

Montana Historical Society
Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
April 15, 2021, 9:00 MST via Zoom web meeting

CALL TO ORDER

President Hal Stearns called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. MST. Jodel Fohn took roll call. Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present: Bob Brown, Jestin Dupree, Tim Fox, Ed Jasmin, Bill Jones, Kent Kleinkopf, Steve Lozar, Thomas Minckler, Thomas Nygard, Ken Robison, Jude Sheppard, Crystal Wong Shors, Norma Ashby Smith, and Hal Stearns.

Excused Board Members: Douglas MacDonald

MHS Staff Present: Director, Molly Kruckenberg; Administrator, Denise King; PIO, Eve Byron; Development Officer, Ginny Sullivan; Membership Services, Jodel Fohn; State Historic Preservation Officer, Pete Brown; Research Center Program Manager, Roberta Gebhardt; Museum Curator of Collections, Amanda Trum; Publications Manager, Diana Di Stefano; and Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager, Kirby Lambert.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

President Stearns introduced Norma Ashby Smith, Jestin Dupree, Tim Fox, Bill Jones, and Ken Robison. Each new Board Member spoke about themselves. President Stearns then thanked Cliff Edwards, Mike Shields, Sara Scott, Sam Phares, and Chuck Johnson for their dedication and time serving on the board.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

Kent Kleinkopf made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2021, meeting. Crystal Wong Shors seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

President's Report – Hal Stearns

President Stearns acknowledged the MHS face masks and the *Montana, Stories of the Land* textbook. He said he appreciates that the rack cards for other museums around Montana being available by the front doors. President Stearns is pleased to see the construction work on the Montana Heritage Center progressing. The Montana Heritage Center will be a social center and great for school kids to visit. He loves visiting the Russell Gallery and seeing the *Waiting for a Chinook*. He said he is proud to be part of the Montana Historical Society. President Stearns thanked those who have served on the Board of Trustees.

Director's Report – Molly Kruckenberg

Molly welcomed the new Board of Trustee members and new employees; Kyler Mozell, Cultural Records Assistant; Renee Kelly, Grants Contracts Coordinator; Laurie Chipps, Technical Service Librarian; Heather Hultman, Senior Photograph Archivist; and Kellyn Younggren, Senior Archivist. Molly shared the core statistics and provided the updated information on the construction of the Montana Heritage Center. The design development phase of the interpretive plan is progressing. MHS has been working with Cushing Terrell and final plans that will go out for bid are almost complete. Member and donor stakeholder meetings have taken place, including a meeting with neighborhood residents. There has

been a positive response to the meetings. Some of the bills MHS is watching in the Legislature are HB2, the budget bill for general appropriations ; HB5, the long-range building appropriations bill; HB9, the Cultural and Aesthetics Grants; HB13, the state employee pay plan; and SB355, which would revise payments related to school trust lands. We have participated in hearings for SB 399, which would revise and simplify income taxes; SR 40, 41, & 84, regarding confirmation of the Governor's appointees to the MHS Board of Trustees.

Denise King is monitoring more than 300 bills that could have an impact on MHS.

Molly reported that MHS has begun work to update the current strategic plan, which was last updated in 2014. The initial step was a SWOT analysis, which the Board was invited to participate in. The plan is anticipated to be complete in the fall. Molly discussed progress on fundraising for the Montana Heritage Center. \$5.6 million has been raised to date. Fundraising strategies include a "brick" campaign and banking challenge. Molly and Ginny will present at the Montana Independent Bankers meeting next week to cultivate support. A current gift chart was shared. Molly has had several opportunities for outreach including the USS Montana Committee, Voices of Montana, KCAP 95.9 news radio, and a Montana Heritage Commission meeting. Our core work at MHS continues with the History of Montana in 101 Objects book, an AAM Community and Audience Engagement Assessment, the 2021 Historic Preservation Awards, software upgrades to the Montana Memory Project, and Inventory and packing in the Museum.

Governance Committee Report

Kent Kleinkopf thanked Cliff Edwards, Mike Shields, Sara Scott, Sam Phares and Chuck Johnson for their service on the Board of Trustees. Terms for Bob Brown, Crystal Wong Shors and Thomas Nygard will expire on June 30. Kent explained the procedure of electing the Board of Trustees Officers and Executive Committee.

Kent Kleinkopf moved and Bob Brown seconded a motion for Hal Stearns for President. Motion passed unanimously.

Steve Lozar moved and Bob Brown seconded a motion for Jude Sheppard for Vice President. Motion passed unanimously.

Kent Kleinkopf moved and Bob Brown seconded a motion for Steve Lozar for Secretary. Motion passed unanimously.

Kent Kleinkopf moved and Bob Brown seconded a motion for Ed Jasmin for member-at-large on the Executive Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Kent Kleinkopf moved and Bob Brown seconded a motion for Tim Fox for member-at-large on the Executive Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Through the Heritage Keepers Awards, the Montana Historical Society's Board of Trustees honors exemplary commitment, effort, and impact in identifying, preserving, and presenting Montana's historical and cultural heritage for current and future generations. Up to 3 annual Heritage Keeper Awards—depending on the availability of worthy candidates—honor distinguished Heritage Service to the State and People of Montana, by Montana residents. An additional award, The Montana Heritage Guardian Award, recognizes the record of accomplishment of one the nominees for the Heritage Keeper

Award, but the Board reserves the right not to award a Montana Heritage Guardian Award in a given year unless warranted by the record of outstanding accomplishment.

Crystal Wong Shors apologized for her involvement in a nomination for the Heritage Keepers Award and recused herself from voting. The top 5 nominees by Trustee scores are Bud Cheff, Jr.; A&E Design; Channing Hartilius; Bev and Gene Allen; and Birdie Real Bird. Discussion for the Heritage Keeper and the Heritage Guardian Awards was had. Kent Kleinkopf said this was a great group of Nominees and encourage the unselected nominees to reapply next year.

Tom Nygard moved and Kent Kleinkopf seconded a motion to select Bud Cheff, Jr., Birdie Real Bird, and Bev and Gene Allen for the 2021 Heritage Keepers Award, and A&E Design for the 2021 Guardian Keepers Award. Crystal Wong Shors abstained from voting. Motion passed unanimously.

Program Reports

Roberta Gebhardt, Research Center Program Manager, spoke about the software upgrade for the Montana Memory Project. The new software is Recollect and the migration will be complete by July 1, 2021. The Archives received a collection that was found in the Great Falls landfill. It included over 400 volumes of reports from the Rainbow Power Plant from 1910 to the 1960's. The Rainbow Power Plant became the Great Falls Power Plant and then later the Montana Power Company. Patrick Hoehne was selected for the Bradley Fellowship and Janice Farkell was selected for the Dave Walter Fellowship. Tom Ferris has completed scanning the Owen Ferris papers and the papers are now being transcribed. A Deaccession list was presented. Jude Sheppard moved and Norma Ashby Smith seconded a motion to approve the deaccession list. Motion passed unanimously.

Montana Heritage Center update

Jennifer James presented an update on the Montana Heritage Center. Outreach has been ongoing to Agencies, Tribal Stakeholders, neighbors, and other stakeholder groups, as well as website and multi-media updates. The design update included continuing to refine the interior and exterior design elements, coordinating eight different disciplines working concurrently, working to align the design estimate with the plans, finalizing budgets, and elements being prioritized. The construction update included Sletten Construction being selected as the GC/CM. The Subcontractor, Mockel, was brought on to for the early work packages. The foundation work is scheduled to start in late spring. The content development discussions have included regular MHS working group meetings, development of shared content database. The focus on the Montana Homeland gallery will include the development of key themes and messages, identification of feature artifacts and experiences, the organization of content and sequence of experiences. Tevere MacFadyen provided an update on the interpretive design, including discussing the vision and opportunities; planning and design responsibilities; budget confirmation and allocation; stakeholder engagement; content development; the Montana Homeland Gallery, and what the next steps will be. MHS and GSD have been consulted throughout the project to have accurate pricing to make this a reality. Sletten Construction has been on board to assist with design and cost. The first early work package is completed and there is ongoing coordination with the City of Helena, FWP, and other agencies, and outreach to neighborhood.

Jennifer James (or whomever) noted that this project challenges us to fundamentally rethink what a state history museum should be and how it can engage its guests and stakeholders. We have an opportunity and an obligation to use all the tools and resources at our disposal to explore history in a new and dynamic way, sharing multiple perspectives on essential ideas and events, telling the powerful personal stories of all Montanans, leveraging the unique power of authentic artifacts and archival materials for future generations what the MHS set out to do in 1865; “promote an understanding and appreciation of Montana’s cultural heritage- past, present and future.” A clear and compelling overarching theme – that Montana’s history and heritage is an ongoing story of interaction between people, and between people and landscapes and architecture to the selection of artifacts and the wording of labels. Together we can do something truly transformative.

Russ Katherman reviewed the schedule for construction. Bids will go out this spring. The current budget is 57.5 million dollars. Russ discussed collaboration with the Heritage Center Building Committee, Montana Department of Administration, Montana Office of Tourism and Development, Museums Association of Montana, and secondary and post-secondary educators. American Indian Tribes and Nations are being represented with ongoing and active engagement with tribal advisors, standing monthly progress review meetings and engagement of a cultural design liaison.

Molly Kruckenberg mentioned that the interior color boards are in the auditorium. Anthony Houtz said the colors are to reflect the geology of Montana, different rock strata and different layers of rock. For more information go to montanamuseum.org.

Steve Lozar thanked the people he has worked with on the Montana Heritage Center and how sensitive people have been in this process.

Program Reports continued

Amanda Trum, Curator of Collections, welcomed the new Board Members and explained what the Museum program does. Images of the inventory and packing process were shared. The Museum is working closely with Main Street Design on the Montana Homeland gallery. Amanda shared a new acquisition. Ms. Gertrude Taylor was a single mom that had her own taxi service. An image of Gertrude Taylor, postcard of Taylor Taxi, and a taxi-ticket for her business were shared. The preservation of artifacts is always a consideration in displays.

Kirby Lambert, Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager, shared information about the planning for the 2021 Butte History Conference, which will take place on September 23-25. The school tours are fewer with Covid-19 Pandemic. The Outreach and Interpretation Program is working on a new 4th grade history textbook. The Centennial Farm and Ranch yearbook will be out soon. During the pandemic they have learned how to better work with teachers in distant parts of the state and being better at giving tools to teachers. Kirby is looking forward to “in person” workshops resuming

Diana Di Stefano, Publications Manager, reported that her program is best known for *Montana the Magazine of Western History*, and having nearly 60 books in print. Publications has won the Wrangler Award for the second year in a row, this time for an article by Tempe Javitz. The magazine was a finalist

for a Spur Award this year. Diana spoke about the Emerging Scholar program and the 101 Objects book being nearly complete. A book on Rose Gordon is anticipated to be out by the holidays this year.

Pete Brown, State Historic Preservation Officer, welcomed the new Board of Trustee Members. Pete explained that SHPO is the abbreviation for State Historic Preservation Office and spoke about the work provided by SHPO. SHPO saw an increase in the first quarter work. Pete spoke about the National Heritage Program and State Historic Preservation Review Board, the Revitalizing Montana's Rural Heritage Grant, and Community Preservation around Montana. This year's Montana Preservation Awards are virtual. Pete invited the Board of Trustees to visit their office; however, they are in a different building from MHS.

Denise King, Administrator, Central Services Division, reviewed the financial report with the Board. She explained she is waiting of the final report of the audit. It was another clean Audit, the third in 5 years.

Hal Stearns moved and Kent Kleinkopf seconded a motion to approve the hiring of new employees; Renee Kelly (SHPO), Laurie Chips (RC), Kellyn Younggren (RC), Heather Hultman (RC), and Kyler Mozell (SHPO). Motion passed unanimously.

Kent Kleinkopf moved and Crystal Wong Shors seconded a motion to approve the Director's six month increase. Motion passed unanimously.

Kent Kleinkopf moved and Bob Brown seconded a motion to approve the State Archivist's pay increase. Motion passed unanimously.

Ginny Sullivan, Development Officer, explained her responsibilities and noted will be reaching out to all Board Members for support. She has been working on the 2021 spring appeal. Board Members will have a role to play in raising the \$10 million for the Montana Heritage Center and potentially additional funds to grow the programs of the Montana Historical Society. Volunteers are helping with the grant support research. Ginny is writing a case for support to be able to approach essential donors. We have several gifts in hand but have a lot more to get.

Norma Ashby Smith asked about endowments and naming opportunities. Ginny responded that we are looking for endowments and have established naming opportunities within the Montana Heritage Center.

Kent Kleinkopf said previously 100% of the Board has given to MHS and encourages the new board members to give to the Montana Heritage Center.

Ginny thanked her coworkers for their support. We are interviewing for marketing firms to help us promote fundraising for the Montana Heritage Center. Ginny shared her background in fundraising.

New Business

Norma Ashby Smith proposed the reproduction of her publication *Symbols of Montana*, with the proceeds going to MHS. Molly Kruckenberg thanked her for the offer.

Public Comment

Jestin Depree thanked the Board for adding Montana Tribes, especially from Eastern Montana. Jestin said he hoped for more tribal representation in the future. Jestin inquired how we can get more tribal participation. He also asked about the Board Member expectations. Jestin congratulated the Members who were elected to their positions.

Steve Lozar spoke about reforming the MHS Indian Advisory Council and asking tribes to appoint representatives to council. Steve offered to help Jestin with any questions he has.

Kent Kleinkopf mentioned that when we meet with prospective donors, to mention SB338 as the legislation benefits all museums in the state. In 156 years, Molly Kruckenberg is the first female Director.

Hal thanked Crystal Wong Shors, Bob Brown and Tom Nygard for their work, as their terms are expiring. He welcomed Bill Jones, Jestin Dupree, Ken Robison, Tim Fox, and Norma Ashby Smith to the Board. Hal reminded everyone that the History Conference will be in Butte September 23-25.

The next meeting will be July 15, 2021.

Bob Brown moved and Norma Ashby Smith seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.