



Grandiose Utterings of Monaco South

(GUMS)

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Optimist Club of Monaco South



OPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL

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Serving Youth and the Community for 43 Years
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Editor for this Issue—Phil Perington

Speaker, J.v.L. (Julie) Bell Author, "The Lucky Hat Mine"

Our speaker this morning was Author J.v.L. Bell, aka Julie Bell, a Colorado native who grew up climbing 14,000 ft. mountains, exploring old ghost towns, and backpacking through the back country. She and her family love to hike, raft, and cross-country ski together.

Julie is a Mechanical Engineer by trade who discovered she loved to write Colorado History. "This is all fun stuff. My book is basically about Waterloo women who came to Colorado." She shares that in 1858 Gold discovered in Colorado and with that over 100,000 people streamed into the state in search of great wealth. Only 5 percent were women. Her book is about a few of those women who became legends for better or worse. For example ...

Elizabeth Sumner Bears whose husband William started the Rocky Mountain News, married at 20 years of age. They had come to Denver to start a newspaper. On April 23, 1859 they published and distributed the Rocky Mountain News 20 minutes ahead of their competitor to become the first newspaper of Denver. There said there was no gun fight. Elizabeth had travelled by buckboard for 365 miles from Omaha. As a reflection on the life she had lived lamented, "We often laughed through our tears." The passing of children was never quite understood. At one point in her family life, (well known mountain man) Jim Beckworth a "colored man," plus Kit Carson and other notable folks were invited to their one room family home for a dinner party. She was instrumental in forming the Ladies Union Aid Society, Denver's first homeless shelter and orphanage.

Mountain Charley — A true community legend was really a woman, by the name of Elsa Jane Forest. She took on the



role as a man to raise her children, and to run the Mountain Boys Saloon. Denver's first cross-dresser who hated corsets. Her trials and trepidation's were too numerous to detail. It's all in the book.

Clara Brown was the first black woman to come to Colorado. She had been purchased by George Brown who then bought her freedom in Kentucky. However, she was eventually forced out of Kentucky. Crossing the Great Plains and Platte River basin, she was hired as a cook for a



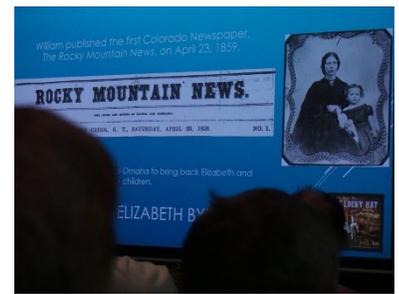
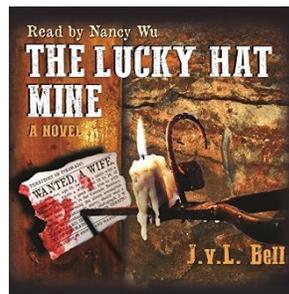
J.v.L. (Julie) Bell
Photo Noel Hasselgren

wagon train. Once she settled in Colorado she opened a laundry in Gilpin County and the adventure began. Affectionately she became known as "Aunt Clare." The sole mission of her life was to reunite with her family, searching endlessly until age 84.

Ada LaMonte — In 1850 she was only 17 years old and married a Pastor to spread the gospel. They kept a detailed travel log while coming to Colorado. Sadly, while traveling in a wagon train her husband ran off with a hooker and left her alone and devastated. As a consequence she made the decision to become Denver's first madam and opened an extremely profitable House of Ill repute. (Better known as a Sportin' houses). She became wealthy and Denver's leading lady. Ironically, her husband was discovered to have been murdered by the woman he ran off with, with Ada's bible still clutched in his hands. Tragically her spirit was broken. She succumbed to alcohol and died in poverty and starvation in Georgetown. It's all in the book.



Julie was a wonderful and enlightening Speaker. Please read her book. It is a great read.



Meeting Place
American Legion Hall Post 1
5400 East Yale Avenue (Yale & I-25), Denver, Colorado
Every Friday Morning, 7:00 - 8:00 am
****INVITE A FRIEND TO JOIN****