

# TIME LINES

## Recent Information from Tempe's Past Uncovered

While going about her normal volunteer duties reviewing back issues of the *Tempe Daily News*, research library volunteer **April Phulton** stumbled across a series of intriguing articles in several of the July 1953 issues. This series of stories reported strange lights had been seen near the dry Salt River bed. Her curiosity piqued, Phulton investigated further going through old military records held in the archives of the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. There she found documents detailing an investigation by officials based at Williams Air Force Base and what appears to be a subsequent cover up.

These previously classified documents reported that a downed UFO had been found east of the Mill Avenue Bridge in the summer of 1953, in the area now known as Tempe Town Lake. According to these sources, the Arizona National Guard reported to the scene and removed the object immediately. Reports further stated that no bodies or any other signs of extra-terrestrial life were found at the scene.

"At the time, it was necessary to remove the object and keep confidentiality because we were afraid of riots and other activities that could be harmful to the public," said Ret. Capt. **Jeff Clement** of the Arizona National Guard.

According to several witness statements, the UFO had been spotted in the sky as it flew northeast over Mill Avenue, near the Hayden Flour Mill. Witnesses claimed the object appeared to be in the shape of a saucer. "It was round with bright red and blue lights around it; just like you would see in the movies," said Tempe resident Ryan Burch.

Realizing the importance of what she had found, Phulton took the information to **John Akers**, the museum's Curator of History. Akers contacted local authorities with Phulton's findings and the case has been reopened and an investigation begun. Akers is assisting the investigation by interviewing the four Tempe residents who claimed to have witnessed the crash. Asked why he encouraged reopening the case, Akers stated, "We felt it was necessary to release this information as it could benefit the museum, and in fact, society as a whole. Just think what it would mean to Tempe history if it were found that Tempe has the first documented case of alien visitation."

(April Fool's!)



A UFO tracking device, originally designed in 1903, proved to be functional during the Tempe events in July of 1953.

(See page 4)



## New Exhibit

**A Day in the Life of Mill Avenue**  
Discover Mill Avenue, the heart of Tempe, as seen through the viewfinder of **Larry Mishler**. He has created a photo-essay showing a 24-hour time period in Tempe's historic downtown area. Opens April 22.

## Continuing Exhibits

### Piecing Together Our Story: Student Snapshots

Coordinated by the Historical Museum Youth Advisory Committee, this exhibit is about the life of students in five Tempe high schools. Each participating high school had a team that produced a photographic collage depicting the unique character of their school. Through April 20.

### A Proud Journey Home: Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Communities in Arizona

The Tempe Historical Museum and the Program for Southeast Asian Studies (PSEAS) at Arizona State University have joined in a cooperative venture to assist Southeast Asian communities to tell their stories. This exhibit explores Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese refugee experiences in Tempe 30 years after the Vietnam War. It features oral histories, photographs and objects from these communities. Funded in part through an Arizona Humanities Council "We the People" grant, the exhibit is open through October 12.

### Tempe in the 1930s

This exhibit looks at life in Tempe during the Great Depression. It was researched and written by Corona del Sol High School students with the guidance of **Eric Ladue**, Social Studies Chair. Funded by an Arizona Heritage Project grant from Salt River Project, the exhibit is open through January 25, 2007.

## Advisory Committee Given Diversity Award

The Southeast Asian Advisory Committee that assisted the museum in producing the exhibit, *A Proud Journey Home*, (see page 1) was honored recently by the City of Tempe Human Relations Commission. The committee received a 2006 Diversity Award for exceptional commitment towards the betterment of the city. Tony Thipdavong, a resident of Tempe and an ASU student, approached the museum staff in 2004 about hosting an exhibit celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and the subsequent immigration of hundreds of thousands of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese refugees.

The Southeast Asian Advisory Committee was formed to guide the exhibit development process and provide many of the artifacts and photographs in the exhibit. The committee is equally represented by the three nationalities and contains a balance of young and old, males and females. It also includes museum staff, a representative of a state refugee service organization, and ASU faculty from the Program for Southeast Asian Studies and Asian Pacific America Studies.

The exhibit uses oral histories, photographs and objects to document the refugee experience of “becoming American” and adjusting to a new language and culture while trying to pass on their particular cultural traditions to the next generation. Quotes from oral histories describe the refugees’ feelings on first arrival in this country, their thoughts about how they were received and their contributions to Arizona. This exhibit was funded in part by a “We the People” grant administered through the Arizona Humanities Council.

The overarching goals of the exhibit are to provide these Southeast Asian communities with a place to celebrate their experiences since immigrating to the United States and to help other visitors learn more about them. Visitors should walk away with:

- knowledge that Tempe and Arizona have a diverse Southeast Asian community that began with the immigration of refugees from the Vietnam War 30 years ago and is still growing,
- a realization that the Tempe Historical Museum is a place where all members of the community can gather to celebrate their past and ponder their future.

The advisory committee has maintained an ongoing commitment to assist with further community outreach activities. There is a film series being shown at the museum in April (see calendar of events, page 3) is a direct result of this commitment. We thank the Southeast Asian Advisory Committee for their wonderful efforts and applaud their dedication to the Tempe community.



Members of the advisory committee receive their diversity award. (L to R): **Councilmember Mark Mitchell, Mayor Hugh Hallman, Tony Thipdavong, Nguyen Mong-Tuyen, Jacqueline Butler-Diaz, Councilmember Ben Arredondo, Sone Sithonnorath, Councilmember Barbara Carter, Karen Adams, Councilmember Hut Hutson, Sithay (Robert) Thipdavong, Councilmember Leonard Copple.**

## Time to Celebrate the Year of the Museum



In celebration of its centennial, the American Association of Museums (AAM) has declared 2006 the “Year of the Museum.” The AAM is the primary organization of museum professionals in the United States.

The Year of the Museum is a celebration of the wondrous, amazing and exciting things that museums do to enrich our lives and our communities. This year will be a time to celebrate the many ways that museums contribute to our quality of life. It also represents the beginning of a major national effort to encourage all Americans to experience, celebrate, and support the museums in their communities.

We encourage you to take a second look at the museums in your community. Take advantage of this year to rediscover what the Tempe Historical Museum, and other museums in Tempe, have to offer! Look for the Year of the Museum logo, designating special activities, in our calendar of events and on our website at [www.tempe.gov/museum](http://www.tempe.gov/museum).



Historical Museum Youth Advisory Board member **Lindsay Samuel** paints Marcos de Niza’s puzzle piece in preparation for the exhibit, *Piecing Together Our Story: Student Snapshots*. (see page 1).

## APRIL


**SOUTHEAST ASIAN FILM SERIES**  
**Tuesday nights, starting April 4**  
**6:00 pm**
**Museum lobby / Free**

 Presented in partnership with **COAR**
**(Community Outreach and Advocacy for Refugees).**

 Each film will be moderated by a speaker. Refreshments will be served. See [www.tempe.gov/museum](http://www.tempe.gov/museum) for details.

**April 4:** "Daughter From Danang"

**April 11:** "a.k.a. Don Bonus"

**April 18:** "Monkey Dance"

**April 25:** "Blue Collar and Buddha"

**TEMPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPEAKERS PROGRAMS**
**Wednesday, April 12, 11:30 am**
**Museum classroom / Free**
**Dr. James McBride**, *From Pans to Pits: The History of Mining in Arizona*. Bring your lunch. Coffee provided.

**APRIL 16, Easter Sunday.** Museum closed.

**3<sup>RD</sup> THIRSTDAY NIGHT CAFÉ**
**Teens Café**
**Thursday, April 20, 6:30 - 8:30 pm**
**Museum / Free**

Teens are invited to meet friends in a café atmosphere, listen to performances by high school musicians and explore exhibits produced by high school students.

## MAY

**INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY**

**Thursday, May 18**

Visit us on International Museum Day, during the "Year of the Museum" and receive a special gift as our way of saying "thanks for your support."

**Be a Part of Wild Wednesdays This Summer**

Did you know that it is now possible to explore the Far East and travel through time? All that is needed is a good imagination and a trip to the museum on Wednesdays from mid-June through the end of July! Yes, you guessed it—*Wild Wednesdays* are back!

Museum visitors will go "techno" with music from the 1980s. They can experience life in the 1930s, including trying on overalls typical of the period. Visitors will also get the chance to make beautiful crafts reflecting the cultures of Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as win prizes doing fun activities. They will also explore the cultures of Tempe's earliest settlers—the Hohokam—as well as the local Mexican-American culture. (See weekly themes and schedule above.)

Teens—you can participate another way with *Wild Wednesdays*! Teen volunteers (age 14 and above) run the activities and assist with the crafts, as well as share their special talents. No special talents are required, however, just an interest

**MAY 29, Memorial Day.** Museum closed.

## JUNE

**VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**
**Tuesday, June 6, 1:30 – 2:30 pm**
**Museum Board Room**

Find out how you can become a volunteer and make a worthwhile contribution to your community while meeting interesting people and doing rewarding work.

**WILD WEDNESDAYS**
**Wednesdays, June 15 to July 26**
**10 am – 4 pm**

**Museum / Free admission**

The museum's "wildly" popular family program returns. Beat the heat and enjoy special hands-on activities, games and prizes. Each Wednesday will focus on a unique theme relating to our exhibits.

**June 14:** The Ancient Hohokam

**June 21:** World Travel: Vietnam

**June 28:** Time Travel: The 1930s

**July 5:** World Travel: Laos

**July 12:** Mexican-American Heritage

**July 19:** Time Travel: The 1980s

**July 26:** World Travel: Cambodia

Looking ahead. . .

**TUESDAY, JULY 4**
**Independence Day.** Museum closed.

in history and working with kids. Volunteers work a Wednesday morning or afternoon shift and attend a weekly training session. The program runs June 9 through July 26. Applications and information are available from the city's Volunteer Office at 480-350-5190.

**Passings**

**Ken Wells**, a former docent at the Petersen House Museum, passed away on January 3 at the age of 89. Ken began volunteering at the Petersen House in 1989 and had also volunteered in the museum at its tourist information desk. He was selected as the museum's Volunteer of the Year in 1999. Ken was a life member of the Tempe Historical Society.

**Almeda Wallace** passed away on March 5 at the age of 82. Almeda began volunteering at the museum in 1994, and was a museum docent. She was also a life member of the Tempe Historical Society, was a past President of the Society and had been very active on the Society's Board.



# Step Into History

*Time Lines* is a quarterly newsletter for museum supporters and volunteers.

Editors:

Mary Anna Bastin  
Jeri Copenhagen  
Amy Douglass

Comments, suggestions?  
Call 480-350-5100.

## MUSEUM HOURS

Monday - Thursday and Saturday  
10 am - 5 pm  
Sunday 1 - 5 pm

## MUSEUM GIFT SHOP HOURS

Monday - Thursday and Saturday  
10 am - 4 pm; Sunday 1 - 4 pm

## PETERSEN HOUSE HOURS

Tuesday - Thursday and Saturday  
10 am - 2 pm

Visit the museum's website at  
[www.tempe.gov/museum](http://www.tempe.gov/museum)

## New Museum Mission Statement

On February 2, 2006, a new mission statement was approved that more closely reflects the museum's purpose.

*The Tempe Historical Museum is a community history museum that explores Tempe's identity and builds connections between residents and their community. We recognize the power of history to provide insights for making decisions relevant to contemporary and future life in an ever-changing society. Our museum is a stimulating public forum acting as a catalyst for lively dialogue.*

*We work together with Tempe's diverse residents to preserve and tell their stories. The museum comprehensively explores Tempe history through exhibits, activities, speakers, collections, research services, and programs that captivate, connect with and delight audiences throughout the community and beyond. We embrace the important responsibility of collecting and caring for the artifacts and the written, spoken and pictorial records of Tempe.*

*The museum, as a municipal institution, follows the City of Tempe's values. We adhere to a policy of inclusiveness that provides open access to all of our facilities, operations, and services.*

April Fool's, again! This is actually a solar energy machine built in 1903. It was located at West Broadway Road and the railroad tracks to produce power to pump water.

***The Tempe Historical Museum is a center where the community comes together to celebrate Tempe's past and ponder the future.***