

Montana Historical Society
Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting
July 21, 2022, 9:00 MST
Montana State Capitol Building, Room 317

CALL TO ORDER

President Jude Sheppard called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Jodel Fohn took roll.

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present: Norma Ashby Smith, Carol Donaldson, Tim Fox, Ed Jasmin, Bill Jones, Lorna Kuney, Ken Robison, Jay Russell, Jude Sheppard, and Candi Zion.

Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees Members Excused: Douglas MacDonald, Thomas Minckler.

MTHS Staff Present: Molly Kruckenberg, Director; Denise King, Administrator; Eve Byron, Public Information Officer; Ginny Sullivan, Development Officer; Jodel Fohn, Membership Services; Roberta Gebhardt, Library and Archives Program Manager; Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney, Museum Program Manager; Martha Kohl, Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager; Diana Di Stefano, Publications Program Manager; and Pete Brown, State Historic Preservation Officer.

Review of Minutes

Bill Jones moved to approve the minutes from the April 21, 2022, meeting. Ed Jasmin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

President's Report – Jude Sheppard

President Sheppard thanked the Board and staff for attending the Employee Appreciation picnic at Tizer Gardens last night hosted by the MTHS Board of Trustees. She thanked Molly for her dedication to the Montana Historical Society and for her assistance to her.

Director's Report – Molly Kruckenberg

Molly thanked the Trustees for contributing to the Employee Appreciation picnic, as well as those who could attend. Molly reported that Laura Tretter, Candi Mullenback, Kellyn Younggren, and Renee Kelley have resigned from the Montana Historical Society. Aaron Genton has been hired as the Historian Supervisor and Daniel Karalus has been hired as the Library Manager.

New Employee Introductions -New employees were introduced by their supervisors. Martha Kohl introduced Bryan Baldwin as a Historian, and he spoke about his work experience. Denise King introduced Judy Clay as Accounting Supervisor. Judy spoke about her experience. Jennifer Bottomly O'looney introduced Heather Doyle, Museum Conservation Specialist. Heather spoke about her qualifications. Roberta Gebhardt introduced Lindsey Mick as an Archivist, and she spoke about her experience. Pete Brown introduced Cherese Gerhardt as the Grants Contracts Coordinator. Cherese spoke about her qualifications.

Molly reported visitation, reference, and outreach statistics. Member, subscriber and social media statistics were reviewed. Molly stated that with a portion of the Homeland Exhibit closed and the Northeast Gallery closed, statistics are expected to be low. The charts represent statistics for the calendar year to date, so they are expected to be low until the end of the year.

Molly reported that this year, for the first time, the Montana Historical Society participated in the American Alliance of Museum's Annual Survey of Museum Goers. The survey, administered by Wilkening Consulting, provides data-driven insights, helping museums to make more confident, informed decisions. It also provides a cost-effective way to gain insight into our visitors and compare our institution to others in our locale, of similar type, and the museum field at large. The survey helps explain who our visitors are, their behaviors, and their values; it also benchmarks our data against that of peers and with future participation will allow us to track changes over time. Through this survey and other projects that you will hear about at future meetings, we are striving to learn more about our members, donors, visitors, and supporters in order to serve them better.

Molly reported that on May 17, MTHS hosted about 200 people at the building construction site for a Topping Out ceremony. We were pleased to have Dennis and Phyllis Washington, Gov. Greg Gianforte, and Eric Sletten, Chief Executive Officer of Sletten Construction as guest speakers. Smokey Rides At The Door of the Blackfeet Nation provided a blessing. Previous to the Topping Out ceremony, the beams traveled to 15 schools across Montana and were signed by hundreds of Montana students.

Molly reported that the Heritage Keepers award was presented to Arlyne Reichert on June 1 in Great Falls. Molly thanked Norma Ashby Smith for her work in organizing the ceremony and Ken Robison and Jay Russell for attending. The Heritage Keeper Award ceremony for Margie Smith will be held in Anaconda on Aug. 5 at 4 pm in the Montana Hotel. The Heritage Guardian

Award for the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers will be presented at their annual conference in Butte on Aug. 19. Molly thanked the Outreach and Interpretation staff for their work in organizing the events in the awardees' hometowns.

The upcoming exhibit closures were summarized. The Homeland Gallery and Neither Empty Nor Unknown Galleries will close Sept. 30. The closures are necessary to provide space for packing the museum collection. The exhibits that will remain open are the Charlie Russell Gallery and the lobby gallery that features "Who Speaks To You? Portraits from the Permanent Collection." The Museum Store and the Original Governor's Mansion will remain open. Public programs will continue. They will be held in the MTHS lobby starting in October. In conjunction with the closure of the galleries, MTHS will stop charging an admission fee. The reference room will close Jan. 1, 2023. This closure is to allow for the time needed to prepare the library and archives collections to be moved or protected. Online materials will still be available. Limited remote research services also will remain available.

Molly reported that the Montana Heritage Center architects' team is unable to join us this morning and she gave a brief update on the project. Several meetings regarding the construction schedule and phasing were held this quarter, including meetings with the Museum and Library & Archives, and with all program managers. Page turner meetings were held to review the current designs with all partners to ensure everyone had current information. Design and construction work for the Montana Heritage Center continued this quarter. Structural steel was completed in late May and steel framing was started. The final slab on grade was finished in early April and metal roof decking is nearly complete. Installation of mechanical and electrical systems has started. The addition should be enclosed by October so that work can continue during this winter. Main Street Design visited MTHS in person twice in May, holding meetings with interpretive staff. A request for qualifications package was released for exhibit fabricators. Five fabrication companies were deemed qualified and a request for proposals for fabrication of the Homeland exhibit was released to them in June and will be selected in late August. Main Street Design completed their 35% Construction Documents at the end of June. Molly reported on the budget and cost analysis. The current cost remains at \$81.4 million. Our current private funds for the project are \$37.7 million, including a recent pledge of \$5 million from BNSF. We plan to raise approximately \$8 million in additional funds throughout the next three years to defray any additional increase in construction costs as well as to add back in items cut from the project through value engineering.

Molly invited everyone to attend the 49th annual Montana History Conference; "To Wonderland and Beyond" at Rock Creek Lodge in Red Lodge, Montana on Sept. 29- to Oct. 1.

Eve Byron gave the public relations report. She reported that there were 17 news releases in the past quarter that reached 1,300 journalists with 87 mentions in the news. Recent Facebook posts have proven popular and helped to increase our Followers. The work with the rebranding project continues.

Candi Zion asked a question about the Facebook stats. Ken Robison asked that all press releases be shared with the Board.

Ginny Sullivan provided a Development Report, including information on potential donors and donations. BNSF/Berkshire Hathaway has pledged \$5 million to the Montana Heritage Center. Ginny reported other donations and pledges from the past quarter along with the spring appeal results. Cushing Terrell has provided updated renderings for the Capitol Campaign brochure, which she shared. Ginny reported on design plans for the Capitol Campaign kit.

Bill Jones made a motion to approve naming the Montana Habitats Trail Sensory Experiences for the Montana State Library Commission. Ken Robison seconded the motion. After discussion, Bill Jones rescinded his motion until more information is available.

A 15-minute break was taken.

Program Reports

Roberta Gebhardt, Library & Archives Program Manager, reported the highlights of her report. There has been an increase in visits to the reference room. Dan Karalus is working on the NDNP. Roberta reported on new employees, interns, and the status of projects. The Library & Archives are working to prepare for the renovation and protecting collections during construction.

Norma Ashby Smith moved to approve the Deaccession List. Ken Robison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney, Museum Program Manager, reported on the progress of planning for new exhibits and creating mounts for artifacts for the Montana Heritage Center. She introduced Kendra Newhall, who has been overseeing the inventory and packing project for the Museum. She gave a brief

presentation on the process. More than 60,891 objects have been inventoried to date. The remaining portion of the Homeland gallery and all the Neither Empty Nor Unknown gallery will be packed this fall. In time the lobby exhibit and the Charlie Russell Gallery will be packed as well. The next phase of the project will be unpacking items into the new collection's storage areas.

Martha Kohl, Outreach and Information Program Manager, reported that the Montana History Conference will be Sept. 29 to Oct. 1 in Red Lodge. Some of the programs and topics of discussion were reviewed. Martha introduced Katie White, the Volunteer Coordinator. Katie spoke about the 50th Anniversary of the Friends program. The Friends of the Montana Historical Society continue to perform vital work.

Diana Di Stefano, Publications Manager, reported that the summer issue of *Montana The Magazine of Western History* is available. Diana spoke about the Western Writers Conference in Great Falls in June. Elise Boxer's article "Fort Peck's Finest: The 163rd Infantry's Assiniboine and Sioux Soldiers in World War II," Spring 2021, is a finalist for best article in an academic journal from the Army Historical Foundation. "A History of Montana in 101 Objects" is a finalist for the High Plains Book Awards. The winner will be announced in October. Diana reported on the Rose B. Gordon book *A Black Woman's West*. There will be an event in September with author. The next book release will be from author Lou Mandler on the biography of Willard Frasier.

Pete Brown, State Historic Perseveration Officer, reported that an invitations-only premier of the African American Heritage Documentary will be held on Oct. 7. SHPO staff has been doing outreach to Camp Caroline Field School, hosted by Beaverhead Deerlodge National Forest; presented at the Mullan Road Conference in Fort Benton; and participated in an archaeological excavation in the confines of Fort Benton. Training on log work repair at the Morgan/Case Homestead that is in Upper Rock Creek was attended. Pete spoke about the recent grant from the National Parks Service Underrepresented Communities program to chronicle Montana's historic Chinese population.

Denise C. King, Administrator for Central Services Division, reported that financials are not reviewed at the July Board of Trustees meeting because the Fiscal Year End has not yet concluded. Denise asked all Board Members to sign the Conflict of Interest and the Code of Ethics statements. The forms will be mailed to Board Members not present.

Denise asked Trustees to approve the hiring of Judy Clay, Accounting Supervisor; Heather Doyle, Museum Conservation Specialist; Bryan Baldwin, Historian II; Lindsey Mick, Government Records Archivist; and Chereese Gerhardt, Grants Contract Coordinator.

Jay Russell moved to approve the new hires. Candi Zion seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Denise reported on new products available in the store

Unfinished Business

Norma Ashby Smith asked about a dinner to get acquainted with other Trustees the night before the October meeting. The Director's Office will assist in organizing the dinner, which not be an official meeting and will be at the expense of each Trustee.

Molly reported that there has been some newspaper coverage lately about the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' interest in having Big Medicine gifted to them for exhibit at the National Bison Range. Molly gave some background on Big Medicine and an update on our current work with the Tribes. With the transfer of ownership of the Bison Range to the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes earlier this year, the Tribes have requested a discussion about transferring the mount of Big Medicine to the Tribes. The first step in this process is a conservation assessment, which will be conducted in August by a conservator that both MTHS and the CSKT agreed upon. After the assessment is complete, MTHS and CSKT will discuss possible next steps. MTHS's primary concern is the long-term preservation of Big Medicine. Any requests about or recommendations on the future of Big Medicine will be presented to the Board for their consideration. Norma Ashby Smith, Ken Robison, and Candi Zion offered their opinions.

An update on the Nutter-Shore Memorial Trophy Hall was given by Molly Kruckenberg. Molly provided an overview of the history of the Nutter-Shore Memorial Trophy Hall, the 163rd room, and the Sons and Daughters meeting room. The plan for the Nutter-Shore Trophy Room was discussed. Molly and MTHS staff have met with representatives with the American Legion. Currently we are working with the American Legion to remove artifacts so that the Trophy Hall can be remodeled Tim Fox suggested that the Board might meet at Fort Harrison and tour the Military Museum for a future meeting.

New Business

Ken Robison spoke about efforts to acquire the Minckler Collection. The Bring Montana History Home Committee is led by Ron Lerner and is working to acquire the Minckler Collection with the intent to donate it to the Montana Historical Society.

Ken Robison moved that the Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees support the efforts of the Bring Montana History Home Committee to acquire the Minckler Collection to donate it to the Montana Historical Society. Ed Jasmin seconded the motion. Ken clarified this motion would allow the committee to explain to donors that the Board will welcome the collection and the Board of Trustees has approved receiving the collection. Jude Sheppard confirmed that there is no financial commitment on the part of the Board or the Society. Discussion was had. Motion passed unanimously.

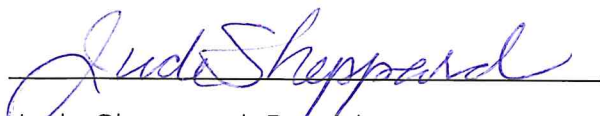
Public Comment

Ken Robison spoke about the Western Writers Convention in Great Falls and Fort Benton. He also spoke about the conservation of the Mandan in Fort Benton.

Norma Ashby Smith spoke about the 12th annual Waking the Dead tour in Great Falls, and the 80th anniversary of Shep's death. Ken Robison added that Shep is one of Montana's best fundraisers for the Montana School for the Deaf & Blind.

Candi Zion reported that she and a friend are working on the Metis Monument at the Lewistown cemetery and working with the Little Shell Tribe to gather information on mass graves from the 1880s.

Ed Jasmin moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.



Jude Sheppard, President