

Humboldt Parlor #14 Official Visit Weaverville to Ferndale: Bigfoot Country

By Burt Winn – The Traveling Trustee

My Official Visits as Grand Trustee returned me to the Northern part of California, first to the historic town of Weaverville, gateway to the Trinity Alps, then on to Ferndale, located on the North Coast near Eureka. Both towns are historic in their own way and close to an area of Northern California known as Bigfoot Country.

Driving north on I5 to Redding, the temperatures hovered near 100 degrees in the Valley, hot for mid-September. Turning west onto 299 at Redding soon revealed a broken, burned-out landscape. Started by an automobile's flat tire scraping the road, in 2018 the Carr Fire burned through 359 square miles of forest and destroyed multiple towns near Whiskeytown Lake. Driving further west towards Weaverville revealed miles and miles of broken, dead and destroyed trees covering the landscape and mountain sides in a ghostly reflection of the forest that used to be.



Weaverville, a mining town that once had its own Chinatown, was spared. Checking into the Whitmore Inn I commented that my wife and I went through the area some 40 years ago and the Innkeeper replied, "Not much has changed." The outdoor circular staircases are still in place in front of the larger buildings in town; the Joss House, built in 1852, Weaverville's oldest building, is still there but now is a developed California State Park with a visitors center and parking lot; the Whitmore Inn, a Victorian House where we stayed is practically a 19th century museum, with period furniture and tapestry drapes.

Weaverville's Mt Bally Parlor #87 is a part-time Parlor as they don't meet from January through April. Winter in Weaverville can bring heavy snow, wind and rain nearly closing the town.

Mt. Bally Parlor #87



My Official Visit was in two parts. I met with Financial Secretary/Treasurer Heather MacLaren at her Tax office then met with the rest of the Parlor at a dinner meeting at nearby Trinity Alps Golf Course Lounge. Both parts went seamlessly, as Heather MacLaren had all the paperwork done before I arrived, and the Parlor dinner/meeting an hour later was to the point, and with good food.

The next day, heading west to Ferndale on 89, we stopped at Willow Creek, home of the Willow Creek-China Flat Bigfoot Museum and Bigfoot Collection.



This cumbersomely titled museum houses a lot of Bigfoot memorabilia; Footprint stones, pictures, statues, stories, souvenirs, and a loop of the Patterson/Gimlin Bigfoot Film taken at nearby Bluff Creek in 1967. I asked the attendant if he had ever seen one. "I heard the 'knock!'" he replied. Apparently, Bigfoot is somewhat elusive, maybe people just haven't looked hard enough...

Crossing over Ferndale's Historic Bridge, a poured concrete two lane bridge built in 1910 reminding me of the old San Mateo Bridge before it became four lanes, we soon entered Ferndale. A well-preserved coastal town built in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ferndale's Main Street probably looks much like it did over 100 years ago. Cool, humid, and foggy weather met us as we arrived, a nice break from the inland heat.



Ferndale Parlor #93 meets at the historic Humboldt County Fairgrounds in town, usually at the Turf Club, but this time at a large meeting hall nearby. Their meeting included a dinner featuring a Cook-Off winning Chili, Pulled Pork with all the fixins' and a no-host bar.

Meeting with their new Recording Secretary Cash Garlinghouse at 5pm at the Hall, I did the Official Visit and completed the paperwork on the site. He had all the records necessary and with