

WEST WORD

Old Colorado City Historical Society

March 2000

When Laughlin *Shot* Devlin in Colorado City "The Rest of the Story"

Anyone who has read the history - either long or short - of Colorado City, knows the story of the shootout between Jim Laughlin and Pat Devlin in 1860. It is one of the legendary tales of the West.

Until now, Laughlin and Devlin seemed like caricatures of all the gunfighters of the West. Maybe even fictional. All the details of this incident, coming down to us from the very earliest days of Colorado City's existence, such as who the protagonists were, where they came from, why they decided to settle their disagreement by arms, and what happened afterwards, were lost to history - or so we who have studied history thought.

Thanks to the timely visit to the Old Colorado City History Center by Madora Laughlin Boyd from Seattle, a direct descendant of James Laughlin, we now know much better what happened and why. And now we even know where it started and happened.

Thanks to Deanna Holcomb Bowman, of the Black Forest, now a member of our Society, who herself is distantly related to Laughlin and Madora, but even more directly to the pioneer Holcomb family whose line is buried at Colorado City's 3rd Cemetery - now Pioneer park in the Pleasant Valley residential area - we have valuable new, and accurate information on several pioneers - both the famous and infamous. And where they lived, farmed, and ranched in the very earliest days of

Colorado City's history. Once again we can thank our Web Site and E-mail for helping us corral this invaluable part of our local history.

During a two hour taped interview with these two ladies in our research room at the Center on January 15, 2000, we were able to piece together, not just for our Society's record, but for their family too, a more complete picture of what took place on the summer's day 140 years ago.

The following narrative gives the essence of

what led up to the shootout between Devlin and Laughlin and what happened to the survivor. Much of the information came from Madora, stories handed down by her family, and entries in her family bible.

James Laughlin, who was born in Maryland in 1834, came west in a covered wagon to the Rocky Mountains in 1858 after a trip to California years earlier during the gold rush. He did not strike gold there but sold to the gold seekers. He was married by this time to a cultured and well educated lady, Josephine,

who was a school teacher from Clear Creek, Ohio.

Jim traveled to the gold camps west of Denver, where he was more interested in selling to the miners than hunting for gold himself. He and Josephine had a son, which they named Denver M. Laughlin.

By 1860, Laughlin owned a 160 acre farm on 'Pope's Bluff', which is the bluff to the north of Garden of the God's Road. One corner of the farm touched the Stagecoach road from Colorado City. He raised potatoes and took them to Denver to sell.

(continued on page 4)



Cartoon Created for OCCHS by:
Chester Commodore Feb. 2000

Old Colorado City Historical Society

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WEST WORD Editor c/o OCCHS
1 South 24th Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80904-3319

SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 15TH OF EACH MONTH

MISSION

The Old Colorado City Historical Society was formed to maintain the memory of Colorado City (1859-1917), to encourage research, preserve pictures, and keep alive the unique culture and spirit of West Side Colorado Springs through education of children and the community and through the establishment of a History Center.

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships are welcome at any time. Membership renewals are due on the anniversary date of the initial membership. Members receive the *West Word* newsletter, discounts, local meetings and programs.

Annual membership classifications are:

Individual -- \$20	Business --- \$50
Family --- \$25	Corporate -- \$250

Funds from a Lifetime membership are placed into a Perpetuity/Endowment Fund to be used only for projects which have been approved by two-thirds of the membership. Only the interest will be used for current expenses. We welcome gifts to this fund, which will be credited to the donor or as a memorial.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Gordon Gray	630-8238
Vice President	Beverley Disch	634-5023
Secretary	Donald Ellis	447-0424
Treasurer	David Hughes	636-2040
	Robert Heinich	488-9001
	Leo Janzen	227-7662
	Agnes Johnson	633-8040

MEETINGS

OCCHS Monthly Meeting & Program is held at 11:00 a.m. on the second Friday of each month, except during June, July, and August. The History Center opens at 10:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting for refreshments and visitation. The program begins at 11:00 a.m. The OCCHS Monthly Meeting is free and open to the public.

Next Monthly Meeting
March 10, 2000
at the History Center



Explore the REAL History!

at the

OLD COLORADO CITY
HISTORY CENTER

1 South 24th Street

(the corner of Pikes Peak & 24th Street)

(719) 636-1225

FREE ADMISSION

WINTER HOURS

TUES - WED - THURS - FRI - SAT

12 Noon to 4:00 P.M.

Closed Sunday & Monday

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From the Board

The President's Message

First, I want to thank all the members and friends who contributed to the 1999 First Annual Appeal. It was a big success with 31 people contributing a total of \$1,815. This money will be well spent this year to help us meet critical operating expenses. On page 7 of the *West Word* you will find an article on this appeal.

In 2000, the Board will concentrate on getting the collections in order and preserved so that in years to come, people can continue to enjoy the many fine artifacts that we have on the history of Colorado City and the surrounding area. As Dave Hughes mentions in his Treasurer's Report, we have a lot of things going on behind the scenes. LaDonna Gunn and her team of volunteers are well underway with updating the inventory of artifacts; the method by which they are being stored and protected; and the overall procedures that are necessary to manage our collection. We can always use additional volunteers in this area, so if you have a few free hours a week, please call the Center and tell the volunteer in the bookstore that you are interested in working in this area. Someone will get back to you promptly.

We are having a "Spring Clean Up Session" on the afternoon of Friday, May 12th. We intend to clean and organize the entire building from top to bottom. We need to organize things; get rid of things we do not need; file things; and in general --- *Get Our House In Order*. The lower level of the Center, aka the Basement, is an area that we need to get organized and cleaned up. We will need to spend some money in the future to make this part of the building an area that is safe for the storage of our artifacts. If you have a free afternoon, we can use all the 'hands' we can find. Call the Center and leave your name and a message that you are interested in helping OCCHS with the May Clean Up Day. We plan to start the afternoon's activities at 12 noon and work until 4:30 or 5:00 p.m. I am sure there will be a follow-up Saturday to complete all the work that needs to be done.

You will notice on page 8 of the *West Word*, that we are planning a Bake Sale on Saturday, March 11th. This is the day of the St. Patrick's Day Parade and Betsy Evans is going to have a lot of home made goodies available in the parking lot at the Center. Betsy and Bev Disch will be calling our 'resident bakers' asking them to help with this event. What a chance to bake that "Family Prized Pastry" and bring it to the event. Please call the Center and leave your name and number if you can help in any way. In addition to bakers we need volunteers to help sell during the day.

Our Technology Sale is scheduled for April 29th. This will be a chance for us to 'unload' all the computer equipment that we no longer need but which still has some value to the right person. We are also getting donations of equipment from local dealers and we hope to make this a very successful fund raising event. Richard Rhodes has volunteered to head up this event and if you can help in any way, please leave a message for him at the Center.

Last but not least, you will see an article in the newsletter about an award that Lance Michels won recently. Congratulations Lance.....we have a 'celebrity' among our membership.

Until next month,

Gordon

January Treasurer's Report

The first month of the new year has passed and the financial transition of our accounts from 1999 has taken place. We are on track to a break-even year with the Board approved 2000 Budget. We still will have to work hard to increase membership, increase our endowment, the earned interest from which is needed to cover our basic, no-employee costs. And we need to do better than last year in the profit from our several fundraising events - Territory Days, Founder's Day Dinner, Cemetery Crawl, the Bed. The B&B Tour was great and now our new theatrical shows are very promising. We made \$750 on our first one.

We started 2000 with a new Certificate of Deposit, where our main endowment asset of \$60,000 will earn us 6.1% interest this year. Together with our old \$752,000 5.15% CD, we can expect to earn just \$3,565 the rest of this year. But our annual basic maintenance costs are \$6,000 a year -- a \$2,000 gap. We need a \$100,000 Endowment Fund if we are to pay our basic light, heat, insurance, security, telephone, copier lease costs annually from earned interest alone, which we should be doing.

While we started February with \$11,396 in the bank, \$10,863 of this is already committed. We have a legal obligation with the State of Colorado to have nearly \$10,000 cash on hand by October to pay for the Guide Book up front, which won't generate revenue worth counting until the year 2001. And we have to make up the maintenance shortfall. So, we have less than \$600 of our bank balance to use for general purposes.

But one thing our new budget permits, is the use of our available funds for the vital, core, work of this Society, which is the collection, evaluation, preservation, form, photography and video form, and artifact form - of Colorado City and the old Westside.

The unseen work going on in the Research Room, Computer Room, and the Basement of our History Center, headed by LaDonna Gunn and the volunteers that she directs, is the only way that the history of Colorado City will be here in place 100 years from now. But they have to have some modern means - not just cast away stuff - to really turn our storage room into a place fit for a museum. We have had for too long too little cash to really make progress in accessioning and taking care and displaying on a rotating basis our 20,000 photographs, 5,000 artifacts and publications. We need to improve our dank, dirty, basement storage facilities with nondestructive shelving and technologies. We also do not have forever to resume videotaping oral histories of long time Westsiders who will not be with us forever. We need digital storage media to feed Richard Rhodes fine loaned equipment and his volunteer professional time, to pursue that strategic goal. Seeking a grant for at least \$5,000, helping match that by member donations, for this purpose is a realistic but necessary shot term goal.

We are off to a good solid start and will not be scrambling to pay our basic bills in the coming year. Our financial projections and records are available for member inspection at the Center at any time.

Dave Hughes
Treasurer

When Laughlin Shot Devlin.....

(continued from page 1)

Pat Devlin appeared on the scene with a herd of cattle. The reason that Laughlin temporarily 'partnered' with Devlin was that Devlin needed a privately owned place to put his cattle. If he let them roam free, travelers would steal them. So, as the story comes down through the Laughlin family, in return for half the sale price of the cattle, Devlin had a place to put his animals until he could drive them over the 'Great Divide' - (today's Monument Hill) which is the last place the snow melts in the Spring between Pikes Peak and Denver. He could then sell them in Denver and fetch a nice price.

Well, Devlin did just that. But this shadowy figure was of questionable character according to the locals who had heard of him. In fact, he had been a Kansas Raider in 1856 - those cross border raiders who privately plundered in Missouri. His cattle herd could well have been rustled or stolen. An Irish immigrant, he fancied he was a fast draw with a gun and he was a hard drinker and womanizer. Once he sold his cattle in Denver, he went on a drinking spree and spent all of his money.

When Devlin returned to Laughlin's farm which was closer to Colorado City than Denver, he was broke, with no money to pay his partner. Jim Laughlin got so angry that Devlin challenged him to a shootout. Jim, a peaceable man, did not even own a gun. Pat was always armed and wanted to show off. So the shootout was set for a time after Laughlin got a gun in Colorado city. It would be a great place for braggart Devlin to show off his prowess.

So Laughlin rode to Colorado City down the stage road that ran past his ranch and down the Camp Creek branch of Fountain Creek, which follows today's 30th Street. The route terminates on West Colorado Avenue at 28th Street, which was the center of town in 1860. Jim bought a double barreled shotgun.

When Jim was warned that Pat Devlin was on the way, he took up a position between two cabins on what is now 28th Street, which was the main road to Denver. He waited.....

Pat Devlin walking down the same road was heard to shout, "I've come to get you Jim Laughlin." Some say that he did this to draw a crowd to the shootout that he was confident he would win. Pat and Jim saw each other as Pat passed the opening between the buildings. Jim said "Mornin Pat" and pulled the trigger. Pat fell wounded in the street. He never got a shot off. But the gunfighter's code of the West was upheld. Pat saw and heard his assailant address him before he was shot and that was fair and square.

The Colorado City towns folk quickly assembled and the El Paso Claim Club, a group of businessmen who often acted as a vigilante committee took charge. The Claim Club, a direct ancestor of today's West Colorado Springs

Commercial Club, served as all three branches of 'government' in the total absence of such. The Sheriff was 600 miles away because this was still Kansas Territory. The Claim Club recorded deeds in the absence of county government, hung horse thieves, kept a resemblance of order, and in general promoted and ran the town.

Seeing that Devlin was badly wounded and medical help was far away, the towns folk were sure he would die sooner or later. Besides, they had other business to attend to in the very young city, such as working on the wagon road up Ute Pass so that the wagon trains could pass.

Even though Pat Devlin was not dead, the Claim Club tried Jim Laughlin for murder on the spot. But the pioneers meting out such swift justice observed all the elements of an American's right to trial by jury - frontier style. The Claim Club appointed a prosecutor, a defense, acted themselves as judge, and made the people standing around in the street be the jury. The whole trial lasted 20 minutes. They found Laughlin not guilty because Pat Devlin was know to be a bad man. The nominal reason was 'self defense'. Some say it was 'justifiable homicide'. Besides, Laughlin was a likable, peaceful, family man.

Devlin did not die until three weeks later. Some say he started the Colorado City cemetery. Well, at that time, there was a sort of Boot Hill above what is now 26th and Pikes Peak Avenue and behind what is now the ice cream store. He probably was buried there.

Jim Laughlin went back to his farm and continued to live, ranch and farm there peaceably with his family. His brother (or possibly a cousin) Hugh Laughlin owned a ranch east of Monument Creek and one south of where Fountain and Monument Creek join.

Jim later bought lots in Colorado City. In 1862, a daughter, Madora Jane, was born and in 1864, Grace Rose was born. After the Federal government pulled the soldiers from the frontier to fight in the Civil War in the east, the Indians began to go on the warpath. In 1864, after several killings and scalplings too close to Colorado City for comfort his comfort, Jim Laughlin took his family and went to Missoula, Montana. He never returned and died peaceably but not before his wife, Josephine, having gotten a small inheritance from her mother, left old Jim for a fling of her own in San Francisco.

Guess you could call it the Woman's Lib of the Day!

by:
Madora Laughlin Boyd
Deanna Holcomb Bowman
David Ralph Hughes



James F. Laughlin

MEMBER PROFILE LaRue Ebersole

BEING SHIPWRECKED on a proverbial tropical island is not a common occurrence in the average Colorado Interstate Gas (CIG) employee's history. But it happened to LaRue Ebersole in October 1946. He was one of the crewmen on the 40-man minesweeper YMS275 when it went aground on a small island near Okinawa during a typhoon. The storm had winds of over 200 mph and wrecked or sank 50 other ships, but were no serious injuries on LaRue's minesweeper.

LaRue was a long way from home when that incident occurred right after World War II. He was born on Easter Sunday, April 20, in Fredericktown, Ohio; but his family moved to Colorado Springs shortly after his birth. After Colorado Springs High School, he later went on to the University of Colorado and eventually received his bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering.

After serving in the Navy and experiencing the power of a super typhoon, "Eb" married Patricia Cassidy in Pueblo. Then in 1948 he joined CIG's Catholic Protection Group and worked in that area until 1956, when he was promoted to Project Engineering. In 1958, he transferred into Telecommunications and Corrosion and worked in this area for many years.

Most of us take our amazing telecommunications network for granted. However, the CIG system was most complex and the company was a pioneer in developing the telemetry and microwave systems that are in use today. Karl Hagius, a retired CIGer, designed the original system; and it was supplemented through the years by engineers such as LaRue and this team of technicians.

LaRue had numerous technical papers published in various communications and industrial magazines and was honored by his peers on many occasions. He served as president of Energy Telecommunications and Electrical Association (1975-76); Chairman of the Petroleum Frequency Coordinating Committee (1960-61 and 1968-69); vice chairmen of the API Central Committee on Telecommunications (1970-74); various communications and radio committees for the State of Colorado, El Paso County, and Educational TV; CSU Vocational Education Curriculum Committee; UCCS Engineering Advisory Council; USC Electrical Engineering Technology Advisory Committee; and as president and state director of the Pikes Peak Professional Engineers of Colorado.

Although a registered engineer, his interest encompasses more than his profession. In local politics, he was precinct committeeman for eight years. At Grace Episcopal Church, he has served as a vestryman, junior and senior warden, lay reader, and chalice bearer.

LaRue and Pat, have three grown children: Nadine, a librarian at Ft. Carson; LaRue, Wildoats answer line; and Diann, a graphic artist in California.

LaRue retired in 1986 and he and Pat enjoy round dancing, square dancing, gardening, and living in a earth sheltered home that they built in Crystal Park. They have been very active members of the Society for many years.

Bottoms Rood a HUGE Success

On Friday evening, February 4th there was a huge crowd at the History Center to see the Victorian Murder Mystery, Bottoms Rood. This was the first venture by the Society into this kind of an event and we hope to have another performance in the fall. Audience participation was essential to the solution of the murder and this event was produced by Red Herring Productions.

The following letter was received from Lee Michels, who was the organizer of the event.

"The murder mystery, "Bottoms Rood", held at the History Center was a great success. We had a "sold out" crowd and one and all enjoyed the show. This was made possible by the effort and support of many people. I appreciate everyone's help and donations. As you are well aware, OCCHS would not exist without the support of the members and community. It was a pleasure working with all of you and I look forward to many future events.

A very special thanks to Red Herring Productions who not only donated a substantial amount of their normal fee but also the winners' prizes. Thank you Don, Mike, Donna, Charlie, Joannie and Michael!"

*Best Regards,
Lee Michels*



*Bottoms Rood Cast Members (left to right)
Lee - Mike - Joannie - Michael - Donna - Charlie - Don*

HISTORY IN YOUR HOUSE?

With a grant from the State Historical Fund, the Old Colorado City Historical Society and author/historian Cathleen Norman are producing a Walking Tour Guide to the historic architecture of the West Side. We plan to include as much historic information as we can. If you have historic information about your house (or business), or any West Side building, we would very much appreciate having that information to use in the Walking Tour Guide and for our archives. Please call the Center to set up an appointment.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

A Star is Born.....

Lance Michels, a member of our Society, is to be congratulated for winning the 21st Annual Buffalo Bill Look-alike Contest!!! This event was held on February 26th at the Buckhorn Exchange in Denver. The Buckhorn is the oldest bar and restaurant in Denver and is a place that Bill visited frequently when he lived in the area.

This is the second year that Lance has entered the contest and last year he won the Honorable Mention. Lance has been active in the Gunfighters Group for about 7 years and when people started telling him that he looked like William Cody, he began to become interested in researching his life. Cody traveled through Colorado City frequently during his travels and Lance would be very interested if anyone has any stories about Cody. He would like to interview them and also see or obtain any memorabilia items.

The criteria by which Lance was chosen was his knowledge of the life of William Cody; the authentic costume that he wore during the event; and the 'look-alike' appearance.

You can be the judge of the pictures below that were taken of Lance during the contest. Look up a picture of Bill and see if you don't think they look like twins.

Congratulations Lance and to his wife, Lee. How does it feel, Lee, to be married to a celebrity? Lance as Bill and Lee's portrayal as Madam Laura Belle, of Colorado City fame, make this couple unique and unlike any other.



Will the REAL Buffalo Bill Please Come Forward!!



(pictures of Lance Michels at the 21st Annual Buffalo Bill Look-alike Contest, Denver, CO February 2000)

Book Review by: Agnes Johnson

A review of the book, "Colorado Gold Rush Days -- Memories of a Childhood in the 1880-1890s" by Carrie Hunt Beard.

Carrie Hunt Beard was born in Burlingame, Kansas in 1881, and came to Colorado with her parents on May 24, 1887.

Her father rented a four-room house, bought a nanny goat and a wagon for her little brother and started a cafe, which became very popular and made a good living.

She writes, "An outstanding customer was gambler Jack Diamond. He was a flashy dressed person - wore a fancy vest always, and carried a gold-headed cane. When he was flush and his luck was good, he paid fancy prices for fancy meals; but when he ran out of luck, Father trusted him. One day he got in a fight with Father's brother, Uncle Billy, and when Father objected, he struck him over the head with the cane. It cut a deep gash several inches in length and required several stitches. He either paid for his meals after that or went without."

Her father started a meat market also. According to her, "The meat market was a small, one room building, but it was not too small to curtain off a front corner to exhibit a petrified man, at ten cents a look. Father either shared in the receipts or charged the exhibitor a rental fee. As members of the family, we children were privileged to go in and look at him free as often as we liked. He lay in a coffin and was supposed to have been an adult; but as I remember, he must either have been a very small man or shrunk in the process of petrification. He was quite gray in color, but was realistic enough. A sign in the coffin said not to touch him. But since I had many opportunities to slip in alone, my curiosity finally got the better of me and I touched his face. It was stone cold and the experience made me a little sick."

(Carrie Hunt Beard's book is available in the OCCHS Book Store)

OUR CONTINUING NEEDS LIST

We continue to need items for the History Center and Museum. If you have any of the items listed below and are willing to donate them, please give Gordon Gray a call at the Center.

Metal shelving appropriate for storage of items

Wooden shelving for use in the office

Office accessories - staplers, tape dispensers, etc.

Blank computer diskettes - 3 1/2 size

Office type filing cabinet

Card table(s)

If you have other items that you believe might be of use to the Center, please give Gordon a call, 636-1225, to discuss further.

1999 ANNUAL APPEAL

The 1999 OCCHS Annual Appeal was a huge success and I want to thank everyone for their support. The money will be well used to support the Society in the coming year. Contributions to the appeal totaled \$1,815.00!!!

The Society thanks the following members who contributed to the appeal:

- ◆ Virginia Black
- ◆ Marilyn Caduff - Century Club
- ◆ Lois Carr
- ◆ Jean Christopher
- ◆ Norman Clark
- ◆ Rebecca Hughes Clark
- ◆ Georgia Croff
- ◆ Ira Current
- ◆ Beverly Disch
- ◆ Barbara Ewell
- ◆ George & Ernestine Fagen
- ◆ Leland & Evelyn Feitz
- ◆ Pam Franklin
- ◆ Eileen Graham
- ◆ Gordon & Becky Gray
- ◆ LaDonna Gunn
- ◆ Alfred Hagedorn
- ◆ Samuel Hall
- ◆ Anna-Leah Hathaway
- ◆ Bob & Chris Heinich
- ◆ Andralee Holland
- ◆ William & Geraldine Iverson
- ◆ Ken & Mid Kolstad
- ◆ Mel McFarland
- ◆ Beverly Mason
- ◆ Constance Murray
- ◆ Forest Porter
- ◆ Maloa Read
- ◆ Jim & Virginia Black
- ◆ Mike Stapp
- ◆ Kristine Van Wert

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE

1999 Annual Appeal

Building our Endowment

The endowment of OCCHS is viewed by the Board as ultimately providing the basic operating expenses of the History Center. Income from the Book Store, treasure sales, craft shows, etc., help considerably but are not enough "to keep the door open." The income from the highly successful B&B tours are earmarked for specific projects. Grants also are targeted for specific program goals, not for operating expenses. So it is to the income from the endowment that we must look to guarantee the continued operation of the History Center.

Based on close to three years experience, the Board estimates that \$20,000 a year would pay for basic operating expenses including a part-time director. The income from an endowment of \$400,000 would cover our basic needs, freeing up other income to further the mission of the Center. But our endowment is currently just over \$60,000. How do we make the seemingly giant leap from \$60,000 to \$400,000?

We would like to suggest some vehicles the membership can use to help the Society reach the goal of \$400,000.

Monetary donations dedicated to the endowment are an immediate help and are tax deductible. Another way of immediately increasing the fund is by donation of stock. You may be holding a stock that has appreciated significantly in value but it's sale would result in a stiff capital gains tax. Donation of the stock to the Society will give you a sizable deduction on your income tax. Of course we will accept any stock regardless of appreciation!

You may mention the Society in your will. Many of us are getting to the age when we start thinking about final disposition of our assets. If you have had a commitment to the Society you may want to help insure it's continuance by willing part of your estate to the endowment.

When Bev Disch's Mother died last year, she asked friends to send a donation to the Society in lieu of flowers. If you have a commitment to the Society, you might consider doing the same when a relative or a close friend passes on.

A charitable remainder trust is another vehicle you might consider. The trust is created by immediately committing a sum of money with a charitable organization as the beneficiary. You may continue to receive the income from the money in the trust with the principal going to the Society when you pass on. Of course, if you do not need the income from the trust, it can go directly into the endowment. Charitable remainder trusts are becoming very popular among those who have done well during these very prosperous times.

The annual gift appeal initiated last December is a good end of the year donations to the Society and an income tax deduction. The response to our this initial annual appeal was most gratifying.

We are still selling dedicated bricks for the patio at \$100 each. A commemorative brick is a lasting tribute as well as a boost for the endowment.

If you are interested in providing for the Society in your will, or creating a charitable remainder trust, we suggest that you talk to your financial advisor or attorney. If you prefer, we do have knowledgeable people available to help you on a firm confidential basis. But do think about how you might be able to help the Society reach its goal of \$400,000.

Bob Heinich, Board Member