

Society STAR

A PUBLICATION OF THE
MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2021



Director Molly Kruckenberg accepts a \$100,000 pledge from Opportunity Bank President Pete Johnson for the Montana Heritage Center. Johnson said he hopes the donation will motivate other people and businesses to support the MHC.



Former Montana Historical Society Director Bruce Whittenberg accepts a check for \$365 from Brett Wiensch, owner of the 1889 Coffee House in Helena. Wiensch decided that \$5 from the sale of every coffee mug would be donated to the Montana Heritage Center. His 1889 coffee and mugs also are for sale in the Montana Historical Society Museum Store.

Versai Team Wins Governor's Award

Five Montana Historical Society employees were honored with the Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance in 2020.

Rod Coslet, Lori Ereth, Jodel Fohn, Rennan Reike, and Anthony Schriilo were nominated for their work implementing the new Versai system. It is an integrated museum software system for customer and donor relationship management.

As a result of the collaborative effort, this team was able to migrate existing software programs into the Versai software. The Versai conversion provides greater work efficiency and improved customer

service to visitors, members, donors, and Montana Historical Society staff.

Governor Steve Bullock thanked all State of Montana employees, but singled out the 2020 recipients, noting how they applied themselves to work above and beyond what was considered their duties.

"I sincerely thank you for your continued dedication to your neighbors across Montana," Bullock said. "Regardless of your position in government, your work ensures that our state remains the Last Best Place for all Montanans." 🌟



(From left) Rod Coslet, Rennan Reike, Anthony Schriilo, Lori Ereth and Jodel Fohn were given the Governor's Award for Excellence in Performance in 2020 for their work on updating the Montana Historical Society's customer and donor relationship software system.

Change

Change is part of the common human experience. We all experience change, in our personal and in our professional lives. We turn another year older. We get married. We accept new jobs.

Change is what makes history, too, and we often study change when we study history. What differences resulted from the passage of the 19th Amendment, granting women suffrage? What developed in our country and the world during World War II? What transformations occurred in Montana when we adopted a new constitution in 1972?

Change is probably the defining factor of 2020. COVID-19 has certainly caused many disruptions in our lives. National and state elections recast government administrations, financial concerns affected many, and the Black Lives Matter movement raised issues of systemic racism. The Montana Historical Society also has experienced many transformations in 2020. We have new leadership (I'm so honored to be the director at MHS), new ways to interact with our friends and members, and new public officials taking the helm of our state and nation.

COVID-19 altered many activities at MHS, although not the essence of what we do and

who we are. And we discovered that sometimes change is positive. We adapted to social distancing and limited gatherings by offering more online opportunities for our friends to interact with us. Although it was disappointing to not gather with you in Butte in September, holding our annual conference virtually allowed us to reach a wider audience and to invite speakers from across the country to talk about Montana history. We expanded the Museum Store's online presence and now offer many more gift options for shoppers. (You should check it out!) Our work of the past decade to make our collections more available online paid off—our digital resources were used nearly 3 million times in 2020!

Perhaps one of the most exciting transformations at MHS is the start of construction on the Montana Heritage Center. Talk about change! The very landscape around our current building has been altered dramatically almost every day during the past months. The iconic sculpture that greets thousands of visitors, *Herd Bull*, moved to a temporary home to accommodate construction. A fence surrounds the north side of our building and it is now normal to see and hear excavators, skid steers, and loaders at work. But this is



just the beginning—so many more exciting changes are coming with the Montana Heritage Center. Stay tuned!

Sometimes change is good, sometimes it's not. Either way, it's what makes us stretch and innovate, which the Montana Historical Society will continue to do as we tackle the many challenges that we will face in the upcoming year. New technologies. New ways of operating. A new building.

A century from now, historians will study 2020 and the many modifications this year brought us, as a country, as a state, and as the Montana Historical Society. 🌟

SHPO Disburses \$430,347 in Rural Heritage Grant Program

The Montana Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) awarded eight grants totaling \$430,347 through its Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage (RMRH) grant program.

SHPO broadly spread its one-time RMRH funds geographically and thematically, supporting museum, residential, and com-

mercial projects in places with populations of fewer than 50,000 across the state.

Projects include the Basin Creek Caretaker's House, Silver Bow County (\$100,000); the Broadway Apartments, Lewistown (\$40,000); Roundup's Central School (\$60,000); the Dion Block, Glendive (\$65,000); the F.M. Mack

Mercantile, Augusta (\$24,500); the I.G. Baker House, Fort Benton (\$66,480); the Montana Hotel, Anaconda (\$54,061); and the Waterworks Museum, Miles City (\$20,306).

RMRH is supported in part by a grant from the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program

Grant Program (cont. on p. 3)

Grant Program (cont. from p. 2)

(HRSP) from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. SHPO is among nine entities nationwide to obtain HRSP funds in the program's inaugural cycle. Grants are for physical repairs and improvements to properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

SHPO's Community Preservation Coordinator Kate Hampton said that "RMRH's goal is to renew community anchors, properties that will in turn serve as catalysts for economic stability and growth in their communities. These projects preserve the fabric and history of the rural experience, celebrate and educate people about the past, and facilitate a sustainable future for the generations that follow."

SHPO's idea for the RMRH program came from seeing homegrown preservation projects in rural communities across the state. Ekalaka established its town hall and library in an empty bank that the town preserved; one by



Built in 1911 and expanded in 1914, the Roundup Central School in Musselshell County has been a community landmark for more than one hundred years. It closed in 2017 and sat vacant since then. Community members rallied to save the historic building, and redevelopment plans include transforming the building into a mixed-use structure with space for five commercial ventures and twenty-one apartments, filling a community need for affordable modern housing.

one, Philipsburg's commercial building owners reinvented the town by repainting the Victorian-era building facades; and Deer Lodge's Rialto Theatre rose from the ashes of a devastating fire to maintain its status as the community's gathering place on Main Street.

"With these pioneering projects, we saw the seeds planted by one or two property owners grow into a cultural, economic, and social ecosystem. We see that same desire and potential in the projects we're funding," said SHPO's Historic Architecture Specialist Pete Brown. 🌟

Flying Sculptures

Excitement was palpable in early October as crews relocated two sculptures to make way for construction of the Montana Heritage Center.

Herd Bull, our iconic metal bison skull on the west side of the Montana Historical Society's offices, was the first to move. Crews unbolted the two horns of the massive sculpture, which was created by Sioux Artist Benji Daniels and Billings sculptor James J. Hadcock in 1990. They used a crane to gently place the horns on a flatbed trailer, then came back for the skull itself.

Using guidewires and the crane, it took little time to deftly raise the skull and set it onto the same flatbed. They backed up the trailer about 40 feet to the sculpture's temporary home and reversed the process.

Next, crews headed to the east side of the building to the *Symbol of the Pros*. This larger-than-life statue of a pro rodeo rider was built in 1982 by Bob Scriver for the society. It was quickly lifted by a crane and relocated about 30 feet to the south, where it will reside while the Heritage Center construction continues. 🌟



Three Honored as Heritage Keepers

Three people were honored with the Montana Historical Society's Heritage Keeper Awards for their exemplary commitment, effort, and impact in identifying and preserving Montana's historical and cultural heritage for current and future generations.

Jerry Hanley of Lewistown, Patricia Lewis of Boulder, and James Southworth of Billings were nominated for their dedicated commitment to projects that went beyond the requirements of professional employment. The Montana Historical Society's Board of Trustees recently voted unanimously to present the awards to the three nominees.

The awards were announced by Molly Kruckenberg, director of the Montana Historical Society.

"This is a fine group of individuals who truly care about history and made lasting contributions to preserving it," Kruckenberg said. "We're proud to include them among Montana's Heritage Keepers."

Hanley is a historian, writer,

and railroad buff, known to be fastidious about the accuracy of historical information. He's a lifelong Lewistown resident and an expert on the early days of the mining towns of Maiden, Gilt Edge, and Spotted Horse, as well as the early railroads in the Lewistown area. Hanley has given numerous ghost town and mine tours, and has his home phone number listed on the sign welcoming visitors to the town of Maiden, just in case they want a tour or have a question.

Lewis purchased her family's Free Enterprise Radon Health Mine in Boulder in 1993, running it for twenty-one years before passing it to her nephew in 2014. She and her husband, Berdette Anderson, maintained and improved the grounds, buildings, and headframes, and still store boxes of historic telegrams, mining stock certificates, and handwritten testimonials from guests starting in the 1950s. During her twenty-one-year reign of the mine, she gave countless tours and passed along the history

of this unique Montana facility to international visitors, journalists, guests, and critical skeptics alike.

Southworth is an author, bluegrass musician, avid genealogist, and raconteur, known across Montana for his love for the state, his volunteer work, and his family homesteading tales. His writings and storytelling focus on his family's experiences in Hope Valley, just north of Park City, especially those of his grandmother Lizzie. He also participated in a joint oral history project between the Montana Historical Society and the Homesteading National Monument of America in Nebraska. The interview is in the MHS permanent collection for use by researchers seeking insight into the lives and experiences of homesteaders.

Usually, the awards are given out during the annual Montana History Conference. Since that was turned into an online-only conference due to the coronavirus pandemic, the awards were distributed privately. ★

Polio Article Takes Paladin Award

The 2020 Paladin Award winner for best magazine article is "*The Biggest Public Health Experiment Ever: The Polio Pioneers and Montana's Contribution to the Elimination of Polio in the United States.*"

The article was written by Todd S. Harwell, Stacey L. Anderson, Greg S. Holzman, and Steven D. Helgerson for *Montana The Magazine of Western History* (Autumn 2019). In a timely fashion, the authors explored Montanans' role in testing the polio vaccine. The success of this vaccine has practically eradicated polio, a disease that used to have devastating impacts on people around the world.

The Paladin Award, selected by the

magazine's board of editors, recognizes the best article of the past year. It has been given since 1990 and is named after longtime editor of the magazine Vivian Paladin.

Harwell is the administrator of the Public Health and Safety Division within the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). Anderson is the senior epidemiologist for the Montana DPHHS Communicable Disease Control and Prevention Bureau. Holzman is the state medical officer, and Helgerson is the former state medical officer for the Montana DPHHS. ★

About Us

The *Society Star* is published quarterly by the Montana Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

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MHS Welcomes Two New Employees

Dianna Berry

Dianna Berry is the new assistant manager at the Montana Historical Society Museum Store.



She grew up in the small town of Fruita, Colorado, and attended Mesa State College, where she took classes in animal science and business.

Berry worked for Walmart from 1988 to 2007, moving from Colorado to Montana in 2000 after taking a position as a district manager. She has been in retail for the past thirty-four years and started at the Montana Historical Society in June.

Berry shared that she also has “been married to the love of my life for the past thirty-four years.” They have three children and four grandchildren.

For hobbies, Berry loves to read, bake, and take long walks in her neighborhood.

“I absolutely love it here,” Berry said. “Everyone has been so welcoming and friendly.”

Ginny Sullivan

Virginia “Ginny” Sullivan recently joined the Montana Historical Society as the



Development and Grants Officer.

This newly formed position focuses on helping MHS realize the goal of building the new Montana Heritage Center and will support the Society’s growing community of patrons, members, and contributors.

Having just completed a fifteen-year tenure at the Missoula-based national nonprofit Adventure Cycling Association, Sullivan’s experience in supporting mission-based work is extensive. While at Adventure Cycling, she founded the organization’s advocacy program, forged partnerships with state agencies across the country, collaborated with other nonprofits, and cultivated and met with donors.

Additionally, Sullivan worked at a Louisiana-based health care clinic for the working uninsured, managed programs for the Missoula YMCA, directed events for the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program, and managed educational courses for the state’s Back to Work program.

As a fourth-generation Montanan, Sullivan has a passion for Montana and its varied and unique history, which led her to

seek this new position.

“My grandmother taught me how important history and connection are early in my life when she and her garden club saved the Charlie and Nancy Russell home from demolition in the early 1980s,” Sullivan noted. “This was a personal mission for her since her father hired Charlie as a cowboy to work on the family ranch from time to time in his earlier years. The common refrain in our family when reflecting on those times was that Charlie was a much better painter than cowhand.”

Sullivan said that working with the MHS community to gain support and raise money for the many ways MHS impacts the lives of Montanans is the biggest honor of her life.

“When you see the plans for the new Montana Heritage Center and learn about the various ways this new facility enables MHS to meet its mission, you’ll understand why it is imperative to get the project completed,” she said. “Through the Montana Heritage Center, MHS will better serve the needs of people across Montana, the United States, and the world.” 🌟

Farewell to Jodie Foley



Jodie Foley’s history with the Montana Historical Society dates back to 1970, when she walked into the museum clutching her grandmother’s hand and was instantly captivated—peering into the windows of Territory Junction and staring mesmerized at the “flying buffalo” in the diorama.

Twenty years later, Foley became a staff member, having just graduated from the University of Montana and the Dale Johnson

(longtime university archivist) “school of archiving.” Starting work as a technician, in 1993 Foley became an oral historian and archivist, in time shepherding several oral history projects and co-editing a guide to the collection in 1997.

Senior Archivist Rich Aarstad recalled that Foley’s office was located in the stacks and her desk sat directly under one of the air vents.

Jodie Foley (cont. on p. 6)

“But despite the dim light and chilly temps, when you came through her door you never knew what you were going to get,” he said. “Jodie belting out the words to the song playing on her radio, her cruising the stacks in her stockings, but you always got her blinding smile that lit the place up. In 2006 she became Montana State Archivist and finally got an office of her own, and for the next fourteen years, her door was always open to all comers.”

During her tenure at MHS, Foley served in various professional organizations, including as Northwest Oral History Association president, Montana Oral History Association president, Northwest Archivist president, and Council of State Archivists vice president and president.

She has written several “From the Society” articles for *Montana The Magazine of Western History* and is a contributing author to the first volume of *Speaking Ill of the Dead: Jerks in Montana History* and a co-editor of the sequel *Still*

Speaking Ill of the Dead; contributed to *Beyond Schoolmarms and Madams: Montana Women’s Stories*; and to the upcoming *Appropriate, Curious, and Rare*.

“For nearly thirty-one years, I’ve been blessed to work at MHS, with its amazing people and collections,” Foley said. “While it is difficult to think of not seeing folks each day, I look forward to writing, singing, and doing my own family genealogy. Thank you everyone for a fantastic run!” ★

In Memorial

James “Jim” Murry

Former MHS Trustee and President James “Jim” Murry, who also was a longtime head of the Montana trade union movement, died October 5.

His accomplishments are too long to list, but include twenty-three years as director of the state AFL-CIO, the defeat of the 1971 sales tax referendum, and the ratification of the 1972 Montana Constitution. He also served as a board member of the Helena Indian Alliance and in 2012 was appointed Commissioner of Political Practices by then-Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

Murry had a tremendous sense of humor, was a brilliant storyteller, and believed work was something that should be enjoyed.

The family requests that memorials in Murry’s name be made to the Montana Historical Society, P.O. Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620, or the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org. Visit www.retzfuneralhome.com to offer the family a condolence or share a memory of Murry.

Stuart Scott MacKenzie

Montana lost a wonderful friend and advocate of our state’s rich

history on October 14.

Born in Illinois but raised in Havre, Stuart Scott MacKenzie was a University of Montana alum with undergraduate and law degrees. He served as a U.S. Army officer in Vietnam, then as Chinook city attorney for thirty years and deputy county attorney for Blaine County. He was a founding board member of the Blaine County Museum and the Blaine County Wildlife Museum.

MacKenzie was known for his love of collecting and dealing in historical documents, as well as his deep knowledge of local and state history. The Montana Historical Society archival and library collections are richer because of his keen ability to find and purchase Montana documents, and his dedication to seeing those documents preserved for Montanans now and into the future.

To honor his dedication to his community, MacKenzie’s wife, children, and grandchildren ask that memorials be given to the Blaine County Wildlife Museum, P.O. Box 304, Chinook, MT 59523, and/or the Blaine County Museum, P.O. Box 927, Chinook, MT 59523. ★

MHS Staff Offers Teaching Resources

With in-person trainings and guided tours canceled due to concerns about spreading COVID-19, the Montana Historical Society education staff has become creative in sharing resources with teachers.

MHS Outreach Historian Martha Kohl has been offering monthly online professional development trainings on topics ranging from “Teaching with Primary Sources” to “Integrating Montana History into English Language Arts.”

According to Twin Bridges teacher Lynn Vial, professional development “always helps fire me up to be able to do more or different things in my own classroom. I am grateful you are making it available virtually!”

For more information, contact Kohl at mkohl@mt.gov or (406) 444-4740. She encourages teachers to join her Teaching Montana History listserv’s weekly emails on resources and strategies for improving social studies education and incorporating place-based learning and primary sources into their curriculums. ★

Not Quite Brand New

On February 10, 1873, the Montana Livestock Brand Office recorded Poindexter and Orr's "Square and Compass," for cattle on the right hip, and for horses and mules on the left shoulder. Although 142 other brands were recorded that day, the Square and Compass earned its place in history as the first livestock brand recorded in Montana's current system. In addition to creation of a "general office" for brands, the 1871-72 Legislature entrusted the Brand Office to maintain brand recordings "in a book suitable for the purpose, which shall be free to the inspection of all persons interested." (January 10, 1872)

The Montana Brand Office took this mandate seriously. In their vaults, they store the very leather volumes containing the Square and Compass through the current 2020 registrations. The Brand Office staff allows the public to inspect the records. However, conducting a brand history search is a challenge, particularly considering the age and

fragility of much of the collection. In 2002, these challenges became apparent to author Ivan Doig, who realized office staff did not have the time necessary to assist researchers.

Doig only had to look to the Montana Historical Society for resolution. The MHS Research Center was uniquely equipped to assist folks with research and coordinate with the Brand Office. Eighteen years ago, Doig and his wife donated the funds for the microfilming of 130 years of Montana ranching history. Since then, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of stockgrowers and historians have visited the MHS Research Center to delve into brand histories.

Due to the popularity of brand research, former Research Center Director Molly Kruckenberg initiated the Brand Digitization Project. In anticipation of the 2021 re-record, records from 1873-1980 and 2001-2011 have been digitized. The collection is currently available through the

Montana Memory Project.

However, successful searches require time. Images of the original ledgers and printouts comprise the collection. Early Brand Office employees designed a system that allows us to trace brands back 147 years. This is not Google. An overview of the collection, and research tips, are available off the Montana History Compass website under "Subject Guides." <http://mthistory.pbworks.com/w/page/97588818/Home>

The Montana Legislature designated "the years 1921, and each tenth year thereafter" for re-records. The 2021 centennial re-record is approaching! Montanans will receive their brand re-record packets in December. Just like the Square and Compass, each mark holds a place in history. Visit the Montana Memory Project to discover your story at <https://mtmemory.org/digital/custom/home/#/>. 🌟

Support your Museum Store

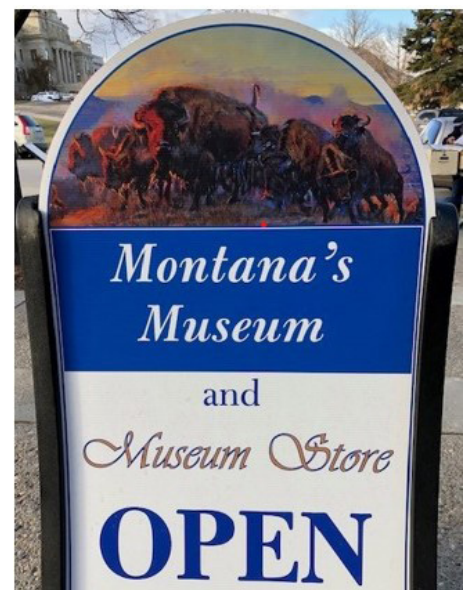
In these uncertain times, the Montana Historical Society encourages our members and patrons to support our Museum Store. The staff is working hard to ensure that everyone has a great shopping experience, whether in person, on the telephone, or online.

COVID-19 precautions continue in the store, including limiting the number of customers, requiring masks, increasing cleaning protocols, and installing plastic barriers at checkout. Staff members also are offering special services to make shopping easier, including curbside pickup, local delivery, personal shoppers, private shopping times, and free shipping with orders

of more than \$50. As always, MHS members receive free museum admission and a 15 percent discount on most purchases.

The MHS Museum Store offers a wide selection of Montana books and gifts, including cards, souvenirs, ornaments, and T-shirts, all selected to complement the museum's collections and current exhibits. Visitors are sure to find something interesting, compelling, and fun each time they visit.

Stop in today, shop online at mhs.mt.gov, or call (406) 444-2890. The store is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday (closed on Sundays and state holidays). 🌟



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Inside

- ▼ Versai Team Wins Governor's Award 1
- ▼ Director's Corner 2
- ▼ SHPO Rural Heritage Grant Program 2
- ▼ Flying Sculptures 3
- ▼ Three Honored as Heritage Keepers 4
- ▼ Polio Article Takes Paladin Award 4
- ▼ MHS Welcomes Two New Employees 5
- ▼ Farewell to Jodie Foley 5
- ▼ In Memorial 6
- ▼ MHS Staff Offers Teaching Resources 6
- ▼ Not Quite Brand New 7
- ▼ Support your Museum Store 7

Please Update Your Snowbird Address

Thank you for your loyalty and renewing your memberships during this challenging year, and to our new members—welcome! Many exciting changes are happening for the Montana Historical Society, and we are delighted you are joining us on this journey.

One update implemented this year is our membership software, which will better serve the needs of MHS and its members. We have chosen software that has integrated museum admission, store merchandise and sales, membership, and donations. This is a time- and money-saving decision.

As part of the software changes, we are updating our records. If you have a snowbird address, we need to hear from you to verify your address and learn when you are at those seasonal destinations. If you have any other changes as well, you can call Jodel Fohn at (406) 444-2918 or email her at jfohn@mt.gov. This will help ensure your magazines are delivered to you.

We look forward to the year ahead and hope everyone stays safe and healthy. We greatly appreciate your support for the Montana Historical Society. 🌟