



Things are looking a little different...

AMY ALLEN

Dear Friends of the Laramie Plains Museum,

Yes, you are in fact holding a LPM newsletter in your hands. We know it's not quite what you are used to, but we hope you'll be as excited by the changes as we are.

Recently, the museum has started using a new platform called Canva, an online graphic design software free to non-profits. If you've been following us on social media, you might have noticed some of the beautiful posts Helen, our Facebook and Instagram guru, has been making—these have been products of Canva's easy to use and wonderful designs. For this newsletter, we're trying this new software, testing out the waters.

For many years, Executive Director Emerita Mary Mountain designed stunning newsletters on Microsoft Publisher. I had the pleasure of working with Mary since I started here at the museum in 2018 until her retirement last year. It is an honor both humbling and terrifying to step into her shoes to format and design the newsletter, especially in such a different direction. Although you will see some potentially startling changes in the coming pages, we hope we have kept the spirit of the old LPM newsletters in the best ways. We have retained the magazine style format pioneered by

Mary to show off the beauty of the mansion and grounds, as well as images of our favorite supporters and volunteers. As this is the Membership newsletter, you'll still find the familiar form and ballots, which you can send back to us in the envelope provided in the middle spread. And most importantly, we hope you feel the love—the love that we as a staff have for the museum, our wonderful volunteers, our donors and patrons and everyone who helps us ensure the lasting legacy of the lyinsons and Laramie itself.

We've decided to call this new iteration of the newsletter, "Mansion," as a sort of working title. On the back of the membership form, you'll find a poll about the future format of the newsletter, as well as a place to suggest a new title moving forward. We'd love your feedback and creative input. We as a staff all agreed that "Mansion," has a nice ring to it, but as you well know, dear friends, the LPM is so much more than just the mansion.

Even if you choose not to pursue a membership this year, feel free to reach out to us—by phone, by email, in-person—to let us know how you feel about the changes to the newsletter. As always, we greatly appreciate everything you do to support the Laramie Plains Museum's mission.

Year In Review

MATTHEW BLAKEMAN

Early February may be a time for Groundhogs to see their shadows in Pennsylvania, but here at Museum Park the squirrels and rabbits were just trying to keep warm. Our critters were too busy staying alive to worry about their shadows! It has been a snowy January in Laramie and the Park is beautiful-but frozen. Still, we are keeping busy as we prepare for the vital membership drive. By the time you receive this edition it will be Valentine's Day. We hope you love our new format. We are very proud of the design work done to make it a reality. Please let us know what you think. This is our time to look back on the last twelve months and celebrate all that has been achieved at the Laramie Plains Museum. Part of that accomplishment is navigating our way to new leadership while preserving what we hold most dear, the museum's core identity. That, dear friends, is you!

First, I would like to thank the team here at LPM for welcoming me into the museum community with such open arms and hearts. From the staff here at the museum to the talented Board of Directors and the extraordinarily diverse group of members and volunteers, I could not have felt more support. It has been quite an undertaking to follow in the footsteps of my esteemed predecessor, Mary Mountain. No list of thanks would be complete without a robust nod to Mary for her years of service and willingness to share a wealth of knowledge. She continues to serve in her role as E.D. Emerita as you will read in her thoughtful and heartfelt testimonial to Mr. Don Adams, I feel blessed that I had the chance to meet and share an afternoon and evening with Don and his wife, Valerie, this last August. Don's special contributions to the museum will last for many, many years to come and no person is better placed to tell that story than Mary. I thank her for helping us to do so with authenticity, respect, gratitude, and love. We here at the museum owe a collective debt of gratitude to Don and his terrific family.

The museum has had a very productive year. Returning with vigor and optimism from two years of pandemic challenges, we recorded solid attendance from all points of the compass. Our diverse rental enterprises produced vital financial support to the museum with many happy, poignant and productive events held at the AHSC and in Museum Park. The Mason Loft Condos continue to provide a first-class and historic stay to Laramie visitors, often in conjunction with an event being held here in the Park. We are uniquely positioned to offer an affordable and polished venue for folks who are saying goodbye to a loved one and celebrating a life well lived. All this in aid of our primary mission: telling Laramie stories and contributing to the preservation and advancement of Laramie's fascinating and diverse culture.

So now it is time for me to make my pitch. Please mark your calendars for the 26th of February and plan to attend our Annual General Membership Meeting. As we work through a period of leadership transition, it is a critical time for our beloved Laramie Plains Museum. We have big plans on the horizon and we need all the talent we can muster to make them a reality. Put simply, we need your help. It is a testament to the strength of this museum and our community that after 50 years we are still re-inventing ourselves day after day. That process, which keeps the museum alive and vital, would not be possible without members like you. Please come to the meeting and share the success. We have lots of exciting news to report and would love to hear your ideas and hopes for the future. Your membership dollars will help to achieve those ideas, so be sure and renew your membership today. As you will see on page 7, there are many ways to be a member and we welcome each and every option. Just as vital, however, is your input and action. As Don Adam's legacy attests, being a part of this amazing story is a gift that will last for many years. I can't think of a better way to honor Don or the legion of others who have done the work before us. The adventure continues as our journey progresses. I hope to see you on the 26th!

In 2022, we had visitors from 46 states, 1 territory, and 9 countries. We had 37 weddings, 4 memorial services, 43 other rentals, and 88 events held by our partner organizations. Join us for the

Laramie Plains Museum Association's

Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 26th at 2:00pm at the Alice Hardie Stevens Center

If you can't join us in-person, please email us at lpmdirectorelaramiemuseum.org for a zoom link.

Leader. Friend. Honored Donor.

MARY MOUNTAIN

We recently learned of the passing of our dear friend Donald Adams. Mary Mountain, Executive Director Emerita reflects on his legacy of generosity and care for the Laramie Plains Museum.

There are just people who come into our lives who are bright lights meant to be part of whom we are and all that we become. I have been fortunate enough to know many of these lights—people who have made special differences in my life's journey, in the choices I've made, who unknowingly urged me to grow in new ways. In my career with the Laramie Plains Museum, I certainly was graced with significant friends and donors who gave me the insight, cheering support and hands-on help just when it was needed. Don Adams was one of those lights.

Don was on the LPM Board when I was Dan Nelson's administrative assistant in the early 2000s. He often would stop into the office to find out what was going on at the museum. With Dan as our executive director and a full time Social Studies teacher at Laramie Junior High, curator Joney Wilmot and I were often the go-to for conversations with Don, Dale St. John, Alan Schenker and other important volunteers. Don was also a museum docent and a very knowledgeable investment advisor. In fact, Don's early donations to LPM were given with his first wife, Roberta, to help build the fledgling Laramie Plains Museum Endowment fund. \$10,000 was a substantial gift at that time and a vivid example of just how seriously the Adams wanted to invest in the LPM's future. As I assumed the role of executive director in early 2006, Don, who was instrumental in my assent to that position, took a different tact with his donations. He wanted to support physical projects that would build and fortify the actual museum complex.

Our beautiful 1892 Queen Anne mansion needed help with foundation care and the diversion of water seeping into the sandstone walls of the basement. In an early project, we coupled Don's



Don Adams. 1935-2022.

funding with Ron Olson and Dale St. John's handson work to seal, repair and rock-fill around the foundation as a very necessary preservation move, but one that folks rarely think about when considering the stunning multi-million-dollar mansion. Don did. Then, as we realized Luke Sweckard's skill with excavation and concrete, Don allocated funds for diverting more water from the mansion and to the east lawn with a French drain. Luke's dad, Jim Sweckard, had earlier developed our French drain system for the west side of the mansion, but Luke's dive into our concrete work for the east drain was important. It revealed that the splits and buckling in our sidewalks were because of concrete fixes in earlier years that had been done over broken sidewalks. Luke and crew had to remove not only the ground level cracked sidewalks but then go much deeper to remove the old slabs and broken shards beneath that were causing the upheaval damage, then refill with proper gravel base. Don funded that smart, correct fix, always paying attention to how I thought his funds would best serve the future of this stunning landmark. We were a good team that way. Don often reached out to me at the end of a year or the start of another to ask what I was envisioning needed to be tackled or would be a positive move for our beloved museum.

"I know my thinking," he wrote me one Christmas, "I think Mary Mountain and all the faithful workers at the Ivinson Mansion deserve all the financial help they can get to continue their great work."

Another early cooperative effort was the development and publication of our Mansion souvenir book. After an experiment where a small takeaway booklet about the Museum/Mansion was successful, I asked Don to fund the publication of 2000 books about the Mansion. That beautiful first glossy black publication was a hit with visitors and members—a lovely book to have on a coffee table about the go-to place in Laramie. The book was a steady feed to our operating income from the Gift Shop for years, and then, during COVID, we gave hundreds away just so we could tell our extraordinary history even when we were unable to be open for public tours. That 2013 printing educated our adult and junior docents, gifted members and visitors with our history, and was a superior promotional tool for the museum. We issued a revised, burgundy-colored edition in 2022 as we celebrated 50 years of the museum showcased on the extraordinary lvinson property. During most of the years of our elegant Evening at the lvinsons' event, Don would discreetly ask me to consider a handful of volunteers or members who were not quite able to afford the event's ticket price. He wanted to cover the cost of their attendance at that special event, so I would give him a number of those I thought would appreciate that year's event and an anonymous donor's kind aesture. He never wanted to know their names nor for them to know his. I think now it's OK to reveal his gracious secret gifting.

What began as Mary's Garden Room, in Don's vernacular, was another visionary project. Don knew that I was frustrated with bridal parties and other special renters paying only minimal fees to use the Ivinson property as the backdrop for their memorable events. With our smaller facilities, bigger groups could only use the stunning, historic setting as the background for their events if they ordered in costly tents, tables, chairs, and event

lighting to make our open grounds work as additional space for their special days. I believed the museum should reap the benefits of the \$5000-\$10,000 renters put out for those extras, but we needed to expand and enhance what we had for that to happen. An increase in such rental income was another piece of future sustainability for LPM. Just as Mary Kay Mason's dream bequest joined with Don Christensen's generous gift to transform the Stone House property into the impressive Mason Loft Condos for sustainable income, Don Adams stepped in as a major contributor and the base (\$500,000) funding for our Alice Hardie Stevens Center dream. His benevolence joined with our other generous donors and the hearts and hands of at least 41 volunteers to create the spectacular Event Center that now brings in close to \$90,000 in annual rental funding support for our museum property. That \$1.5 million project is a sterling example of all that this incredible band of united LPM friends can accomplish.

But we still weren't done; Don still wasn't done. The Carriage House repairs, upgrades and expansion had always been on the back burner for us, from the late 1990s when even I was on the LPM Board. The work needed on it would have to be accomplished once we had predictable income in place for day-to-day operations. We now had that via the Mason Lofts and the Events Center, so we could focus on the last 1892 remnant that needed Don's care. Fortunately, we began that dream before my retirement and before Don passed on to loftier realms late last year. The last \$100,000 he gave is in the special renovation account for the Carriage House work. Don will be part of us in all that can ultimately happen with the welcome center/gift shop/office renovations for the historic Carriage House.

Don Adam's faith was a vital part of who he was—such a devoted servant that this passage from Galatians 6:9 is a poignant summation of the life Don led: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Thank you, Don, for never giving up, for helping us reap such a harvest at LPM, for leaving your transformative heart prints on this very special place of history. We are all better because of you. We miss you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LPM Annual Meeting

Open for Regular Tours

Cheers for Volunteers

Pet Parade

May Tea on Tuesday

Summer Tour Hours Begin

June Tea on Tuesday

Art Fest on the Lawn

National Ice Cream Day Social

July Tea on Tuesday

Evening at the lvinsons'

Flickerlight Tours

Halloween Event

Holiday Open House

February 26th

March 1st

April 22nd

April 30th or May 6th

May 23th

Mid-June

June 20th

July 9th

July 16th

July 25th

August 19th

October 20 & 21st

October 28th

December 9 & 10th



Booking It! Board member Scott Morton mans his booth at the 2022 Art Fest on the Lawn.



Just Be Gold! Polly Wade and Dan Nelson at the 2022 *Evening at the lvinsons*'.



Jingle Jingle! Shelly Forster decorates the dining room table for the Holiday Open House, 2022.

The Laramie Plains Museum at the Historic Ivinson Mansion

Name _	
Address	S
Phone _	
Email	

Please make sure we have your correct name and address when you return this sheet.

2023 Invitation to Membership

Museum memberships at all levels support the preservation and maintenance of our historic complex.

Members receive admission to the Museum, a 20% discount on purchases at the Carriage House Gift Shop, voting privileges, newsletters, and notice of special events. Yearly Business Memberships are noted in the newsletter and will be displayed prominently on our Business Membership poster. Names of Benefactors and Business/Organizations at \$1000 or above are permanently presented in the Ivinson Mansion's Hall of Donors. All membership contributions receive acknowledgement, tax-deduction receipts, and this year's member card. Benefactors and Life Members are not required to fill out any kind of membership form, unless a change of address has been made.

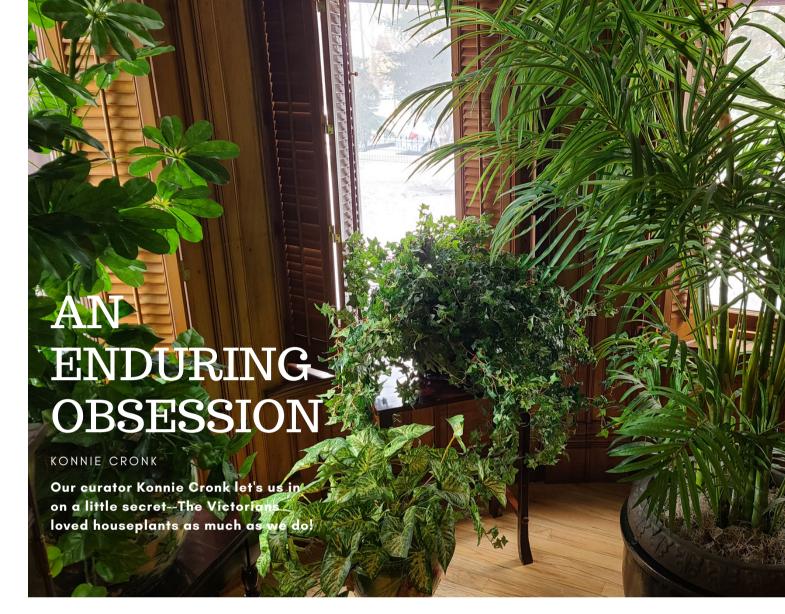
-	*Edward and Jane Ivinson were instrumental to the development of Laramie as a thriving town. We have two membership categories reflecting their benevolence with cultural and economic development. LPM Members who contribute at these levels will be acknowledges on the El plaque in the Ivinson Mansion's Hall of Donors pport for the restoration of the Carriage House nation to the LPM Endowment Fund
PAYMENT OPTIONS:	
Check (made out to the Laramie Plair Credit Card Account #:	

The Laramie Plains Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit association. Your membership and endowment support are taxdeductible to the fullest extent provided for by law. A receipt will be sent for any monetary contribution.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

Quiz time! If you could take a few minutes to tell us your opinion about future newsletters, we would be grateful. If you would rather speak to us personally, feel free to leave this side blank and call or email us, or even stop by in-person.

How would you prefer to receive your newsletter in the future?
I would like to receive my newsletter in the mail.
I would like to receive my newsletter in an electronic format (like email).
Either format would be fine with me.
Please note that this question is a poll to gauge interest in newsletter formats going forward. Your
answer will not effect how you receive your newsletter in the immediate future.
How did you like the new newsletter?
It looks great! I'd like to see more newsletters that look like this!
I miss the old style.
I just enjoy hearing about the museum, either format works for me.
f we stay with the new newsletter style, do you have a
suggestion for a new title?
f you do, great! Write your ideas on the lines below. If you don't, no worries. We'll take the best ideas a but out another poll in the next newsletter. The winner will receive a great big thank you in the first newsletter with their suggested title.
Title Suggestions:
1
2
3
4
5



Peoples of the western traditions have been bringing plants into their homes since at least the times of the Ancient Greeks (and earlier in Japan and China). even Increasingly, as urbanization grew, so did an interest in the natural landscape. However, it wasn't until the mid-nineteenth century when people began to bring their potted plants indoors (in America). Thanks to the exploration of far-away lands, the invention of the Wardian case (early terrarium), and indoor heating, exotic plants from other continents were able to thrive in otherwise unhospitable locations. Photos and drawings of homes from the middle and upper classes show parlor rooms accented with anything from a single fern to entire rooms covered in various species of plants. Different plants

were used to create window gardens, provide tasteful cover for the summer fireplace, vines sprawled across entire walls and surrounded couches, and magazines aimed for women readership recommended plants as an inexpensive replacement for curtains for the lower income household. Those who did not wish to bring actual plants indoors often expressed their love for nature through art. Others engaged in outdoor gardens and greenhouses, though the latter was more common for the upper class.

This year, many of the interior exhibits of the lvinson Mansion are arranged through the naturalist's perspective offering a fresh view into the life of American Victorians.

CURRENT BOARDMEMBERS

Tanner Evans, President
Debi Ockers, Vice-President
John Nutter, Secretary
Karen Lange, Treasurer
Brie Blasi
Christel Walrath
Karen Bard
Greg Bauman
Tanner Evans
Bernadette Horst
RJ Lara
Scott Morton

CHRISTEL WALRATH

Over the last three years Christel "Chris" Walrath has set a terrific standard for leadership as President of our Board of Directors. This is no surprise to folks who have known Chris for a while. She is bright, resourceful, collaborative, and an extraordinary worker. Chris agreed to extend her term as President and our museum is all the better for it. Even now, she is remaining on our board as Tanner Evans takes the reins as the new President, Her continuing presence, knowledge and dedication will be a valuable asset as we move forward. Thank you for your service, Chris. Your many talents make your leadership look effortless. We salute your commitment and honor your accomplishments.

THANK YOU

As we move into the new year, the LPM gears up to welcome new board members and say goodbye to those who are moving on. We wish them all the best!

KAREN BARD

Karen has been a valuable addition to our board and has served concurrently as President of one of our most honored partnership organizations: The Laramie Woman's Club. In all her endeavors Karen gives above and beyond. This year she is taking on the role of President of the GFWC Wyoming. Understandably, she has decided to focus her attention more exclusively on that challenging work and we will miss her talents greatly. Indeed, we know that she will continue to be a trusted partner to the Museum in the months and years to come. Thanks for your dedicated service and insightful knowledge, Karen. You are simply the best!

GREG BAUMAN

Greg has served with great distinction and expertise. We have made smarter and more timely decision with his assistance. While Greg is taking a hiatus from his role as a board member, we hope to coax him back to serve at a later date. His knowledge and experience has been a terrific asset to keeping our handsome Museum Park looking its best. We thank you for your many contributions to making the Laramie Plains Museum thrive. Though he is leaving the board we know that Greg will still be a familiar face and terrific contributor to our work here at Laramie Plains Museum.

R.J. LARA

R.J. and his wonderful wife, Samantha, have long been friends of the Laramie Plains Museum. R.J. played many roles at the Museum during his relatively short tenure in Laramie. That beginning lead him to pursuing a master's through study at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library in Delaware's Brandywine Valley. Returning west, he was appointed the Executive Director of The Stanley Home Museum and Education Center in Estes Park. He has served our board with distinction and is leaving our board as he and Samantha have relocated to New York to explore another chapter in what promises to be a fascinating career. We send him off with a great deal of Laramie gratitude and wish him all the best.

2023 BOARD CANDIDATES

BOB ROUTSON

I am a Laramie native, a graduate of University Prep High School, a graduate of the University of Wyoming College of Engineering and I am a licensed Professional Engineer in the state of Wyoming. I have been retired for eight years, having worked 46 years in the construction industry, 34 as co-owner of Arcon, Inc. My wife Micky and I have been happily married for nearly 53 years, and have two children and 6 grandchildren. I served on the City of Laramie Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals for around 35 years and I currently serve on the Cottonwood Homeowners Association board of directors.

SUZY TAYLOR

My name is Charlotte Sue Taylor, and I've gone by Suzy for years. I was born and raised in Illinois on a dairy farm and came to Laramie and graduated from the University Wyoming in 1969 with a BS in education. I taught physical education in Illinois, but returned to Wyoming as I knew I wanted to make it my home. I married Larry Taylor in September, 1969. We lived in Rawlins for 13 years, where I taught at Pershing Elementary School. We moved back to Laramie in 1986 when Larry went into the business part of Foster's Inc. I worked as a substitute teacher, and later took a position at the Student Health office at the University of Wyoming. Larry and I purchased a gas station convenience store from Foster's in 1999, and Larry named it Suzy's after me. We ran the store for eight years. After selling the store, I went to work at the University of Wyoming at the Cowboy Joe Club, and worked there for 10 years. Larry passed away in 2015 and I continued to work for two more years. Even though I retired in 2017, I've gone back to help out at the Cowboy Joe Club and for the past three years, where I work in the Office of Academic Services, tutoring/mentoring student athletes and continue to do that. I have two children, Dawn, who lives in Denver with her husband, Jim, and their two children, Harlan and Taylor. My son, Shawn, and his wife Erin, live in Cheyenne with their three children Byson, Ava, and Slade. I have several friends who have served on the board of the Laramie Plains Museum and have been involved in other ways with this wonderful institution. I would be honored to serve on the board.

JOHN NUTTER

Nutter has lived in Laramie since 1983 and was employed in the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Wyoming before retiring in 2012. He first joined the LPM Board in 2006 and has served more or less continuously with gaps recognizing the Board term limits policy. He has previously served as President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Association and wishes to continue serving the museum and its members, supporters, and donors, providing a historical perspective.

Use these ballots to cast your vote for the new board candidates. Feel free to utilize the write-in option if you have a suggestion for a great candidate. For individual membership, please only submit one ballot. For family and business memberships, please submit two ballots. Return the ballot in hardcopy form to the museum in the provided envelope in time for the Annual Meeting, February 26th, 2023. If you are interested in voting electronically, please email us at lpmdirectorelaramiemuseum.org with "Votes" in the subject line.

2023 BALLOT	
Bob Routson	
Suzy Taylor	
John Nutter	
Karen Lange (Re-election)	
Write-in Option	
VOTE FOR UP TO (5) FIVE	

2023 BALLOT
Bob Routson
Suzy Taylor
John Nutter
Karen Lange (Re-election)
Write-in Option
VOTE FOR UP TO (5) FIVE

Historic Ivinson Mansion Laramie Plains Museum Newsletter

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