

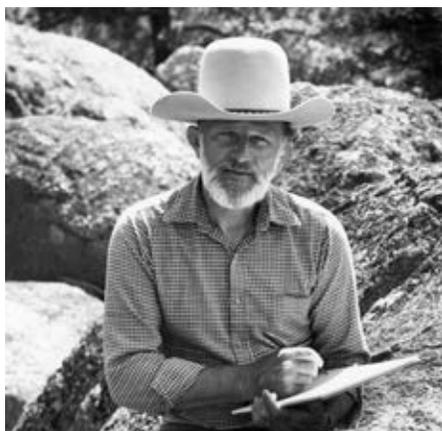
## Bob Morgan Will Live on in the History He Loved

In life Bob Morgan reveled in the history, the natural beauty and the people of Montana.

In death he has joined the pantheon of Montana legends that went before him and continue to inspire us with the brilliant glow of each Montana sunrise and sunset.

Robert F. Morgan died at age 85 on the evening of June 20 with his beloved wife, Gen, holding his hand and surrounded by many of his family members. The news touched people in every corner of the state, and the family heard from people across the nation when the story was picked up by the Associated Press.

It is impossible to say what



Bob Morgan at home in his beloved Montana.

Morgan was, because he was many things to many people. For the Montana Historical Society he was curator emeritus, MHS Board of Trustees member emeritus, and a founding father of the

modern Historical Society.

He was an expert on the works of Montana's cowboy artist Charlie Russell, and a noted artist in his own right painting Montana landscapes, wildlife, murals and the history of the special places of his beloved life-long home of Helena.

He inspired the careers of hundreds of artists – some of them among the best in the West – founded the NorthWest Rendezvous Group of artists, and supported other museums and art shows.

He was a proud veteran of the U.S. military from 1947 to 1966 and retired as a chief warrant

*Bob Morgan (cont. on p. 4)*

## History Conference Trail Leads to Bozeman

The Bozeman Trail is one of the most iconic in the History of the West, and it also leads to this year's 42nd Annual Montana History Conference Sept. 24th to the 26th.

This is the first time the Montana Historical Society has taken the conference to Bozeman, and it promises to be interesting and exciting.

"We will focus much of the conference on the history of this special Montana community, as well as Gallatin County and the surrounding region, including Yellowstone National Park," MHS



This year's History Conference will be as "sweet" as the history of Bozeman itself.

Director Bruce Whittenberg said. "We have had great support from many people and organizations, and they are ready to welcome us

and show their part of Montana off."

The Extreme History Project of Bozeman will kick the confer-

*History Conference (cont. on p. 6)* 1

## Disappointment, Optimism and Historical Context

*"The reason that this Society as a whole is going full blast is that we simply can't believe that full support won't be forthcoming."*

K. Ross Toole, 1954 - First full-time Director of the Montana Historical Society

In March, 1923, the Eighteenth Legislative Assembly established the Montana Pioneer Historical Fund for the purpose of constructing a building for a permanent and appropriate home for the Historical Society of Montana. The Historical Society of Montana was 58 years old. The Society was located in the basement of the Montana Capitol and was running short on space for collections and exhibition. The creation of this fund provided a means for raising money and support for the vision of a new permanent home. This effort continued for decades. In 1941, the legislature approved a bond of \$250,000 for the project and in 1945 the bond was increased to \$400,000. The Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers acquired 63 lots east of the Capitol in a tax sale, making land available for the Society. Veterans returning from World War II with the hard earned knowledge of what community, state and country mean to history also played a significant role. They rallied support statewide and held a parade in Helena to let their feelings be known about the new Society building that also carried their name. The final piece of the puzzle was put in place by Governor John Bonner and the 1949 legislature when an additional \$350,000 was provided. Construction of the

Veterans and Pioneers Memorial Building – the current home of the Montana Historical Society- began in 1950.

Fast forward to 2005-55 years later. After years of planning and debate, the 58th legislature authorized the construction of a new facility for the Montana Historical Society and provided \$7.5 million in bonding authority. The balance of the project cost, an additional \$30 million would have to come from other sources. Legislators in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013 considered more funding for the building but failed to act. It's now 2015 and the 150th anniversary of the Montana Historical Society. The 64th legislature considered the Montana Heritage Center – the renovation and expansion of the Society's home – in four different bills. The final negotiated package, SB 416 which included a number of important infrastructure projects throughout Montana, failed in the House of Representatives in an embarrassing

spectacle of political gamesmanship. The Montana Historical Society, universities, schools, cities and counties all were sent home without needed improvements. Some legislators even characterized that failure as a political "win." It's important to note that SB 416 passed the Senate 47-3, passed the House on second reading 70-30 (the bill required 67 votes to pass) and had the support of Governor Steve Bullock. That was before the games began. The bill fell one vote short of final passage, despite strong bipartisan support. As incredibly disappointing and frustrating as that ultimate failure was, it's important to remember the lessons of history.

The Historical Society of Montana shared a powerful vision in 1923 that took 27 years to become a reality. But those visionaries persevered. It took decades for the wisdom of the investment to be recognized, private funds to be raised and the political forces to align to move this

*Director's Corner (cont. on p. 5)*

### About Us

The *Society Star* is published quarterly by the Montana Historical Society as a benefit of membership.

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[www.montanahistoricalociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalociety.org)

### SOMETHING NEW, SOMETHING OLD

## When Spitting Was in Style

You never know what will turn up in a collection donated to the MHS Research Center.

Who would have guessed that the donation of A. M. Holter Family papers would include a beautifully laid out and adorned catalogue of brass cuspidors --a fancy word for spittoons.

It was in a collection of catalogues from the Holter Hardware Store in Helena from the 1910s to 1920s but undated that will be added to the paper ephemera collection.

The Goodnow & Blake Manufacturing Company announced proudly "to the trade": "In presenting our new Catalogue of Brass Cuspidors, we have endeavored to illustrate an

assortment of styles equal to the best in design, workmanship and material."

The prices ranged from \$10.15 for a small 4 ½ inch "self-righting" model to \$36 for an "extra heavy brass with removable enameled pan" model. The company noted that it also made things like auto wheel dust caps and battle axes. Their business apparently was nothing to expectorate at. ★



# On the Road to Montana's Great Museums and Galleries

Tucked away on Highway 83 on the road to Glacier National Park and worth a visit is the Upper Swan Valley Historical Society Museum in Condon.

The museum opened July 4, 2013, with a celebration of pride in the nation and a love of local history.

"People are proud of the history of the valley. It was a labor of love. There are less than 1,000 people here (in the valley), if you count the summer folks," Steve Lamar, spokesman for the museum said.

Last year 140 volunteers contributed 6,141 hours to the museum, he said, and that number is growing every year. The museum is open free to the public Thursday through Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

"People can call for an appointment. Our people love to show the

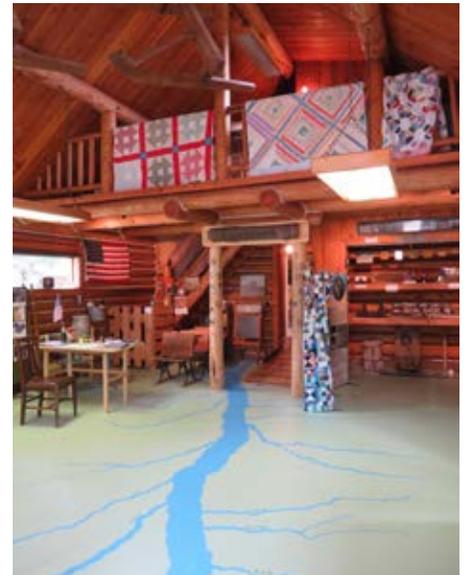
museum off, and somebody is usually available to do it," Lamar said. You can call him at 406-754-2745.

The museum exhibits are well interpreted and displayed "We want to tell the story behind the exhibits," he said.

MHS Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager Kirby Lambert attended a planning meeting for the museum about two years ago and recently went back. "I was truly amazed at how much they have accomplished in a relatively short period of time," Lambert said.

There are many unique exhibits from the area's history of logging and community building including a restoration of the original Liquid Louie's Bar, a community gathering place in the 1940s.

The valley was one of the last places in the nation opened to homesteading in 1906. More than



The inside of the Upper Swan Valley Museum.

200 people took out homesteads, but only 102 proved up on their property, Lamar said.

It is well worth a visit to see how Montanans survived in that part of the state. ★

## SOCIETY STAR PROFILE

### Kate Hampton Destined to Find the Real Montana

It's a long way from Baltimore to the special places of Montana, and the stories they tell.

MHS State Historic Preservation Coordinator Kate Hampton said it all began in 7th grade when she missed a day of school.

"We had to do a report on a state. The only two states to pick from were Idaho and Montana. I picked Montana," she said with her infectious smile.

After graduating from Towson State in Baltimore, she completed her destined journey by getting her master's degree in western history at the University of Montana in 1995. Her first job was with Historical Research Associates in Missoula, and one of her first assignments was to hike the back country of Grand Teton National Park in search of its special places and stories.

"I thought; I can't believe I am



Kate Hampton finding Montana's special places.

getting paid for this. I fell in love with discovering and documenting place as history," she said.

She brought that love to MHS in 2000, working first as its State Historic Preservation Office National Register Coordinator. She has traveled to virtually every corner of the state working with communities to find and tell their stories and save their historic treasures.

"I really enjoy the community workshops we put on across the state," she said. "The people are always so warm. I revel in their telling of family histories and the significance of the places important to them. You can see the pride in their faces."

Although she says she didn't want to be a history teacher, she acknowledges that it is a big part of her job. "When they learn how their stories relate to larger historical themes, people rally around their history," she said.

Her father-in-law is noted Montana historian H.D. Hampton, and she took one of the last classes he taught at UM. "He is a great teacher. He trusted me enough to house sit for him," she said.

Another bit of her destiny. She married his son Wade, and they now have two children – of course Montana natives. ★



Noted Sculptor John Weaver made this bust of Bob Morgan in 1974, and is in the MHS collection. It is fitting that Weaver also did the statue of Charlie Russell that is in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol – Morgan was a Russell expert.

**Bob Morgan** (cont. from p. 1)  
officer 3.

Mostly he was a great guy to be around and a gifted raconteur who spun his stories with skill and the ever-present twinkle in his eyes.

As a 10-year-old after school he began frequenting the collections of the Montana Historical Society when they were in the basement of the State Capitol. He was inspired by Charlie Russell, who died only three years before Morgan was born.

Morgan cut his eye teeth in art designing and painting backdrops for window displays at Helena's famous Fliegelman's Department Store. Shortly before the current

MHS facility was opened in 1952, MHS Director K. Ross Toole recognized Morgan's talent and hired him as curator to design the modern museum. He also curated the Mackay Collection of Russell art that became the foundation of the MHS Russell gallery.

Throughout his life MHS was an extension of Morgan's life, and he mentored and encouraged dozens of people who followed in his footsteps.

We lost a friend. But as long as there is a Montana Historical Society, Bob Morgan will live on and continue to share his vision of the Montana he loved. ★

## Bob Morgan Remembered in the Words of MHS Staff

*"The 150 year history of the Montana Historical Society bears the names of many iconic Montanans. Bob Morgan stands tall among them. Perhaps no one has contributed more to the growth and maturity of the modern historical society than Bob."*  
MHS Director Bruce Whittenberg

*"Bob was always so generous with his time and sharing of his knowledge. I loved his visits! I learned so much from him – about Charlie Russell, and the history of the Montana Historical Society. The Society would not be what it is today without the tremendous foundation that Bob built for us. I miss him greatly."*  
MHS Museum Senior Curator Jennifer Bottomly—O'looney

*"One of my best memories of Bob was listening to him talk about the 1935 Earthquake. He was such an amazing story teller....I could almost feel and see the grassy fields outside of Helena rolling like waves with each aftershock. It must have been quite a sight! I am so thankful that I got to have that....and so many other opportunities to hear Bob "tell" Montana History."*  
MHS and State Archivist Jodie Foley

*"Bob was always very supportive of MHS staff and interested in our activities. One year, he volunteered to help me identify our in-house photographs of MHS staff, activities and exhibits from the 1950s to the 1970s. I remember fondly the afternoons that we spent together as Bob identified the photographs and told me great stories and the history of MHS in those years."*  
MHS Photograph Archives Manager Lory Morrow

*"Along with his generosity in sharing his time and expertise, and his gift as a storyteller, one of the things that always impressed me about Bob was his ability to remember the details of events—like who donated a certain object to the museum— from 30 or 40 years ago. His detailed knowledge of MHS collections was in no way limited just to our Charlie Russell artwork. No one could possibly have been more helpful, or more fun to have around."*  
MHS Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager Kirby Lambert

*"Bob always enjoyed sharing his stories about MHS with all of us – so much history. He was the epitome of the Montana Historical Society."*  
MHS Membership Coordinator Rebecca Baumann

*"Mr. Morgan was so generous with his time and his knowledge. He knew the history of the Montana Historical Society better than anyone, because he lived it. When I was working on the National Register nomination for the MHS building, I reveled in his joyful enthusiasm, gentle guidance, and hilarious stories. It was his approval I wanted most of all, and he gave it with a broad smile and a kind heart. For that, and so many happy memories, I will always be grateful."*

MHS Community Preservation Coordinator Kate Hampton

*"More than anyone Bob Morgan epitomized the mission of MHS. His passion and dedication for Montana history and culture was unwavering. He was an inspiring mentor for all of us at MHS, and I especially benefited from his tutelage for over 30 years. His deep and wide knowledge of the institution and our collections could never be fully appreciated through reading catalog cards or reports. Bob was the best kind of advisor -- kind, funny, generous and constantly an advocate and confidant. And Bob was the best kind of friend -- always caring and supportive, taking the time to celebrate successes and com-*

mensurate in disappointments. No one will replace him.”

MHS Marketing & Development  
Officer Susan Near

“In life there is no greater treasure than to say I have had friends such as these. I first got to know Bob as a fellow veteran. In a time when not many did, he thanked me for serving in Vietnam. It was later that I joined MHS. By then I had come to know that he was a famous artist and historian. He never wanted to say he was. As an old jock and Marine, I knew little, nor really cared, about art. On one of our road trips for the Society, Bob asked me what colors I saw in a sunset. White clouds, blue sky, and yellow, I said. Like Socrates, he asked me to look again. I began to see the pinks, purples, reds and even blacks. Every time I see a sunrise or sunset, I look through Bob’s eyes and think of him. As Bob would say, I now know enough about art to be dangerous. Another time, we were talking about something called plein air, and I got frustrated. Tom, he said, remember this, it’s all you need to say to make them think you know something about art: ‘When you are out of Monet, you are baroque,’ he said with a laugh. I wrote it down as I did other things he told me. I said I would use it in his obituary, and he laughed. Well, Friend Bob, I will never be broke because I will never be out of Morgan.”

MHS Public Information Officer  
Tom Cook



Shortly before his death Bob Morgan and his beloved wife, Genevieve, autographed copies of the MHS Press award-winning book “Montana’s Charlie Russell.” The book was a dream of Morgan’s for 60 years, and it is dedicated to him and his wife.

## MHS Board of Trustees Honor Bob Morgan

The Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees has honored Bob Morgan for his life-long service to the Society by creating the Robert F. Morgan Fund for Art Acquisition and Education.

### Here is the act passed unanimously by the Trustees:

Whereas, Robert F. Morgan, former curator, curator emeritus and trustee emeritus, iconic Montana artist was a gentleman, friend and mentor to so many at the Montana Historical Society and all across Montana,

Whereas, Bob Morgan passed away on Saturday June 20, 2015,

Whereas Bob was instrumental in the creation of the Western Rendezvous of Art (WRA), which served the western art community for 34 years,

Whereas the objective of the WRA was to generate funds for the Montana Historical Society for the purpose of art acquisition and art education,

Whereas the WRA fund continues to support the objective of the WRA and the Montana Historical Society to this day

It is hereby moved that the Western Rendezvous of Art fund held by the Montana Historical Society be renamed the Robert F. Morgan Fund for Art Acquisition and Education at the Montana Historical Society, and the balance in said fund remain with the fund, and that use of funds be at the direction of the Montana Historical Society Museum Program and Director. ★

### Director’s Corner (cont. from p. 2)

important institution into a new home. Today, we find ourselves facing the same political headwinds in achieving the vision of the Montana Heritage Center. The opportunity to provide better access and exhibition and the need to care for these world-class archival and museum collections has never been greater. And it gets more urgent with each passing year. We must not allow this setback, especially after having come so close, to deflect us from the pressing urgency to achieve this goal.

The 27 years that it took to provide our wonderful, important historical society with its present home gives us some perspective, but not solace. We’re going full blast! The people of Montana expect nothing less, but rather they anticipate much more from us. We serve every county in the state through our five programs. Montana’s Museum and the MHS Research Center care for some of the great collections of archival material, art and artifacts found anywhere in the western U.S. The Montana Historical Society attracts visitors from all over the world and supports our friends and colleagues in historical museums, libraries and archives throughout

Montana and the nation. We will ask the 2017 legislature to take a thoughtful look at the value, the opportunity and the need for investing in what will then be a 152 year-old institution. And we will renew our commitment and campaign to identify the private support that, at the end of the day, will demonstrate to the policy makers that Montanans want and demand an appropriate facility to house, preserve and exhibit the people’s historical treasures.

In the meantime, we’ll continue to go full blast, because in the optimistic tone of Director Toole, “We simply can’t believe that full support won’t be forthcoming.” ★

For a great history of the MHS, check out *Saving Montana’s Past: The Creation and Evolution of the Montana Historical Society and Montana The Magazine of Western History* by Brian Shovers, **Montana The Magazine of Western History, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Spring, 2002), pp.48-59.**

## PEOPLE BEFORE THE PARK

# Glacier Park Through the Eyes Of the People Who Knew it First

Before it became known as Glacier National Park, there were people who knew its wonders simply as home.

Thanks to the descendents of those first people, a new MHS Press book opens the doorway to the life-ways Glacier supported and inspired -- and continues to inspire today.

"People Before the Park: The Kootenai and Blackfeet Before Glacier National Park" by Sally Thompson, the Kootenai Culture Committee, and the Pikunni Traditional Association enriches appreciation and understanding of the land in which the two tribes once lived in harmony with nature.

The Kootenai and Blackfeet tribes shared with Thompson their traditions; stories and legends; food gathering and hunting techniques; games; spiritual beliefs; place names and other aspects of traditional life handed down to them generation to generation.

The two tribes share their world-views and record them in the cycle

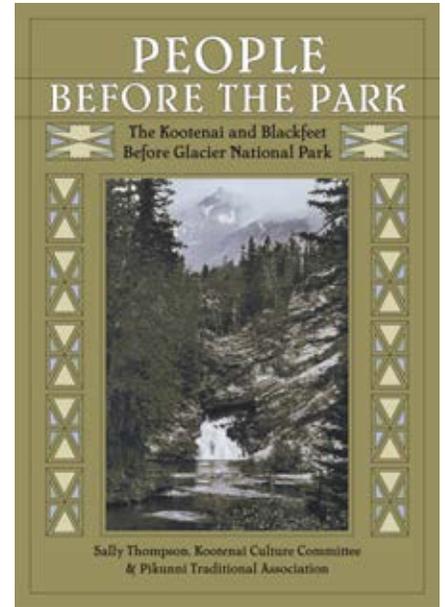
of the seasons that their ancestors followed for thousands of years, taking them to the spiritual places and sources of food and material resources that sustained their lives.

Kootenai educator and tribal chairman Vernon Finley tells of the importance of Ya-kit Haqawilnamki (today called Apgar campground in Glacier Park) where a spirit first taught the songs, circle dance and wisdom to his people to guide their lives.

"The circle represents the road that you're going to walk, from right now in the middle of the wintertime and until the middle of the next winter. Everything will cycle through from the spring to summer to fall and back to winter again," Finley said.

Blackfeet Percy Bullchild talks of the importance of vision quest sites in Glacier where his people went to find their power and life's mission.

"No matter where you go, there is a power spirit there. Spirits are up in the mountains, trees, rivers. All



animals have supernatural spirits; the birds too," he said.

The book includes drawings of the plants important to the tribes found in Glacier and how they were used and when they were gathered. It also details hunting methods and ways that food was prepared and stored.

Darnell and Smokey Rides At The Door talk about their vow to hold a Medicine Lodge at Okan when the traditional spirits saved their home from a grass fire in 2011. Those sharing their stories in the book agree that young people need to understand traditional lifeways.

"We can continue to learn from our traditions. Acting from them, we will see the regeneration of Mother Earth and the people that are living on it. That's why Indian people are so important. We haven't ventured very far from that understanding of our connection to Mother Earth," Smokey said.

Thompson said all people can learn from the first people who lived in what is now Glacier National Park as they continue to fight for the survival of "The Backbone of the World." "Somewhere in our DNA, we all remember our Covenant with the Creator," she said.

The 244-page book with illustrations is \$19.95 paperback, and \$34.95 in hardback. Call the Museum Store toll-free at 1-800-243-9900 to order and get member's 15% discount. ★

### History Conference (cont. from p. 1)

ence off Thursday with a unique first person dialogue, "Fort Parker: In Their Own Words," to tell the history of the first Crow Agency established by Treaty in 1869 just east of Livingston. It will set the stage for traditional Indian life and the changes settlers brought to the area.

Since the conference is being held downtown at Masonic Lodge #18, it also offers conference goers the opportunity to visit this important historic structure.

The Plenary Breakfast Friday will feature Bozeman Historic Preservation Officer Courtney Kramer talking about the educational roots of the community with "Town and Gown: Montana State University and the Development of Bozeman." On Friday MSU President Waded Cruzado will talk about the history of land-grant colleges and the huge impact MSU's agriculture experiment stations that were created by the act and other research have had on Montana.

Other topics include legendary cattleman Nelson Story who is credited with bringing in the first Texas

cattle herd into Montana in 1866, history of Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks, the history of spiritualism in Montana and many other emerging Montana research studies.

As always the topics will be interesting as well as fun.

Montana baseball history from 1866 to present day will be the topic of award-winning journalist Skylar Browning and researcher Jeremy Watterson. Museum of the Rockies Curator Michael Fox will open his tap of knowledge with "Hops and History: Connecting Contemporary Audiences with Montana's Brewing Past."

Field trips this year are to the Madison Buffalo Jump, a walk though history at the Sunset Hills Cemetery and a downtown look back at "Murders, Madams and Mediums."

For a complete schedule of talks, banquets and other conference events, and to register go to [www.montanahistoricalociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalociety.org) and click education and events at top of home page and then conferences and workshops. ★

## First Door on the Left

It's exciting to find a treasure when you least expect to, wouldn't you agree? I hope you have a chance to stop and visit this summer or fall, because you are in for a real treat! Treasures abound here at MHS.

You can visit our new exhibit, "Our Forgotten Pioneers: the Chinese in Montana," and experience what life was like for Chinese immigrants as Montana grew into the great state that it has become. You can also enjoy "Eloquence in Wood: The Art of John L. Clarke" exhibit. Even though John lost his ability to hear or speak due to a childhood illness, he went on to become an accomplished outdoorsman, wood carver and artist. The exhibit features a wide selection of

his representations of wildlife art and letters over his lifespan of 89 years.

Our members are entitled to two complementary research requests each year in our wonderful Research Center. You can stop in, phone in, or go online to [www.montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montanahistoricalsociety.org) to take advantage of being a member. You could explore your family history, check out the history of your property, learn the stories of your community, or learn about that interesting question that has always fascinated you about Montana.

On page one is a story about our upcoming History Conference in Bozeman. This is our first history conference in Bozeman, and if you live in the area, this is a great chance to experience what Montana history is all about. I will be there to welcome you and talk about how we can better serve you.

Feel free to call, email, write, or stop by and maybe sign up your favorite person as a new member. My number is (406) 444-2918, or [rbaumann@mt.gov](mailto:rbaumann@mt.gov). ★

## New at Museum Store



Chinese Story

MHS Museum Store Manager Rod Coslet has some unique books and other items to match the interest of those who visit the popular new "Our Forgotten Pioneers: The Chinese in Montana" exhibit.

"We look for things that will let museumgoers learn even more about the exhibits they see, as well as things they can take home with them to remember the experience," Coslet said. There are books on Chinese experiences in coming to the U.S., Chinese culture and the Chinese language. You can see other items in the photo above. Call the Museum Store toll-free at 1-800-243-9900 for more information – and use your 15% member discount. ★

## Birthdays are for Celebrating!

SUSAN NEAR,  
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

MHS is continuing the celebration of our 150th anniversary throughout the year. This milestone calls for special opportunities to come together for Montana history. The Montana History Conference is coming up in Bozeman, the lineup for our free Thursday night programs this fall is great, and more & more of our presentations are appearing on the MHS YouTube channel. Some additional special events also are in the works.

Our members and their support plays a huge part in everything we do. MHS is grateful for your encouragement—and your financial support. It is gratifying that the response from our special MHS 150th donation request letter that you received in June has resulted in significant donations. Thank you! If you have not had a chance to contribute yet, please consider a special gift to MHS. Everybody appreciates a birthday gift! ★

## Retired Lawman Saves History in New Role

A lawman has to have many skills to "serve and protect."

Retired Columbia Falls Deputy Sheriff Pat Walsh went above and beyond that calling by digitizing more than 28 years of The Columbian newspaper's earliest editions in the community.

"When I heard about Pat's painstaking efforts to digitize 'The Columbian,' I was amazed. I wanted to be sure this wonderful resource was made available online," MHS Newspaper Digitization Coordinator Christine Kirkham said.

The digitized editions of The Columbian are on line at [www.montana.veridiansoftware.com](http://www.montana.veridiansoftware.com).

[montana.veridiansoftware.com](http://www.montana.veridiansoftware.com).

This is the first time MHS has used the New Zealand-based Veridian, which approved a grant proposal for The Columbian project.

"The Veridian software has one very special feature," Kirkham said. "Anyone can create a free account and become a text corrector. Volunteer correctors are given access to the text generated through optical character recognition. By comparing the text and page image side by side, users can fix erroneous words, thereby improving the accuracy of search results for all users." ★

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.

# Montana

## Historical Society

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### *Inside*

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*We are  
thankful for  
our members!*

## 1st Montana Territorial Governor Meets His Great, Great Grandson

MHS Photograph Archivist Jeff Malcomson (center) re-enacted Montana's First Territorial Governor Sidney Edgerton at a special event at the recent Bannack Days celebration in the historic ghost town near Dillon. In this photo Edgerton's great-great grandson Ken Small of Great Falls (left) and Greg Beverage of Helena (right), whose grandmother was an Edgerton, stand with "Edgerton" by a new MHS historic sign dedicated at the event. Small said the marker gives long-overdue recognition to Edgerton for his role in the founding of Montana. As a Republican leader appointed governor by President Abraham Lincoln, Small said he served in a territory primarily populated by Democrats. "It was like they hit the delete button and smashed the hard drive and Edgerton ended up taken out of our history," Small said. The two descendants said they hope the recognition sparks more research into the life and times of Edgerton.

