January 2015 Newsletter
Volume XXXI No.1

Colony House Museum
316 E. Elmwood Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645
907-745-1935
Winter by App’t.

Palmer Historical Society
PO Box 1935
Palmer, AK 99645
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COMING UP ……..

January 21  7:00
History Night * Marty Raney
Palmer Library

February 18  7:00
History Night
Palmer Library

March 18  7:00
History Night
Palmer Library

April 15  7:00
History Night
Palmer Library

It’s time for History Nights 2015!
Palmer Historical Society
Presents……..
MARTY RANEY!
Cast member from Ultimate Survival Alaska Season 2 & 3,
mountaineer, musician and adventurer extraordinaire!
Come hear Marty share about his family, life in Alaska,
and the Alaskan dream.
7:00pm - January 21st
@ Palmer Public Library.
History Nights are free, historic, and fun!

Making Memories
by Gerry Keeling

The Colony House Museum was overflowing with Christmas spirit
and holiday celebrants of all ages during OPEN HOUSE on
Saturday December 13.

A brisk Palmer winter breeze helped guide many red-cheeked
visitors to CHM, where a “hot cuppa” and a delightful assortment of
hospitality awaited in the kitchen, thanks to our first-class baking
eves.

The Museum was bedecked throughout with seasonal decor. A
classic "Alaskan" Christmas tree, covered with vintage ornaments
and silver garland, welcomed visitors indoors....while upstairs the
archive-centered front room had been turned into a magical
Santa's workshop (thanks to our President elf)!

Musical tones emanated from the antique piano, and much of the
afternoon was filled with the lovely sound of caroling voices.

So many dear volunteer hands coordinate to bring the CHM's old-
fashioned Christmas to the Valley. A stocking-full of appreciation to
everyone...visitors, docents, bake-salers, PHS-ers, and to all who
help to create this historical Christmas event each year, thereby
keeping alive our traditions of the home and heart.
Rick Mystrom entertained us with tales of his world wide adventures promoting Anchorage for the 1992 and 1994 Olympic bid.

Mr. Mystrom, an author of two books, also shared his story of living successfully with diabetes.

Rick has done years of research and testing on himself. He has charted the correlation of the foods he eats, and how his blood sugar levels react to individual foods.

These books are great reads for all-diabetic or not!

“Ring out the old, ring in the new, ring happy bells, across the snow; the year is going, let him go; ring out the false, ring in the true.” — Alfred Lord Tennyson
A Great Man with a Great Life

Ever since I moved to my neighborhood in 2001, I have made lifelong connections and great memories. Mr. and Mrs. Bouwens always brought a smile during the holidays. We would stand on their porch to sing Christmas carols and bring delicious treats. It was fun getting treats in return. Every year they have the biggest family reunion party on the block.

This past year I had the opportunity to interview Mr. Bouwens for a class project. The project was to interview someone who had been a part of important events before 1991. I am lucky enough to have a neighbor who was a son of a Colonist of the Matanuska Valley. I thought I had known my neighbor, but after interviewing Mr. Bouwens, I learned more about my neighbor than ever before.

Mr. Bouwens was born on August 10, 1929 in the lower part of Wisconsin. When he was six, his family moved up to Palmer, Alaska with one of Roosevelt’s plans. His family was a bit different than other colonists; this was because his parents were older and had more children than the average family traveling here. The first few years were rough; disease and lack of medication took several loved ones. Each colonist, when they arrived, was granted 40 acres of land to live on. If they wanted to move they traded in their 40 acres for another 40 acres. When one of his childhood homes burnt down, his family moved into the current day Campbell House. Hunting was hard, as most of the moose stayed in the mountains because most areas were still much wooded. I asked Mr. Bouwens, with the knowledge he has about Palmer, Alaska, if he thought his parents would still move here and he said he thought that they still would.

I asked Mr. Bouwens about some of his happiest memories. When he was in high school, he played basketball for Palmer High. He explained that the team had the minimum players that you needed to compete. The team was composed of farm kids, who could beat out the competitors in the first half of the game. But during the second half they were so tired because there was no one to switch out with. He enjoyed the trips they took to compete against other teams because they got to travel by train.

In 1950, Wayne married his wife Marge and together they had seven kids.

The hardest thing he ever had to do was rescue his daughter Marybeth, who was 2 at the time, from a piece of farm machinery.

I am saddened by the loss of my dear neighbor. But I am thankful for the opportunity to share some of the marvelous history of this man. You can truly tell how excited he was to share his life with others.

Wayne Bouwens was a great man with a great life.

By: Allison Qualls, teen neighbor to Wayne and Margrye Bouwens

It’s a New Year!
With a New Year comes
New opportunities!
Do you love Palmer History?

YOU could be part of our
VIP
Colony House Museum
Volunteer staff during the
Summer season!

All it takes is a couple hours a week –
give us a call for more info!

2015/2016 Board of Directors & Team
Joan Campbell  Sharon Benson
Sheri Hamming  Jean Krupa
Gerry Keeling  Clyde & June Oberg
Carol Lombardo  JoAnn Utt
Carol Strouse  You?
John Stuart
Barbara Thomas
Palmer Historical Society
PO Box 1935
Palmer, AK 99645

Find us on Facebook - Palmer Historical Society Alaska
See you at History Night!

Yes! I want to Preserve, Promote, and Protect the History of Palmer Alaska!
Please sign me up! I will circle the level I would like to commit to for 2015.

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Name: ____________________________  Phone Number: ____________________________
Mailing Address: ____________________________  Email Address: ____________________________

Cut out form - Please mail to Palmer Historical Society, PO Box 1935, Palmer, AK 99645 or bring to History Night!
THANK YOU for your generous contribution – Palmer History will be preserved because of you!