

The Bodie Times

Protecting Bodie's Future By Preserving Its Past

2009 Winter

www.BodieFoundation.org

Number 2

Milestones by Brad Sturdivant

The Bodie Foundation has seen some changes over the past year. It is time to celebrate!

In the summer of 2008, four of us decided to form the Bodie Foundation. By August 24th the website was up and running, and in September, the first issue of Bodie Times was posted on the web, e-mailed, and mailed to a small but growing membership. The first Bodie Foundation calendar came out in early November and we had trouble keeping them in stock. We sold out twice.

In late December we said good-bye to the Foundation's first President, Kent Adams. Other responsibilities had claimed his time. I had the opportunity to visit with Kent this past September. He is very busy but doing well. We are grateful for help in those formative months.

In early February of 2009 we received our official status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

It is my pleasure to announce that on October 16, 2009 a "Donor Agreement" was signed at Bodie State Historic Park between the Bodie Foundation and California State Parks. This was certainly our greatest milestone for 2009. There was no formal ceremony, just a lot of chatter about where we would like to go from here. My Stetson is off to those who have worked so carefully to make this happen. A few of us have worked for this opportunity for many years.

What will this agreement allow Bodie Foundation to do?

This agreement allows us, *and you*, to raise funds to help keep parks in the Alpine/Mono Sector open and operating. Those parks include, of course, Bodie State Historic Park, Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve and Grover Hot Springs State Park.

As many of you may know, this has not been a banner year for budgets in the State of California. State Parks have taken serious cuts in operational funding, and it is expected that it will cost \$30,000 just to operate the Museum in Bodie. Those funds are

needed to pay for staff and purchase merchandise to sell. Any additional profits may be used to hire staff for the Visitor Services and Maintenance operations.

This agreement opens a number of doors to allow the Foundation to coordinate special events, talks and tours and make the Bodie Foundation website the official voice of Bodie, Mono Lake, and Grover Hot Springs.



Nancy Frye and I put together and staffed a booth at the annual Bridgeport Founders Day celebration over Labor Day weekend. It was Bodie Foundation's first venture into the public. We met some new people and visited with some

long time "Friends" from my days at Bodie with State Parks.

This, our second newsletter, will include some familiar "faces" in the form of articles presented by Terri Geissinger from Bodie and Dave Marquart from Mono Lake. We are happy to have Jeanne Sisson, Supervising Ranger, at Grover Hot Springs represented as well. Special thanks to Donna Jones for her article on "Wagons to Bodie and Beyond." Mark Pupich, a former Bodie/Mono and Grover Hot Springs State Park Ranger, says adios to Maintenance Supervisor Chuck Fell. Also

retiring is Mark Hoffman, a Bodie and Grover Hot Springs State Park Ranger.

We've added three new members to the Board of Directors: Mark Pupich, Norm Stump and Dave James, and have formed several committee to help us develop and grow the Foundation.

We have a lot of work ahead of us and we could use your help - tell your family and friends, and hopefully they are all "Friends" of Bodie. The coming year will be a challenge, but we're starting off with a great partnership with California State Parks. Together, we can help preserve the *Best Ghost town in the West*.

Keep watching and help us grow.



Goodbye Bodie, I'm going to Washington *by Mark Pupich*

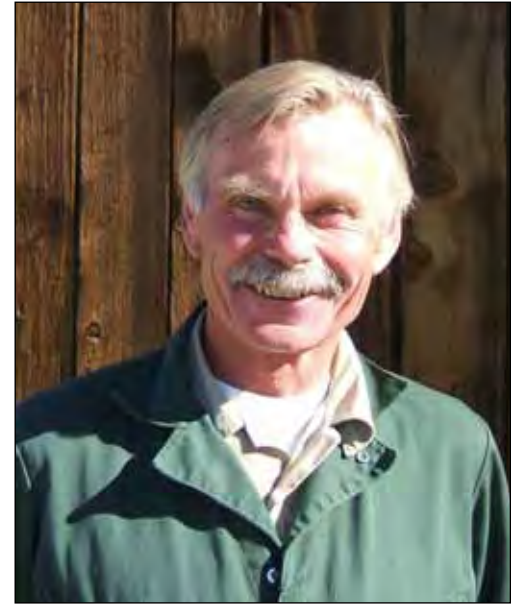
Back in Bodie's heyday a little girl was quoted as saying, "Goodbye God, I'm going to Bodie." Young Shannon Fell may have also thought that when she first heard that her father was moving the family to Bodie to start a new career with California State Parks. So, at age 41, during the summer of 1989, Chuck Fell relocated from Visalia, California, to his new home in Bodie. His career with state parks would span two decades before he retired this last September and moved to the northern state of Washington to live near his daughter and her family.

Chuck came to Bodie with many years of experience and knowledge from his previous careers in the private sector and military, and with his high standards of work ethic, he was an excellent choice for the position. Charged with the maintenance of this very unique state park, Chuck faced many challenges that not only tested his knowledge, but his ability to learn and adapt as well. As the Maintenance Mechanic he was responsible for maintaining the mechanical systems such as water, sewer, and electric, which are especially challenging during Bodie's extreme winters. Along with those duties he had the public and employee facilities to look after. But the most critical to the mission of this historic park is maintaining the 180 or so structures that still remain standing, or par-

tially standing, in a state of "arrested decay". This basically means repairing and keeping the buildings standing without altering their present appearance; which is a unique challenge that requires ingenuity and creative thinking. Over the years Chuck didn't just meet the challenges of his job, he excelled; and along the way raised the level of standards expected of all that worked with him.


Chuck worked at Bodie until 1998, then relocated to Empire Mines State Historic Park, promoting to a Restoration Work Specialist, and Supervising Maintenance Worker. After five years, he returned to Bodie to Supervise the Alpine Sector maintenance program, which includes Bodie, Mono Lake Tuff State Reserve, and Grover Hot Springs State Park. Even though his new position kept him tied to a desk more than he liked, he would find ways to keep hands-on with projects in Bodie.

This year, at 62, Chuck hung up his park uniform and tool belt to retire, but to anyone who knows him well, this does not mean he will slow down. Chuck is an accomplished woodworker, and for as long as I have known him, he has worked to hone and expand his skills at furniture and cabinet making, crafting beautiful humidors, and mastering any skill that fit his fancy. He has already set up his new work-



Chuck Fell

shop and is pursuing his passion for woodworking; he also plans to take a break every so often to do some traveling.

Over the years Chuck has earned my appreciation and respect as a fellow employee and a friend. I wish him and his wife, Judy, all the best in this new chapter of their lives, and I know in his heart he will never be far from the Bodie Hills; to him this is God's country! 

Mark Pupich was a Park Ranger at Bodie from 1989 – 97, and is now retired and currently on the board of directors for the Bodie Foundation.

A Brief Evolution of Grover Hot Springs State Park *by Jeanne Sisson*

For those of you who have never visited Grover Hot Springs State Park, you are missing out on a very special place. The park is located about 40 minutes south of South Lake Tahoe just outside of the small town of Markleeville, which also serves as

the county seat for Alpine County. Grover Hot Springs State Park consists of a small campground, a large meadow, and a public pool complex with a hot pool fed from the nearby surface mineral hot springs and a conventional "cold" pool for swimming and cooling off. There are some trails in the area for hikers and the park is open year round. The pools at Grover Hot Springs are very popular with local residents as well as day users and campers from Reno, Carson City, South Lake Tahoe, Sacramento, and beyond.

Grover Hot Springs and the surrounding land was possibly utilized first by native Washoe Indians. There is some evidence that members of the Fremont-Carson expe-

dition of 1844 camped in the area. The area was first homesteaded by John Hopkins in 1854. By 1864, the water from the hot springs were being directed into a small pool that was being used enthusiastically by bathers. During Hopkins ownership, the land was used for a dairy, and woodcutters denuded the Hot Springs Valley and surrounding hillsides for mining timber. The following year, 1874, Alvin M Grover obtained a half deed on the land and began operating the hot springs as a resort after building a bath house and fencing the pool. In 1905, the complete ownership of the land and hot springs had passed to Mrs H.A. Grover, who sold it to the Scossa

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How many miles to Bodie?

- Abilene, TX - 1,421
- Chicago, IL - 1,971
- Reno, NV - 132
- Greenwood, IN - 2,093
- Los Angeles, CA - 363
- San Francisco, CA - 249
- Orlando, FL - 2,672
- Louisville, KY - 2,112
- Seattle, WA - 881



Surviving the Bodie Road... *by Brad Sturdivant*

For those who may not know me, and for those who do, I spent many years living in and traveling up and down that dad-burned road leading in and out of Bodie. There are four in all, now anyway. A friend recently sent me a copy of a map that showed, at one time, as many as six (6) roads leading in and out of Bodie NOT including a proposed railroad route. Hopefully, at least one of them was better than what is here now.

I recall my first trip into Bodie. It was August 12, 1972. A friend and I were en route to Oregon and he said we should go visit Bodie. He said I would really like it, it was an olde ghost town. We were driving a two seater MG sports car. We were following another friend driving an MGB. In those days the 13 miles into Bodie was all dirt. Or should I say rocks and ridges and darn little dirt.

As we were following the MGB there was a stretch of very soft dirt as we climbed the hill up onto 4 mile flat... at the 8,000



ft elevation marker today. The MGB became stuck in the soft sand. Vic, my friend, and I stopped, got out and pushed the MGB to hard ground and returned to the MG... you guessed it... we had to push the MG up the hill as well.

We continued to on Bodie. As we were creeping slowly along we began to notice pieces of tailpipe, mufflers, hubcaps, side

mirrors and the occasional oil spill where some unfortunate individual had hit bottom on a rock. Later, while working as a seasonal park aide in Bodie, staff went out and picked up some of those pieces and made "metal man" standing near that first turn. Some kind of a warning, I guess. It had arms and legs of tailpipe, a flat muffler for a body and a hubcap for the head. If you look around out there you may still find the remains of "metal man."

By then, our teeth and bones were getting sore from the washboard

ridges of the road. We passed the "all seeing eye" someone had painted on a rock. That "eye" was there for decades before someone decided to remove it a bit more than 10 years ago. That thing was a piece of history. Whoever it was that removed the "eye" must have felt guilty. They or someone has spray painted a new one, but, it is not the same. Anyone remember that?

As we dropped down into the Murphy Springs area we could see the tell tale sign of someone driving too fast, skid marks in the dirt and bouncing out into the sagebrush to await a tow truck. The tow truck in those days is another story to be told ... another time. Today, with the road paved this corner can still catch you if you are not paying attention.

As we drove up out of the canyon the road became more washboard and we began to slip around some. Finally, we drove upon to a flat area. Today, the pavement ends at this point.

The rest of trek into Bodie was pretty uneventful until we arrived at the parking lot. A burro, we found out later her name was Jennifer, moseyed over to the car and stuck her head and neck all the way across where we were seated. She was obviously trained to seek out potential food sources or perhaps just looking for company.

In those days Bodie was open sunrise to sunset. We arrived just before sunset. As we walked over the hill east of the parking lot and behind church the townsite was glowing, in golds and browns with a blue sky behind Bodie Bluff. I mentioned to Vic that this would be a great place to work. He mumbled something about my being nuts and continued to walk toward Green St.

Little did I know...



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TheBodieStore.com



Wagons to Bodie and Beyond

by Donna Rea Jones

In the time of Bodie, the Comstock Lode, and the gold strike migrations, the highest paid workers weren't the miners - it was the teamsters who hauled the freight which was the lifeline of the towns. Mines scattered across lands that often couldn't support agriculture and the goods and that arrived in the back of the freight wagons were all that stood between the gold seekers and starvation.

The huge freight wagons that hauled everything from cord wood to French wine, hobnail boots to patent medicines, were slow moving, massive vehicles. The men who drove the teams were skilled drivers, hard working and talented. They had to know the roads, know their animals, care for them well and keep their wagons in good working order, too.

Bodie still has one of the now-rare, high-sided freight wagons. It once belonged to Arthur G. Allen of West Point Ranch in Mono Lake, and a photo of it survives, coming into town with teamster Tom Rogers driving a 12 mule team. And one more big freighter that once plied the local roads still survives, though barely. I call it the Brandon Freighter.

This big freighter once rolled for the Bridgeport Trucking Company, which was owned by Washington P. Brandon. Little more is known about the wagon's working history, but an account of just one trip Brandon made gives a glimpse into the man's skill as a teamster, and the risks of the teamster's work.

"A Rough Trip. - Wash. P. Brandon returned from Lundy about 3 O'clock Wednesday afternoon from his trip to Lundy with the machinery for the Lakeview mine. He was four days getting the machinery up the hill to the works, one piece of his load weighing 15,185 pounds. Seventy men were employed to shovel out the road, the snow at that point being very deep, and his 16 horses had no picnic on the trip. On his return on Wednesday night he was caught in the heavy snowstorm that raged that evening on the summit this side of Goat Ranch and had to camp without unhitching his team, and without hay to feed them. Teaming in the mountains in the winter is no funny business."

It is unknown when the big freighter took its last trip behind a team, but it was likely the late 1930s. By the 1940s, the wagon was part of the Parker Lyon collection at the Pony Express Museum in Arcadia, CA. There, it was photographed by famous artist Man Ray. With Parker's passing, the wagon was sold to the Harrah's collection. When that collection was dispersed, the freighter ended up



Brandon freighter at the Pony Express Museum in Arcadia, CA, 1940s. The sign reads: "Bodie Hawthorne W. Brandon Trucking Bridgeport Cap. 10 tons Mono Co. Calif."

*Photo appears courtesy of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
Man Ray, photographer*

at Ponderosa Ranch, in Incline Village, Nevada. With the sale of the Ponderosa a couple years ago, the wagon's future is uncertain.

Today, fewer than 20 of the giant wagons still survive. As the automobile era gradually overtook them, the big freighters fell into disrepair, and the barns and livery stables that once protected them were torn down or turned to other uses. Long exposure to the harsh environment has taken a toll, but conservation could still preserve this iconic wagon. I hope it can be saved in time.

Donna Rea Jones is a curator and wagon historian with California State Parks



The Brandon Freighter today. Photo by Donna Rea Jones



Mono Lake is all about Partnerships

by Dave Marquart

When visitors approach the front desk at the Scenic Area Visitor Center in Lee Vining, California and ask how they can walk to the shore of Mono Lake, for years the response had been, "Well, you can't really get there from here without driving," The Visitor Center, staffed jointly by the US Forest Service, National Park Service, and CA State Parks opened in 1992 and attracts 130,000 people a year. It is a focal point for those visiting the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve and the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area.

Because the State and Federal Governments own and cooperatively manage land surrounding the shore of Mono Lake the opportunity presented itself to form a partnership to construct a trail from the USFS Visitor Center down to the lakeshore at the Old Marina site, one of two major visitor sites at Mono Lake maintained by State Parks. Jon Kazmierski, USFS visitor center manager and Matt Green, sector superintendent for the Alpine/Mono sector of the Sierra District of CA State Parks, began the planning for the trail in 2007.



Visitors walk from the Scenic Area Visitor Center to the lakeshore.



Ribbon cutting ceremony in September; from left to right, Jon Kazmierski (USFS), Sterl Cogar, Dave Marquart, Pam Armas, Jim Pence (CA State Parks), and Sally and Vireo Gaines from the Mono Lake Committee

Kazmierski, USFS project planner and manager, completed a joint NEPA/CEQA document for the project. Under State and USFS supervision the California Conservation Corp. was brought in to construct the ADA portion of the trail which included both a hardened raised trail bed and boardwalk. Sterl Cogar, CA State Parks project manager and Vern Pierce heavy equipment operator worked the ground like an artist with canvas. Vern not only converted roads to trails but completely rehabilitated the Old Marina visitor site adjacent to Highway 395.

Two cooperating local non-profits, the Mono Lake Committee (MLC) and Friends of the Inyo (National Forest) furnished personnel to remove invasive species along the trail route and to help restore roads that were converted to trail. The MLC also secured additional funding for an extension of the boardwalk section of the trail. The final component of the project resulted in the placement of 12 interpretive panels along the trail route funded by both State Parks and the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association. With the collective efforts of agencies and non-profits working together the trail was completed and dedicated in September.



Gold Miner's Chili Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups finely minced white onion
- 8 garlic cloves, finely minced
- 2 (15 1/2-ounce) cans chicken broth, with fat removed
- 4 ounces tomato sauce
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 tablespoons ground cumin
- 10 1/2 tablespoons chili powder
- 4 1/2 tablespoons New Mexico chile powder (medium)
- 1 tablespoon New Mexico chile powder (hot)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3 pounds beef, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon meat tenderizer
- 1/2 teaspoon light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon hot red pepper sauce

Directions

In a large pot simmer onion and minced garlic in 2 cups of chicken broth for 10 minutes. Add tomato sauce and all dry spices, except the tenderizer and sugar. Mix well. Brown the meat in oil using a separate pan and drain well. Sprinkle the meat with the tenderizer. Add the meat to the onion/spice mixture. Add remaining broth and simmer for 2 1/2 hours.

Mix in brown sugar and hot sauce just before serving.

Cook Time: 2hr 40min

Level: Easy

Serve: 6 to 8 servings

courtesy Steve Falkowski 1997 World Champion Food Network Challenge

Friends of Bodie Celebrates 150 Years of History by Terri Geissinger

If you were in Bodie on August 8th, you know it was a great day of celebration. Over 2,000 folks attended Friends of Bodie Day honoring the town's Sesquicentennial. A big thanks to the amazing staff and volunteers-the event was a fabulous success!

invited visitors into the jailhouse as he shared stories of Bodie's rowdy past. Two of his prisoners (Chris Grimshaw & Marshal O'Grady) were fit to be tied! "Dr. Isreal Goode", traveling medicine man (Warner Anderson), set up his fancy wagon at the cor-



"The Bodie Story Unraveled" - cast photo

The festivities began at 10am with several venues of entertainment. "Reverend Warrington" (Rod Duff) welcomed people to join him inside the church as he introduced characters from Bodie's colorful past. The audience applauded as they heard from "David Victor Cain" (Laird Johnson), "Eleanora Dumont" (Sasha Trana), "Theodore Hoover", (Dave James), Undertakers, "Mrs. Friend and Mr. Ward" (Cecile & Roger Vargo), "Elizabeth Butler" (Terri Geissinger) and "Marietta Butler" (Jenna Nustad). The firehouse was open and the apparatus displayed while Mitch Geissinger interpreted early firefighting techniques and the town's tragic fire history. "Constable Kirgan" (Norm Stump)

ner of Main and Green streets. His barker (Louie Hicks) drummed up lots of business and miracles were performed. Men, women and children were cured from all kinds of ailments! Old tyme tunes were played by talented musicians, the Bodie Travelers, Big Meadow and Chris Bayer. Many visitors dabbled in gold panning with Russ Taite of the Delta Gold Panners Association.

By high noon, the crowd had peaked and Bodie was anything but a ghost town. Many people arrived in period costume,

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...Grover Hot Springs State Park

...continued from page 2


family in 1905. In 1959, the land including the hot springs was purchased by California State Parks. Various improvements have followed over the years, bringing it to what it is today.

It is no secret that California State Parks as a department is facing unprecedented financial hardship and challenges. As a result, now is a good time to explore the possibility of expanding "Special Events" at Grover's pools. Special Events are defined as events held in the park that are beyond the normal park activities. Examples of special events would include reunions, corporate parties, weddings, and



athletic events. Historically, we have held only a few special events at the Grover Pools. "Midnight Madness" was an event suggested by the lifeguards that has been held in years past. The event was on Friday nights in the summer, and involved reopening the facility in the late evening after the regular hours and playing a movie while the visitors relaxed in the hot springs pool. We have had similar holiday movie view-

ings that were offered as extra public service and were not organized as a special event. These were very popular events, and we still get calls to this day from previous visitors asking about future movie nights at the pool.

With all these enthusiastic visitors, I am certain that we can utilize the facility far more creatively than we currently are in such a way that provides good public service and helps the park support itself. As the current Supervising Ranger at Grover Hot Springs, I welcome your ideas and referrals, and I appreciate your support. 

Jeanne is currently working as the Supervising Ranger at Grover Hot Springs State Park. She came to Grover from Folsom State Recreation Area.

Friends of Bodie Celebrates 150 Years of History


...continued from page 6

adding to the spirit of the day. For those who wanted to join in on the fun, costume rentals were available on site. A huge 'thank you' goes to Peggy and Lucky of Revelations Costumes for all that they did to make this event look authentic! The highlight of the day was the Heritage Parade that took place at 1:30. The large crowd edged Main Street in anticipation. The USMC Color Guard was honored with silent reverence as they marched and halted in front of the Miners Union Hall. Emotions swelled as the national anthem, sung beautifully by Dianne Harris, echoed through the Bodie hills. Leading the procession was the Grand Marshal, "W.S. Bodey" (John Buie) with his burro, Keith. Following were 22 entries that represented the historic time line of Bodie. The audience cheered as impressive horse and mule

teams pulled wagons and stages. As the parade progressed 'through time', the soft putter of the Model A automobiles delighted the crowd. An added treat for all were the Bodieites, who were riding in the antique cars. We were privileged to have Alice Dolan, Elwood Brown, Jack Brown and the Ellie Brown, all of whom remember Bodie as home.

I wish I had room here to personally thank all the parade participants. The time, effort and expense that these generous people put toward making our event a success is staggering. A special 'thank you' goes to the Smith Valley residents, to Ted Holloway and to the Sagebrush Model A club of Carson City.

Following the parade was the pie and watermelon eating contests. Lots of

laughter and smiles surrounded the tables as the onlookers cheered on their favorite contestants. Oh boy, what a mess! The member table was busy all day checking in dinner reservations and selling new memberships and goodies. My warmest gratitude goes toward the volunteers, Shari Stump, Mary Jane James, Leigh Pringle, Denise Matty, Sasha Trana, Lu Weaver and Joan Dillard, who ran the member / sales tables. Albert's BBQ served up the member dinners and as always, it was delicious. This year, we sold 375 dinners! Following tradition, the evening entertainment was set aside for the Friends of Bodie members. A Bodie staffer, James Dexter, wrote and directed the play "The Bodie Story Unraveled". Staff and volunteers performed the skit on the boardwalk to an enthusiastic audience. It was a hoot and we had a great time! If you couldn't join us on this special day, mark your calendar for next year! 

Donors since the last newsletter

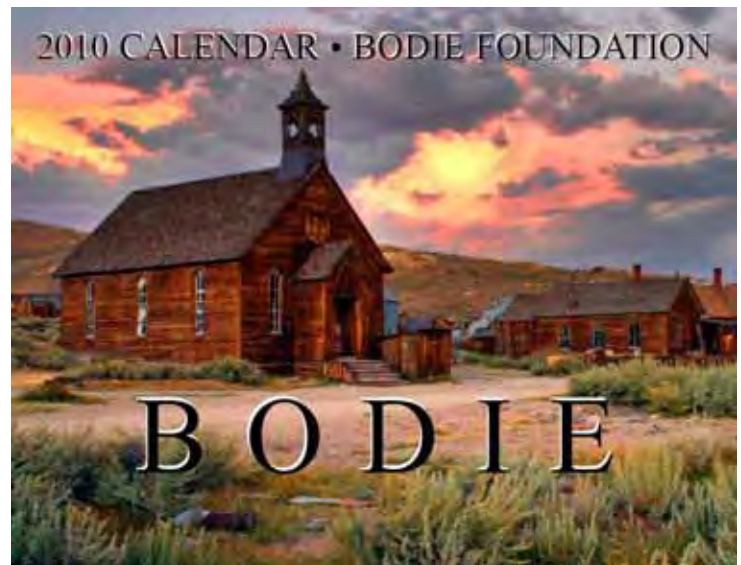
This is our list as of 11/2009. If we have inadvertently left your name off the list, please contact us via the website.

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Anne Crudden	Donna R. Jones
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Andrea and Ford Cole	Rosa M. Vasquez
Gabrielle Flynn	Mike J. Wenrich
Roy Wagner	Mervin & Wanda Nensteil
Nathan Bacon	Emmon Clarke
Eric Grimm	Steven Eigenberg
Allen Hirsch	Laura Likar
Dque Eyheramendy	Wendy Fogelstrom
Mervin and Wanda Nensteil	Steven Eigenberg
Karl and Jennifer Schroeder	Gerald and Kris Leedom
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2010 Bodie Foundation Calendar

The 2010 Bodie Foundation Calendar is now available!
Order your holiday gifts today at www.TheBodieStore.com

We'd like to thank these wonderful contributors for their photos - we couldn't have done it without you!



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