Continued from P. 3— History of Recreation on the Deschutes

was the main summertime attraction. However, sections of the river through town were still considered unsafe due to decades of logging and mill operations. The waters were so hazardous that swimming was banned for a period during the 1970s. However, by the 1980s, the situation was gradually changing.

In 1987, crews began demolishing the last remnants of the seventy-year-old Shevlin-Hixon mill on the west side of the river. In 1994, the Brooks-Scanlon mill on the east side of the river finally closed. That event marked the end of Bend's logging legacy but offered a unique opportunity to reinvent a section of the river that had been closed to recreation for nearly eighty years. Developer Bill Smith and a group of private investors bought the site and began revitalizing the area for commercial use. The project included cleaning up contaminated portions of the river and gradually making the waters safe for recreation.

A Revitalized River Attracts New Users and Tourism

The revitalized Old Mill area was officially opened to the public in 2000, but even before that time, locals were already starting to use that section of the river for recreation. A use study conducted in the mid-1980s found that the Deschutes was Bend's second most visited attraction after the downtown area, making it a bigger draw for tourism than skiing at Mount Bachelor. The same study found that the river was considered the region's most important natural asset for visitors and tourists alike.

An early Bend "floater" enjoying Mirror Pond in 1987 when recreation was still prohibited upstream from the Columbia Street Bridge. Courtesy of the DCHS.

As Bend's riverfront underwent a rebirth in the 1990s, it became the epicenter of the city's summertime recreation scene. This reflected a long-term effort by the city to improve accessibility dating back to the late 1950s when Bend Parks and Recreation director Vince Genna proposed building a river trail system starting at Tumalo State Park. The first part of the vision was realized in 1986, then known as the "River Strollway." Over time, it expanded into what is now the Deschutes River Trail, extending twelve miles along some of the most scenic stretches of the river.

Another symbolic moment was the change of venue for Bend's iconic multi-sport race, the Pole Pedal Paddle (PPP). When the race started in 1977, the PPP's paddle leg was held on Mirror Pond. In 2004, race organizers moved the paddle leg to its current location in the Old Mill District. Bob Woodward identified that move as pivotal in transforming people's views about recreating on the river. With the arrival of the PPP, the once-forbidden waters of the Old Mill district were officially open for recreation.

That new perspective ushered in a series of significant changes along Bend's riverfront. Soon, inner tube floaters began using that stretch of the river for leisurely passages on hot summer days. The popularity of floating has exploded since then. Today, upwards of a quarter of a million floaters use the river each summer, making it one of Bend's most popular recreational activities. In 2015, the Bend Park & Recreation District expanded the area's potential by opening the Whitewater Park, a recreational area designed for kayaking, surfing, tubing, and whitewater paddleboarding. One recent analysis estimated that out-of-town visitors using Bend's Whitewater Park have generated over $26 million in economic output for the region.

While recreation on the Deschutes has always been part of local history and culture, in recent decades it has also become a vital part of the region's tourism economy. Today, the Deschutes has finally fulfilled George Putnam's century-old vision as a "sportsman's paradise" drawing visitors from around the world to Central Oregon.

Map and Document of the Quarter

The next time you visit the Deschutes Historical Museum, carve out some time to explore the Map and Document of the Quarter. Volunteer researcher and board member Brad Lemmon encountered many interesting maps and documents while working with his TAG group of fourth graders last spring. "As I spent more and more time at the museum, I became aware of the amount of interesting things that are in the drawers and boxes. I wanted people to see more of those things than they get to see in the permanent or rotating exhibits."

The April-June map of the quarter shows existing and dismantled Deschutes River bridges that are in Deschutes County. It is a complement to two *Homesteader* articles – one from January 2025 about the Brownell, Besson, and Shevlin-Hixon South bridges, and the article that will appear in June 2025 that will focus on three more Deschutes river bridges. The April–June Document of the Quarter is a 1924 Brooks-Scanlon income tax return. Come see how much profit Brooks-Scanlon made and how much they paid in taxes ($1 in 1924 is worth $19 today).

Deschutes Historical Museum

Put some history in your future...

Heritage Walking Tours of Downtown Bend May 3– August 30, 2025

Join us for a walking tour of historical significance around Bend's historic downtown district and neighborhoods.

Saturdays May through August.

All tours leave from the museum at 10:30 a.m.

$15 per person, FREE to Museum Members

Space is limited, Registration is required.

Reflections of History: An Architectural Tour

Stroll through the Drake Park Neighborhood Historic District and take a step back in time when walking was the thing to do and neighborhoods were all about proximity. Participants will be introduced to the architectural styles represented in the neighborhood, hearing stories of a changing community. Tour begins and ends at the Deschutes Historical Museum.

May 10 & 24, June 14 & 28, July 12 & 26, August 16 & 30

Time: 10:30 a.m., approximately 90 minutes
Length: One mile through historic neighborhood. The sidewalks can be uneven.

The Early Days of Bend

Travel back to when the river ran wild, ponderosa pines were plentiful and Bend the Beautiful was a town in the making. Learn about early Bend through the stories of six "Bendites" and how these residents helped transform a young hamlet into a booming town.
Tour begins at the Deschutes Historical Museum and ends at Lone Crow Bungalow on Wall St.

May 3, 17, & 31, June 21, July 5 & 19, August 2 & 23

Time: 10:30 a.m., approximately 1 hour
Length: Less than a mile traveling through old neighborhoods and parkways. The ground can be uneven at times.

RESERVATION IS REQUIRED.

SIGN UP MUST BE BY 4:00 p.m. THE DAY BEFORE THE TOUR.

Call 541-389-1813 or email info@deschuteshistory.org or sign up online:

deschuteshistory.org

Tours are subject to change and cancellation.

We recommend the following: comfortable walking shoes, dress for the weather, bring water, and a hat.

Tours are led by knowledgeable museum volunteers

Deschutes Historical Museum 129 NW Idaho Ave, Bend Oregon 97703, Tel: 541-389-1813, email: info@deschuteshistory.org

April History Pub

Tuesday, April 29

Dr. Lillian Gilbreth: Mother of the Modern Kitchen

Presented by Therese Oneill, New York Times best-selling author

Doors open at 6:00 p.m., Presentation at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Lillian Gilbreth was the first woman elected to the National Academy of Engineering. Best known as the real-life mother of *Cheaper by the Dozen*, she invented industrial psychology, advanced the occupational opportunities for disabled workers after World War I, and designed the modern-day kitchen, among other groundbreaking achievements.

Therese Oneill, New York Times best-selling author of Unbecoming a Lady, *tells the true story of Dr. Gilbreth, one of history's unsung geniuses, with humor and unique insight.*

Reservations required, $5 per person

www.mcmenamins.com/events/

April Volunteer Meeting: Collections Work

Wednesday, April 9 from 1-2:00 p.m.

At our last meeting in February we dipped our toes into some of the collections work we are doing on the third floor. This month we'll take more of a deep dive.

At this month's volunteer meeting, we will review the DCHS Collections Policy and how it is helping us shape our artifact collection. We will review some of the upcoming upgrades to Past Perfect and what that means for collections volunteers. And finally, we will have an intro into how we are tackling an inventory of the third floor and reviewing some of the new protocols we are implementing to safeguard our valuable artifact collection.

This meeting is open to ALL volunteers, and those who are interested in becoming volunteers.

Mark Your Calendars

APRIL

5 **A NOVEL IDEA: READ/CREATE EXHIBIT OPENS**

9 **VOLUNTEER MEETING: Collections Work**
1:00 p.m. Deschutes Historical Museum

29 **HISTORY PUB: DR. LILLIAN GILBRETH: Mother of the Modern Kitchen**
Presented by Therese Oneill, *New York Times* bestselling author
McMenamins Old St. Francis; 700 NW Bond St., Bend
Father Luke Room, 7:00 p.m., doors open at 6:00 p.m.
Reservations required, $5 per person

Save the Date!

MAY IS NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH ***Stay tuned for programming details***

JUNE 7: OREGON ARCHAEOLOGY ROADSHOW: The Archaeology of Art and Craft