

MINUTES
MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
October 15, 2015
9:00 a.m., MHS Auditorium
Helena, Montana

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present: Bob Brown, Crystal Wong Shors, Kent Kleinkopf, George Dennison, Chuck Johnson, Ed Jasmin, Jim Utterback and Thomas Minckler.

Excused Board members: Janene Caywood, Jim Court, Steve Lozar, Cliff Edwards and Shirley Groff.

Absent members: Jude Sheppard, Tom Nygard

Staff present: MHS Director Bruce Whittenberg; MHS Membership Coordinator, Rebecca Baumann; MHS Development and Marketing Officer, Susan Near; MHS PR/Media Manager, Tom Cook; MHS SHPO Manager, Mark Baumler; MHS Publications Manager, Molly Holz; MHS Centralized Services Administrator, Denise King; MHS Outreach & Interpretation Manager, Kirby Lambert; MHS Museum Senior Curator, Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney; MHS Research Center Manager, Molly Kruckenberg

CALL TO ORDER

President Bob Brown called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Joy took roll call.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

George Dennison moved approval of the July 23, 2015 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ed Jasmin and carried unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Bob Brown

President Brown reported on the 42nd annual History Conference. There were over 300 people who attended the conference, including the workshops and evening events. He highlighted MSU President, Waded Cruzado's talk at Friday's luncheon on the Land Grant Act and how the Act has been vitally important for both universities in Montana in providing education opportunities to all. He talked about the two Heritage Keeper's Award recipients, Hank Armstrong and Phyllis Smith. Phyllis unfortunately passed away on September 21, a few days before the conference. The Librarian from the Bozeman public library, who nominated Phyllis, accepted the award for her. Hank Armstrong, the local Choteau County historian is also the focus for an upcoming *Backroads of Montana* episode on Montana Public TV. Bruce, Denise King and Bob met with the Governor's Chief of Staff, Tracy Stone-Manning and Dan Villa, the Budget Director and were assured of the Governor's full support in the next Legislative session. There has been speculation about a special session to address the budget excess of 90 million dollars and he said he will keep Trustees informed when he hears any news. Bob suggested that folks meet the night before a Board meeting for dinner about 6 – 6:30ish and share a meal and conversation. Jim Utterback said it was a good idea. Ed Jasmin said that Home Town

Helena meets every Thursday morning at 7:00 a.m. and it's always a good discussion and he encouraged anyone who could to attend to do so. They meet on the 6th floor of the Montana Club.

Bob presented retiring board member Jim Murry with a plaque recognizing his years of service on the MHS Board. Jim thanked the Board for the award. He said it has been a great experience and he was very pleased with his replacement, Chuck Johnson. He praised the Director and the staff for their dedication and all their hard work.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Kent Kleinkopf summarized Denise's report and said we were on track financially and for the second year in a row, we had no legislative audit exceptions. He gave kudos to Denise and her staff and the entire staff for this report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Bruce Whittenberg

Bruce asked for new staff introductions. Molly Kruckenberg introduced Tammy Troup the new Digital Projects Manager. Tammy gave a brief bio of her education and interests. Molly Holz introduced Randall Williams, the new Associate Editor. He'll be teleworking from Missoula. He gave a brief bio of his education and interests.

Bruce began his report by summarizing the very successful 42nd Annual History Conference held in Bozeman. He highlighted the number of attendees and their enthusiasm, Waded Cruzado's speech, the social events hosted downtown on Thursday evening at the Sun Dog Fine Art Gallery, hosted by Tom Nygard, and the reception hosted by the Pioneer Museum. He shared information on ongoing digital projects and spoke about the importance in terms of public access to the various historic collections. Public programs have been overwhelming the Society's capacity lately. Molly Holz will touch on the sales for *Montana's Charlie Russell* book. The book continues to sell well. Kirby and the Outreach folks have created a classroom lesson plan. Sue will talk about our successful mid-year appeal and we are preparing now to do the year-end appeal. *People Before the Park* is selling extraordinarily well and the Kootenai elders are very pleased with the work and the way they were involved with the process. The inspection on the Wolf Point Bridge is now competed. He has been working with the Daly Mansion and the University of Montana concerning the \$100,000 that was appropriated to the Mansion by the last Legislature.

Our Forgotten Pioneer's exhibit has been a huge success in part because of the great collaboration between Crystal and her family in the creation of the exhibit. On January 21, 2017 the Stan Lynde exhibit will open in the Lobby. It should be a top notch exhibit. He encouraged members to pick up their limited editions of *Montana's Charlie Russell*. He shared a photo of the Russell school packets boxed up and on their way out to mail with a number of volunteers in the background who helped stuff 700 packets and prepare them for delivery throughout the State of Montana. He thanked the Volunteers and the Friends of the Society for all their help. The next History conference will be in Hamilton and Stevensville to help celebrate Saint Mary's Mission 175th anniversary. The Daly Mansion has a number of issues that they are dealing with but the volunteer organization is doing a great job with the Mansion. He shared a photo of the overflow crowd in the Lobby from one of the Thursday evening events and said that it reflects the overall growth in support of the Montana Historical Society. The Museum visitation for the summer months was up 33%. The Museum Store

sales for the fiscal year that ended in June 30, 2015 were up 36 %. Membership was up and public programs are pushing the limits of our capacity. Bruce reflected that he felt this was due to not only an interest in history but an interest in community and being a part of something special. Many of the Thursday night attendees were stuck in the back and couldn't really hear or see the small TV screen but they elected to hang in and even stayed after the event concluded to mingle and talk to folks. Bruce said that it feels as if we are creating a sense of community around the work of the Historical Society. He said that because of these overflow crowds he's looking into equipping the Lobby with the technology to handle the larger crowds with a bigger screen and projector. The Wolf Point Bridge is the responsibility of the MHS as an historical artifact. He showed pictures of the bridge inspection. The bridge was constructed in 1930 and transferred to the Historical Society in 1998. There are a number of deficiencies that have been identified and he's working on a plan to find the bridge a more appropriate owner. On December 8 he will be meeting with Program Managers to discuss and review strategic and critical issues. He suggested that early next year the Board have a retreat to review the strategic plan and reaffirm the track the Historical Society is on. Bruce reviewed the digital strategies they are working on to provide access to many of the Society's collections. The Social Media committee is doing a great job of monitoring seven social media platforms that we are a part of and we continue to grow with our Facebook pages and Twitter. The YouTube channel has over 200 videos on it now. We have 43 photo gallery boards on Pinterest. We play a significant role in the Montana Memory Project and there are now over 850,000 pages of content. The Montana Memory Project is a collaboration between the State Library, the Historical Society and other partners across the state. The State Antiquities Database that is managed at SHPO has logged 26,000 historic sites. There are well over one million pages of content that are digitized and available to the public. He reported on the new IT position they have been working on and rethinking the position description to include website and desktop expertise. He summarized the current curator projects; one at the Scriver is an old dugout canoe and the other is a Ralston mural restoration project. SHPO is now officially in its new building and at about 11:00 a.m. we will walk over for a tour. Museum storage is an ongoing project that Jennifer and her crew are working on. It will cost about \$150,000 to provide some new shelving and hanging art storage space. He said that we have some funding from the State Risk Management Office and we've applied for a couple of grants. The Original Governor's Mansion has some serious issues with the roof infrastructure and we've been working hard to find a contractor to tackle the project. They've also been looking into more secure access to the Archives and the Scriver Center. He said that our goal at the Historical Society is to create a high profile through social media and other venues, encourage more museum visitations, create a stronger brand than ever and make this place worth the investment. The January Board meeting should include a discussion about strategies for the upcoming Legislative session. Bruce said that we need to make MHS a higher priority project for the Governor and the Legislature. He invited the Board to commit to wrap up the 150 anniversary year by attending the February 6, 2016 celebration/fundraiser dinner at the Montana Club. He encouraged the Board to continue to help raise funds for the MHS, help with the Anniversary event, help with educational outreach, support the MHS events and enjoy the benefits of being a trustee at the Historical Society.

MHS PR/Media Manager – Tom Cook

Tom (dressed up) presented five separate clips on screen that have been featured on KTVH – local TV. Tom said that we have a lot of fun getting the word out about Montana's history. TV is a hot medium, as well as the other social media outlets.

Marketing and Development – Susan Near

Sue reported that she, Tom, Rebecca, and the staff are working on getting the message out to promote the MHS. In addition, she said they are working with Northern Broadcasting Network with radio ads and once-a-week the Network hosts a history focus spot with a photo. In addition, they have been advertising online through Last Best News. The highlight for donations was the mid-year appeal. It was focused on our anniversary year and the Heritage Center, and was mailed out in June. This year's mid-year appeal has currently netted over \$16,500. Out of the \$16,500, \$2,700 was designated for the Heritage Center. The Greater Montana Foundation made their last pledge payment of \$10,000 toward their \$600,000 commitment for the Heritage Center. She summarized the other large donations.

Membership – Rebecca Baumann

Rebecca reported that membership is doing very well. We are up to well over 2,200 members. She is preparing for membership month beginning in November, "Become a member in November." The History Conference netted 12 new members and 11 people renewed their membership. They were able to interview a few members about what they like about being a member. Clips of these interviews will be in the next *Society Star*.

PROGRAM MANAGERS' REPORTS:

CENTRAL SERVICES – Motion-Denise King

Denise passed out new books available in the store. She reminded folks to please ask for the state rate for lodging. She passed out financial reports and asked for a motion to pass the fiscal year-end financial statement. **Ed Jasmin moved to pass the year-end financial statement (green document) and Jim Utterback seconded it.** She summarized the report. **The motion carried unanimously.** She summarized the financial schedules for fiscal year through September 30, 2015 (salmon document).

MUSEUM PROGRAM – Motion Action -- Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney

Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney reported on the exhibits that the Museum is working on. When the Montana's Forgotten Pioneers exhibit comes down next year the Hunting exhibit will go up. The Stan Lynde exhibit will be replacing the John Clarke exhibit in January. Amanda Trum is the curator of the Stan Lynde exhibit and she said she's been immersing herself in everything Stan Lynde. She's been in contact with the family to make sure they are comfortable with the content. She summarized her work and ideas on the design to include a three dimensional of one of Stan's comic towns. Jennifer said that the Montana Tannenbaum exhibit is now open in the Montana Moments gallery and it honors Montana's history in providing national Christmas trees. She reported on the conservation projects that include the dugout canoe made by two Nez Perce Indians, one of which was Chief Joseph's brother and a conservation project on a Cree buffalo hide tipi, ca 1860. The Ralston Mural restoration should be completed by the end of the fiscal year and will hang on the wall outside the Homeland Gallery. Jennifer and Amanda showcased some donations one of which is a Chippendale chair that belonged to Senator Walsh. The other was a Ralph DeCamp painting from 1897 depicting a scene from the Helena Valley.

RESEARCH CENTER – Motion Action -- Deaccession Request – Molly Kruckenberg

Molly reported that in August five Archivists took the Certified Archivists exam and passed. Tammy, the new Digital Projects Manager, is bringing to fruition a mobile app that will feature text developed by Martha Kohl and Deb Mitchell and highlights National Historic Register sites in Montana. Molly talked about the State Historic Records Advisory Board and their role in providing support to MHS. She handed out a poster they produce every other year celebrating October Archives Month. The newspaper repository is moving on to create a Montana newspaper repository that will include the newspaper pages that are currently in the Montana Memory Project and eventually will add the MHS digitized newspaper pages. In April 2016 you should be able to view and search nearly ½ million pages online. The project is expected to grow as community libraries come online.

George Dennison expressed his appreciation for the project and how it has helped him work on projects.

Molly passed out the Bradley Trust Funds proposal and proposed an alternative use for the trust to support one-half of two positions (1.0 FTE total) to work on digital projects for 22 months, starting November 2, 2015. **George Dennison moved to use the cash available and interest earned from the James H. Bradley Trust to support one-half of two positions (1.0 FTE total) to work on digital projects for 22 months, starting November 2, 2015. Jim Utterback seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Board members were asked to record their vote on paper for purpose of requesting permission from the Governor's budget office to use the funds.** (motion and vote tally included in the minutes)

She presented and reviewed the deaccession list and asked for a motion to approve the list. **Jim Utterback moved to approve the list. George Dennison seconded it and the motion carried unanimously.**

The Board took a break to tour SHPO at 10:55 A.M.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE – Mark Baumler

Mark took the Board on a tour of the new SHPO building.

Meeting resumed at 12:00 P.M.

OUTREACH AND INTERPRETATION – Kirby Lambert

Kirby reviewed the contents of the Charlie Russell educational packets (700 packets total) sent out to all public and school libraries in the state. He said that initial feedback has been great. He sent the packet around for viewing. (A sample of this packet is available from Kirby.)

Jim Utterback said he was impressed with the outreach for the History Conference. Chuck Johnson commented on the Butte school kids showing up and was impressed with their interest and energy. Bob asked what grade school kids the packets were geared toward. Kirby said that they have three versions geared toward 4th and 5th grade, middle school and high school.

PUBLICATIONS –Molly Holz

Molly said that the fall issue of the Montana Magazine is out and that the next book coming out is *Beyond School Marms and Madams, Montana Woman's Lives*. This is a book created out of the

Woman's History Matters project blog and should be out before the next Board meeting. *People Before the Park* has sold 1,368 copies and the Charlie Russell book has sold 1,817 copies and 49 of the special edition.

Committee Reports:

Government Relations - Bob Brown

Bob mentioned the possibility for a "special session" and talked about spending some time during the next meeting brainstorming about a new strategy for presenting the case for the Heritage Center before the 2017 legislature. He said that Thomas Minckler suggested that we emphasize the value of the MHS collections as part of our approach. Ed Jasmin asked to see a comparison of how other nearby states fund their historical programs. Chuck Johnson said that the more we can emphasize that the MHS is not just a Helena "institution," the better. He suggested documenting MHS's outreach throughout the state to show the extent of our services. Crystal said these are all great ideas and that perhaps when we have a Board retreat we spend some time on copy points to help clarify and unify our thoughts. Some discussion followed concerning what other states are doing and how we compare. Ed Jasmin suggested we identify what Legislators voted against funding the Research Center and find people who might have a connection with them, and also find out if they voted for bonding their schools and other infrastructure in their communities.

Donor Relations – Ed Jasmin and George Dennison

No report.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEXT BOARD MEETING – January 21 - 9:00 a.m. - Executive Committee – 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Bob adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

"The reason that this Society as a whole is going full blast is that we simply can't believe that full support won't be forthcoming." – K. Ross Toole, 1954