



Miracle of America Museum

Autumn 2014

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Visitors from every state!

2014 treated us well, and we got our 50th state visitor on July 19, the opening of annual Live History Days weekend. Attendance was good and our helpers were super!! The RSVP volunteers really shone and Renée Loehr took the helm of the concessions and fountain. That was a big load off my shoulders. In-kind donors of food and products for the concessions include the following: Family Foods, General Store, Harvest Foods, Safeway, Super 1, Town Pump and Walmart. The local media also deserves a big thank you for covering and listing our events. Polson Chamber website, Lake County Leader, Valley Journal, KALS, KERR, KGEZ, and KOFI were most helpful.

Intergenerational visits fulfill museum mission

Well, the farmers have finished combining grain and are ready to dig potatoes, the geese are fattening up for their flight south, the tree-ripened plums are littering the ground, and there was ice on a couple of puddles last week. So collectively, the signs tell me it is time for me to brave the keyboard and computer screen for the Fall newsletter. I've been short of reception help on most weekends, but that gives me more opportunity to personally meet our visitors and witness the intergenerational bonding and memory building that takes place.



Museum active in Community – “Second Thursdays” continue!

We participate in the community in various ways: David and his mom took our '24 Model T Ford coupe in the Dayton Days parade; we hosted the August Chamber SPLASH with Finley Point Grill and Flathead Lake Cheese hosting and help from the capable Polson Chamber staff; we displayed the restored '49 Ford Flathead Cherry Hauler with my 3 foot-diameter (whimsical sculpture) cherries on board for the downtown cherry festival weekend; I exhibited the “Polson Lakester” racer at the grand reopening of Mission Valley Speedway; and occasionally we lend our “Thomas the Train” barrel-train ride for various functions.

We host free “Second Thursday” evening programs each month. All are interesting and start at 6:30 pm. It is hard to find an open evening as busy as our society is. If you're not going to the monthly American Legion meeting in Polson, or

committed elsewhere, why not join us?

Second Thursdays now through December:

- **Oct. 9 – "Red Skies of Montana"** a 1952 feature length movie based on the 1949 tragic Mann Gulch fire will be shown. A short tour of smoke jumper related artifacts in the museum collection will precede the film.
- **Nov. 13 – Documentary film "Smoke on the Waters"** of early day steamboating on Flathead Lake. A tour of the boating memorabilia collection will precede the film.
- **Dec. 11 – A reading of the Christmas story and Jimmy Stewart's "Mr. Krueger's Christmas"** will be shown. Bring a favorite treat to share.

MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Baby Boomers are coming of age. That is, many are faced w/ cleaning out their aging or deceased parent's property. I've heard many museum



visitors exclaim, "We wish we had known or thought about you when we were cleaning out our relative's place. We hauled so much to the dump or just had a garage sale to dispose of it." Fortunately, many do think of us. A lot of things coming in are WWII memorabilia, although some older military items still surface. A word of warning here. Uniforms, especially jackets that have been stripped of insignia, patches, medals, etc. become almost meaningless and I rarely accept them unless it is an uncommon piece. I do have a stock of some extra strippings that I can sometimes complete a uniform if I have the service records to instruct me how it was. In fact, those records, discharge papers, photos of the G.I. in uniform, make it more meaningful.

Donors in the above category include:

Roselyn Glase – a 1944 Christmas dinner menu and a medical syringe kit of her father, Frank Bowerman Smith Jr., who landed at Normandy on D-Day plus one.

Randy Kjos – uniform patches, military magazines, etc. from his father, Leslie Kjos.

Lulu Stock – a 1909 dance program

of the 27th U.S. Infantry.

Jennifer Milosavljevic – Two uniforms (work and dress) from when she served in the U.S. Coast Guard as a Bosun Mate 3rd Class.

Sandi and Beth Murray – the uniform of their great uncle, Clarence Hanelt.



Interesting book adds to collection



Working the desk most weekends gives me a chance to do some reading and thanks to Dee Barba, some of the things she donated were a part of Bill's library. We inherited some very nice books, mostly on aviation. Two authored and autographed to Bill by Steve Smith, a former Missoulian writer have made for very enjoyable reading, especially from his compilation of personal interest stories from actual interviews in his book, "Out Among 'Em." One chapter tastefully covered another profession in Wallace, Idaho –other than mining. Coincidentally, a few days later, "chief picker" Howard Hudson (who never ceases to amaze me) brought in a variety of interesting collectables which included an antique medical can from a Wallace pharmacy – an intriguing and very personal item of vital importance to its red-light "industry."



We salute our Members and Cash donors this past quarter

We're grateful for new financial "friends" as well as renewal

memberships including the following:

SINGLE; Steve Noe, Lores Porter, Andrew Speer. **FAMILY;** Paul Fugleberg, McCurdy family, McCurdy Law Firm, Donna Pomajevich, Christopher Pugh.

SUSTAINING; Don Lodmell, Mike Maddy, Donna Rolfson Trust, Ned Wilde.

CORPORATE; Western Mt. Community Tel, Inc. /dba Access Montana.

PAUL BUNYAN FUND; McCurdy Law Firm, Poloson Investments.

IN KIND; Polson Bay grocery \$100 Gas card, and Jim Phillips of Glacier Lake Sand and Gravel who delivered two loads of fractured rock to level out more of our walkways and cover the mud puddles.



TRASH or TREASURES? RARE or COMMON?

Fortunately many folks let us make the judgment on whether something is worth saving or displaying. Not many visitors would relate to an Auburn boattail speedster, silver and gold inlaid dueling pistols owned by Napoleon, a dress of Marilyn Monroe's, or a Hope-sized diamond. We wouldn't turn any of those items down and know they would elicit a respectable amount of interest. However, the majority of our visitors comment on the ordinary objects they grew up with and remember their parents or grandparents using. Make no mistake, we have many rare and one-of-a-kind items in our collection, but in this issue, I thought we would include some more common or utilitarian objects. Tom Needham brought in his family's Dewey Lumber Co. nail apron. These were usually an advertising give-away to customers. Last month, grandchildren of the Dewey family visited and asked specifically if we had any memorabilia displayed from their family. They were overjoyed to find photos, signs, calendars, yardsticks, and yes, nail aprons in four separate areas of the museum village.



*Above: Nail apron from Polson's early days; top right: 1944 Army Christmas dinner menu donated by **Roselyn Glase**; bottom: 1909 dance program from the Twenty-seventh U.S. Infantry, donated by **Lulu Stock**.*



School kids enriched by museum visit

School field trips are starting. We've already had three groups, and more are calendared. Please suggest to a school near you that they schedule a lecture tour. We've had many happy teachers and the most heard word from the kids is "AWESOME!!" Teaching the younger generations about our national heritage is our highest priority. So far I'm holding up.

to the stress of managing and improving the museum with so little help. However, I had another birthday last month, again so soon and my biggest concern is enlarging the endowment fund to keep the museum going.

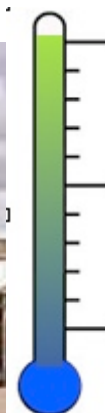
Our endowment has almost \$500,000 in it, but it needs to grow about \$3 million more in order to have enough dividends to hire a staff to manage things. I mention two examples of other recipients only to show that there are people out there with funds that could endow us without financial strain to themselves or their families.

The University at Bozeman recently received a donation of over \$22 million. A university in California received a 3-digit-million dollar donation. There are many millionaires and billionaires out there, but they don't know me. And while I've been blessed somehow with the ability to form a "world class museum," I'm not socially adept at rubbing shoulders with financially wealthy people. Perhaps some of you are. Following is a list of some painless – I think – ways in which

you may help the museum. Remember, neither I nor any of the board members receive any financial remuneration from the museum.

Now within \$450 of Paul Bunyan Goal!

In order to preserve the Paul Bunyan, we have designed a permanent shelter. We were awarded a Montana State Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) grant to provide about 80% of the cost, with a local match to cover the rest. At this time, we are within \$450 to raise for the match. Won't you help us get to the top?



ONLY \$450 more needed to reach our goal!

Thank you everyone who has contributed to this project. Without you, it could not have happened!

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Non-cash ways to help the Museum

To help the Museum in ways that cost nothing and clear the garage of useless items consider donating expired license plates, aluminum cans and heavier scrap metals. Some items may be useful for restoration parts, useful in a sculpture, or in our recycling program.

Mentioning your family outing to the museum in your family Christmas letter, on facebook, and any other social media helps get our name out there.

Donation of vehicles, guns, tools might be useful in displays, salvage, or trading stock, and may net you a tax write-off.



If you have influence in the schools, encourage field trips. Encourage involvement by your service organization, banks, etc.

Join us for Second Thursdays!

6:30 pm at the Museum.

Free and fun family entertainment.

Movies!! Readings!!

Tours of select items!!

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Image courtesy of Montana Memory Project website.