

## 2017 Montana History Conference Returns to Helena

In September, the forty-fourth annual Montana History Conference brought scholars, historians, educators, and students together in Helena to explore “Montana, 1917: Time of Trouble, Time of Change.” The three-day conference featured tours, workshops, panel discussions, keynote addresses, and the presentation of annual heritage awards.

Thursday’s lineup of events included a “Made in Montana Tour,” Helena walking tours, archival and grant-writing workshops, and a guided tour of the capitol building. Educators from around the state convened for a series of workshops organized by MHS’s Outreach and Interpretation Program, including a World War I-themed tour of the Origi-

nal Governor’s Mansion, a study of Montana’s landless Indians, and a chance to explore an MHS footlocker on early twentieth-century immigration. “The immigrant footlocker opened our eyes to the importance and diversity of the immigrants who helped build Montana,” one teacher commented, adding, “I especially enjoyed the activity that required us to guess the purpose of a certain artifact, explain our reasoning, and then discover its actual purpose.” The Montana Historical Society hosted Thursday’s opening reception.

Michael Punke, former U.S. ambassador to the World Trade Organization and author of *Fire and Brimstone*, kicked off the conference presentations with a talk on the 1917 North Butte mining dis-

aster. On Friday, conference goers chose between several concurrent presentations by scholars from across the West and the nation. Topics ranged from sedition to public health, Indian citizenship to women’s suffrage, and conflict on the home front to the war overseas. One attendee praised the conference for offering “in-depth information over a wide variety of topics all centered in and around this short period of Montana history that I had little knowledge of—very engaging!”

Among the topics in Saturday morning’s programming were eugenics, radicalism, bootlegging, and gambling, as well as the emergence of modern art and architecture in postwar Montana. Dr. Rafael Chacon, professor of art history and criticism at the University of Montana, delivered Saturday’s keynote address on the development of art as a political weapon during World War I.

The MHS Board of Trustees presented the 2017 Heritage Guardian and Heritage Keeper awards to four Montanans who have dedicated their efforts toward the preservation of Montana’s diverse history and heritage. This year’s recipients

*Conference (cont. on p. 2)*



Award-winning author Michael Punke’s Thursday evening talk, “Fire and Brimstone: The North Butte Mining Disaster of 1917,” packed the Old Supreme Court Chamber at the Montana State Capitol.

## Times of Trouble, Times of Change

That's the title of an incredible new exhibit in Montana's Museum at the Montana Historical Society. It's also the story of the past twelve months for the Montana Historical Society.

2017 was a year that we will look back on with disappointment and frustration. Times of trouble began with the conclusion of the legislative session. Severe budget reductions imposed by the legislature and approved by the governor resulted in the discontinuation of some of the Montana Historical Society's very popular services and programming as well as a reduction in employee hours. Key strategies have been altered significantly, and some responsibilities were reassigned to already very hard-working people. The staff of the Montana Historical Society, however, are flexible and adaptable. The passion that these folks have for helping others enjoy the stories of Montana and the West, providing access to the archival and museum collections, and celebrating our rich history has not diminished in the least.

That passion was evident on December 14, when a new exhibit opened in Montana's Museum at the Montana Historical Society, *Times of Trouble, Times of Change: Montana and the Great War*. The museum, abuzz with excitement, was packed for this celebration. Recounting a dramatic decade in Montana and world history, the exhibit required the collaboration of every MHS program and more than forty people from both within and outside the Montana Historical Society. Their efforts produced a powerful exhibit! A related digital exhibit, *Montana and the Great War*, presents a vast collection of images, audio recordings, story maps, educational tools, and more—all

available through the MHS website. Publications, public programs, and educational materials will follow. The 2017 annual Montana History Conference also focused on Montana during World War I, and together these three events showcased the results of dedication and collaboration. This is when we are at our best.

After several months of stressful legislative deliberations that hung over our heads like an ominous storm cloud, we are adjusting to the new, reduced level of state support and carrying on with our work. As a public institution that relies on state funding, it should be expected that there will be times of trouble. Montana is experiencing a changing economy and declining state revenue. Communities across the state and every level of state government are feeling the impacts. Yes, these are times of change in Montana.

Change often follows trouble, but what *won't* change is that the Montana Historical Society will continue to fulfill a mission that is so important to generations of Montanans. You may notice fewer public programs and tours, shorter public hours, and less travel to support our colleagues throughout the state. You will not, however, see any difference in the quality of our engaging and informative exhibits, the award-winning excellence of *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, the dramatic expansion of digital access to our incredible resources, and the creativity and professionalism of our educator programs. Our commitment to telling Montana's stories and bringing its past to life remains unwavering.

Over the 153-year history of the Montana Historical Society, there have been times of trouble and times of change. Now is the

*Conference (cont. from p. 1)*

were Montana legislator and historian Diane Sands; Salish culture keeper Tony Incashola; Penny Redli, who has served as director of the Carbon County Museum and is currently director of the Museum of the Beartooths; and Butte educator Jim McCarthy. Following the awards presentation, Montana Beer Museum proprietor Steve Lozar entertained attendees with a humorous keynote speech, "When the Beer Ran Dry," a look at the serious impacts of Prohibition in Montana.

Those who couldn't make it to the conference—or had a hard time choosing between concurrent presentations—can listen to recordings of the sessions on the Montana Historical Society's SoundCloud channel, a link to which can be found on the Society's home page.

The 2017 Montana History Conference was sponsored by the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, the Montana History Foundation, and the Patricia Hoksbergen estate. 🌟



MHS director Bruce Whittenberg and Board of Trustees president Thomas Nygard present Salish culture keeper Tony Incashola with the 2017 Heritage Keeper Award.

time, however, to put 2017 behind us and get back to having fun, serving Montana, and doing the great work of the Montana Historical Society. 🌟

## Who Says Education is Boring? Not the Montana Historical Society!

The word “archaeology” brings to mind visions of dusty bones, pottery fragments, and crumbling rocks. Making the subject exciting and relevant to elementary-age students presents no small challenge. The staff at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), however, have a solution: an annual Archaeology Day, where students are immersed in the process of investigation and the thrill of discovery.

Archaeology Day started in 1992 with an educational program on archaeology basics for the general public. In time, it evolved into a day for children to learn from top-notch professionals—many of whom work at the SHPO office—about Montana’s ancient history and why it matters. With the organizational skills of the Outreach and Interpretation Program, the day has proven to be a success for generations of students.

More than five hundred students attended this year’s Archaeology Day on October 5. Where else could



SHPO’s Kate Hampton and John Boughton captivate a crowd of students at the annual Archaeology Day.

they learn how to cook with hot rocks, make soup in the stomach lining of a buffalo, play with sharp arrows, throw an atlatl, or observe a flintknapper make stone points from obsidian? Teachers often tell us that this day is the highlight of the school year. Surprising? Not to MHS!

“Research” is another word that seldom generates enthusiasm among elementary students. In

fact, it tends to overwhelm them . . . until they meet the Research Center and Outreach and Interpretation staff, who know how to make the process enjoyable and exciting. On October 2, nearly two hundred sixth-grade students from C. R. Anderson School visited the Montana Historical Society to learn the ins and outs of basic research. Rotating through various stations, they had an opportunity to see the boot of young Charlie, who was killed on the Bozeman Trail, along with other artifacts and documents from the Society’s collections. While these objects are interesting in their own right, they grow even more fascinating when students discover the stories behind them. Making such connections brings the past to life, and the Research Center staff takes great pride and pleasure in fostering an interest in history that will live on beyond these students’ visit to MHS.

Key to the success of these efforts is the remarkable and passionate staff at the Montana Historical Society, who know how to make education stimulating and memorable for not only youngsters, but also the young at heart. 🌟

## MHS, Ellen Baumler Recognized by Visit Helena Tourism Awards

In the fall of 2017, the Montana Historical Society and interpretive historian Ellen Baumler received the first-ever Visit Helena Tourism Awards, which were created to “honor and celebrate those who create a wonderful visitor experience in Helena, Montana.” Tourism partners throughout the community nominated businesses, organizations, and people that provide exceptional customer service, as well as their favorite local “Made in Montana” products and their recommendations of

must-do activities for visitors to Helena.

The Montana Historical Society and Museum was one of the top three most-recommended attractions by the Helena tourism partners. According to Jennifer Davis, the community outreach director for Visit Helena Montana, “This is a great recognition that our tourism partners know that a visit to Helena is not complete without some time spent at the MHS. We love to recommend the museum

*Baumler (cont. on p. 6)*



Ellen Baumler poses with Anna Strange, the interim executive director of Visit Helena Montana, at the inaugural Visit Helena Tourism Awards.

## “Times of Trouble, Times of Change: Montana and the Great War”

On Thursday, December 14, an excited public crowded Montana's Museum for the opening of *Times of Trouble, Times of Change: Montana and the Great War*, a new exhibit on Montanans' experiences during World War I.

The exhibit recounts the battlefield bravery of servicemen from the Treasure State as well as the sacrifices and contributions made by those on the home front. It also explores the many questions raised by this turbulent period in the nation's history. When the United States entered World War I in April 1917 to make the world “safe for democracy,” a conflict over American ideals erupted at home. What happened when pro-war propaganda swept across the nation? Why did questions of what it meant to be “American” tear communities apart? What ideals were we fighting to protect?

Winnowing this sprawling story into a single museum gallery was a collaborative effort requiring the creativity and expertise of more

than forty individuals from within and outside of MHS. As curator Maggie Ordon noted, “Exhibits are always a team project. We couldn't have done it without the expertise of staff across the Society, including Rich Aarstad, Martha Kohl, Zoe Ann Stoltz, Roberta Jones-Wallace, and Todd Saarinen, among others, as well as loans from families of Montana servicemen and private collectors, such as Hayes Otoupalik, who was appointed Special Military Historical Advisor to the national WWI Centennial Commission.”

Staff brainstormed topics, studied and discussed World War I histories and articles, examined artifacts from the Society's collections, searched databases for photographs and posters, scanned newspapers on microfilm, investigated World War I-era magazines, pored over letters and diaries, wrote and revised pages of text, made models of exhibit components, designed interactive experiences, and consulted with Montana families of Great War veterans.



Exhibit designer Roberta Jones-Wallace designed, carved, and painted three custom figures used to mark the “times of trouble and times of change” explored by the exhibit.



Maggie Ordon, curator of collections, welcomes visitors to the exhibit's December 14 opening reception

The result is an engaging and powerful exhibit that showcases some of the contributions made by everyday Montanans to the war effort and examines how patriotic fervor pulled some communities together while tearing others apart. It offers several interactive experiences for visitors to step into the lives of Montanans during the war, including a life-size trench replica and a “Follow a Montanan” character experience.

According to Ordon, visitors have been struck by the dramatic events that unfolded on Montana's home front, from the sweeping Sedition Act to the devastating influenza epidemic. They've also connected stories about their own families' experiences with some of those shared in the exhibit, such as recollections of German immi-



Visitors on the exhibit's opening night tour a gallery of posters, weapons, tools, and various other artifacts.

grants being banned from speaking their language or going to fight on behalf of their newly adopted country. Visitors have also been impressed with Montana's enlistment and volunteer rates—some of the highest in the country in proportion to the state's population.

The museum exhibit is among several projects recently undertaken by MHS to tell Montana's stories of the Great War. Martha Kohl in the Outreach and Interpre-

tation Program developed an interactive website, *Montana And the Great War*, that presents place-based stories from throughout the state. Interpretive tour guide Bobi Harris co-curated an immersive experience, *Doing Our Bit*, at the Original Governor's Mansion. The annual history conference hosted in Helena September 21–23 focused on "Montana, 1917," and featured an educators workshop on teaching World War I as well as numerous



(above) Museum staff faced no small challenge in taking stock of the vast collection of World War I-related artifacts, photographs, and archival materials that might be used or displayed.

(below) Amanda Streeter Trum, curator of collections, prepares an interactive display.



panels on various aspects of the conflict. On Saturday, November 10, 2018, in observance of the 100th anniversary of the war's end, the Society will host a daylong symposium on the global conflict's impact on life in the Treasure State, featuring presentations from MHS staff and outside scholars.

*Times of Trouble, Times of Change: Montana and the Great War* will remain open to the public through spring of 2019. 🌟



One of the exhibit's most unique items is a quilt made as a fund-raiser for the Cascade County Red Cross during the war. Nearly 1,300 Montanans paid to have their names placed on the quilt, with spaces ranging from 25 cents to \$100 for the large cross in the center.

*Baumler (cont. from p. 3)*

to learn about Montana's history and the amazing collection of C. M. Russell art."

Ellen Baumler was acknowledged for her exceptional customer service. Baumler's nomination was accompanied by this praise: "For the past twenty-five years Ellen Baumler has championed the Queen City's storied past . . . One of the many ways in which she does this is to serve as a step-on guide for tour buses visiting Helena. Over the years she has treated countless busloads of visitors to enlightening, entertaining, and intriguing tours of Helena. Visitors rave about the quality of her tours and the gracious manner in which she delivers them."

Congratulations to Ellen and the entire MHS staff on this well-earned recognition! 🌟

## Kate Hampton Receives Governor's Award

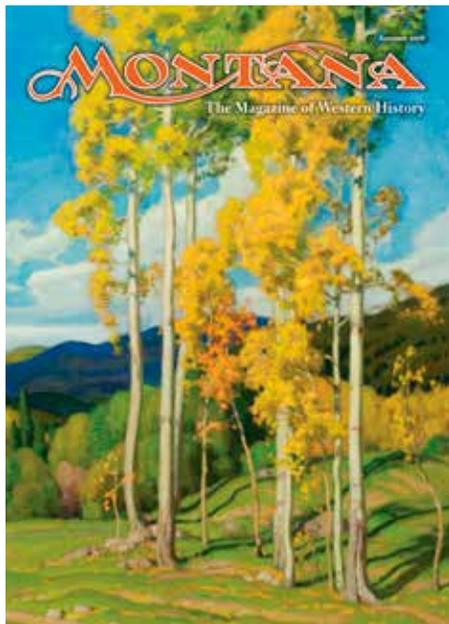
Kate Hampton, the State Historic Preservation Office's community preservation coordinator, was among 252 employees from across Montana state government to receive one of the 2017 Governor's Awards for Excellence in Performance, presented by Department of Administration director John



Lewis. For the past twenty-eight years, the Governor's Awards have annually recognized state employees "who have gone above and beyond to ensure state government operates more efficiently and effectively." Among her most recent accomplishments, Kate spearheaded the creation of the "Montana's African American Heritage Resources" website and the "Identifying African American Heritage Places" project, which documents the history of African Americans statewide and received a two-year, \$27,000 grant from the National Park Service, as well as a \$10,000 grant from the Montana History Foundation. Congratulations, Kate! 🌟

## Article in *Montana The Magazine of Western History* Wins Western History Association's Gibson Award

"Nurse, Mother, Midwife: Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail and the Struggle for Crow Women's Reproductive Autonomy" by Brianna Theobald, published in the Autumn 2016 issue of *Montana The Maga-*



*zine of Western History*, received the Arrell M. Gibson Award at the Western History Association's 2017 conference in San Diego, California. The Gibson award recognizes the "best essay of the year on the history of Native Americans," and nominated works are "judged on their significance to the field, their contributions to knowledge, and their literary quality" by a panel of scholars from the United States and Canada.

Theobald is an assistant professor in the department of history at the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York, and earned her Ph.D. at Arizona State University. She attributes the article's power to the involvement of the Yellowtail women, including Susie's daughter Constance Jackson, in her research process, and notes that the work of Marina Brown Weatherly, an artist, writer, and

longtime family friend of the Yellowtails, served as an inspiration. While honored by the recognition, she views the award "in large part as a testament to the power of Susie Yellowtail's story," which was "in many ways defined by her commitment to speaking truth to power." The Gibson Award carries with it a cash prize of \$500, which Dr. Theobald has donated to Blue Otter, a nonprofit organization founded and run by members of the Yellowtail family to honor and continue the legacy of Thomas and Susie Yellowtail.

Despite *Montana's* long history of prize-winning articles, this marks the first time that the magazine has received the Gibson Award. Editor Molly Holz notes that "competition is stiff" for the prize, given the overwhelming amount of first-rate scholarship in the field of Native American history. 🌟

# #MontanaMadness Is Coming

In March 2018, sixteen objects from the Montana Historical Society's vast collections will compete March Madness-style for the title of Montana's Most Awesome Object.

The competition, modeled on the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament, will pit object against object from the Montana Historical Society's museum, archives, and library collections.

History lovers can help select objects from the online exhibit "Appropriate, Curious, & Rare: Montana History Object by Object" to compete in the Sweet Sixteen. Online polls opened February 2 at our website. (See link, below.) Voting to determine which objects should join the initial Sweet Sixteen will end February 28, 2018.

On March 5, 2018, the Sweet Sixteen bracket will be available to download. Anyone can complete a bracket and submit their prediction

for the winning object. All entries will be entered into a sweepstakes to win one of the following prizes: a one-year family membership to the Montana Historical Society, a signed copy of *Montana's Charlie Russell: Art in the Collection of the Montana Historical Society* by Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney and Kirby Lambert.

Throughout the month of March, objects competing for the title will face off in online polls that will be promoted in an active social media campaign using the hashtag



#MontanaMadness. "The Montana Madness competition is our way of having a little fun while looking to expand the audience for Montana history," says MHS historical specialist Martha Kohl.

Anyone can participate in the selection of Montana's Most Awesome Object by following the voting links on the Montana Madness webpage: <http://mhs.mt.gov/education/MontanaMadness> or through the Montana Historical Society's Twitter and Facebook feeds. ☺

## About Us

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

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## Books, Books, and More Books!

BY RODRIC COSLET, MUSEUM STORE MANAGER

The MHS Museum Store has hundreds of titles available! We pride ourselves on having the best Montana book selection in the state.

Please stop in and browse our shelves if you're in Helena, or take a moment and shop online at [montanahistoricalsociety.org](http://montanahistoricalsociety.org). Our online store is easy to navigate and arranged in sections like the shelves in the physical store.

We list books online in major categories:

Charles M. Russell, Montana History, Women and the West, Fiction and Literature, Cookbooks, Children's Books

And under "Montana History," we have ten sub-categories:

General Montana History, Montana Art and Photography, Native American History, Montana and World War I, Natural History and Guide Books, Lewis and Clark, Military History, Montana Railroads, Yellowstone Park, Glacier Park

You'll find plenty of Montana classics that are still in print, as well as a wide selection of new titles. Our online store is updated daily as new books arrive.

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Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.

# Montana Historical Society

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## Inside

- ▼ 2017 Montana History Conference 1
- ▼ Director's Corner 2
- ▼ Archaeology Day 3
- ▼ New Exhibit at Montana's Museum 5
- ▼ #MontanaMadness Is Coming 7
- ▼ Books, Books, and More Books 7



Members of Helena's Continental Divide Tuba Society delighted attendees at the opening of the Society's newest exhibit—*Times of Trouble, Times of Change: Montana and the Great War*—with spirited renditions of music from the World War I era. Selections included songs both popular on the home front and sung by soldiers serving overseas.

*We are thankful for our members!*