



Miracle of America Museum

MEMBER:
MUSEUM ASSOC.
OF MONTANA
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OF MUSEUMS

Summer 2022

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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

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50th state visits MOAM

The first week of June brought us our 50th state as well as visitors from 20 countries and four Canadian provinces. More and more visitors have come as a result of word of mouth advertising. Bless all of you who help spread the word in various ways, including folks like **Joel Gleason**, **Sigurd Jensen**, and **Mark French** who have allowed sign placement on their property. We thank **WBC, Polson** for donating two 6x6 x 12' pressure treated posts for our Pablo sign.

Value of printed newsletters

Many folks opt to get our newsletter by email to save us postage. My fear is that it goes into your spam file, or that the rest of the family won't see it or pass it around. We try to make them educational, hoping even children will benefit from reading them. They are also a reminder of our website and YouTube channel.

We are happy to put you back on the US mail list so you'll have a printed copy to share. Stamps this time are courtesy of a frequent stamp and cash donor, **Ralph Westermann** from Fall City, WA, who sent us six sheets of different stamps.

Ronan grade school 15th annual tour

Children love us, and numerous pre-school groups come visit. The students then later return with parents or grandparents in tow, and it is rewarding to see the little ones become the tour guides.

We continue to see parents come back with a new generation of little ones who themselves were brought through when they were children. Although two years were missed because of pandemic rules, it was nice to have two classes from Ronan grade school for their 15th annual tour and Model T Ford ride, The 1914 "Flivver" didn't miss a beat with helper David at the controls.

See student's note from our guest book, above.

New Activities for Live History Days

You'll enjoy new activities this time! This year *Live History Days* will feature vintage snowmobiles displayed by the Western Montana Vintage Snowmobile Enthusiasts. We are working frantically to provide a few new venues this year which should be interesting.

We are always looking for more exhibitors, volunteers, re-enactors, etc.

We are expecting a larger than normal crowd this year thanks to the Montana Tourism Grant Program, expected to attract visitors to our area. We have been busy placing 4' x 8' and 3' x 9' signs around the valley. We'll remove them after the event and reuse them next year.



♡♡♡ There just aren't words to express
how amazing this place really is! ♡♡♡



Rare vehicle restored with boat tail



The most labor intensive donation of the year was by master wood worker, **Gene DeCarlo** in fabricating a boat tail for our 1930 Franklin air cooled car. It had previously been donated to us by **Bob Feil** of Feil Boats in East Wenatchee, WA. The four doors and rear sedan body had rotted, but Bob had

powder coated the six wheels and installed four new tires and tubes, and the front end still looked impressive and it ran well, so I thought a similar look



to *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* from the delightful movie starring Dick Van Dyke, would give it some character.

Church, Barn plans underway; Funding sought

Our Church and Barn are the big projects, but related smaller projects take time and money, too. We won't find out the success of our barn grant application until next spring. We will be applying for a church grant soon.

We are raising funds to restore a 5-ft diameter stained glass window, originally in a circa 1915 Polson Presbyterian church. Our plan is to build a wing on one side with a partially glassed in dividing wall in order to display our 1880s horse drawn hearse.

Brother in law, **Gary Abbey** has pledged a nice set of dress harness, so now we have to raise money for a pair of horse mannequins.

Please consider helping us complete this meaningful addition to MOAM.

MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

We maintain our historically correct displays. The Cream of Wheat Doll, a friendly Black server assured society of a "quality" breakfast food, just as Aunt Jemima stood for "quality" syrup.

Political correctness has robbed us of these iconic, trusted, and much loved symbols and other names that stood for bravery and other positive traits.

This doll and a handmade doll from Germany were donated by **Diania Allison** who also donated a caned picnic basket and numerous vintage household/kitchen items.

The largest donation was a restored 1944 2N Ford tractor by **Jim Wasson** of Washington and delivered by his son from



Portland. The 2N denoted Ford started building this series in 1942 and these are often mistaken for a 9N which were built in 1939 thru 1941, because Ford kept the 9N preceding the serial # thru 47 and only minor differences over the years. Unfortunately, most rubber tires from tractors were filled with calcium chloride for traction weight, and over the years it would rust out the rim and often destroy the tire and tube. Fortunately we had an extra good tire, but had to replace the wheel and tube.

Pickers **Lulu Stock** and **Howard Hudson** must have a race on in bringing in neat goodies; usually so numerous, I can't list everything. Howard included his



mother's Brownie box camera, Girl Scout jewelry, WWI books, and Glacier Park items. Lulu donated a fantastic condition WWI canteen, and a unique fire extinguisher as well as useful household items from yesteryear.

Our rare 1942 Ford ambulance project looks much better with new glass courtesy of **Greg at Odyssey Auto Glass**.



Our financial friends are so important to us

We salute our Friends of the Museum, memberships, and donors. Special project donors for this quarter have been:

Anonymous donation of \$500

Donna Rolfson Trust

Richwines Burgerville

Glacier Bank

Carolyn and Eric Hall,

West Wind Courier Service of Havre

John Hatfield

Greater Polson Community Foundation, \$1,000

Irvine and Mary Milheim

Susan Smith

Clearwater Montana Properties donated \$500, the second time they have donated, thanks to a recommendation from associate, **Kathy Crockett**. Many companies share charity funds, but it takes an employer or associate to recommend us.

Thanks to several generous donors in the Friends category, **we added \$10,000 to our Endowment Fund** through the Montana Community Foundation!

Sherm and Bonnie Anderson joined at the Life level. They own Sun Mountain Lumber in Deer Lodge and both serve on the executive board of the Auto Museum at the Old Prison complex. Well worth the special trip to see it and the other museums across the street including the doll and toy museum and the Old West collection!

Annual Support Levels: Single \$50; Family \$100; Corporate \$200; Life \$1,000.

Membership includes free admission, newsletter and discount in our Gift Shop, plus the satisfaction that you are supporting our mission to preserve history.



MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

We had five military vehicles in the Polson Memorial Day parade and five in the July 4th parade. We must use non-ethanol premium gasoline which is expensive. We received help from both **VFW** and **American Legion posts** for fuel.

Many donations came in last quarter including the following: Carpenter chest full of tools in memory of Larry Skipper who worked for the Wabash and Cannonball RR, donated by niece **Terry Skipper**; **Robert Worsham** brought in a rare 1910 Model T Ford timer and misc; **Maureen Dehne**, 50s-60s ladies hats in boxes; **Jim Borowski**, misc. WWI and II web belts, medals and misc military gear; **Jon and Sandra Aalderks**, Story and Clark pump organ; **Paul Grinde**, coffee pot and 26 copies of WWII Yank Magazine; **Paul Laisy**, Standard Crown gas pump globe; **Elsa Duford/Valerie Broyles**, WWI and II sheet music.

When I lost my two wheelbarrow seeders in the barn fire, I doubted I'd ever find another one. Imagine my surprise when

Laurence Walchuk from Ronan, wondered if I would like one and delivered it. They were a unique 15' long seed hopper. As it was pushed along, the cogs in the wheel levered a reciprocating wooden bar inside that slid the gates back and forth to distribute (usually grass) seed.

As a boy visiting my maternal grandparents' place in North Crow, I used to shoot an unusual rifle with a folding stock. The bottom barrel was a shotgun using a bird shot cartridge similar



to a 410. The top barrel was 22 caliber. It went to an uncle. A few years ago I found a rough one at a gun show, but couldn't find any parts to complete it. Last March, **Sawbuck Pawn and Loan** of Kalispell had one, less the stock they wanted to donate. So now we display a complete Marble Arms "Game Getter." It's legal for us to own, but for some reason, the shorter barreled versions are illegal to own. I doubt any crime was committed with any of these. Probably saved a few people from snake bites, and harvested small game for meals. I would like to find an original 44 shotshell cartridge to display with it. If you have any old cartridges or boxes, consider letting us display them.



We were recently donated an unusual firearm, a 1884 Springfield 45-70 trapdoor rifle by **Garry Wunderwald**. These were used by the Shattuck "Crack Squad" School, Fairbault, MN. The Squad were never defeated in honor guard competition. The rifles were stripped of sights and bayonet lug and anything that might catch on clothing during drill maneuvers and then re-blued.



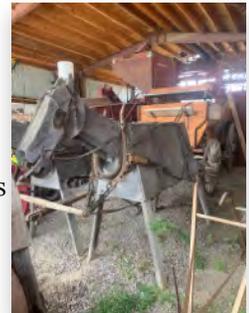
We lost several ornate pulleys with wooden spools in our barn fire. **Hap Cheff**, a Ronan High School shop teacher had some of his class make the wooden

spools to restore our pulleys. It was nice that the students could use their training to be helpful in preserving history. The wood needs to be stained. Any volunteers?



Obviously not everything is donated and I occasionally purchase certain items. A 1965 Arctic Cat snowmobile recently caught my eye and I thought it should be included in our collection because of its uniqueness and nice overall condition. (The seat needs a little repair) I was successful at an internet auction and my friend **Bob Lasilla** from Great Falls picked it up at the auction house until I could arrange a trip to Great Falls to pick it up. Bob has helped before with similar items and finding neat pieces for us of which our antique four car transport was one. *See photo on front page.*

Karen Claffey sent a load of work horse harness which helps to offset harness lost in the barn fire. We will want to make some more harness horses to display, hitched to various machines, if any retired carpenters would like to help build them.



I'm sorry if I've missed someone, as you can imagine, I've got a lot on my plate. – Gil

1987 Montana Band Airplane Tragedy Tribute

A longtime friend, **Dennis Jones** brought us several historical items. Dennis had written the first ever newspaper story about the museum for the Missoulian which featured me and the rare WWII armored car.

A few years later he was chief correspondent and photographer to cover a tragic event in Lakeside, the airplane wreck killing all on board of the "Montana Band." I had been able to salvage the largest intact piece of the airplane, one of the rudders of the twin Beech.

We have used it as a safety message, stating that our freedom – including that of travel – is dependent on responsibility. More info on the wreck can be found on our YouTube channel and Mr. Jones' newspaper account in our display. Coincidentally, as I was working on the display, a couple who occasionally performed with the band stopped in to visit and was amazed by our tribute.

"It's a small world, after all."





Live History Days

July 16 and 17 –

a safe, outdoor opportunity to see living history!

Great fun!!!



Come relive the good ol' days right here in Polson! Live demonstrations, music, food and family activities. Bring your visitors and join the fun!

Left: River Mallory from Kalispell demonstrated blacksmithing at Live History Days last July.
Right: Larry Eslick of Marion operated a hundred-year-old saw.
Photos by Scot Heisel/Lake County Leader.

Please take a moment to enjoy our

[YouTube videos](#)

for an animated look at many of our displays!



Open 9am to 5pm all year long.

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