



Miracle of America Museum

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

Autumn 2019

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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We value our volunteer Board members

We wish to thank those who have served on our board for years. Your time and energy is valued. We welcome incoming board members for your interest in our mission to preserve history for future generations.

While we are appreciative for any and all help, our new emphasis is on enlarging our endowment fund that will provide for ongoing museum management.

Open letter to Kalispell pilot Frank Hale, upon the news that the B-17 Flying Fortress "Nine-O-Nine" crashed October 2. It is owned and operated by the Collings Foundation, that permits rides in their fleet of American warbirds.

Frank,

The sad news was so hard to take I couldn't even tell Helen without breaking up. I feel like a part of me died as I'm sure you do too. I don't even know what to say other than my sincerest condolences to you and the rest of the Collings bunch. I'm so thankful for the ride you arranged for me on Nine O Nine and rubbing shoulders with all of the crews. Please share my thoughts and prayers with them.

- Gil, Miracle of America Museum

MOAM Worth Repeat Visits

Summer disappeared awfully fast. Fall visitation was fairly good with an average visitation of 40 to 50 folks per day, but visitation has dropped significantly with the cold weather. The good news is that Polson hosts conventions that bring folks to town. But what is unfortunate is they keep their attendees so busy, that they either don't have time for us, or they don't even know we exist.

Visitors tell us that we are "Montana's best kept secret." State tourism agencies like Glacier Country or Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) consistently ignore museums. In a mid-September report they claim, "Montana's repeat visitor loves mountain-type vacations over any other type of experience for a vacation." And, "Montana is unique and brings visitors back. According to repeat visitors, the scenery, access to public lands and water, and wildlife is why they come here over other destinations."

I don't know how they poll their visitors, but we have repeat visitors almost daily that have made a special trip to

We have repeat visitors almost daily that have made a special trip to Polson to bring their friends and families to the Miracle of America Museum.

- Gil Mangels

Polson to bring their friends and families to the Miracle of America Museum. We don't claim to compete with scenery, but many visitors compile reasons to visit an area and included in their list is MUSEUMS. It would be nice to have all museums included in state vacation guides, when the majority of pages are free advertising of scenery and the cost

of a museum advertisement is exorbitant. So again, dear reader we, as well as other museums, are depending on you to make us a household (and public) name. Please remember that we stay open all year from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. whereas many other museums close until spring. On the positive side, for the last couple of years, a Netherlands tour company has brought three busloads, of usually

20 young people per tour. Last word from the tour manager, was, "We'll see you next year!"

I so enjoyed the big round softball-sized Dutch cheese when I visited Holland on a three day pass from my duty station in Frankfurt, Germany back in 1962, so I keep asking these folks to bring some, but Customs frowns on it.



MOAM Outreach Forays

Part of our outreach program included participating with one of our WWII vehicles driven by helper, David in the Dayton Days Parade in support of the Volunteer Fire Department on Saturday, September 7.

On the same date, I took our Vietnam era tribute jeep out to the Polson Airport Fly-In where the theme was "75 More Years of Freedom". This being the 75th anniversary of D-Day, it was a tribute to military veterans.

Adults and kids alike enjoyed riding in it as I wove around several historic, experimental, and beautiful aircraft.

Photo courtesy of Lake County Leader.

Grant goes to Schoolhouse improvements



Thanks to a Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development of the Department of Commerce Two-to One matching grant, we were finally able to repair the 1912 Green Mountain School and give it some new siding, a much needed paint job and enhance one of the playgrounds with astro-turf. (like the official football fields use) This makes it so much more enjoyable and safer for the kids than playing on the gravel.



Maybe You'll Find the Perfect Match

Originally from St. Ignatius, Dave Sargent, now from Jacksonville, OR has been a financial and item donor (1939 John Deere tractor, WWII truck, and Merchant Marine memorabilia). He discovered a new way to benefit the museum endowment fund. He found that if he donated \$500, a previous employer, Chevron Oil, would match it.

Many other companies have that sort of program and I encourage you to check it out. Remember, that the interest from the invested endowment fund is what will hire replacement personnel when I no longer show up for breakfast.

Your donations are not only tax deductible, they are an investment that will benefit your posterity. It is now quite common to have parents bringing their children through the museum, who themselves had come through as children.

Occasionally we hear of properties or great sums of money being given to some university or other seemingly worthy cause. In some cases, the CEOs receive unbelievable huge salaries.

A couple of things to consider here. Just as an example, a 1935 poster we have



begs money to cure cancer. After all those years and billions of dollars received, they still haven't.

I urge you to weigh the salary of the CEOs of your favorite charity and realize that I, as CEO of the Miracle of America Museum receive no salary.

The other thing that is often written in our comment book and we hear daily is that "We wish the things your museum teaches with your exhibits were still taught in our schools." In the words of a New Jersey family brought in by a Bigfork family, in September,

"What a wonderful museum full of so many treasures. Thank you for preserving our history - especially for our children and grandchildren who are not getting the information in school."

And Sage, a February visitor, had this to say, *"I had so much fun. Thank you for the history lessons (sp from original) I wish they would teach us this in school."*

MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Gil's notes of financial donors won't be in this N.L. but rest assured all donations are greatly appreciated.

Chief picker, **Howard Hudson** found us a couple more scouting items, Glacier Park Memorabilia, etc.

Marvin Douma from Moiese, sold his farm and donated a couple of trailer loads of vintage school desks, tools, a John Deere flywheel engine and a grain cleaner and grindstone that the engine powered. Other than a couple of repairs to make the engine operable again, we decided to leave it just as it was last used.

The **Nethercott** and **Stock** families

presented us with some interesting Polson advertising gimmicks, including a broom stick holder and a clothespin bag for hanging on the line

A recent rush trip to the Portland, Oregon area netted a few goodies including this 5' diameter porcelain sign to display near our 1954 Kaiser 4 dr. sedan.

On the return trip along the Columbia River there was just enough time to visit a museum I had heard about at Hood River, Oregon, the Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum. I consider it a

must-see if you are anywhere near. I had the honor of meeting the founder, Terry Brandt, who has created a wonderful display.

For the subject of airplanes and autos along with support memorabilia, I know of no equal. We will display his rack card in our rack and he has provided a place for our brochures in his. I also visited with a few of his volunteers who enjoy sharing their time and talents to help preserve history, and make and keep things operating. Some donors of vehicles even come every so often to tinker or shine their previously owned treasure.



Left to Right: Cub Scout neckerchief and Girl Scout jackknife; John Deere flywheel engine, grain cleaner and grindstone; bag for hanging clothespins on the line with Polson advertising; porcelain Kaiser sign, that's 5 feet in diameter.

Goal nearly met—

MOAM to acquire Shorty Shope original Montana Artwork

The MOAM is pleased to announce that donations have come in to purchase five original paintings done by native Montana artist, Shorty Shope.

The Montana Highway Commission used his artwork for the covers of their official maps in the 1930s and 40s as you can see by our display comparing the museum map collection with the original paintings.

Thanks to a very generous seller, we are able to purchase these paintings at *half of the appraised value*. At this time, *the Museum still needs to raise \$3,300* to pay off the debt for the purchase.

Can you help make these special paintings part of our collection for all to enjoy?



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

Donors' wishes honored – Have you made yours clear to heirs?

I've harped on this next subject enough to feel like Groucho Marx, but the recent losses of Nancy Seegers and Gale Miller shows the importance of giving instructions while still living.



Unbeknownst to us, Nancy wanted her one gallon milk picture to come to us and Gale wanted us to have his collection of Polson High School annuals (Pend 'Oreilles) dating back to 1929, and a stack of Flathead Couriers dating back to 1932. The sub heading reads "Polson – The Power City, The Commercial, Recreation and Scenic Center Of The Garden Of The Rockies – Polson." Note the reference to

Polson as the "Power City". Kerr Dam wouldn't be built until 1938, but I believe there was a steam powered generating plant near the lakeshore across from where Super I Foods stands that gave electricity to Polson at least as early as 1910. I've also heard that there was a generator up Hell Roaring Creek, but I have no photos of that either.

Back to the newspapers, the earlier ones were four inches wider and usually did not have photos. There seemed to always be one full page devoted to state and another for

national news. Perusing the front page of the September 15, 1932 issue, I find a duck shooting time schedule, large columns devoted to the Cherry Growers annual picnic, Chamber of Commerce meeting, and a couple reports of crime about as large as a notice of a football game next Saturday. That would never fly today as Editors get nasty phone calls if some parent's child's picture of a sports event is left out. The social news from various communities is a real kick and I'll give a couple of shorter examples just for fun. "Mrs. Leon Thompson, Mrs. Chapman and Ruth, motored to Ravalli, Sunday, and picked elderberries." And "Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Neifert were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Brooks, Sunday, at a 7 o'clock dinner." You can see why former editors called it the "chicken dinner news".



We're open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. all year long!

Live History Days Saturday and Sunday, July 20 and 21!

Live History Days 2019 was a rousing success with some new exhibitors, rides, and volunteers.

Our newest was Hunter Linstead, the glass blower from Kalispell who did unbelievable demonstrations both days. All have committed for 2020 on the 18th and 19th of July. We are getting more things operating and ready for it already. Put the dates on your calendar and join us!



SEE THE
MIRACLE OF
AMERICA MUSEUM
POLSON, MONTANA

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www.miracleofamericamuseum.org