



Miracle of America Museum

MEMBER:
MUSEUM ASSOC.
OF MONTANA
AND
AMERICAN ASSOC.
OF MUSEUMS

Winter 2018

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

36094 Memory Lane Polson, MT 59860 406-883-6804 www.miracleofamericamuseum.org • info@miracleofamericamuseum.org

Executive Board of Directors

Gil Mangels, President
Ned Wilde, Board Chair
Nancy Pray, secretary
Ryan Gage, Treasurer
Board members: David Bauer
Brandy Wallace, Cathleen Wilde,
Kendall Dupuis,
Mike Maddy, Helen Mangels,
Annette Schiele,
Art Mangels and Sam Allred

2018 sees visitors from 61 countries

I hope you had a happy Thanksgiving season and didn't get injured in the rush and crush of Black Friday. The museum actually did well over the weekend, even picking up two more countries, Nepal and Myanmar for a total of 61 countries. As the year draws to a close, we tally 13,200 and some visitors.

What started out as a record setting attendance early in the year was curtailed by a poor policy of the state tourism agency whenever there are forest fires in the Parks. We count a lot on drive by visitors destined to the Parks. When the headlines show fiery photos and announce road closures, potential visitors immediately cancel their plans. The agencies and media pretty much ignore the other things to do and see in Montana, and that there may only be one small part of the Park that is closed.

MOAM display brings understanding and closure to Needham family

Sadly, we lost a good museum friend, Tom Needham recently. He had been involved with MOAM over 20 years. Unfortunately that point was completely left out of the obituaries and suggested memorial section. There was however, a mention of Tom conducting a "closure" memorial service in the Ronan Cemetery in honor of his brother Robert. That was only made possible thanks to the following story which I deem as a miracle. It was his museum involvement that made it so special.

Tom had donated his older brother Robert's Purple Heart, photos, and other memorabilia that we had on prominent display that would change Tom and his two older sister's lives for the better.

Bob was last seen bailing out of his damaged twin engine Douglas A20 attack bomber over the English Channel in 1944 becoming MIA, leaving questions for his bereaved family for decades. A sister, Rachel from Arkansas always made a point to visit the museum on her annual trip to Ronan. One time as she started into the military section, she heard two men exclaim, "Look, there's a photo of an A20." She rushed in to question these men, and got invited to the

annual A20 reunion. She attended and actually met some of Bob's barracks mates. Tom attended the following reunion where he met crew members and the crew-mate who saw a huge wave completely engulf Bob's life raft. This personal report, while not bringing Bob back, finally brought closure to the family.

Tom, with his monetary donations, always wished he could do more. His wishes were apparently not shared with the family. His death was unexpected and sudden. I encourage all of you — whether it involves a memorial or donation to the museum or not — to write down your own obituary and your wishes and tell your family where to find them. When the time comes that your family needs that info, they are often in a state of shock or grieving and may leave out something that was interesting or was important to you.



Christmas card, from the 1910s. Right: MOAM Display of Robert Needham's military memorabilia that triggered sister Rachel's conversation that resulted in her attending Robert's crew-mates' reunion.



MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Donations have been coming in faster than I can deal with them as baby boomers downsize or clean out their parent's places. Some seem to come in three's as three boats came floating in. One a 1930s sailing kayak from **Ann Ross**, built by her father, Carl on Skidoo Bay; a 1950s 10 foot Sea Scouter from **Mark Palmquist**; and a 1943 life raft from **Ivan Lorentzen** in memory of Harvey Knebel.



CARL A. ROSS Sailing Kyack
Flathead Lake early 1930's

Some come in as pairs as two International trucks add to our motorized vehicle collection. A 1949 KB7 dump truck was delivered from the **Gregor family** of Helena. Their parents owned a landscaping business, and this truck actually hauled the crushed white landscaping rock that was crushed by a 1800s crusher that their mother had earlier donated.

Ron Parker donated a horse-drawn mower and other farm collectibles.



A 1953 Metro van was donated by **Don Harrington**, of Ninemile.

MOAM board member, **Dave Bauer**, lived close by and helped load that. **David Bosley** helped get them both running and mounted correct year license plates on them. Sometimes we have to rejuvenate a rusty old plate, but visitors are noticing that the corresponding year plate to the year of vehicle is kind of neat.

You can help us by donating any license plates.

Those that may not fit on a vehicle or in our main collection can raise money in our gift shop as souvenirs for out of the area visitors. If you don't care to donate, I will pay the going rate the recycling yards pay. We have plenty of antique scales nearby that are as accurate as the day they were new.

MOAM receptionist, **Marge Dickson**, has become quite good at cleaning and repainting older plates if necessary.

Same name but used on different animals was evident as **Mary Wadman**, among other useful display items, donated two horse collars and also several boxes of NOS (new, never used stock) men's collars. It makes displays more authentic as on the shelves of the general store when you have the original packaging. The horse collars were cleaned and re-oiled by senior volunteer **Daphne Rudolph** who loves working with leather and has previously treated saddles and chaps in our Jack Welch Saddlery.



Misc. items brought in by **Linda Larsen** included brass blow torches, one of which I quickly polished and placed in our gunsmithing shop, a hand sickle which went in our gardening/orchard building, and a three-gal milk can, which, you guessed it, went in our dairy barn.

The long and the short of it was a 59" 1910 Swedish military Mauser rifle complete with bayonet and sling gifted by **Joseph Griffiths** of Plains. The shorter item, about the size of a matchbook and actually an advertising gift from the Famous Wonder Bread Co., would be remembered by the ladies of the WWII era. It is a stocking repair sewing kit, when all nylon went to parachutes and war time essentials.



Other things included WWII effects of Joe's father's including Nazi uniform patches collected as "spoils of war" souvenirs, and a 7th Cavalry guidon. A staff was supplied by **Jeff Nelson**.

Among the treasures brought in by **Jack and Gail Downes** of Bigfork, were a nice "sweetheart jewelry" pin/locket, (photo on next page) vintage children's books, and crocheted and knitted Bed Dolls.

John Gale brought in a tin clawfoot, oak trimmed bathtub pre-owned by a Butte brothel.



Chief picker, **Howard Hudson**, among many other things, brought in a very unusual 1943 military fireman's coat which looks like it was never used. (at right) We show it hanging under a

much older cast iron fire call box donated by **Jan Rogers**. Howard also brought in a 1936 postcard of



a quack hair growing machine. Now if you have one of those collecting dust in your attic or basement, we'd be happy to take that off your hands.

Rory Horning contributed a 12" glass Japanese net float.

Paul Keyser donated a nice cabinet model Columbia Grafanola record player and many other primitive farm related antiques. The best items were another one of those miracles where



strange things come into the museum collection unexpectedly and like the missing puzzle piece. High on a shelf in Paul's old garage was what looked like a buggy lamp covered in dust which had been there when his dad bought the place in 1936. When I dusted it off, the writing pressed in the cap identified it as a Ford side light only used in 1913 and '14. Paul spotted the mate to it wedged up higher in the rafters. An exciting find and absolutely correct for our 14 T Ford.

Note – There were many other donors and items to list this time, that we will catch up next time.



We salute our Members and Donors



Our financial friends keep our doors open!

Individual \$25 – Ken Conger;
Family \$50 — David Sergeant, Andy Jeffries, Ken and Kathleen Brown;
Sustaining \$100 — Steven Davis, Bill Hutchins;
Above and Beyond — Lee Barta, Wanda Kemp Maxon.

Newsletter layout courtesy of Carmine Mowbray of



Friend and patriot passes

We just received more sad news. The passing of a good friend, patriot, veteran, and faithful financial friend, Richard Beauchamp, which came as a shock.

Our condolences to Kathryn.

Special Volunteers

We really appreciate the volunteerism of **Lee and Afton Moss** of Pablo as occasional receptionists and **Steve Hebert** of Hot Springs, who has been dinging out some of the dents on our vehicles.



\$10,000 endowment match awaits!

We have a donor willing to match a \$10,000 donation to the museum endowment fund. At this time of year, please consider Miracle Of America Museum. All donations are tax-deductible. Admissions generate income and help us pay the operational expenses, but to secure our future, we have established an endowment, with Montana Community Foundation (MCF) as our partner in philanthropy.

Through MCF there are many ways to give and 100% of your donation benefits the MOAM endowment, and is tax-deductible. It doesn't matter how you give, it simply matters

that you give. To ensure that your donation benefits our endowment make your check payable to or direct your gift to "MCF/ Miracle of America Museum". Mail to Montana Community foundation, 1 North Last Chance Gulch, Suite 1, Helena, MT 59601. Find out more by going to www.mtcf.org/Giving/Ways-to-Give. Remember neither MOAM CEO Gil Mangels nor Helen receive NO remuneration and all their time is donated.



36094 Memory Lane
Polson, MT 59860
www.miracleofamericamuseum.org

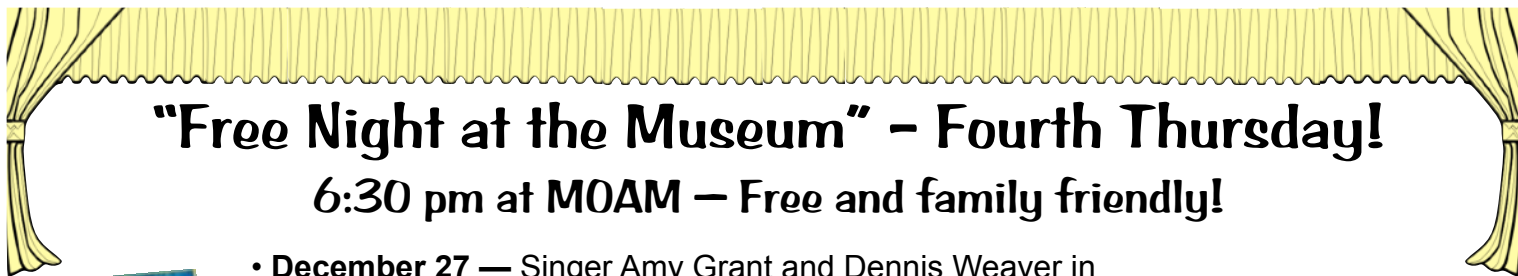
*This newsletter may be viewed online.
Please go to our website and click the
Newsletter tab for clearer color photos:
Miracleofamericamuseum.org*



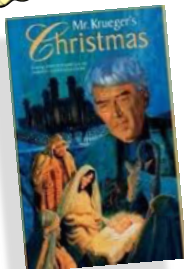
No wrapping, always fits!
MOAM donations or memberships make thoughtful Christmas gifts!
Or check out our Gift shop — Many Montana-made items.
Help MOAM preserve history for posterity.
You can choose any amount.



It goes into the MOAM Endowment, or your choice of projects, in the recipient's name.



"Free Night at the Museum" – Fourth Thursday! 6:30 pm at MOAM – Free and family friendly!



• **December 27** — Singer Amy Grant and Dennis Weaver in "Headin' Home for the Holidays" filmed in Glacier Park and the Scriver Art Gallery in Browning, MT. Since this Christmas movie is only an hour long, it will be preceded by a 30 min special with Jimmy Stewart in "Mr. Krueger's Christmas."



I thank those who have been supportive in our previous monthly programs and regret that the programs will not continue with regularity. If we do any special programs in the future, we will announce them thru the media.

Treats and donations are always welcome!