

# HOLE IN THE ROCK

## News

*Preserving the History and Sharing the Legacy*

Volume 11 Winter 2011



## THE OLD BLUFF CO-OP STORE

The San Juan Co-operative store was organized April 24, 1882, with Platte D. Lyman, president; Jens Nielson, vice president; Charles E. Walton, Kumen Jones and Hyrum Perkins, directors; L. H. Redd, secretary; and Benjamin Perkins, treasurer. The store opened June 11th, stocked to meet the needs of the people in the fort and to trade with the Indians. Joseph A. Lyman was the salesman.

The store was incorporated December 18, 1886, remaining organized for 20 years serving the community in many useful transactions. At one time the capital stock was \$100,000. It was successful from the first.

In a letter to Joseph F. Barton dated January 16, 1900, Jens Nielson wrote, "Our co-op store is now so far completed that we can pile goods in the lower part, and we had all our holiday dances on the upper floor. The store also houses the post office. The building cost \$2,700 to date and will cost about \$300 more to finish it."

The Bluff valley did not have enough land for all the families, and the uncontrollable flooding river made it necessary for most families to move away. In 1919, John and Martha Hunt purchased the store. Unfortunately, the Bluff Co-op store was blown up in 1925 during a robbery attempt. The robber, alias Fred Starr, used too much dynamite when attempting to break into the safe, blowing up both the co-op and himself. Thus ended the Bluff San Juan Co-operative Store.

During the ensuing years the hand-hewn sandstone rock of the building was eventually used in other places in Bluff. The land surrounding the store was sold by pieces to different parties for various purposes. However, in 131 years, no major buildings occupied the fort block. It was being kept for the old fort and the old co-op store to be rebuilt to tell later generations about the people who chiseled their way to San Juan and lived for a time in the beautiful valley by the river.

If any of you reading this newsletter have stories, histories or tidbits about the Bluff Co-op or life in Bluff, please send us a copy.

Every newlywed couple in Bluff received gifts purchased from the co-op store. At their wedding celebration party, Floyd and Clara Nielson received a complete set of silverware for twelve—a gift from Kumen and Mary Jones, china dishes, and many more nice gifts from others, all purchased from the co-op store. Clara used this silver and china only for dinners with white linen tablecloths and napkins. Bluff families appreciated nice things and took care of them. Children were taught good manners. What an asset the co-op store was to the people of Bluff and surrounding areas.

My father, Floyd Nielson, and my Monticello neighbor, A. J. Redd, both raised in Bluff, told me this tidbit regarding a Navajo lady that worked at the store with Mary Nielson Jones. Mary asked Sally, a Navajo girl, to go out back to the rock granary and get a 50 pound sack of flour for a customer. After filling the customer's order, the girl was not back and Mary became concerned. Finally she came back into the store sweating and exhausted, but with no flour. "Aunt Mary," she said, "there ain't no fifty pound sacks of flour, they all forty-eight." She had lifted every sack of flour stacked high in the stock room, and they each weighed 48 pounds. The faithful girl was truly a devoted worker and good help for Mary in the store. There was reciprocal respect and love between Kumen and Mary Jones and the Bluff Navajos.

When Kumen and Mary Jones managed the co-op store, Kumen would get up early each morning and go make a fire in the store while Mary cooked mush for their family of nine children. When he came back, he always brought one piece of candy for each child to have after breakfast...maybe to break the sameness of eating mush most mornings. The children anticipated his return each day. After breakfast Mary mixed her eight-loaf bread recipe before going to clerk in the store. It took eight loaves of bread every day to help feed this big family. Mary was a good manager, a good cook, and a good mother. Lydia May Lyman Jones, the second wife of Kumen, had eight children when she died from burns when her dress caught fire. Her children are Stanley, Thomas, Marvin, Leland, Mary Lydia (nicknamed Mamie), Marion, Alma and Francis. Mary Nielson Jones, the first wife of Kumen, became their stepmother and Lydia's children loved "Aunt Mary" as they called her. With Mary and Kumen's one son Leonard, it made a family of nine children. Aunt Mary was indeed one of Bluff's strong and valiant women.

— Corinne Roring, HIRF President

## OCTOBER 28, 2011 A REAL HIGHLIGHT DAY!

On October 28, following a Halloween Party at the Bluff Senior Center, 21 “seniors” came to Bluff Fort for a tour. What a wonderful and delightful experience. Mary Lou, director of the Bluff Senior Center, showed them the hogan on the Fort site which she has been decorating with sheep skins, a loom with a partially woven rug, stirring sticks, a hairbrush, her mother’s cooking rack, and many other items.

The docents took them on a tour of the cabins. When one lady walked into the Barton cabin, the quilt on the bed triggered a memory of coming to the Fort as a child with her mother or grandmother to buy quilts. They were excited to see all the old-fashioned things inside the cabins. These were things many of them grew up with in their homes or hogans.

When we reached the meeting house, Dennis Harvey serenaded them on his harmonica with *Amazing Grace* and *Jesus Loves Me*. They sang along in Navajo as we sang in English, joined by a couple of tourists. It was tear-jerking. Then Dennis explained that the main reason the pioneers came to Bluff was to be friends with the Navajo people and said that we hope we are their friends.

This was one of the highlights of our summer. As they left, one of the older women gave both Ron and me a wonderful hug. I hope I never forget that moment.

— Lorraine Barton, docent

## UTAH HISTORY CLASS VISITS FORT

October 28th, 7th grade teacher Lynda Boyle and her 24 Utah History students spent an hour and a half with us at Bluff Fort. After a trip to see the petroglyphs at Sand Island, they viewed the Hole-in-the-Rock video and listened to Dennis Harvey play the harmonica. Students then visited the Bluff Fort cabins while Lorraine and Dennis Harvey, Karl Barton, Ron and Lorraine Barton, and Bobbie and Neldon Holt stationed themselves at various posts around the Fort so they could share pioneer stories with the students.



Bobbie Holt took their photo while they were playing with handcarts and eating lunch.

## SAN ANTONIO SCOUTS VISIT BLUFF FORT



Here they came, the week of July 24, 2011, two Venture Scout Crews from the San Antonio Texas East Stake. Full of vim and vigor, as 16 and 17 year-old young men are, looking for a pioneer experience. So what do you do with 20 enthusiastic boys? Hook them up to handcarts and let them pull.

Loading all their gear into the handcarts they left Bluff Fort on their way to the cemetery which is located on a hill north of Bluff. The mile trek was a breeze for these young men. The evening meal was prepared, utilizing the kitchen facilities here at Bluff Fort, followed by a fireside with songs and stories of the “Old San Juan” presented by Stan Bronson.

*Come on boys, it's time to get up; it's going to be hot today and we're headed to San Juan Hill to experience the arduous task the pioneers encountered in getting covered wagons up this incline. Wow, what a climb! It's amazing that covered wagons pulled by skinny, tired teams could accomplish such a task.*



Inscribed at the top of San Juan Hill are these words, “We Thank Thee O God,” a great message for these young men and all who make the climb. God helps us through our trials if we have the faith to tackle the task. Carved into a rock located by the old meeting house are these words, “We Do Hard Things!”

A visit to the old Bluff Fort touches the inner feelings of the visitor. Often we hear the comment, “We feel something different than we have ever felt before. What is it?” Come and find out. There are opportunities for family reunions, young men and young women outings or just you and your friends. Service projects are available and greatly appreciated when accomplished. It’s a touching experience, one you will enjoy!

— Frank Rowley, docent

## HALLOWEEN 2011 AT BLUFF FORT



We had over 100 trick-or-treaters at Bluff Fort! The Benalli family also provided a chili/fry bread dinner on the patio.



## VISITORS TO BLUFF FORT IN 2011

1,759 visitors from March 3 to April 30

1,729 visitors during May (1,116 USA, 553 foreign, 26 Canada, 34 descendants)

1,888 visitors during June (1,140 USA, 638 foreign, 33 Canada, 77 descendants)

3,289 visitors during July (1,197 USA, 1,852 foreign, 26 Canada, 214 descendants)

3,198 visitors during August (691 USA, 2,440 foreign, 36 Canada, 31 descendants)

1,841 visitors during September (732 USA, 973 foreign, 45 Canada, 91 descendants)

1,414 visitors during October (866 USA, 501 foreign, 22 Canada, 25 descendants)

**TOTAL: 15,118 from March 3 to October 31, 2011**

Australia: "Well worth visiting. I felt a real sense of peace here."

Denmark: "Very interesting! Lovely with a Danish Mormon book."

England: "Great to see sheer will power wins through this history lesson."

France: "Great work! You can see the love you put into it. Sacred Land."

Germany: "History can be lived here! Great place!"

Italy: "They did something unique just in the grace of God."

Morocco: "God bless the souls of all these pioneers."

Pretoria, South Africa: "Similar to story of Voortrekkers."

Saskatchewan, Canada: "A hidden treasure."

Switzerland: "Very interesting. Great respect for these pioneers."



**Our first visitors from China!**

## AUDIO CELL TOURS NOW AVAILABLE

In selected cabins, you can now dial a number on your cell phone and hear a story about the original inhabitants of Bluff Fort. Stories have been taken from original pioneer journals, descendant stories, and historical accounts. The stories have been recorded using the voices of the settlers' descendants.

Dial 435-338-3009 and listen to the introductory message. Then follow the instructions and dial the number of the story you'd like to hear. The following numbers correspond with the following tales and locations at the fort.

1011 John Taylor monument  
1021 Barton cabin  
1031 L.H. Redd Jr. cabin  
1051 Hobbs cabin  
1071 Walton cabin  
1081 Ency Butt story  
1091 meeting house stories  
1101 vegetable garden  
1111 orchard  
1121 blowers and blasters/Perkins cabin

You can skip through the list of numbers by pushing the pound (#) sign button.

This winter we will be working to make most of the stories available in French and German.

We encourage descendant families to send us more stories about the Hole in the Rock trail or life in Bluff. Some of the best stories have come from letters and journals. The final version of the message should be less than one page, typed, single-spaced. Each descendant family can contribute up to nine messages at each stop.

If you have questions or stories you'd like to submit, contact Grant Taylor at [gptaylor50@comcast.net](mailto:gptaylor50@comcast.net).

We want to ensure that the stories are historically correct, and then, ideally, we'd like to have the descendants provide the voice for the recordings.

The Ency Bayles Butt story, taken from the journal of her daughter, is an example of one of the stories you'll hear. These genuine accounts contribute significantly to the authentic and poignant experience of the visitors to the fort.

## FINAL HOURS OF BELOVED MOTHER ENCY BAYLES BUTT

The following excerpt about the death of Ency Bayles Butt was taken from the journal of her daughter Lenora Butt Jones.

*October 10, 1897*



*A windy cold day! While playing with the children-- popping corn for us--Mother was stricken with a coughing spell. By night she was chilly. We built a fire in the fireplace. By bed time she was worse and retired without eating. She remarked to my Father that she was grateful for her new sewing machine and for the way we children had taken over the household duties. Soon she dropped off to sleep and suddenly into convulsions.*

*At 10 o'clock the neighbors were summoned by my dear brother John, and Joseph Christensen was dispatched for Ed Hyde, an amateur surgeon. He came, but too late. Soon after midnight, Mother died and also the babe which was never born. As other women had died in childbirth, so did my Mother. She was 33 years-old.*

*The people were notified. They came--not a few, but many. When Uncle Hanson arrived from Thompson Spring, he and Father threw their arms around each other and wept bitterly.*

*The funeral was held at the grave side on a knoll near the house where mother had once taken me to pick wild-flowers. She remarked then that this would be a good place for a cemetery. I was the only one who knew that she had picked that very spot. I was taken there to see her lowered into the grave and recollections of that spring day eased my sorrow-torn heart.*

## DANIEL PERKINS FAMILY REUNION AT BLUFF FORT SEPTEMBER 2011

Eighty descendants of Daniel and Cornelia Adams Perkins met at Bluff Fort, Saturday morning, September 24, 2011, for a family reunion. Norma Young and DeMar Perkins and many of their family members were there to help remember their pioneer ancestors.

Daniel Perkins was born at Bluff Fort on May 9, 1881, a year after his parents came through the now-famous Hole in the Rock. His parents, Benjamin and MaryAnn Williams Perkins, had emigrated from Wales and settled in Cedar City before their call to the San Juan Mission. Benjamin was one of the “blasters and blowers from Wales,” along with his brother Hyrum. These Perkins brothers played an essential part in preparing the road down through the “hole” because of their knowledge of the use of blasting powder obtained working in the coal mines in Wales. There is a log cabin built by Perkins’ descendants, at the Fort, in honor of these two great men and their families.

William Adams, Cornelia’s grandfather, had moved to Bluff from Parowan in 1881 to serve in the San Juan Mission. Her father, George, was a young man at the time and spent time in Bluff and back in Parowan where he eventually married Evelyn Mortensen (aka. Ev on the old chuck line). In 1886, soon after Nean was born in Parowan, the young family moved to Bluff to make their home. The Perkins and Adams families were among the first families to settle Monticello in 1888. Dan and Nean were married in the Salt Lake Temple in 1912.

Descendants of Dan and Nean Perkins enjoyed visiting, eating and enjoying the ambience of Bluff Fort. On Saturday morning, many of the men spent several hours applying mud to the Navajo Hogan, that is on display at the Fort, as a service project, supervised by the Bluff Fort docents. Women and children made rag dolls and clay marbles while the men worked. In the evening, all enjoyed Navajo tacos and fresh corn before participating in a Hole in the Rock pageant written by Norma Young. Everyone had an impromptu part of reading, singing or dancing.



Sunday morning many attended church at the Bluff branch. The last event was watching the Bluff Fort video presented by the docents at the old meeting house.

After lunch everyone departed for their homes. All agreed it was well worth the trip. Bluff Fort is one of the best tourist attractions in San Juan County. Many of the family were able to enjoy some of the other beautiful sites in the area.

— LeiMomi Sampson

## JENS NIELSON: BISHOP OF BLUFF NEW BOOK ABOUT ORIGINAL SETTLER

Earlier this summer, BYU Mormon Studies gave the following introduction to author David S. Carpenter’s newly published book, *Jens Nielson: Bishop of Bluff*.

A Denmark native, Jens Nielson emigrated to Utah Territory in 1856-57. By 1880 he had joined the Hole in the Rock expedition to settle Bluff, where he served as ward bishop for over two decades.



As much a part of the landscape as the red cliffs, Bishop Nielson helped the town develop the contrasting characteristics that most impressed outsiders: dogged tenacity and kind hospitality. Bluff’s settlers were to establish peaceful relations with Native Americans in the Four Corners region and to occupy that area and preempt non-Mormons from settling it.

Nielson and the families who chose to stay came to know each other intimately through their celebrations, mournings, endeavors, and arguments. Modern society would not trade its luxuries with Bluff, but sometimes it longs for what it left behind—the strong community and sense of shared purpose.

This book examines Nielson’s life and the community from 1880 to 1906. Bluff’s history demonstrated the lengths some Mormons would still go in the late nineteenth century to fulfill the requirements of their faith in a particularly harsh physical and cultural environment.



Wonderful docents Marolyn and Gil Moen built an orchard wagon and a hay wagon; Peggy Capson works on one of the many projects around the fort.

## EAGER TO CONTRIBUTE

During the month of July, my wife, Mitsi, and I volunteered at Bluff Fort. It was a great experience, and we appreciated the kindness of those we served with: Steve Bronson, the Bartons, Harveys, and Rowleys. No better people in the entire world. For three weeks we served in the Bluff Fort Visitors' Center and Gift Shop and helped weed, repair, and water plants around the restored buildings of the Fort. The winds, dust, and rain were reminders of what our ancestors put up with. I was raised in Blanding, and I enjoyed seeing old friends and remembering the times we had together so many years ago. We marveled at all the changes that have been made over the past 70 years.

Meeting visitors from all over the world was amazing. These visitors, for the most part, were eager to find out the story of Bluff and why on earth anyone would want to settle here. We loved sharing the story of the Hole in the Rock pioneers and why they attempted such a difficult and demanding journey.

One morning, Karl Barton took me and J B Washburn on a jeep trip to San Juan Hill. During the trip I twisted my knee and I couldn't walk very well. I could no longer work outside on the grounds, so I began my telephone fundraising campaign for the reconstruction of the Bluff Co-op Store. I called (at least five hours a day) everyone and anyone who had shown any interest in the Fort. What a great experience. I loved every minute of it. I talked to people all over the country who were descendants of these pioneers. Placing calls to friends and relatives I had known in Blanding as a lad gave me the opportunity to recall the good 'ole days. We had a grand time reminiscing about my parents, Dan and Margaret Perkins.

Most people were eager to contribute and promised donations even when they could hardly afford it. To some it was the widow's mite, but they were doing it for their ancestors and felt the desire to honor them and pay homage by contributing whatever amount they could. Some conversations were very tender, and you could feel the need they felt in their hearts to give to such a cause. This was a very satisfying experience for me. There is nothing to compare with coming back to dear old San Juan County, a place ever dear to my heart.

— Jim Perkins



Dinner with our docents

## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

As we approach the end of the season at Bluff Fort, I would like to express gratitude to the dedicated volunteers who have served at Bluff Fort, and give an update on our activities. These talented docent volunteers lend their expertise in all areas at the Fort. They have worked on major projects and kept the Fort free from weeds and debris.

Whether working inside or out, our staff is busy greeting visitors and helping them become acquainted with the Fort. Our gift shop carries an inventory of homemade items, historical books, CDs, shirts, jewelry and other gifts unique to this area. Our retail volume this year will about double that of last year. Proceeds from the gift shop assist with the overhead operations of the Fort. We had over 15,000 visitors from all 50 states, 6 Canadian provinces and 59 foreign countries.

I would like to acknowledge, by name, those who have volunteered their time to build Bluff Fort. From San Juan County, Karl and LaRue Barton, Corinne Roring, Mary Lou Harvey, Max and Sandy Black, Beverly Vowell, Judy Lyman, Ben Black, Pam Bronson, Norman and Margie Lyman, Mike Halliday, Joyce Martin, Donna Washburn, Neldon and Bobbie Holt, Karen Dufur, Bernice Hurst, and Ariella Thomas. From elsewhere in Utah, Lyle Helquist, Ron Snowden, Grant and Erleen Taylor, Graig Taylor, Grant and Nina Taylor, John Cox, Brandon Cox, Mike Roring, Craig Roring, Ron and Lorraine Barton, Bill and Loralee Hall, Lark and Georgia Flannagan, Keith and Gerri Nielson, Leimoni Sampson, Russell and Peggy Capson, Wayne and Marva Hancock, Erma Redd, Kena Winn, Audrey Nelson, Gil and Marolyn Moen, and LaMar and Colleen Helquist, from Arizona, Dennis and Lorraine Harvey, and Frank and Elaine Rowley, from California, Howard and Cornine Hurst, and from Idaho, Jim and Mitzi Perkins.

Family organizations have also contributed time to service projects at Bluff Fort. The families who have participated in service projects this year are the Hobbs, Perkins, Wolfs, Youngs, Bayles, McConkies and the Redds.

On September 23, 2011, Grant and Nina Taylor prepared a volunteer docent appreciation dinner at Bluff Fort. Following a delicious meal, many volunteers told uplifting stories of their experiences while they served at Bluff Fort. It was a great evening. The work accomplished at Bluff Fort was due to the unselfish service and hard work of the docent volunteers.

On October 12, 2011, we held the groundbreaking for the reconstruction of the Bluff Co-op Store. Upon completion the co-op store will be the location of the new visitor's center and gift shop. The outside of the building will be a faithful replica of the original store which was destroyed in 1925.

I encourage any who are interested in a rewarding experience for service to consider becoming a volunteer at Bluff Fort. I am confident that you will remember your service here with great satisfaction. Please contact Bluff Fort by mail at PO Box 476 - Bluff, UT 84512, call 801-971-5306 or email Grant Taylor at gptaylor50@comcast.net.

— Steve Bronson

## SALVATION KNOLL TRAIL PROJECT

A stranger to San Juan County might raise the question, “What, or where, is Salvation Knoll?” As the main body of pioneers was laboring to widen the treacherous descent through the Hole in the Rock, four scouts searched for the most feasible route between the Colorado River and Montezuma Creek. By the time the scouts reached the area, known as Salvation Knoll, they were lost and out of food. On Christmas Day 1879, after praying for help, and with clear weather at last, the scouts climbed the knoll and from there saw the Blue Mountains and Comb Ridge, which were the landmarks they needed to find their way through. Although hindered by severe winter storms, the scouts George Hobbs, George Morell, Lemuel Redd, and George Sevy succeeded in plotting a wagon route through some of the most difficult terrain in North America.

In June, Graig Taylor called me and explained that a trail had been partially completed to the top of Salvation Knoll by descendants of James Monroe Redd. He asked me to coordinate a group of volunteers to finish the trail. He suggested drawing from Lemuel Hardison Redd’s posterity, and I told Graig I would be happy to take on the project.

I called Laird Naylor, the BLM official in Monticello, UT, who explained the process that had led up to the go-ahead for the trail; an interested party had expressed approval with the stipulation that no power tools would be used. Considering the spirit of cooperation manifested, and the valuable opportunity to build a trail up the knoll, that condition was gladly accepted.

Myself, Joe Finn Lyman, J. Whitney Redd, Kevin Dunn, and another cousin, drove to Salvation Knoll and looked at the trail. We were amazed at the work that had already been done. The knoll is made up of rocks, boulders and soil, with pinion, juniper and brush dotting the rugged landscape. Although the trail was three-fourths of the way finished, the remaining work was daunting; some boulders were very large and solid. We would need jacks, pry bars, picks, sledges, shovels, wheelbarrows and saws to break rocks and remove a few trees.

On Saturday morning, 2 July, 2011, our group rolled into the parking area at the base of the knoll along Highway 95. Laird Naylor came with his wonderful family, and Ron Barton and his wife and granddaughter came from Bluff Fort with lots of tools and a large cooler of water. It was already like a reunion, visiting with relatives and friends.

We moved up the trail and got to work. Laird guided our efforts to lay the new trail and improve parts that needed to be leveled and made safer. The work at the top was indeed rigorous, working around huge rocks we couldn’t move, and dismantling others to open the way through.

We stopped work around noon to enjoy a delightful meal prepared by Jacqueline Redd. Eating together was as wonderful as was working together.

After lunch, we collected tools and moved down the knoll. One large rock obstructed the lower trail; we tried, unsuccessfully, to break it apart. We finally decided to put all our combined strength into moving it out of the way. We muscled it down and laid in fill material to level the trail.

The view from the top of the knoll is very impressive. We aren’t sure which of the four scouts received the inspiration to climb the knoll on Christmas morning in 1879, but the Lord was looking out for the hungry, disoriented group responsible for choosing the route for the rest of the pioneers to follow. Our efforts that day gave us some appreciation for the settlers who endured the hardships of taming in that hostile environment.

I visited with a few members of our crew; here are some of their memories.

J. Whitney Redd- “It was a delightful get-together, to work and reminisce about L. H. Redd Sr. and the others. It was a lot of work, but very, very enjoyable...and a good lunch!”

Lemuel Hardison Redd 4th- “We did some good and felt a connection to our ancestors. It was good to sweat for a good cause. We gained some appreciation for what they went through on the Hole in the Rock trail.”

A. Mason Redd- “It was delightful, I enjoyed it very much! I got to know some of the cousins I had little connection with before, like Ron Barton. We worked with L. Hardison Redd IV, the first opportunity to get to know him and his daughter Nanette and her friend Scott. It was impressive to see the Blue Mountain in the distance, and to be able to make out the San Juan through the light haze. I call Salvation Knoll one of the ‘Sacred Spots’ that unite us as a family. This was one of the best events we have been involved in, along with building the cabin at Bluff Fort.”

Ron Barton- “It was a lot of hard work! We moved a lot of big rocks and trees and laid in rock and dirt for the trail. Our granddaughter Kim Stevens enjoyed the project too.”

Laird Naylor- “It is wonderful to get together in memory of ancestors to build a trail so many people will love, and learn about what happened there long ago that was so important.”

I hope this is a complete list of everyone that participated on July 2, 2011: Ron and Lorraine Barton and Kim Stevens, A. Mason and Karen Redd, J. Whitney Redd, Stuart Shumway, Lemuel Hardison Redd IV and Nanette Redd and Scott Speckert, Laird and Mary Naylor with children Alma, Brian, Sharon and Camden, Ralph and Jacqueline Redd and children Andrew, Rachel, Alex, Michael and Dustin, Karen R. Redd, Marcia and Patrick Roderer, Ryan Redd and children Joshua, Daniel and Aaron.

Thanks to everyone who had a part in this great opportunity to work together in such a good cause.

— Ralph Redd



## HISTORIC DAY FOR BLUFF CO-OP GROUND BREAKING

Governor Gary Herbert promised Corinne Roring that not only would he “polish his dancing shoes” for next year’s promised dedication of the Bluff Co-op, but that he would “start practicing his dancing steps.”

Master of Ceremonies and former SJC commissioner, Lynn Stevens, introduced Gov. Herbert, as “Utah’s Most Rural Governor” and complimented him on his efforts to represent and visit rural Utah. While in San Juan County, on October 12, Governor Herbert also spoke to students statewide via the Utah Education Network and visited several local schools, Blanding Visitors Center, and Edge of the Cedars Museum.

Governor Herbert reminded the audience of about 100 people at Bluff Fort that the groundbreaking of the new Bluff Co-op was a remembrance of those who had come before. “We are standing on the shoulders of the Hole in the Rock pioneers, whose qualities can still be incorporated today.” The addition of a replica of the first Co-op promises to be the gem of the fort, and will once again be the hub of activity.

The Co-op was one of San Juan County’s first successful businesses, where bartering and trading with Native Americans and pioneers alike made it the center of commerce during the years of the gold rush and the first oil boom in San Juan County. In fact, Herbert stated, “the Co-op paid a 10% dividend to original investors during the first five months of existence, and later paid 25% dividends to investors before the first year ended.”

The Governor told citizens that the state is looking for ways to expand the economy in rural Utah, and tourism and travel can help. He thanked local residents for “all you do to raise good families and to run good businesses.”

Dignitaries who participated in the groundbreaking included Wilson Martin (Chairman of Utah State History and Chairman of Four Corners Heritage Council); Shirley Silversmith (Director of Utah Division of Indian Affairs); President Mike Redd (Blanding LDS Stake); Elder Perry Webb (Area Authority Seventy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints); San Juan County commissioners Kenneth Maryboy, Phil Lyman, and Bruce Adams; Cleal Bradford (Chairman of Trail of the Ancients Council and member of Heritage Council, as well as writer of the original grant of \$486,600 to build the new Co-op); Manuel Heart (Ute Tribal Councilman and former Chairman of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe); and Leigh Von der Esch (Director of Travel & Film for Utah).

In her introductory welcome, Corinne Roring, on behalf of the Hole in the Rock Foundation, thanked those who had worked so hard to make her “distant dream” of 10 years ago, a reality. “I predict that with the addition of the Bluff Co-op, the Bluff Fort complex will become a ‘must stop and see’ destination for all those who pass along Hwy 191. This would not have succeeded without you.” She thanked all those who over the past four years, had helped to raise the matching money to the original grant. She also thanked the Bluff Fort volunteers who



clearing the trail to Salvation Knoll

“perform a labor of love” in keeping the gardens and grounds so clean and beautiful.

She predicted that in 2012 we’ll celebrate the dedication of the Co-op by “ringing the bells,” (as they did in early Bluff when Utah became a state in 1896), and “with a feast, and dancing ‘til midnight; so get your dancing shoes ready. Bluff will buzz with activity again!”

Following the official ground breaking, 3rd-5th grade students from Bluff Elementary also took turns breaking the soil for the new building. A delicious BBQ was prepared by Twin Rocks Cafe with salads, cookies, and drinks prepared by the fort volunteers. It was a delicious end to a beautiful day of culmination, ceremony and hope.

Earlier in the morning, Governor Herbert addressed students statewide. It was the first statewide, live gubernatorial speech geared toward high school students. About 110 schools participated via live web stream. Herbert said the digital age and changing job market demand a highly-educated workforce in order to compete. “When you go out in the world to start your careers, you’re not just going to be competing with the graduates of Utah State University and Dixie State, you’ll be competing with the graduates of the University of Beijing in China,” he said. After the speech he fielded questions from students from Orem, Rich County, Murray and Emery County.

— Janet Wilcox



## SANTA'S CHRISTMAS CARD LIST

Bluff Fort is compiling a database for newsletters and mailing purposes. As you are creating your list of Christmas card recipients this year, please consider sending us the names and mailing addresses of your family and friends so that we can share good news about the Fort with them too. Please send the following information.

- first and last name
- mailing address including state and zip code
- email address
- phone number
- your name as the person making the referral

Please send the information to:

Bluff Fort PO Box 476

Bluff, UT 84512

## TREKKING OPPORTUNITY

Come one, come all—families, youth groups, reunions, wards, or stakes. Find within yourselves the same inner strength and faith in God that the original pioneers exhibited in settling the San Juan country.

The Hole-in-the-Rock Trail provides unique opportunities for groups to experience some of the challenges faced by Mormon pioneers who accomplished what was deemed as impossible.

To request an information packet, please email Mike Halliday at [mhalliday@frontiernet.net](mailto:mhalliday@frontiernet.net) or call 435-678-2381.

## FUN FORT FACTS

Accomplishments of the Bluff Fort this year include:

- Over 50 people volunteered.
- 15,000 people visited the Fort.
- Visitors' center was repainted.
- Final cabin at the Fort was completed.
- A new restroom facility was completed.
- Volunteers from Bluff furnished the Navajo Hogan which is part of the Native American display at the Fort.
- All of the cabins were wired for electricity for displays inside and to facilitate cabin cleaning.
- Video equipment was installed in the fort meeting house so we could present videos to larger groups and so that Sunday visitors to the fort could see the video. (The gift shop is closed on Sunday.)
- The Hole-in-the-Rock was featured in *BYU Mormon Studies*, *Utah Historical Quarterly* and the July LDS *Ensign*.
- Author David S. Carpenter's book *Jens Nielson: Bishop of Bluff* was published.
- Presentation made at the Mormon Historical Seminar in St. George, Utah, by David S. Carpenter.
- Mobile phone/cell tour began.
- Co-op Store groundbreaking.

Thanks to all of you for making this possible. YOU made this year a BIG success!

Hole-in-the-Rock Foundation Web Site: <http://www.hirf.org/>