

February 27, 2024

6:00-7:45 PM

Meeting of COMO Preservation

[www.comopreservation.org](http://www.comopreservation.org)

Columbia Public Library, Friends Room

I. Call to order by Dianna O'Brien

The sign-in sheet was passed around and the following were present: Bruce Alspaugh, Brianna Bland, Stephen Bybee, Debby Cook, Chris Creasy, Janice DeRosier, Timothy Dollens, Mary Kaye Doyle, Matt Fetterly, Dennis Fitzgerald, Melissa Hagan, Brian Hayden, Michelle Lancaster, Cindy McCord, Marilyn McLeod, Dianna O'Brien, Julie Plax, Christiane Quinn, Nina Sappington, Elena Vega, Dan Viets, Deanna Wasman, Jill Womack, Sophia Anderson, Debbie Taylor, Ray March, Greg Leonard, Ken Green, Stacy Bybee, Brent Sappington, Patrick and Helen Atkinson, Mary Austen, Peggy Hendrickson, Luann Corban, Gabi Jacobs, Rikki Ascani, Lara Nugent, Jeff Buehler, Melissa Williams, Elaine Allen, Charles Schoene, Mary Frantz, Keith Politte, Emily Morrison, Adam Morrison, Alexander Aguilera, Talon Aguilera, Bill Thompson and Dianna Rains.

Event Reminders:

-Our next meeting will be Wednesday, March 20 at 6:00. Greg Olson- Indigenous People of the Columbia Area. Our April 23 meeting speaker will be Verna LaBoy impersonating Annie Fisher, a black caterer famous for "beaten biscuits".

-Future dates: Tuesdays, April 23, May 28, June 25, July 23, Aug. 27, Sept. 24, Oct. 22 & Nov. 19.

-Tour- Movie Theaters Through Time- Mar. 16, 10-Noon. Free but registrations required:

<https://www.comopreservation.org/events>

-Volunteers are needed for all teams. Tasks range from taking photos, writing content for a blog to monitoring Columbia's colleges to help salvage historic items, maintain the artisans list.

**Advocacy Team:** next meeting: 9-10 AM on Mar. 14 at EatWell. (Team Leader- Dianna O'Brien, [dobrien387@gmail.com](mailto:dobrien387@gmail.com))

**Education Team:** next meeting 3-5 PM on March 19 at The Grind on Forum. (Team Leader- Julie Plax, [kikiplax@gmail.com](mailto:kikiplax@gmail.com))

**Restoration Team:** next meeting 5:15-6:30 PM on March 26 at Elena's house-2815 N. Oakland Gravel Road. (Team Leader- Elena Vega, [elenavega@aol.com](mailto:elenavega@aol.com))

Announcements:

-Become a member for only \$20 per year.

*\*\*In order to ensure the safety of all library visitors, Daniel Boone Regional Library requires that children under the age of twelve (12) be accompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible adult age sixteen (16) or older while on library property. The library is not responsible for caring for children who are left*

*unattended in the library or who come to the library without an adult or other responsible person.*  
Coloring pages are available for children.

II. Speaker: Stephen Bybee – Columbia at Night through Photographs.

Stephen Bybee works with the Food Bank, Missouri Conservation and is Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission. He is also a gifted photographer and for 25 years has been taking documentary photographs of Columbia at night utilizing black & white film since 1998. In 2010 he switched to a digital camera.

Background- Stephen attended Marshall, MO High School.

Westminster College as an English major.

He worked for the U. S. Forest Service in Southern Colorado.

Stephen came to Columbia in 1995 and lived in the East Campus Neighborhood. With no air conditioning, he took odd jobs and had free time to take photographs. Stephen took classes at Columbia College and MU in art and photography. Oliver Schuchard was an influential photography professor. One project was to make a photography book of things that interested him. Neon signs and unique buildings on 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Broadway, MU Campus, Hitt Street, Cherry Street, Providence Road and the Business Loop drew Stephen's attention.

Stephen became the photographer for MU Recreation Services between 1999-2003. He was also a Photo Instructor at MSA/GPC Craft Studios.

Projects he is involved in currently are Missouri Conservation, the Historic Preservation Commission and the Task Force for the McKinney Building.

Influences on Stephen's photographs- Walker Evans who used black and white photography to document the Great Depression and real-life settings of small towns and people. He took photos of things that would change- small town life, buildings, signs and graphics. French photographer Eugene Atget was famous for his documentary photography of street scenes and architecture of Paris. His early photos of Paris captured scenes that were gone in 30-40 years. Hungarian photographer Andre Kertesz was interested in unorthodox camera angles. When he came to the United States in 1936, he took famous street views of New York City. Another Hungarian photographer known as Brassai was famous for taking views of high and low society in Paris and the idea of vernacular photography.

Stephen was also influenced by the early glass plate photos in the archives of the Boone County History and Culture Center.

Stephen's photography- Artistic view over 25 years.

He was originally interested in photography as art, not documenting history. His photos now are archival. His early photographs around 1996 of Lowry Mall especially the windows and Missouri Bookstore to capture its beautiful design. Stephen began taking street photos and Jefferson High School (now Jefferson Middle School). He took a series of photos of a used car lot on the Business Loop. He was drawn to 9

th Street with his interest in signs like the Peking neon sign. He utilized the weather to take striking photographs. In Dec. or Jan. 2000-2001 – Osama’s and The Heidelberg in snow. Glenn’s Cafe on 9<sup>th</sup> & Cherry. Shakespeare’s playing pinball, the Rolling Rock neon sign. Missouri Theater marquee in snow. Tony’s Pizza sign, Lowry Mall, Jesse Hall dome and the Bull Pen Cafe neon sign.

1999 -Stephen had 17 of his prints in a photography show at Columbia College.

Late 1999 – photo of Glenn’s Cafe- SE Ballenger Building.

He was drawn to old ads – Rene Butel soda bottling. 1888-1889 soda water, ginger ale, spring water. Butel died in St. Louis in 1904.

2002- Footprints in the snow.

2003 Stephen began indoor night photography. Old Osco Drug signs, Ron’s Country Boy, Rick’s, Otto’s and Cornerstone.

Other photos:

College Avenue car wash, Gerbes before facelift- panorama photo 2012-2014, Coley’s, Parkway by library, back of the Stephen’s Building, Ragtag summer, night & winter, Adam’s Books, The Heidelberg hand-held camera at night, Ewer’s Tires, Broadway Billiards, photos from parking garages, Neidermeyer Apartments. Stephen took winter photos in February 2011 during the blizzard: Wabash Station, D & H Drugstore, KOPN, Office Depot, 8<sup>th</sup> Street.

Missouri Theater after the remodel, the back of Missouri Theater, Rag Tag during the True/False Festival, Lucy’s Cafe, pavers on Short Street (not knowing that Short Street would be covered by a hotel). He took a photo of the laundromat on Paris Road and a week later the business closed. He was standing in the middle of Paris Road to take the shot. The Diner’s neon sign was like an Edward Hopper painting.

Some photos that have not been shown in public before.

The steps of the Neidermeyer Apartments in snow, drainage grate, Booche’s alley & interior, Bull Pen in color shot with slide film in late 1990’s, Arrow Head Motel sign, Buffalo Motel in Buffalo, Missouri, Cottonwood Motel, Marshall Junction Grocery & Service Station which ran until the early 2000’s, The Diner before it moved to present location, Liquor sign near Lebanon, Missouri, Perlow-Stevens Gallery on Walnut St, laundry at Garth & Business Loop with lights on all night, 8<sup>th</sup> Street across from City Hall, tattoo parlor, Uptown sign, inside Booche’s at night, Blue Note taken 2012 or 2013, Tiger Pawn sign, the Diner on a rainy night, Cyclextreme sign, power pole during a blizzard, Missouri Theater one window, next to Federal Hall – Viking Restaurant, the building the Ott’s are working on now that was the former City Hall and jail, Candy Factory, Déjà vu, Edward Jones on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, panorama from his bedroom window, JJ’s he didn’t want to stand in the road, but wanted to get the shot. Another project was rural churches of Missouri 1998-present which includes about 150-200 churches.

Stephen’s perspective on photography

When Stephen began taking photos, he was using film that came in 24 or 36 pictures per roll. You couldn’t see the photo until it was developed and had to be careful about how many shots you took. Now working with digital, it’s hard to have a vision. Photographs last for years, but we don’t know how long digital will last. He still takes a film camera for the rural church project. His vision has changed from ph

oto to documentary. He wanted to visually preserve Downtown Columbia. Now more than ever he is in preservation mode. Looking at the photos after 25 years is like a time capsule. You can organize photographs and negatives, but you really can't organize digital photos since there are too many images. During the pandemic he took photographs of storefronts and uncrowded streets.

State Historical Society of Missouri has about 500 of his 1978 photos. 2018 photos in that collection too.

2009-2011 the invasion of the high-rise buildings altered the skyline.

He walked around Shakespeare's before the remodel and liked the way Columbia looked from an artistic view, not historical.

### III. Reminders

May will be our 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary!

The calendar on our website is up to date with all historical events in the area.

Also, the website has notices about our upcoming meetings.

Please sign up for our mailing list.

The Movie Theater Tour will be March 16.

If you would like to lead a tour or work on a script for a tour, see Julie Plax or Dianna O'Brien.