



# Volunteer Handbook



*The mission of the Aurora Colony Historical Society is to  
“Promote interactive lifelong learning by inspiring curiosity about, and  
preservation of, the heritage of the Aurora Colony.”*



Welcome to the Aurora Colony Historical Society!

We want you to know how very much the Aurora Colony Historical Society, its members, board and staff appreciate you sharing your time, energy and expertise.

As a volunteer you are the most important link to our visitors. You help to create the impression they will take away from their visit to our museum.

The Aurora Colony Historical Society provides services including collecting, researching, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting Aurora Colony history. Paid and non-paid staff is responsible for providing information to visitors about the Aurora Colony and the Historical Society.

You are encouraged to share your ideas and concerns with us, for that is how we will continue to maintain and improve what we offer. Your feedback is important, since the successful growth of the Historical Society has been largely due to the efforts of the many volunteers who have contributed to that end.

This handbook is intended to provide some basic background to the Aurora Colony, the Aurora Colony Historical Society and some of the job opportunities available. If you have questions after reading it, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thank you for your interest and support!

Christina Leder  
ACHS Volunteer and Programs Coordinator

## **BY-LAWS**

The Aurora Colony Historical Society was organized in 1963 to collect, preserve and exhibit artifacts from the Aurora Colony. The Aurora Colony was a German Christian communal society that existed in Oregon in the nineteenth century (1856-1883). Artifacts include colony structures and sites, articles made or used by colony members, and items which have a direct bearing on life in Aurora.

## **VISION**

The Aurora Colony Historical Society preserves and interprets Aurora Colony history and heritage and is nationally recognized for its efforts.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the Aurora Colony Historical Society is to:

*“Promote interactive lifelong learning by inspiring curiosity about, and preservation of, the heritage of the Aurora Colony.”*

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

The Historical Society was organized in 1963 with the assistance of Oregon history preservationists Ruth McBride Powers, Dr Burt Brown Barker and his daughter, Mrs Barbara Sprouse. These people acquired the initial funding to preserve the 1862 Aurora Colony Ox Barn, thus providing the Society a building in which to exhibit the privately owned Aurora Colony treasures. With this kind of outside assistance, many of Aurora’s residents and Colony descendants began to donate their artifacts. They also went to work as volunteers helping to staff the new museum and assist at special fund-raising events. This legacy is carried on today by a new group of volunteers who work in the Colony with a selfless spirit of cooperation, working toward the achievement of a common idea.

The Bethel, Missouri and Aurora, Oregon communal societies, following Dr Wilhelm Keil, were cohesive from 1844 until 1883. Nearly 600 German and Swiss individuals lived in these communities of Christian support, literally sharing labor and property, receiving in exchange: access to housing, all Colony-made products and a very specific understanding that should they or members of their families need help in any way, they would receive that help without question. While the Colonists practiced communal living, they did not lead isolated lives. For example, the Aurora Band traveled throughout the Northwest playing music and the hotel served stage and rail passengers from all over the world.

The Old Aurora Colony Museum now comprises five buildings which are open for public tours. In addition, the Historical Society operates a living history program at our 1869 Stauffer-Will Farmstead. We also actively support interpretation of the rest of the Aurora National Historic District.

## **MUSEUM OPERATIONS**

Old Aurora Colony Museum--corner of 2nd and Liberty, Aurora, OR  
Mailing Address: PO Box 202, Aurora, OR 97002  
Street Address: 15018 2nd Street NE, Aurora, OR 97002

Website: [www.auroracolony.org](http://www.auroracolony.org)

Email: [info@auroracolony.org](mailto:info@auroracolony.org)

Phone Number: 503.678.5754

Fax Number: 503.678.5756

Executive Director:

Business Manager: Caroline Queer

Email: [caroline@auroracolony.org](mailto:caroline@auroracolony.org)

Volunteer Coordinator/Living History Programs Coordinator: Christina Leder

Email: [christina@auroracolony.org](mailto:christina@auroracolony.org)

Weekend Tour Guide: Janus Childs

Assistant Living History Programs Coordinator: Kathy Hardman

The Aurora Colony Historical Society is a non-profit, tax exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Service regulations.

The membership of the Historical Society elects up to an eleven-member Board of Directors. The Board elects officers, sets policies and approves budgets. Board meetings, open to members, are held monthly at the museum.

Funding of the Historical Society comes from visitor admissions, memberships, programs, events, gift shop sales, Aurora Colony brand products and donations from individuals, businesses, foundations and governmental agencies.

### **Aurora Colony Historical Society Board of Directors--2020**

- ★ Kenneth O Hartley, President
- ★ Ted Heid, Vice-President
- ★ Carol Burger, Secretary
- ★ Spud Sperb
- ★ Annette James
- ★ Mike Byrnes
- ★ Cheryl Burkes
- ★ Ken Riley
- ★ Diane Anderson
  - Treasurer position open
  - Board Member position open

## **EXPECTATIONS**

As a volunteer you should expect:

- To be treated with respect and consideration.
- A suitable assignment, with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experiences, education and employment background.
- To be given information on the history of the Colony and the Historical Society, its policies, people and programs.
- Training for your assignment. Training may be in the form of reading material or in-person training sessions.
- Sound guidance and direction, information about new developments, training for greater responsibilities and a staff person who is experienced, well informed, patient and thoughtful, and who has the time to invest in giving guidance.
- A place to work in an orderly, designated place, conducive to work and worthy of the job to be done.
- A variety of experiences through advancement to assignments of more responsibility and through transfer from one activity to another, if desired.
- To be heard, to have a part in planning, suggesting and respect for an honest opinion.
- Recognition in the form of added responsibilities, awards and day by day expressions of appreciation.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining a professional attitude of mutual respect and confidence. Your cooperative attitude, expressed in the willingness to provide needed services, is deeply valued.

We Expect You To:

- Be punctual and reliable
- Notify the site in case of an absence
- Record volunteer hours on the time sheet provided
- Wear your volunteer name tag while volunteering
- Accept supervision from staff and experienced volunteers
- Practice the professional ethics of confidentiality
- Become familiar with the history of the organization, its policies and programs, tours, hours, days, fees, etc.
- Work to the best of your abilities to provide the highest quality service
- Uphold the traditions and standards of ACHS and interpret them to the community at large.

## **FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST**

As a receptionist, the initial impression which you make on our visitors will greatly affect their attitude toward the museum and the Historical Society. This first impression, positive or negative, will be what our guests will take away with them and mention to others.

The receptionist is responsible for opening and/or closing the museum, providing information on the museum programs, membership in the historical society, collecting admission fees, starting the orientation video, handling gift shop and raffle quilt ticket sales, balancing the cash box, and doing other jobs that might be helpful to the office staff. (i.e. helping with mailings, tidying up the exhibit area, setting out brochures)

If possible, it is usually most effective to engage the customer in conversation to help determine their reason for visiting the museum and their level of interest in taking a tour of the museum. Asking if they have been to the museum before, where they are from, if they are familiar with the history Aurora, etc, can help lead into an explanation of the museum tour.

If the visitors desire to take the tour, collect the admission, escort them into the video room and start the video.

After the video has ended, allow the visitors to tour the museum, answer any questions they might have. If you don't have the answer to their questions, let them know that you don't know the answer and that you will try to find out for them. You can also play the band music for them.

### **ADMISSION FEES**

\$6.00	Adults
\$5.00	Seniors and AAA Members
\$2.00	Students (with student I.D.)
\$20.00	Family (4 or more)
FREE	Children under 6 yrs

### **MUSEUM HOURS**

Tuesday-Saturday: 11:00 am - 4:00 pm  
Sunday: Noon - 4:00 pm

### **OPERATING SCHEDULE**

January - *Open by Appointment only*  
February 1 - December 31 -- *Open Tuesday through Sunday*  
*Closed all Mondays and Major Holidays*

**FRONT DESK**  
**OPENING PROCEDURES**

- Turn on lights in exhibit areas
- Turn on lights in exhibit cases
- Make sure kitchen door is closed
- Turn on TV -- make sure video is ready to go
- Arrange/straighten chairs for viewing video
- Unlock door by bathrooms to courtyard
- Check restrooms for supplies--restock, if needed
- Count opening cash and fill out tally sheet
- Unlock front door
- Set out A-frame sign on corner of sidewalk
- Check entry and sidewalk area for neat appearance
- Good weather days:
  - Unlock and open cabin doors, turn on lights and lock plexiglass gates in place
  - Unlock and open garage doors to blacksmithing areas, hook rope barrier in place
  - Unlock and open woodworking area door, turn on light and hook door in place
  - Unlock and open the wash house door, turn on the light and lock the plexiglass gate in place.
  - Unlock and open the cobblers' exhibit door, turn on light and lock the plexiglass gate in place.
  - Unlock and open up the back door of the Kraus House, turn on the light and lock gate in place.

**CLOSING PROCEDURES**

- Bring in A-frame sign
- Lock front door at top, deadbolt and wrap chain around handles
- Turn off TV
- Straighten chairs
- Count ending cash, leave \$100 in drawer
- Fill out and balance tally sheet
- Turn off all lights in exhibit cases
- Turn off all lights in exhibit areas
- Good weather days"
  - Turn off lights and lock all courtyard buildings: Cabin, Blacksmithing areas, Woodworking area, wash house, cobblers' shop and Kraus house

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND PLEASE HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME*



## **TOUR GUIDE**

The Aurora Colony Historical Society tour guides provide information to visitors about the Aurora Colony either through museum tours or living history demonstrations.

Hours and days will vary depending upon the tours that are scheduled. Each tour at the museum lasts approximately 1.5 hours and includes all the buildings located in the museum courtyard complex, along with the video presentation.

Tour groups will vary in age, from young children to seniors. We try to have groups of 10-15 people, but groups could be larger or smaller, depending on the need of the group scheduling the tour.

Your job will be to present Aurora Colony History to the visitors, telling them about the exhibits and answering questions.

Information will be provided as guidelines in giving a tour. Background history for the various buildings and displays will also be provided. We suggest that before you give a tour, you accompany several tour groups with several different guides to see how each one presents the history.

Tour guides also help staff the buildings during special events.

The *Stauffer-Will Farm Program* runs from mid-March through the first or second week of June each year. Living history tour guides staff the five areas at the farm, Monday through Friday, 9:30 am - 1:30 pm, during that period of time. Each day, up to 60 4th grade students visit the farm. Training will be provided along with a handbook for the farm.

The *Village Program* runs at the museum courtyard from April through the first or second week of June each year. Living history tour guides staff the five areas at the museum Monday through Thursday with an occasional Friday, as needed, 9:30 am-1:30 pm. Each day, up to 60 4th grade students will visit the village. Training will be provided along with a handbook.

## **COMMITTEE WORK**

The museum offers a variety of opportunities to work on projects throughout the year.

- *Fundraising / Program Committee:* This committee is responsible for planning the annual fundraising events and programs that emphasize the history and purpose of the Aurora Colony. This committee meets throughout the year as necessary.
- *Quilt Show Committee:* The Quilt Show Committee is responsible for planning and helping with the annual Quilt Show, held in October. There are many ways in which you can help:
  - Distribute flyers
  - Stuff envelopes
  - Sell advertising
  - Promote the raffle quilt at other venues
  - Organize and arrange the quilt shop in the cabin
    - Fold fabric
    - Price notions, books, patterns, yarn, etc etc...
    - Set up shop in the cabin
  - Procure sponsors
  - Bake cookies for the cabin
  - Set up displays
  - Check in quilts and return at the end of the show
  - Help with hanging the quilts
  - Help staff the buildings during the show

This committee starts meeting in the spring to begin the planning process.

**Special events**-- help with other special events held at the museum throughout the year:

- Antique Spinning Wheel Showcase (3rd weekend in March)
- Emma Day (Saturday before Mother's Day)
- Aurora Colony Herb Society Lavender Day (2nd weekend in July)
- Aurora Colony Handspinners' Guild Dye Day (3rd weekend in July)
- Aurora Colony Days' Beer Garden (2nd Friday in August)
- Aurora Colony Days Parade (2nd Saturday in August)
- Aurora Colony Day at the Museum (2nd Saturday in August)
- Celebrate the Colony Fundraising Dinner and Auction (Late August)
- Quilt Show in October (2nd Friday through 3rd Sunday)
- Christmas events
  - Christmas in Aurora Colony (Saturday after Thanksgiving)
  - Wine and Chocolate Walk (First weekend in December)

**General / Office / Other**

- Maintenance--help with preservation of our old buildings
- Gardening--maintaining the herb garden
- Carpentry
- Baking
- General office support, filing, etc
- Volunteer recruiting / Training
- Marketing / PR
- Publications and graphic design of advertisements

## **Covid-19**

Beginning soon, we will have a policy in place for social distancing, cleaning of high-traffic areas and other guidelines for the safety of our volunteers, staff and public visitors.