



Newsletter — Aug 2017

Hole in the Rock Foundation Bluff Fort Historic Site, Bluff, Utah

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Utah Symphony to Perform

— Stuart Matheson, Board member

The Hole in the Rock Foundation is delighted to host the Utah Symphony Utah Opera for an outdoor performance Thursday evening, August 31, 2017 at 8:00 pm at Camp Stickie-ta-tudy just west of Bluff. This full orchestra performance is one of four performances that is part of this season's Great American Road Trip to provide concerts to parts of rural Utah. This world-class orchestra and opera company headquartered in Salt Lake City will perform works by Bernstein, Copland, Mozart, Debussy, and others and is especially pleased to include a composition from Native American composer and performer Brent Michael Davids. The full program and other relevant information can be found at: <http://usuo.org/news-more/press-releases/item/297-great-american-road-trip>

According to the Symphony: "The tour is presented in collaboration with Utah's National and State parks and is also part of the Utah Office of

Backdrop for Utah Symphony performance

Tourism's Road to Mighty campaign, which encourages visitors to explore not only the Parks, but other scenic locations around the state. Educational programming is provided in partnership with the Natural History Museum of Utah, and the post-concert "star parties" are held in collaboration with the University of Utah's Consortium for Dark Sky Studies and the Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative."

The Foundation is particularly pleased that the Symphony chose Camp Stickie as the venue for the Bluff concert, as the 360-degree open-air views are spectacular, and will provide many of our friends and neighbors an opportunity to experience unparalleled natural beauty combined with inspirational music.

The concert is free of charge but tickets are required. Call (801) 533-6833. If you plan to attend, come early for seating. If you might be late bring a chair to set up on the sand. Parking may be limited. We encourage you to carpool where possible.

We hope to see you there!

Director's Message

Burnis Skinner

Eighteen months ago, Sister Skinner and I accepted an opportunity to perform a Church Service Mission (CSM) at Bluff Fort. We were to serve for 8 months and then return to our family and our home that we love. At that time, we had not even a small idea of how much we would love living and serving in Bluff. We were then given the opportunity to continue on as the Directors.

Since that time, we have traveled a good portion of the original trail those 1880 settlers took to get here. We have discovered just how sacred this place is. To peer over the Hole in the Rock and even hike down it opens your eyes to just how difficult this trip must have been for those solid and obedient pioneers. What an example they are to all who know their story.

We love these stories and love to share them. We are missionaries, called and set apart to perform the Lord's work here in San Juan. Every day we have many opportunities to let our visitors know that "Mormons" are full of love, care about them and are willing to do just about anything for them. When they feel that we care they open their hearts and then the Holy Spirit has opportunity to bless them with that special, peaceful and loving feeling that we all know so well. What we are doing is planting Gospel seeds in their hearts, seeds of love. That is what we were sent here to do and oh how we love doing it. We love the Fort; it also has the ability to open hearts to the spirit and so we do all we can to take care of it and make it a special place that is appealing and drawing for those who visit. So here we are eighteen months later and looking

with a bit of trepidation that we will soon leave our fellow missionaries, whom we have grown to love and this very special place that we will always remember and visit with reverence and love. We believe this is one of the best kept secrets in the Church. It is inexpensive to live and serve here and oh how we cannot begin to count the blessings that have become ours for serving here. The Gospel is true; those 1880 saints knew it and lived it. We will be eternally grateful to them for giving us this opportunity to tell of their journey, their faith, their devotion, their obedience to their Church Leaders and their love of our Savior Jesus Christ. If any of you read this and desire to have a wonderful opportunity of Testimony growing service, we would like you to



know that it is so easy to make this happen. You are needed here at this wonderful place. You can start this opportunity, or at the very least learn more about it by simply calling 435-672-9995 and ask to speak to one of the Directors.

— Elder Burnis & Sister Lana Skinner

Youth Conferences

Stuart Matheson, Board member

As part of its mission to tell the story of the Hole in the Rock pioneers, this summer the Foundation hosted a number of youth conferences, including one ward from Salt Lake City and another from Price. A third group came to Bluff and stayed at Camp Stickie-ta-tudy on its own, not hosted by the Foundation. With a Special Recreation Permit issued by the BLM in hand, we continue to encourage youth groups to come to see and experience and learn first-hand the inspiring story of these hardy pioneers who were great examples of faith, obedience, courage, strength, perseverance and with the Lord's help were successful. This is just as applicable for us all today, but particularly for young people who face such daunting challenges in our modern world. These 19th-century pioneers came safely home - and so can we today if we seek the Lord's help and apply those same eternal principles. Youth conferences in Bluff allow youth and leaders to stand on holy ground and feel the inspiration of those who went before - who faced daunting challenges and overcame them. Participants stand at the base of San Juan Hill - the last major obstacle facing the pioneers - and look up to see and feel the significance of what those pioneers accomplished. Along the trail up San Juan Hill hikers can rest across from a rock carving "We thank thee O God" and

ponder its significance.

Those who come for these youth conferences stay at Camp Stickie, a camp we smilingly refer to as a "pioneer" camp although there were no pioneer camps then that enjoyed the amenities of a fresh water well, brick outhouses, showers, electricity, and pavilions for shade and activities. We have recently added "cope" courses for fun, entertainment, and learning. We continue to support and encourage activities for young and old alike that will instill those values exhibited by those hardy Hole in the Rock pioneers. Please contact board member Stuart Matheson for more information about these activities.

THE FORT

by Frank Rowley

It all began as a dream; a dream to rebuild the old Bluff Fort. The dreamer being Floyd Nielson who passed the dream on to his daughter Corinne Nielson Roring. The dream became a vision which perceived reconstruction of cabins, the old log meeting house,



The 2013 Church Service Missionaries in front of the nearly completed Co-op store – waiting on the stone facing.

wagons, and the “crown jewel” the Co-op Building. It began with the purchase of the only cabin left on what was the original Bluff Fort site, the Barton Cabin. Being viewed to many as a “far-fetched idea”, Corinne began the task of restoring the old cabin.

just like the original pioneers. Never giving up, pressing forward through financial dilemmas, bureaucratic and health issues. With guiding words from Bluff’s first Bishop, Jens Nielson; “If we have plenty of sticky-ta-tudy, we cannot fail”, to the new slogans, “When the

time is right, it will happen” - Corinne Roring, and “My sight may be dim, but my vision is clear” - Graig & Grant Taylor, a dream from the past stands as a monumental fortress for the future.

Hundreds of helping hands, new board members, a new president, Lynn Stevens, each have made this dream a reality.

Missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and local docents are now part of this driving work force. Directors oversee the daily activities. It began with LaRue Barton, then



Field trips help acquaint the missionaries to the local area.

Descendants came to help; moved upon by some unforeseen spirit to go, to help, to donate time and money. Descendants of other Hole-in-the Rock pioneers came and built their family’s cabins.

Donations and grants rebuilt the old log meeting house and the Co-op Building.

Somewhere in all of this movement came the Hole-in-the Rock Foundation (HIRF), with Corinne as the President and other board members. Two families joined Corinne’s family and became part of that driving force, the Helquists and the Taylors. They overcame obstacle after obstacle,



Reunion of missionaries in 2015 took us to top of Salvation Knoll

Current and past missionaries gathered atop Salvation Knoll in 2015

President's Message

— Lynn Stevens

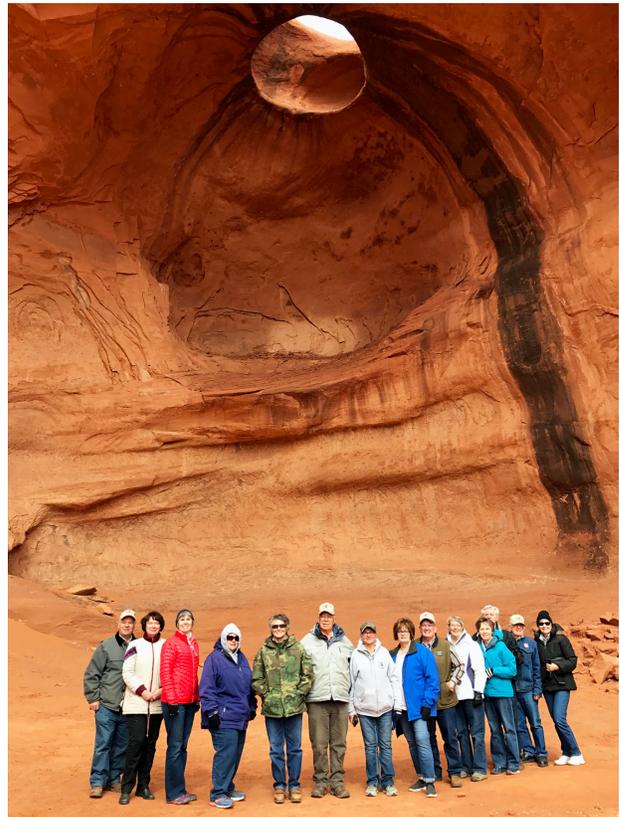
This has been one of the most successful and enjoyable years at the BLUFF FORT since I have been on the Board Of Directors. We are rapidly approaching the two thirds point of the busiest months of the year. We have had several outstanding youth conferences. We have had outstanding entertainment at the Friday night at the Fort. A significant amount of maintenance on the cabins and the overall Bluff Fort footprint has been completed. We are very encouraged by the number of missionaries who are willing to serve through the winter, and others who will begin their mission next March.

The prospect of having the Utah Symphony concert at our campgrounds on 31 August is extremely important. It will provide Statewide recognition of the activities of the Hole in the Rock Foundation. Our participation in the Bluff City Founders Day activities was very well received by the public, as well as being very enjoyable for those of us who participated. An astounding number of descendants celebrated their pioneer heritage together on Founders Day.

We are happy that Elder Jim Orr and his wife Sister Vickie Orr have agreed to serve as the Bluff Fort Mission Directors beginning at the end of October. I express my personal love and the appreciation of the foundation's Board Of Directors for the outstanding, selfless service we have received from Elder Burnis Skinner and Sister Lana Skinner as our Directors for the past eighteen months. My prayers are that our Father in Heaven will continue to bless the mission and the Fort and the people who visit the Bluff Fort.

Rowey (continued)

Steve Bronson, Frank & Elaine Rowley, Dale & Beverly Black, Burnis & Lana Skinner, and your new directors for 2018 being Jim & Vicki Orr.



2017 outing to Monument Valley (Navajo Tribal Park)

But the keystone to all of this effort now is YOU! Missionaries and Docents are badly needed! This is a "Work Mission" where dreams become realities and life skills are utilized to build projects and then reconnect with Missionary Reunions. Friends which will last forever. One couple and their grandson are coming to this year's Missionary Reunion all the way from Delaware. A beautiful Visitor Center and Gift Shop exists where stories are told and handmade crafts are sold. The craft

center is a busy place with sewing, weaving and quilting projects always going on. A work shop with up-to-date tools and wood working equipment supports construction projects and various crafts. But the most rewarding blessing comes from the visitors you meet. The original San Juan Mission lives, we cannot proselyte, but we can tell the story of faith and hope and courage. Almost 60,000 visitors last year, 40% from European Countries, came to hear the story and visit the site. There is someone special waiting for you! "I live for moments yet to come and my place in the field." (from Movie "Bagger Vance")



Vicki and Jim Orr, 2017-18 Directors

New Directors for 2017-2018

Jim and Vicki Orr, Blanding, have accepted the positions as directors for Bluff Fort Visitor Center starting November 1, 2017 and continuing until October 2018.

Jim and Vicki served two summers at the Fort in 2014 and 2015. They were

great Bluff Fort Missionaries and grew to love the story of the Hole in the Rock expedition.

They were living in Morgan, Utah, but after spending time in San Juan County they became friends with the docent volunteers and decided to relocate. They purchased a home in Blanding in 2016 and have been remodeling it. They have almost completed it and will put the rest of the remodel on hold until after their mission is completed.

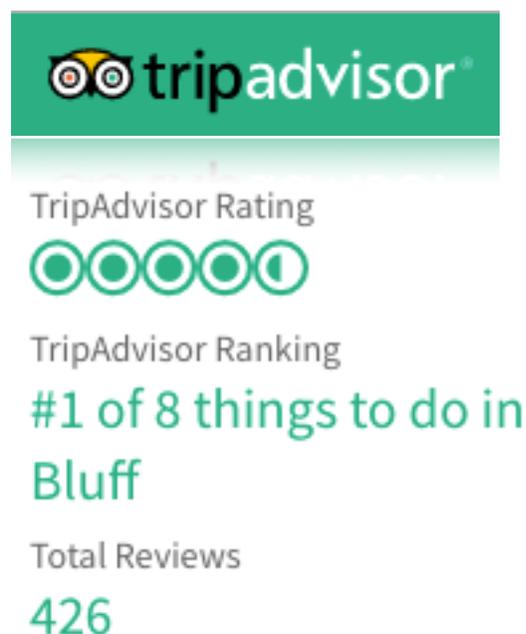
Vicki said, "We made such great friends from Blanding so we decided to move and be near them." Vicki has continued to serve as a docent once a week, and enjoys working in the Craft Center, too.

Jim and Vicki are the parents of 4 children and have 9 grandchildren. Jim purchased a Polaris Razor and so has his toys to explore the wonders of San Juan County. He enjoys the many trails in the county. Last year Jim and Vicki followed the Pioneer's trail from Highway 95 to Cottonwood Canyon. They gained a great appreciation as to just how difficult the journey must have been.

The Hole in the Rock Foundation Board is excited to have them serve. Their two years of experience means they are coming into the responsibility with their eyes open.

The Visitor Center had almost 60,000 visitors last year. Making sure that visitors have a great experience at the Fort, scheduling, gift shop management and working with Church Service Missionaries and Docent volunteers will give them plenty to do over the coming months. Thanks!!!!

Sampling of comments on:



"A Wonderful Surprise....Yes, in the Middle of Nowhere" 5* 8/4/2017

We have been here several times driving through and now with the visitor center and the grounds completed, this is a nice stop for a few hours. The fort and the history are interesting and the cabins have been well done, with multi lingual recordings. ..a real nice feature. Clean rest rooms and picnic tables. The only thing lacking is the purchase of food. Snacks only. A real nice surprise. Make the stop!

"à ne pas rater" ("not to miss") 4*

Aug 4, 2017 from Casablanca, Morocco
It would be a shame to miss this place that evokes the Mormon pioneers, Mormon charming volunteers are there to guide you and help you learn how these remote places inhabited by native tribes were settled by Mormon families.

"Si vede l'impegno della popolazione " **("We see the commitment of the population")** 4*

Aug 3, 2017 from Albenga, Italy
Bluff has about 400 inhabitants. The most that a strong reconstruction of a pioneer village is accurate and also offers children experiences of a past full of hardships, pains and little satisfaction, but full of desire to conquer. If you come to Bluff, take time for a short visit.

"Very well laid out free museum which sets out the history of Bluff beautifully."

5* July 17, 2017

Very impressed by this museum. It sets out the history of Bluff from the pioneers who founded it to the lives of the people who lived there very well indeed. Listen to tapes in multiple languages about the different families of famous Mormons or simple just ordinary folk. Spend 10 minutes or two hours here and your time will not be wasted

"Molto carino!!" **("Very nice!!")** 5*

Jul 1, 2017 from Italy

If you have a few hours and you're tired of the usual giant rocks and canyons, making a leap here as well. The owners are very kind, all spoken audio and an introductory film (15 minutes) are Italian, and the history of the colony is very attractive. The reconstruction is very well done, recommended!

"Nečekaně zajímavé" **("unexpectedly interesting")** 5*

May 19, 2017 from Czech Republic

I recommend to look at the film in the visitor center is enormously interesting and touching. A person with admiration realize how enormous difficulties they had to overcome. In one of the houses you can borrow historical clothes, dragged them through their clothes [put on over your own clothes], and for a moment you feel like ancient settlers. You can even take a picture of the car with a tarp [covered wagon]. Wooden cabins with furniture, blacksmith shop, school ... a nice stop on the way.

"Liebevoll restauriert" **("Lovingly restored")**

5* May 16, 2017 Berlin, Germany

When you want to visit some notable sights in Utah, you come through the small town of Bluff [on your way]. You should take a little time there to visit the restored Fort Bluff with its lovingly decorated rooms. The museum hosts like to tell guests about the early residents; admittance is free, by the way.

"Интересно" **("Interesting")** 4*

Oct 9, 2015 Moscow, Russia

Old American life. Friendly staff, dressed in colonial America. Gave them nesting doll