

BEVRIDGE from page 1A

a number of ways, including: increasing membership, fund-raising efforts, special projects, maintaining or increasing attendance for chapter activities or increasing morale and friendship within the chapter and community.

Oregon Dunes DAR was able to present Beveridge the Honorary Past Regent pin at a chapter meeting on Nov. 16.

“Jacquie’s time as regent was a wonderful era for this chapter, with the greatest fundraising and membership growth of its 12 years,” Westphal said when she presented the award “with heartfelt thanks.” “She is kind and her current work as chapter chaplain is appreciated more than she will ever know.”

For Beveridge, the work of DAR is important in local communities. While it is a lineage organization — requiring that members be able to prove lineal descent from a patriot of the American Revolution — DAR also has a three-fold purpose: Education, historic preservation and patriotism.

“There are many ways to reach out the community with each of those things,” she said. “We’ve always been supportive of veteran things and our active duty military. We catalogued all the bricks at the Veteran’s Memorial Wall, so we’ll do the next wall when they get that one done. It makes it easier for people to find them when they have a directory.”

Helping people find their history is important in several of Beveridge’s other organizations, including the Oregon Coast Military Museum (OCMM), where she is wrapping up a four-year term on the board of directors, and the Siuslaw Genealogy Society, which held a Titanic-themed party this week.

“It’s a fun group,” Beveridge said. “And everyone is welcome to attend. You don’t have to be a member.”

At the Siuslaw Genealogy Society, attendees give each other

advice on connecting with their pasts. Many meetings have special programs, such as introductory classes with Kevin Mittge or webinars on specific topics.

“We try to have interesting programs to help people,” Beveridge said. “This year we are trying to focus on breaking down brick walls (in our research).”

Events like the Titanic Party or potlucks honoring Irish/Scottish or German heritage help people connect in different ways to the past, through specific foods, images or even costumes. In her research for this week’s party, member Debby Wright found out that the person she chose to research from the Titanic was actually from Lane County.

“That was really amazing, another connection,” Beveridge said.

While Siuslaw Genealogy Society encourages resources for research — the group meets monthly at Siuslaw Public Library and offers access to Ancestry and other programs — OCMM offers another angle: the area’s connections to past wars and conflicts.

From meticulously detailed murals to authentic costumes and displays, the museum seeks to show coastal Oregonians’ involvement in America’s military history, all the while honoring area veterans and their families.

“You know, at the museum, we have kids come through and get to observe them as they go through things, feel them and try things on,” Beveridge said. “Most places say ‘don’t touch.’ Here, we offer a really good interactive experience.”

OCMM is also seeking to continue building connections to the community, through local partnerships with the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum or with the Umpqua Chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America, which brought the Oregon Memorial Traveling Wall to the museum earlier in December.

Through those contacts and work done by OCMM staff, “The Wall That Heals” Vietnam Veterans Memorial Replica and Mobile Education Center will be coming to Florence in April 2019.

The special appearance will require community involvement, as volunteers are needed to staff the replica 24 hours a day.

“This town runs on volunteers. I do at least 10 or more hours of volunteering each week, and so many in this town do, too,” Beveridge said.

Despite her busy December, she had found time to ring the bell for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign.

“Florence is such an amazing community — and it’s the people who make it that,” she said. “When there’s a need, people step up and take care of it.”

It comes full circle, she said. Everything connects.

A few years ago, Oregon Dunes DAR invited Jesse Beers, culture director with the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, to talk about the area’s native population and history. He also instructed another of Beveridge’s groups on native herb names and uses.

Full circle, as now OCMM is working with local tribes to include Native American elements in a museum display, even if temporarily.

“The museum continues to evolve,” Beveridge said.

Through the use of internet archives and newly digitized sources, people’s research into the past continues to evolve, as

well.

“Thanks to genealogy ‘angels’ (people who donate their time to archiving and collecting historic documents), more and more information is becoming available all the time,” Beveridge said.

“What’s available now on the internet and through various libraries is really just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is available if you go travel somewhere and get local records.”

Through her research, Beveridge has used free resources, such as DAR’s national records, and paid sites, like ancestry.com and the New England Historic Genealogical Society, and even traveled to Salt Lake City to access records there.

“It makes it easier for us doing the research, but it’s also important to preserve that information. It helps to know where you came from. And sometimes you find amazing synchronicities — one of my ancestors was in law enforcement,” said Beveridge, who also worked in law enforcement. “That was kind of cool when I discovered that.”

And online genealogy searches are getting more advanced, with continued research refining DNA test results, linking a person’s percentage of heredity to actual countries or regions.

Beveridge’s test at Ancestry DNA first listed “four percent Scandinavian.” An update to her results said it was “six percent Norwegian,” a complete surprise to Beveridge, who now wants to look at her son Jeffrey’s results.

“You throw up different genes and they fall in different piles,” she said. “You might learn

something you weren’t expecting. ... People believe these family legends, and then something says, ‘Oops, no, it’s not that way at all.’”

Despite the worry or surprises, she values the research she has been able to do.

“Think about what they accomplished, and how we got to where they are,” she said. “Not everybody comes from somebody who did something famous, but they were there, and more and more people came after them, and there you are. You’re a compilation of all those genes.”

Her search has also allowed her to connect not only with her close family, cousins and their children, but also the people who lived in a historic home built by one of her several great-grandfathers. She can link her American history back to William Claiborne, who was a surveyor in Jamestown, Va., who lived until around 1677.

Some members of Oregon Dunes DAR are older than 90, creating a shorter chain to their Revolutionary ancestors.

“It makes a difference. Most of mine are like a fifth-great grandfather,” Beveridge said. “Younger members coming in now, they’re going to have sixth- or seventh-great grandfathers.

The older we are, the less of a gap there is to that history.”

And with data more accessible online, DAR could add more members to the more than 930,000 women who have joined since the national society was founded in 1890.

“Many of us have relatives that were here long before the Revolutionary War,” Beveridge said. “To be able to go back to the 1600s in North America I think is really remarkable. And there are a lot of people in DAR that can go back that far.”

Oregon Dunes DAR has a list of its accomplishments in the Florence area, but Beveridge returns again to education and the importance of knowing history, both the world’s and one’s own.

“The history just makes it come alive,” she said. “I wish more kids would get to experience things like that.”

While not everyone will find a semi-famous person in their family tree — Beveridge said she “got goosebumps” when she visited Jamestown and walked in her ancestor’s actual footsteps, even seeing his name on a plaque — she hopes they learn to connect with their past.

“Some things are worth saving and preserving,” she said.

“Florence is such an amazing community — and it’s the people who make it that. When there’s a need, people step up and take care of it.”

— Jacquie Beveridge

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