



Miracle of America Museum

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

Summer 2025

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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

Executive Board of Directors

Gil Mangels, Chief Executive Officer
and Board Chair; Helen Mangels, Secretary;

Ryan Gage, Treasurer;

Board members: Brandy Wallace, Cathleen Wilde,
Art Mangels, Sam Allred, Carol Edger,
Paul and Vanessa Hammond, and Rick Wallace.

Note: We would like to add members to our board of directors. We'd love to hear from you if you have interest.

Sawmill Restoration a Priority

The major project has been restoring our sawmill to working order. Dupuis sawmill donated lumber for that project. Our faithful sawyer, Larry Eslick, has made several tips from Marion to help set it up correctly. I also restored a steel wheeled lumber yard cart and David is working on a rare wooden wheeled lumber wagon. I am trying to leave things in the best working order as possible, for when I am no longer able.

With that same thought in mind, It took a lot of research and measuring to install a foolproof engine and drive system in our park train. We finally got the job done. It goes a bit slower, but that will make it safer on the curves and more engineer friendly.

Creston Auction Yields Meat Chopper, Reliable Chainsaw

I don't attend the spring annual Creston auction anymore, but friend **Bill Tidwell** does and keeps an eye out for nifty historical items to donate. This year's antique was a 1904 sausage chopper which now is by the doorway of our butcher shop. Also included in his donation was a more modern chainsaw and it has been handy in cutting beams and blocks for our sawmill. It surprises us by starting consistently on the first pull. Now how many chainsaws will do that?



Visitation Robust; Plans Set for Live History Days

School tours, bus tours and visitation in general has been picking up. As I start writing this, we have registered visitors from 49 states (awaiting Rhode Island visitors), 28 countries, and six Canadian provinces.

This month is very busy getting things ready for Live History Days July 19-20. We didn't have any advertising grant money to use this year, so I hope you will remind your friends to include us in your plans. And as always, if you want to participate as an exhibitor or help in any way, please call. We appreciate it! Spectators are needed to view the demonstrations, ask meaningful questions, etc. Our regular musicians will perform from 10 am to 1 pm on Saturday and 1 to 4 pm on Sunday.



Wind Generator Spins to Life

In 1978 before the museum officially started, I attended an auction at the Lookout Museum south of Lakeside where the Paul Bunyan sat. The logging towboat didn't sell at that auction and it would be over 10 years later that we purchased and moved it. One thing I did purchase was a 32 volt Wincharger on a 30 foot tower, in storage til this spring. David and I finally raised it. It's fun to see it spin in the wind and hear the governor slow enough that it won't self-destruct. We took out the generator brushes so it is just a static display to save the high cost of batteries. Back in the day, though, this could generate enough electricity for a small homestead.



A Special Note of Thanks . . .

Mrs. McMillan sent us a hand-written note thanking us for their recent grade school field trip. In part, she wrote,

We love our field trip at the end of the year. Everything that I read about and talk about during the school year my students get to see for real at your museum. They love climbing on all of the things with the green ovals, and the train ride is always a hit. So thank you again for having us and for being so kind to me and my students.

Love, Mrs. McMillan and Students

Museum Receives '77 Olds Cutlass

The largest donation we received this quarter was a nice 1977 Oldsmobile Cutlass Coupe with 52,000 miles on the odometer. It included service records, first aid kit and emergency and maintenance items. It is a nice driving auto and I appreciate the hand crank windows, more dependable than electric ones. It was donated and delivered by the **John Peterson Trust**, by personal representative, **Rick Michelotti**.



MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Helen's daughter, **Julie Nicklaus** attended the Creston auction mentioned on page 1, and was high bidder on two unique dolls which she donated to the museum. To add to our doll family, **Lila Leuning** donated the four pictured dolls, delivered by **Tami Thompson**.



In memory of **Robert "Hawkeye" Hughes**, personal representative **Beth Gramay** donated a few air force items. The 6'x4' red and yellow flag is a mystery. Google says it is not American. It appears to be naval, but Hawkeye was always stationed stateside, so he may have been gifted it sometime in his military career. Can anyone help identify it for us?



Gary Watne donated several vintage electrical devices including this nice 1936 Atwater Kent radio and remote speaker. They are displayed in the Land office section of our train depot. (Right)



The **Balchunas** family donated a 1940 Bausch and Lomb medical school microscope and wooden case in memory of Anthony Peter Balchunas, MD who used it during his schooling. It is displayed in the main medical building.



Something about the packaging and signs of earlier days just seem to be enticing to many collectors. The colors seem to be richer or more inviting. Picker **Howard Hudson** has a talent for finding interesting and unique items to share with us. Are there any mothers out there that were given a physician's sample of Dextri-Maltose for their baby?



MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS, cont'd

Jim Nethercott brought in a couple of new old stock (NOS) heater thermostats still in their boxes that will go into our plumbing shop, and some Kerr canning items that will go in the general store.



Brother-in-law **Gary Abbey** gifted us several items, among them a Shell oil curb sign which is hung on one of our garage doors since we don't have any curbs. Included in sister-in-law **Frances Abbey's** grouping was a nice candy jar as used in early day general stores.



Surprisingly, many visitors like our 64 Rambler station wagon with a sleeper Camp-O-Tel on the roof; pulling a tag-a-long teardrop trailer. The **Van Zants** donated some period camping gear and heavy blankets which fit in perfectly with our camping theme.

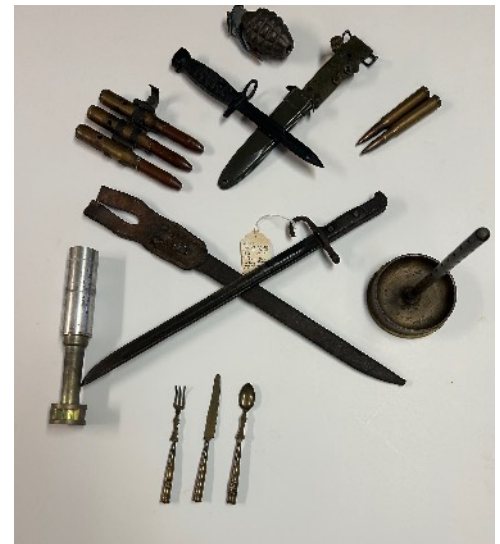


Judy Eslick brought in a WWII Merchant Marine jacket. They were thought of as the unsung heroes of the era, but played a crucial role in keeping our troops supplied in winning the war for freedom.



A very early, and continuing museum donor is **Jerry Roat**, and he brought in some interesting military items, as well as a stenciled end of a very early cherry box. We have over one hundred different ends, but we know there were many more cherry growers in the area.

Does anyone know where the J.T. Symonds orchard was located?



We Salute our Members, Donors, and Volunteers

Financial friends this last quarter include memberships, corporate donors, and outright donations:

Kathy Crockett of Clearwater Realty submitted our name successfully to receive a generous charitable donation.

Other donors include **Ervin Croft, Richwine's Burgerville, Butch Stewart, and Jed Williams** through Thrivent Choice.



Museum Giving Levels:

Annual Support:
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.

Importance of Miracle Endowment – Ways to Help

Maybe you already know that Helen and I work on a strictly volunteer basis. My granddaughter Desire' takes over when Helen and I step away, and funds will be needed for assistants, receptionists, and grounds help.

That's where dividends from our Museum Endowment Fund will go. The corpus remains invested and the earnings are directed for that purpose alone. We need to grow the Endowment and we ask that you consider helping in any way you can.

Donors can enjoy tax advantages by helping the museum. Here are ideas to discuss with your CPA:

- **Planned or pending stock donation**
- **Required Minimum Distributions from your IRA**
- **Life insurance policies**
- **Real properties, i.e. land**
- **Personal assets, vehicles, collections of value, partial retirement fund, etc.**

If you so decide, be sure to put your desires in writing and let the family know that you did so.



Plan to join us the third weekend in July for our 38th Annual Live History Days – July 19th and 20th!

We promise another fun celebration of history with live artisan demonstrations, vintage equipment demonstrations, food concessions, rides, ice cream social, and musical entertainment.

Bring the family and all your summer visitors for a very special weekend at Miracle of America Museum!



Please enjoy our quarterly newsletter and share it with your friends and family. View it online for best color images.

If you are no longer interested in receiving a printed copy, a note or phone call is appreciated so we can save mailing costs.

**Open 9am to 5 pm
Year-Round!**



Enjoy the Museum's YouTube Channel!
We've added QR codes, and WiFi is available throughout the grounds to enhance your enjoyment of our displays. Learn "the rest of the story!"

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