

# The Cave Creek Museum

From horse soldiers to resort developments, the desert foothills have been a spectacle of historic and prehistoric dimensions.

Set in the shadow of majestic Black Mountain, the Cave Creek Museum offers a view to the past.

Thousands of years ago, Hohokam farmers dug 2,000 miles of irrigation canals to water their crops. Tools, pottery, jewelry, and other artifacts in the Museum collection give insight into these productive, innovative people.

In the late 1800s, people returned again to farm, ranch and prospect for gold, silver, copper, jasper and other mineral riches. See the implements, home goods and special exhibits describing the lives and experiences of our most recent predecessors.

The first church of Cave Creek and the last original tubercular cabin in Arizona, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, are among the outside exhibits. An impressive ten-stamp ore crushing mill, reconstructed and revitalized to its original use, is operational and runs on specific dates during the year.

Cave Creek Museum Docents share anecdotes and additional information to enrich the extensive exhibits and your experience — or enjoy the Museum on your own.

The spectacular history of the Desert Foothills is yours to see and enjoy at the Cave Creek Museum.

Museum hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.; early opening on Fridays at 10:00 a.m. Closed holidays.

Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 super adults and students.  
Children under 12 admitted free.

The Museum is open for the season from the first Wednesday in October to the last Sunday in May.

For more information: Call 480 - 488 - 2764 or visit [www.cavecreekmuseum.org](http://www.cavecreekmuseum.org)

# Cave Creek Museum

## Annual Report

2024—2025



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***The Cave Creek Museum is a 501 (c) (3) organization***

**Federal Identification: 94-2404270**



### *Mission Statement of the Cave Creek Museum*

*The Mission of the Cave Creek Museum is to preserve the artifacts of the prehistory, history, culture and legacy of the Cave Creek Mining District and the Cave Creek/Carefree foothills area through education, research, and interpretative exhibits.*

#### *Cover Photo:*

*“Suited to Serve,” featured exhibit in the Ansbaugh Auditorium, displays uniforms and memorabilia from different branches of military service.*

*Annual Report Editing and Layout: Stephanie Bradley*



***Remembering Dear Friends  
Who Have Left Us ...  
and Whose Loss We Feel Deeply***

✦ **Jesse Monongya** — renown Navajo/Hopi jeweler passed away on August 6, 2024. Jesse spoke at the museum in the past and gave his stunning “Bear II” necklace, on display in the Becwar case, as a gift to the museum.

✦ **Patrick Neal** — June 10, 2024 longtime member and widower of Betty, who was Exhibits chair for many years.

✦ **Jay Williams** — volunteer and docent, passed away October 5, 2024. Jay’s impact remains in the History Wing where his finely detailed model of the Golden Reef Mine site captivates visitors and volunteers alike.

✦ **Sue Beastall** — longtime member and volunteer passed away on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. Sue also served on the Board of Directors and was an enthusiastic docent.

**★AWARDS★**

**The Arizona Historical Society's  
2024 AI Merito Award**

**★GRANTORS★**

**AZ Commission for the Arts  
AZ Historical Society  
Griffith Foundation  
Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest  
Kiwanis Club of Carefree  
Town of Cave Creek**

**★AFFILIATIONS★**

**American Association of Museums  
American Association of State and Local History  
Central Arizona Museum Association  
Carefree/Cave Creek Chamber of Commerce  
Museum Association of Arizona**

**★WEB-BASED COLLABORATIONS★**

**Arizona State Library and Archives:  
Arizona Memory Project**

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2024-2025

### PRESIDENT

KEITH OTSUKA

### VICE PRESIDENT

PATRICK O'BRIEN

### TREASURER

BETH RESCIGNO

### RECORDING SECRETARY

WENDY WHITMAN

### BOARD DIRECTORS:

MARCIA D'ALESSANDRO

DAVID GRIFFITHS

TAMSIN WOLFF

### STAFF

JO ANN STUCKEY, MUSEUM DIRECTOR

BUCK COLUMNA, OPERATIONS MANAGER

Of these 38 docents, many only show up once a month. Due to the office circumstances there are docents who were hesitant to sign up because of the uncertainty that there would be back up office help while they were on duty.

Of the approximately half dozen new volunteer applications that have been turned in since last spring, only one person has become active to help on the Miners' Dinner committee and with one off site event.

Our youngest volunteer is in middle school, and she helps occasionally for KFFD or AZGME.

We are missing our teen volunteers who are involved in school activities and sports.

The plan has been to implement a recognition plan for all volunteers and hopefully we can begin to take steps to initiate this soon.

We have ordered and received lanyards with card holders for name tags. These are printed with the CCM logo. We also will be ordering cute desert themed pins (such as cactus, owls, etc.) and award specific pins to be worn on lanyards to recognize years of service to CCM.

To celebrate our Volunteers, we hosted two events in their honor:

- ♦ On March 13, Sue Palmer (who happens to be one of our newest volunteers) presented "A Kiss From France" at the Foothills Library. This was a free event with refreshments following.
- ♦ On April 7 we invited all volunteers to a catered luncheon at the museum. Lanyards and pins were handed out with recognitions for time and years given the museum.

◆◆◆

### VOLUNTEER HOURS (JUNE 2024 THROUGH MARCH 2025):

**Dream Team:** 4,000 hours. At \$33.49 value for volunteer hour equals \$133,960. And I'm sure these numbers are low. Many times the DT do not record all their hours.

**Volunteers:** 5,000 hours. At \$33.49 value for volunteer hour equals \$167,450. I'm sure that this number is low also. Several volunteers have not recorded their time and probably no Board Directors hours. It could easily be over 6,000 hours.



Jo Ann Stuckey

## VISITOR COUNT

LINDA VAREHA

The following data is from  
October 2024 through February 2025.

**NOTE:** These following numbers are based on visitors who signed the Museum's guest book.

A total of 2,095 guests visited the museum from many of the 50 states. A total of 85 foreign travelers visited.

Average visitation was 19 per open hours.

See the following data for individual states and countries:

AK 4	KS 14	NM 10	WVA 2
AL 0	KY 0	NV 11	WI 36
AR 1	LA 0	NY 43	WY 10
AZ 1232	MA 12	OH 38	
CA 97	MD 9	OK 8	Australia 1
CO 21	ME 5	OR 13	Canada 62
CT 2	MI 31	PA 15	England 5
DC 0	MN 83	RI 0	Germany 1
DE 0	MO 8	SC 14	Italy 2
FL 35	MS 6	SD 2	S. Africa 6
GA 9	MT 30	TN 2	Sweden 1
HI 0	NC 20	TX 22	Switzerland 1
IA 14	ND 6	UT 4	UK 3
ID 21	NE 18	VA 2	
IL 72	NH 6	VT 3	
IN 2	NJ 8	WA 91	



## VOLUNTEERS

DEBBIE CLEMENT

We currently have approximately 38 docents with about 30 active. We have 93 volunteers with 49 active volunteers. A few have left or dropped out because of their own personal health or a family issues.

## Cave Creek Museum Proposed Budget FY 25-26 (Does not include VMG)

	Proposed FY 25-26
Income	
Admissions	\$ 29,000
Donations	92,000
Fundraisers	49,000
Grants/Foundations	20,000
Interest	13,000
Memberships	22,000
Museum Store	16,000
Total Income	241,000
Expenses	
Facilities	17,000
Collections & Exhibits	9,000
Education	3,000
Fundraising	10,000
Insurance	16,000
Marketing/Publicity	6,000
Office	8,000
Other Expense	8,000
Payroll Expenses	134,000
Professional Fees	11,000
Museum Store Expense	8,000
Utilities	6,000
Total Expenses	236,000
Net Income	\$ 5,000

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

KEITH OTSUKA

It's been a busy and challenging year. To help us, **Jo Ann Stuckey** and **Buck Columna** have agreed to take permanent positions as the Museum Director and Operations Manager. They have been doing an excellent job in the interim and are staying on to ensure our success.

We have been working to get the museum back on a trajectory of growth and success. Ensuring our processes are compliant with federal and state requirements along with non-profit best practices has provided us with stability. With this, we can move forward with confidence into our next phase and continue with the Strategic Plan.

It has been an honor to serve as your President. While the Cave Creek Museum certainly is very cool, it is the people who make all the difference. The members, volunteers, and staff are what make the CCM both unique and special.

Please remember that you are also part of our history, and you make a difference. Thank you and I hope to see you at the museum!



The project has a budget of \$549,000.00 and nearly \$300,000.00 has already been raised, even before the active public campaign. Strategic partnerships have been formed with key organizations such as The American Legion, Kiwanis, Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sonoran Arts League, and others.

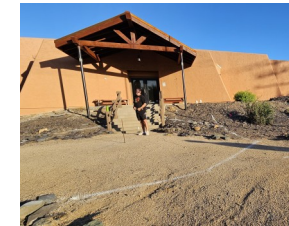
### Phase 1 – Building Frontage

This phase comprises the construction of the re-designed building frontage as designed by Marc Viator.



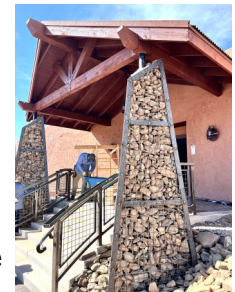
### Phase 2 – Garden Footprint

This phase comprises the tasks necessary to create the physical layout of the garden design. This includes the pavers, irrigation, electrical and water control, as well as the paths and elevations that support each of the military branch service areas. This includes one or more of the gabion walls, the design work of Desert Foothills landscaping, paths, rip-rap and basic plant layout.



### Phase 3 – Populate the Garden

This phase kicks off the public campaign with the ability to donate from a list of available "line items" that individuals can donate. It comprises all of the tasks necessary to fully plant the garden, have functional branch areas, including benches and emblems, memorial opportunities such as the dog tag display, as well as the ability for the public to buy upgraded "specimen grade" plants. They can individually choose to donate a wall, bench, military, emblem, etc.



Excellent progress has been made to date with the completion of the new building frontage.

With bold, custom metal railings and gabion work, the feedback has been very positive about the new, updated look. Significant progress has been made with the layout with pavers and paths outlining the main ground feature. The first of seven distinctive, custom gabion walls are in place providing the public with a preview of the elements that they can donate as we kickoff Phase 3 in the coming months



The museum's fundraisers were successful, and visitor numbers have increased for workshops, experiences and special events. Booth most recently identified/recommended the talent for the 2025 Miners' Dinner.

Booth also began developing a Speakers Bureau to showcase the museum's speaker talent and to further promote the museum and its uniqueness in Cave Creek's former mining district. The goal is to reach out to businesses and organizations in various Valley communities. The framework has been developed and several speakers identified. Next, the speakers and topics will be confirmed and plans made to launch the Bureau in early fall 2025.

Local Landmarks becomes a formal Cave Creek Museum program in spring 2025 and Booth has been working with museum staff (and the Town of Cave Creek) to promote the Landmarks program and each Landmark when publicly dedicated. She has promoted five official Landmarks to date with more planned.

In 2025, Booth will serve as a major marketing contributor to the museum's marketing committee.



## VETERANS MEMORY GARDEN

STEVE GREENBERG

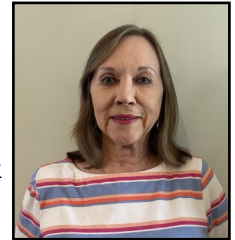
The Veterans Memory Garden (VMG) is our flagship project to modernize and expand the impact of the Cave Creek Museum. This project includes a transformation of the building frontage for impact and curb appeal, while the land in front of the building becomes a special garden destination. The project focuses on honoring our Veterans and provides a dedicated reflection area for each branch of the military. Integrated directly into the Town of Cave Creek's trail system, VMG will allow visitors on foot to transition directly into this unique space. In addition, local master artists will be paired with Veterans to create art pieces that populate the garden while retaining and expressing the thoughts, viewpoints, and memories of our veterans.



## MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JO ANN STUCKEY

Through this year of transition, the operations of CCM have continued full blast, thanks to our wonderful volunteers who continue to support our events, programs, and activities.



Your Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers look forward to giving life to our ideas for achieving our goals for next year. To assist the Board and myself with our grand plan, **Buck Columna** stepped in last fall as our Interim **Operations Manager**. Buck brings excellent skills, expertise, energy and, most importantly, love and commitment to the Museum.

The **Spaghetti Western** and **Miners' Dinner** fundraisers were well attended and were filled with laughter and our brand of western hospitality with delicious food produced by **Harold's** and **Butcher Block**.

Our **Kiwanis Family Fun Days**, sponsored and funded by **Kiwanis Club of Carefree**, are essential educational programs, which increase in popularity. Kiwanis increased its annual funding to allow us to create a new program, **Pre-School Pioneers**, which provides the foundation for littles and their families to become engaged with the museum world.

The **Veterans Memory Garden** is off the blueprint stage and into construction. Be sure to drive by to check the progress of the garden. We will soon be into the next phase.

As we get ready to shift into summer mode, our extremely creative exhibit team and collection team members will be planning on how to collaborate with the Town of Cave Creek to celebrate 40 years of incorporation and to mark 25 years since the creation of Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area. I am happy to report that collaborations with our other town nonprofits on mutual themes for programming and exhibits are on track.

While the museum is closed to the public during our summer season, the fun does not stop. If you would like to join us in the behind-the-scenes work, taking down past exhibits, preparing collections for new displays, administrative support, and general sprucing up the place, please let me know!

Thank you for your continued support.



## ADMISSIONS REPORT

MOLLY TUFTS

Month	Culture Pass*	Roam	Guest	Adult	Student	Vets	Super Srs.	Members	Revenue
Oct.	45	0	3	77	5	1	145	0	\$1978
Nov.	67	0	2	144	10	6	122	0	\$2543.20
Dec.	72	1	0	81	6	9	105	2	\$1770
Jan.	113	5	0	95	14	14	211	0	\$2862
Feb.	111	6	0	115	9	12	254	0	\$3350
March	35	2	0	51	2	2	72	3	\$1102
Thru 3/10/25									
*includes culture passes for all ages									
<b>Totals</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$13,605.20</b>
<b>Through March 3, 2025</b>									

## ARCHAEOLOGY

GWEN HARWOOD



Tasks for 2025 include assessing and documenting the Archaeology Collection and checking Past Perfect entries to determine the accuracy of the data entries. At a future date I would like to discuss with the Director the organization of the Native American pottery collection by cultural groups and provide location and time periods of the cultures.

Last summer the family of Carefree founder **K.T. Palmer** donated a large Hohokam pot found by him near his original home near Troon and Pinnacle Peak. The family reassembled the pieces.

*K.T. Palmer pot*



## PUBLICITY (MEDIA RELATIONS) AND MARKETING REPORT 2024

FRAN BOOTH, ABC, BOOTH COMMUNICATIONS

The Cave Creek Museum had an excellent year of news and promotional coverage in 2024, dominating print publications every month, and often, every week.

The year started with a focus on the new board, then planning ways to promote the museum by “breaking down” information about museum exhibits and plans. The concept was to create lots of story features to build awareness about the museum and to keep interest high throughout the summer months and beyond. Working closely with museum staff and volunteers, Booth found new avenues to promote the many nooks and crannies within the museum, including its people. For example, we promoted the museum’s longest-term volunteers and why they give back; we will continue to showcase museum volunteers and the importance of volunteering and becoming a museum member.

Booth continued to take quality photographs at museum events and workshops to continue to collect an enhanced inventory of good photographs for monthly and future events.

She also contributed regularly to the museum’s social media platform, pushing events and telling its many stories (primarily Facebook) online.



Booth worked closely with the Arizona Gold Mining Experience (AZGME) team, and others, to increase traffic for the monthly demonstrations. The AZGME was promoted as a whole entity and with focus on its various exhibits and dream team members to generate maximum interest. The AZGME crowds grew in size (two demonstrations per month) and popularity. The demonstrations (and mine tour) were full most of the year.

Working closely with the museum, Booth placed approximately 365 stories in Arizona newspapers, journals, magazines, radio and television outlets (the ones that were seen and captured). News also was sent to U.S. tourism publications twice although the outcomes are not known since the museum does not use a media clipping service. However, the value of the marketing and media outreach efforts resulted in thousands of dollars worth of publicity for the museum.



## PROGRAM REPORT: CAVE CREEK PRESENTS

### MOLLY TUFTS

<u>Program</u>	Member Tickets	Non-Member Tickets	Total	Revenue
"Desert Survival and Hiking Basics" by Paul Diefenderfer 10/12/2024	17	32	49	\$320
"Off the Beaten Path" by Tom McGuire 11/2/2024	20	24	44	\$220
Black Mountain: A Study in Black and White by Stephanie Bradley 11/9/2024	18	34	52	\$250
Author Roger Naylor: "Arizona's National Parks and Monuments" 12/7/2024	20	31	51	\$310
Black Mountain: A Study in Black and White by Stephanie Bradley 1/18/2025	15	25	40	\$250
Talk with a Museum Curator <b>*attendance not tracked</b>	—	—	—	—
"Lady Law: The Extraordinary Lorna Lockwood" by Kraig Nelson 3/8/2025	5	4	9	\$40
A Dozen Ways of Dying in the Desert by Len Marcisz 4/5/2025 **	—	—	—	—
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>\$1,390</b>

**\*\*PROGRAMS:  
as of March 8, 2025**

## BYLAWS AND POLICIES

PATRICK O'BRIEN

The following changes were made to the Museum Bylaws dated from July 1, 2022.; enactment date of new Bylaws is December 9, 2024:

- Changed - membership year from fiscal year to a rolling calendar year
- Added - Member may request to speak at a Board meeting
- Changed - better defined the duties of the Board Secretary
- Changed - List of Board Standing Committees
- Added - Defined the position of Museum Director

## BUILDING AND GROUNDS

JO ANN STUCKEY

Due to the vigilance of the **Dream Team** and other volunteers the museum campus is in good shape. We are fortunate to have many eyes always on the lookout for potential "issues" and quick to recommend a solution. Major work on the Gazebo last year, the new front entrance, and other outbuildings bring the major campus structures into good physical condition.

## COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

GWEN HARWOOD



Donations to museum collections continued to be moderate. The major issue for collections was poorly entered data in Past Perfect, our museum software program. The problem was that data entered by our summer intern was not correct. Fall volunteer time was spent cross checking entries and replacing incorrect entries of the 2024 data entries. The good news was

the organization of the Collections Room by the intern. The best news was our new volunteer, **Kathleen Tuley**.

Several surprises occurred in Collections. Boxes of Native American artifacts were found in the storage shed. Newspaper wrappings indicated they were from 1974. A mixed group without provenance, they

must be disposed of properly. An investigation is underway into the proper path to undertake this issue.

Another surprise from the storage shed was a large collection of minerals and rocks that had been donated and accessioned. **Tom McGuire** has consented to assess this collection and discuss proper disposal or placing in Collections for display at a future date. These rocks had also been stored for years.

## DESERT AWARENESS COMMITTEE (DAC) PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW DIANE VASZILY

This year DAC celebrates 51 years of educating about the Sonoran Desert. We love partnering with the Cave Creek Museum for several “family days.” Families and kids love the hands-on activities as well as the opportunity to learn something new about desert life. The museum is the perfect venue for these events!

Our latest family fun day adventure brought squeals of delight from all ages who turned out to become “Wildlife Watchers.” Eight DAC volunteers shared their enthusiasm and love of the Sonoran Desert wildlife! During the Archaeology Expo, another dedicated team of DAC volunteers shared *sand-painting* techniques, allowing families to “paint” one of their own.

This Fall, we were proud to install the new interactive **TIC TAC TOES** board on the museum wall where kids and adults alike try their skill at identifying wildlife tracks.

Watch for our community-wide **Pre-Harvest Seminar** and the famous **Walk Talk and Taste** in the park held every April at Desert Awareness Park in Cave Creek. **Earth Day** is another good time to join us for backyard landscaping advice with native plants. November 1st brings our annual **Prickly Pear Fest** where you can learn the health benefits locked in every part of this prickly plant!

Don’t miss our monthly **Desert Awareness Park Tours**. Learn things you never knew about our Sonoran Desert on this 90 minutes stroll with a team of DAC guides. We will look for you on the trail!

Thank you Cave Creek Museum for your eternal support!



## OUTDOOR EXHIBITS: *The Arizona Gold Mining Experience*

The Arizona Gold Mining Experience continues to draw crowds to watch the stamp mill in action, to try panning for gold, and to explore the **Charlie Connell Mining Campus**.



At the March 25, 2025, Miners’ Dinner, Executive Director Emeritus **Evelyn Johnson** read remarks to the crowd describing the immeasurable contributions of the late Charlie Connell to the restoration of the stamp mill. His knowledge and efforts, along with that of the “Dream Team” volunteers, brought further enhance-

ments to the mining exhibit. Surrounded by Dream Team members in attendance, Charlie’s widow **Kathy Connell** shared memories of her late husband’s vision, commitment and his pleasure at being part of the stamp mill project.



A commemorative plaque, now installed on the campus by the Dream Team, was created by Rick Millard, EdglitDesigns, and unveiled by Kathy Connell.



The **Dream Team** continues to give love and attention to Charlie’s “dream” project. In addition, the team oversees projects large and small in the museum facility and grounds. Their dedication and time honor his memory and our museum’s history.



The borders, graphic enhancements, and creative touches in the newsletter are the result of the skill and talent of Joelle Paleologue who brings newsletters to your computer or phone. Her touches make a compelling setting for editorial and informational material.

The newsletter would present a blank screen were it not for our editorial and photographic contributors to the newsletter. Our thanks to **Fran Booth, Debbie Clement, Buck Columna, Kathy Dwyer, Steve Greenberg, Gwen Harwood, Judith Hatsell, Stacy Holland, Evelyn Johnson, Kraig Nelson, Keith Otsuka, Darlene Southern, Kathy Tuley, and Stephanie Bradley.**

### **Gallery Guide**

Stephanie has photographed and written the gallery guide, which docents distribute to visitors. The guide provides a narrative that highlights many of the ongoing and special exhibits for the Museum year. We print the guides in-house. In addition to the cost savings of printing in-house, we enjoy the convenience of immediate response to diminished supplies and to making changes as exhibits evolve over the museum year.

### **Annual Report**

Stephanie has provided editorial and/or layout for this Annual Report and other writing needs of the Museum.

### **Other Editorial**

Stephanie has also assisted staff and volunteers as needed.

Working with Museum staff and volunteers continues to bring us great pleasure, and serving our Museum is a source of great pride for Joelle and Stephanie.



## **DOCENTS**

### **BUCK COLUMNA**



Our docents are Cave Creek Museum's storytellers. They play an important role in the interpretation of our local history. By breathing life into the stories of the people who lived in our desert foothills, they bring history alive to our visitors.

This season our amazing team of 22 docents donated close to 1,800 hours, an invaluable contribution in our ability to live up to our museum's mission.

This achievement and their own life stories were featured in articles and highlights in local media orchestrated by our press magician **Fran Booth**. We are pleased to announce **Carol Ann Anderson** and **Linda Vareha** have recently joined our docent ranks bringing our number to 24 for the start of next season!



## **EDUCATION: SCHOOL TOURS**

### **DEBBIE CLEMENT**

This year we have a new format for schools to apply for field trips. The information is on our website along with an application to be filled out with specific dates and numbers of students. It is interesting to note that now we are getting interest and attendance from as far away as Surprise, Scottsdale and PV area of Phoenix (Shea Boulevard).



Our numbers have dropped from last year. None of the CCUSD schools scheduled tours, even though I contacted the district office and each third-grade teacher back in August. They are sadly closing a school at the end of the year. This may be a factor.

Another school that was a distance from Cave Creek had to cancel their plans due to bus issues.

An application came in for an elementary school that is on Indian School and 48th St. They requested a visit with 150 students and 30 chaperones. Sadly, we cannot accommodate that large of a school group. The suggestion was offered to them to split the students into at least two visits.



Considering all this I have come up with a proposal for next year.

We are definitely reaching students and educators beyond our local CCUSD district (and I include homeschoolers and charters in this category). I believe this is because they can now apply directly on the website which eliminates numerous phone calls to work out details.

Schools are admittedly having transportation issues (as in the one that had to cancel).

Some schools are too large, and it is not feasible for them to split their students into two or three trips. CCUSD schools are close enough and were willing to do this.

I want to explore the idea of CCM offering a TEM (Travelling Education Museum).

- ♦ We could have a team of two people set up a “tour” for a school, for example, on their stage area. The “museum” would be on campus for 2-3 hours for example and each classroom would come visit for 45 minutes to an hour.
- ♦ This would solve transportation and class size issues for schools such as the one above.
- ♦ When I taught, we did this often where different groups came to the school for presentations.
- ♦ This obviously can be a Kiwanis supported project. We just need a team to put it together and expand our outreach to the student community when it isn’t possible for them to come to us.

I am looking forward to **Tamsin Wolff’s** experience to work together as a team and we hope to launch this program in fall of 2025.

## MUSEUM STORE

### DARLENE SOUTHERN, STORE MANAGER

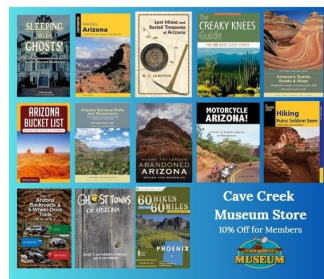
The Cave Creek Museum’s small but mighty Museum Store continues to plug along. So far, net profit of 2025-2026 is just about the same as 2024-2025 BUT...last year we had the benefit of many “special items” donated to the Museum but not appropriate for accession, so donors consented for the pieces to be sold in the Store. So, in consideration of that, our gain in net profit is greater this year!

As far as product is concerned, the Store continues to add lines that reflect the mission of the Cave Creek Museum. Store management will also be working closely with the Exhibit Committee and the Events/Program Committee to proactively bring in books and other items that

will enhance the exhibits, programs and events being developed for 2025-2026.

It is so helpful that our docents and volunteers bring forth suggestions from our visitors and their own ideas regarding product, display, even operating procedures.

**Thank you!**



## NUGGETS NEWSLETTER / OTHER EDITORIAL

### STEPHANIE BRADLEY AND JOELLE PALEOLOGOU

The *Nuggets* newsletter continues to be a lively source of information, calendars, and history for readers, with direct links to event details and reservations.

The digital version is now the sole version of the newsletter, Back issues are available on the museum’s website. The print version, while still popular, proved too cumbersome to continue.

The digital gives readers convenient access to Museum news, upcoming events, and articles on any electronic device, with easy links to additional information. The digital method of communication also provides data to the museum on readership and subscriber interests.

Using the online platform MailChimp, the e-newsletter reaches out to 1,609 readers who are both museum members and followers.

## LANDMARKS PROGRAM

EVELYN JOHNSON

This year the Town of Cave Creek transferred oversight of the Local Landmarks Program to the Cave Creek Museum. The program celebrates Cave Creek's history and the unique places that make Cave Creek what it is.

Twenty locations have been awarded landmark distinction. The last five were awarded plaques during this season: **Black Mountain Summit, Cave Creek Regional Park, Desert Awareness Park, Spur Cross, and Cave Creek Rodeo Grounds.** The Rodeo Grounds has two plaques due to its size. Look for all of the new plaques as you hike, shop or visit local sites.

The Town of Cave Creek has dedicated funds for the continuation of the program over the next three years. The museum is in the process of creating a link on its website for landmarks information. Additionally, the town's website will have a link to the museum's, offering two routes to landmarks material.



## MEMBERSHIP

MOLLY TUFTS

MEMBERSHIP: 38 new Members this year

Membership Type	No of Memberships
Agave	22
Business-Quail	1
Cholla	54
Ocotillo	6
Sage	46
Saguaro	10
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>139</b>

## EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

STEPHANIE BRADLEY

Thanks to our History and Auditorium Exhibits Team: **Stephanie Bradley, Gwen Harwood, Judith Hatsell, Evelyn Johnson, Patty Kelbley, Kathy Tuley, Linda Vareha and members of the Dream Team, whose talents, patience and creativity made installation of exhibits possible.**

### HISTORY WING

The History Wing is a timeline, beginning with "the cave" followed by the arrival of the military, prospectors, ranchers (featuring the **Cartwright** family), and settlers.. A section on tuberculosis ties in with the museum's TB cabin.

Dude ranch photos capture chipper cowgirl and cowboy wannabes from around the world who stayed at **Sierra Vista, Spur Cross or Rancho Mañana Dude Ranches.**

**The Mother's Club** was the de facto government in Cave Creek, starting kindergarten and local schooling in a time when kids had to travel an hour or more to high schools in Phoenix. The group published **the Vacuum Cleaner** (later **Black Mountain News** and now **Foothills Focus**). Amusing excerpts are part of the exhibit along with a dial phone that is always a hit with young and old.

**Faces of Cave Creek** moved into the corner and features artists **Lon Megargee** and **John Wade Hampton**. Nearby is an original sign for Cave Creek, designed by and promoted by Hampton. Framed photos of last year's "faces", **Catherine Jones, George Mileham** and **Hube Yates**, remain on view as well.



A rifle collection rounds out the perimeter of the room. In the center are two freestanding exhibits: one, a model of Black Mountain with video enhancement; the other features memorable vintage toys.

### THE ANSBAUGH AUDITORIUM

The remarkable Sonoran Desert critters and plants are in the **Desert Awareness Committee (DAC)** cubes, part of the natural history exhibit. Nearby, the **Desert Awareness Committee's** "Tic Tac Toes" is a fun identification scheme for young and old.

**Rudolph Becwar's** collection of sculptures capturing Native American life is featured in his donated case,



along with the necklace donated to the museum by the late **Jesse Monongya**.

The featured exhibit “**Suited to Serve**” highlights military uniforms and other memorabilia, bringing attention to the museum’s developing **Veteran’s Memory Garden**.

### MINI WING

The mini wing features “Chow Time in the Mine,” lunch pails and sundries used by miners.

The Carefree exhibit now includes the diary of **KT Palmer**. On the north wall is a colorful, oversized birds-eye view of downtown Carefree and Cave Creek, on loan from the town of Carefree.



## FUND RAISING

### Spaghetti Dinner and Miners’ Dinner

### SPAGHETTI WESTERN DINNER DAVID GRIFFITHS AND BETH RESCIGNO

Revenue	Revenue	Cost of Goods Sold	Profit	Profit Margin
Bake Sale	\$ 377	\$ -	\$ 377	
Dinner	6,110	1,188	4,922	
Donation	700	-	700	
Raffle	515		515	
Silent Auction	4,645	818	3,828	
Sponsorship	3,550	-	3,550	
Expenses		751	(751)	
. Total	\$ 15,897	\$ 2,757	\$ 13,141	82.7%

## KIWANIS FAMILY FUN DAYS

### AUDRA BOTWIN

In November of 2024, the Cave Creek Museum once again participated in the **Desert Discovery Days** at the Jewel of the Creek Preserve. Kids were able to create their own pinch pot using real clay. We also had information available about the museum.



January 2025, brought the **Desert Awareness Committee** and their presentation “Wildlife Watchers.” Kids could rotate through six different stations of learning with the knowledgeable volunteers from the Desert Awareness Committee.

In March of 2025, the museum hosted our annual Archeology Day. The museum’s booth had pottery puzzles, clay discs to make petroglyphs, and

more clay to make and decorate pinch pots. Other booths participating this year were the Deer Valley Petroglyph Preserve, Scott Wood and Friends of the Tonto Forest and Desert Awareness Committee. Our own **Tom McGuire** had a booth for geology and rocks and volunteer **Gwen Harwood** had a booth explaining Hohokam pottery.



In April of 2025, we once again were visited by **Jeremy Kennedy** of Daisy Mountain Fire and Rescue. Children (and adults) learned about fire safety and evacuation plans. There was also an activity table with coloring pages, mazes and word searches in addition to a temporary tattoo station where the kids could get fire truck “tattoos.” They also were able to see a fire truck up close and in person. (If not called away to an

emergency.)

We had great participation at all our events and, with the generous funding by the Kiwanis Club of Carefree, we hope to continue with more fun and educational events next museum season.







chorus of “Yee-Haws” from the entertained guests. It was a unique and fun show. Folks loved Johnny’s visits to the tables and he charmed everyone with his dry wit.

**Butcher Block Catering** fed attendees for the second year in a row and — seriously, that peach cobbler? So delicious!



Popular last year, the signature cocktails were back! This year, **Carefree Distillery** donated a case of Carefree Bourbon for the popular Bourbon Burro and a case of Chakra Vodka for a new concoction of Buck Columna’s, the Continental Cosmo. Our bartenders tell us that men leaned toward the bourbon mix and ladies to the Cosmo— -and they ran out of the Cosmo mix first! Hmmm —what does that tell us? You go, cowgirls!

Silent Auction items varied from facials to tech sessions to a “get-away-from-it-all” two-night stay at the AirBnB at Healing River Ranch Animal Sanctuary in Camp Verde. Bidding was spirited and thanks to our museum supporters, revenue for the Miners’ Dinner Fundraiser is just north of \$15,000.00.



There are so many people to thank for their enthusiastic participation in the preparation for Miners’ Dinner and day of — But a shout-out to our new volunteers, **Suzy Dodson, Michelle Nanna and Mari-aElena Rizzo** for all their hard work — they didn’t know what they were getting into! Special gratitude to the **Cactus Shadows Honor Society** — weren’t they wonderful young volun-



teers? And **Erik Anderson**, who spent time with our gunslinger to make sure lighting and audio was perfect and Johnny Hotshot’s show could be seen and heard from every vantage point. The Dream Team created an elegant venue for our guests to enjoy — and we’ll just stop naming names there,

it’s difficult to name people individually in case you miss someone! Just know that you were seen, you are appreciated, and absolutely Staff and Board know that without the Cave Creek Museum’s dedicated army of volunteers, very little of what happens at the Museum would get accomplished.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

## MNERS’ DINNER DARLENE SOUTHERN



The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Miners’ Dinner took place on March 25, 2025 and we couldn’t have asked for finer weather.

More than 120 supporters of the Museum gathered to enjoy an evening that was kicked off by emcee and musician **Kevin Causey**, who was joined by the “Almost Famous” **Michael DeVito** on bass guitar and **Josie Annette** on lead. As always, all three musicians donated their talents— we are so grateful!

Also taking part were artists **Marless Fel-lows** — who completed a beautiful painting of a miner and his equine pal during the evening, then donated it to the Silent Auction — and **Nancy Breiman**, who set up in the Historic Church selling apparel and totes with her artwork emblazoned on them, gifting a percentage of her sales to the Museum. Unfortunately, the flu felled artist **Lance Headlee** and he was unable to live paint at the event this year, but he too donated a piece of artwork to the Auction. And we saw lots of shoppers at the **Pretty Please Collective** pop-up shop showing off a collection of western-themed clothing and accessories.



While Kevin Causey and friends kept the festivities going and toes tapping, we had a thoughtful moment with the dedication of the **Charles Connell Mining Campus** and a handsome

bronze plaque dedicated to the late Dream Team leader’s memory. It was an honor that Charlie’s wife, Kathy, was able to join us for the dedication and share how much the restoration and running of the Golden Reef Stamp Mill meant to Charlie. The Connells are true friends of the Museum.

Following that solemn moment, gunslinger and bullwhip artist **Johnny Hotshot**, invigorated the crowd with a display of his talents, throwing guns and cracking whips and eliciting a

