

MINUTES
MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
April 27, 2018
9:00 A.M. MHS Auditorium
Helena, Montana

CALL TO ORDER

President Tom Nygard called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Joy Lewis took roll call.

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present: Tom Nygard, Bob Brown, Janene Caywood, Kent Kleinkopf, Jude Sheppard, Ed Jasmin, Hal Stearns, Chuck Johnson, Jim Court, Steve Lozar, Crystal Wong Shors and Thomas Minckler.

Excused Board members: James Utterback, Sam Phares, Cliff Edwards.

Staff present: MHS Director, Bruce Whittenberg; MHS SHPO Historic Architecture Specialist, Pete Brown; MHS Centralized Services Administrator, Denise King; MHS Education Outreach & Tour Coordinator, Deb Mitchell; MHS Research Center Photo Archives Manager, Jeff Malcomson; MHS Publications Manager, Molly Holz; MHS Museum Collections Manager, Jennifer Bottomly O'looney and Curator of Collections, Amanda Streeter Trum.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Ed Jasmin moved approval of the January 18, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Bob Brown and passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Tom Nygard

Tom summarized the upcoming summer programs and praised Bruce and staff for keeping things moving along.

Executive Committee Report – Hal Stearns

Hal summarized the upcoming Candidate Forums sponsored by the Greater Montana Foundation, and the nine Montana Easy History Lessons sessions available to the public and teachers. He noted the 400 videos we have available online on the MHS website and he summarized the Visitors Count Survey MHS is conducting. He noted the possibility of an acquisition of a photo collection of the well-known photographer, Barbara Van Cleve. He talked about the new EPP requirements. He mentioned the search for a new Publications Manager and an Associate Editor position. He talked about a photo of "French Gulch" that was erroneously tagged as French Gulch, Montana but it turns out it was from French Gulch, Colorado. He reviewed staff numbers before the budget cuts which stood at 70 staff and we are now down to 57.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Bruce Whittenberg

Bruce talked about the Candidate Forums, one of which (GOP) took place the night before. The Greater Montana Foundation sponsored them and the first forum went very well. The next forum with the Democrat candidates for Congress takes place the following Thursday, May 3. He reported that the Nine Easy History lessons were attracting overflow crowds. "Montana the Magazine of Western History" won

two National awards, the Western Writers of America SPUR award and the Western Heritage award for the article *All American Indian Days and the Miss Indian America Pageant* by Gregory Nickerson. He gave a rundown of the search for the Publications Manager. They had a total of 15 candidates. He thanked the search committee for all their hard work. Chuck Johnson gave an overview of the top two candidates. Bruce gave an up update on the moving Images Archives Project and encouraged trustees to visit the YouTube channels to view MHS's the various offerings of vintage films. The History Conference is taking place September 27-29 in Billings at the Northern Hotel. He reminded trustees to visit the WWI exhibit. MHS will be participating in the AASLH Visitors Count that will assess visitor interests, and how we could improve our services. He shared a copy of the survey. CM Russell and the American West, a PBS documentary continues to air and MHS features prominently in the credits. MHS continues to follow the Critical Issues and Strategies that have been previously established even though times have been tough this past year. They've been working hard to work with local tourism groups to make MHS more visible and visited. He showcased the Helena Chamber of Commerce's newest publication that features the MHS prominently.

RESEARCH CENTER – Motion Action – Jeff Malcomson

Jeff presented a Deaccession request for a French Gulch, Colorado ambrotype photograph. The photograph has been in the collection since 1969 and was recently discovered by Jeff to have been taken in French Gulch, Colorado in 1862, not Montana. They have been in contact with the Breckenridge Colorado Regional Archives who expressed an interest in acquiring the photo. Much discussion followed concerning the value of the photo and any family ties that might still exist. The original donor is deceased. **A motion to table the deaccession until further information was gathered was made by Bob and seconded by Ed Jasmin. The motion passed unanimously.**

BREAK

Jeff presented a loan request renewal from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture to renew the loan of the Emma G. Harris/Montana Federation Negro Woman's Club cookbook, *Choice Recipes of Cateresses and Best Cooks of the State*. **A motion was made to approve the renewal loan by Ed Jasmin and seconded by Kent Kleinkopf and passed unanimously.** He presented the awardees of Bradley Fellowships and the Dave Walter Research Fellowships.

MUSEUM PROGRAM – Motion Action – Jennifer Bottomly O'looney

Jennifer reported that they had received a loan request from the CM Russell Museum & Western Spirit: Scottsdale Museum of the West for the CM Russell's painting, *Keeoma*. **A motion was made by Ed Jasmin to approve the loan and was seconded by Jude Sheppard and passed unanimously.**

Amanda presented an 1880's F.J. Haynes Photo Retouching kit that he used in Yellowstone National Park. Some discussion followed about the gift. Jennifer encouraged trustees to visit the third-floor exhibit cases of recent acquisitions from the past two years. Jude asked about *Past Perfect* and Jennifer and Amanda elaborated on the user-friendly collections management database.

OUTREACH AND INTERPRETATION – Deb Mitchell

Deb invited trustees to the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on Wed, May 16. Ellen Baumler is the guest speaker. Volunteers have donated 6,000 hours in 2017 which is equivalent to \$126,500.00. She's been working with MPMA, the Mountain Press Museum Association on their annual 2018 conference in Billings. She's also been working on the AASLH awards committee as the State representative for

selecting the Heritage Award. They sent retired teacher Jim Shultz to conduct teacher workshops in the Pablo and Kalispell area this year. March Madness was a huge success as are the Nine Easy Montana History Lessons. Ellen Baumler is participating in a 30-minute documentary, *Born under a Bad Sign*. It's scheduled for release the last week of June in Butte and Deer Lodge and is about Bessie Fischer, an African American prostitute from Butte. It's funded by the Greater Montana Foundation and the Montana History Foundation. She's also working with a French TV journalist on a documentary of Jim Harrison, author of *Legends of the Fall*.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE – Pete Brown

Pete talked about SHPO's website re-design to make the site more intuitive and user friendly. He recounted his stint in AmeriCorps in Philadelphia via a power point and talked about how he came to work in the preservation field. Steve Lozar shared a Philadelphia story that he experienced with his wife years ago.

PUBLICATIONS – Molly Holz

Molly remarked that this would be her last Board meeting. She reported that this was the year of the Railroad with the calendar, SHPO poster and Dale Martin's Railroad book. The special fall Magazine issue will be about Ivan Doig looking at different aspects of his career and Montana's history through his eyes. She said that things are wrapping up nicely and she complimented Laura Ferguson's skills as a photo and manuscript editor. She feels like she is leaving at a good time. The Board thanked her for her dedication and years of service.

CENTRAL SERVICES – Denise King

Denise talked about the Fred Miller Photo collection and the Fred Miller books that were donated by his grandson, eight of which were autographed and are available for purchase for \$80.00. The store will be participating in the Helena Railroad Fair on Saturday at the Civic Center on Saturday. Rack cards are being distributed to local hotels & B&B's to remind them that MHS is a great place for their lodgers to visit. They are also working on scheduling docent tours every other Saturday. **A motion was made to approve a 1% pay increase for Bruce by Ed Jasmin and seconded by Crystal Shors and passed unanimously.** An inventory of programs is requested this year by the Governor's Budget Office and replaces the traditional EPP or Executive Planning Process. She talked about MHS's new book distributor, The Farcountry Press in Helena. She presented the financials for the last quarter.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - The Board agreed to move October's meeting to Thursday, October 11, 2018. Staff Picnic on July 18 at Tizer Gardens. Kent and Steve will take charge of drinks.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Heritage Keeper Awards – The top candidates were considered at length and after much discussion the group chose two worthy candidates. **A motion was made by Bob Brown to pick Carl Davis from Missoula, and Darris Flanagan from Fortine as the recipients of the 2018 Heritage Keeper Awards. The motion was seconded by Ed Jasmin and passed unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS –

Thomas Minckler passed around a gold nugget that was found on the Pioneer Bar on Gold Creek 1857 by Granville Stuart. It was wrapped in a handwritten note signed by Stuart.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

NEXT BOARD MEETING – July 19, 2018 & Staff Picnic – July 18, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT 1:10 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