

HELLO FRIENDS OF ROCK LEDGE RANCH!

Happy August, friends! We can tell the summer is coming to a close, as our summer crops are being harvested and our Junior Docents and seasonal staff are headed back to school. It's been an incredible summer and we are so thankful to all of our amazing volunteers and staff who have made living history engaging and educational for all the visitors who have come to the Ranch this summer.

But the end of the summer means the coming of the fall, and our September will be full of exciting programs! We hope to see you visiting the park during and between those upcoming events—read on for more details!

IN RECENT HISTORY...

Garden staff and junior docents at the Ranch have worked tirelessly this summer to harvest the produce from our cherry and chokecherry trees—gallons upon gallons of small round fruits have been picked, processed, cooked, and eaten in the form of jams, pies, cakes, and more. Even more exciting, the staff have picked several bushels of

apples from Old Rosie, an approximately 125-year-old Red Astrachan apple tree planted by the Chambers family. The Chambers as well as other farmers in the Pikes Peak region were encouraged to plant Red Astrachan apple trees because they harvest earlier than other apple trees, thus avoiding the danger of an early frost affecting the harvest. Now that we know, we are delighted to be cooking and eating these apples in August!

The east wall of the reproduction Galloway Homestead Cabin has new chinking and caulking between the logs! Historical interpreters spent a day out of period clothing in July, getting dirty as they pulled out the old and chinked in the new.

Our new Ranch gateway has received its proper adornment now, and boldly proclaims to those driving under it that they are entering Rock Ledge Ranch Historic Site! The goal of this project was to make the Ranch more visible to both tourists and locals who may have missed this precious gem tucked away in the trees, and we hope you've noticed it and pointed it out to friends.

This month, we want to use this newsletter to feature a phenomenal group of volunteers whose hard work beautifies the Ranch and enhances the



One of our Junior Docents picking cherries

experience for our visitors. The second Tuesday of every month, the Ranch Artisans gather in the Carriage House from 9:30-2:30, giving of their time and expertise freely to create thousands of unique handmade gifts.

Anyone who steps into the room when the Artisans are meeting is greeted with the sounds of sewing machines whirring, thread and fabric being cut, and a cheerful hello. It's almost like stepping back in time to an old-fashioned sewing circle.



One of the ladies in the Sewing Circle

About a dozen women chat, sew, stuff, felt, and iron industriously around the room, working together to stock the store with finely crafted Ranch-made treasures. This week, the tables are covered with dresses—perfect ruffled pioneer dresses, made to fit 18” dolls. Every dress is made of cotton fabric, in calico patterns appropriate to the time periods we represent here at the Ranch. The artisans are committed to using period-accurate materials—cotton, wool, wood, and leather—so that the items they create fit with the rest of the Ranch. Much of the fabric they are currently using was donated by a member of the group who recently passed away.

Near the door sits Huldah, with a box of tiny sheep in front of her. If you've been in the General Store you may have seen these precious sheep ornaments—better snatch one up the next time you visit, because they go like hotcakes! Huldah explains that her husband Jim carefully carves the little sheep skeletons out of wood, then sands and paints them. She pulls out pictures of her grandkids, who are grown now but used to help with the sanding too. The tiny leather sheep ears are added next, and then Huldah felts wool onto the sheep's body. This is Charlotte's wool, which is very soft and the best to work with because it has very long fibers, Huldah explains. She has been involved with the Artisans for about 12 years, and learned to felt when she joined the group, she says as she deftly moves her felting needle to work Charlotte's wool into the perfect fluffy sheep shape.

Lotus is multitasking, carefully ironing a doll dress while explaining how the stuffed chicks are made. It's all a team effort, she explains. One seamstress will sew the fabric pieces together, and several more will stuff them, and this past week she took a set of the stuffed but unfinished chicks home



to finish sewing them and adding their eyes. Many of the artisans take projects home to keep working on them, several seamstresses note. Lotus has always enjoyed sewing, she says, but it is fun to be at the Ranch working with a group of people.

Martha Davis, the backbone of the Artisans group, pulls out a bag of smaller dolls she has made to show me. Each tiny pioneer doll, which looks just like something out of Little House on the Prairie, wears a tiny bonnet that matches her dress, a lacy pair of bloomers, and a little half apron. Martha has been involved at Rock Ledge Ranch since 1999, and has served as a docent in the Orchard House, the clothing librarian, and now the leader of the Artisans. She learned to sew from her mother, who taught Martha and her three sisters from an early age.

Martha emphasizes the importance of having items for sale in the General Store that were made right here at the Ranch. Many times, she says, you go to a special place and there isn't anything for sale that was made right there, but here at the Ranch, you'll find many special gifts and treasures in the store that Ranch volunteers have made onsite. The connection to the physical place is an incredibly valuable part of the work they are doing, Martha explains. It makes the experience more real and the memories more long-lasting.

The Artisans group is open to anyone, regardless of sewing experience or proficiency. There is always work to be done, Martha states, that doesn't require a seamstress ("Anyone can stuff chicks!" someone chimes in). Many people have learned or vastly improved their sewing skills through involvement with the Artisans. If you are interested in learning more or joining the group, contact us at info@rockledgeranch.com.

So next time you see a cute little chick, a superior sheep, or a darling dress in the General Store, you know where they came from: right here on the Ranch, made by the careful and loving hands of our generous Artisans group. The General Store will be open during all of our special events this fall, make sure you stop in to pick up something for yourself, and for a friend!

AROUND THE BEND...

This week may be the last week of our summer living history program for this year, but that doesn't mean the Ranch is closed! Remember that the park is open dawn to dusk year-round, plus, fall and winter special events, field trips. School at the RANCH, and many other activities make the Ranch an exciting place to be all year long. We hope you'll continue to visit the park through the fall and winter to watch the seasons change and enjoy the farm animals, trails, and wildlife.

Monday September 2 is Labor Day, which we celebrate at the Ranch with Vintage Base Ball! The Camp Creek Cloud Busters return after a smashing victory last year hoping to win again—with your support! This immersive event invites spectators to join in the historic fun by using period slang, purchasing popcorn and soda from costumed docents, and occasionally get involved in the many shenanigans that come with this classic American pastime. The Ranch will open at 10am, with the first pitch of the baseball game at 1pm. You can purchase your tickets online now at <https://rockledgeranch.com/event/labor-day-vintage-baseball-2/>

The very next weekend, come back to the Ranch for an evening of bread, brews, and bluegrass—or, as it is properly called, Fiddles, Vittles,

and Vino! Sunday, September 8th, more than 29 restaurants provide food and wine samples as guests enjoy music performed by the Bonnie & Taylor Sims Band, Wirewood Station, The Cody Sisters, and The Sleeping Giants. The event begins at 3pm, with doors opening at 2:30. Tickets are available for purchase now at the TB hut or online at <https://fiddlesvittlesandvino.com> Members can receive a \$10 discount on tickets, if they purchase in-person at the TB hut. The proceeds from this event go to further restoration projects and agricultural programs at Rock Ledge Ranch, and we are thankful to the Club Nine chefs, the talented musicians, and the event organizers for bringing this beloved event back to Rock Ledge Ranch!

The 14th Annual Garden of the Gods Powwow at Rock Ledge Ranch is Saturday, Septem-

ber 21, from 10am-5pm! Join us for this special event celebrating and honoring the history and cultures of Native Americans through song, dance, and traditions.

Do you or someone you know have preschool-aged children? Rock Ledge Ranch has a weekly preschool program called Barnyard Buddies Storytime, where Ranch staff engage young learner's imaginations by reading several children's books. Barnyard Buddies Storytime is every Thursday morning at 10:30, and the first Thursday of each month the Barnyard Buddies First Thursday program includes a snack, a craft, and an activity as well as storytime. The First Thursday programs are by registration only, so make sure you sign up at [https://www.signupge-nius.com/go/5080E49A5AF23A5F94-46536507-rock#/#/](https://www.signupge-nius.com/go/5080E49A5AF23A5F94-46536507-rock#/). This program is free for members and costs \$4 per child for non-members.

MAY AND JUNE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday August 17

Last Day of Summer Living History Program 2024

Sunday August 18

Volunteer Appreciation Event

Thursday August 22

Barnyard Buddies Storytime, 10:30am

Thursday August 29

Barnyard Buddies Storytime, 10:30am

Monday September 2

Labor Day Vintage Base Ball at the Ranch,
10am-3pm



The wonderful sewing ladies

Thursday September 5
Barnyard Buddies First Thursday program,
10:30am

Sunday September 8
Fiddles, Vittles, and Vino, 3pm-8pm

Thursday September 12
Barnyard Buddies Storytime, 10:30am

Thursday September 19
Barnyard Buddies Storytime, 10:30am

Saturday September 21
Garden of the Gods Powwow at Rock Ledge Ranch

Thursday September 26
Barnyard Buddies Storytime, 10:30am

Saturday October 5
Harvest Festival, 10am-5pm

Wednesday October 30
Fall Homeschool Day, 10am-2pm

Thursday October 31
Holiday Teas Registration opens for Members

Saturday November 2
Everything but the Oink, 10am-5pm

Saturday December 14
Holiday Evening, 4pm-8pm



Junior Docents picking cherries

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Rock Ledge Ranch is partnering with many other organizations and city departments to improve and increase our programs and community impact! Some of our community partners in July and August include:

**City of Colorado Springs Horticulture
Department**

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

**City of Colorado Springs Office of
Accessibility**

**City of Colorado Springs Communications
Department**

Howbert Elementary School

**City of Colorado Springs Facilities
Department**

**City of Colorado Springs Information
Technology Department**