

**MINUTES**  
**MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**July 23, 2015**  
**9:10 a.m., MHS Auditorium**  
**Helena, Montana**

**Montana Historical Society Board of Trustees members present:** Crystal Wong Shors, Bob Brown, Kent Kleinkopf, Tom Nygard, Jude Sheppard, Janene Caywood, Jim Court, George Dennison, Steve Lozar, Ed Jasmin, and Thomas Minckler.

**Excused Board members:** Jim Murry, Shirley Groff, Jim Utterback and Cliff Edwards

**Staff present:** MHS Director Bruce Whittenberg; MHS Development Officer, Rebecca Baumann; MHS PR/Media Manager, Tom Cook; MHS SHPO Manager, Mark Baumler; MHS John Boughton, National Register Coordinator; MHS Publications Assistant Editor, Christy Ekerle; MHS Centralized Services Administrator, Denise King; MHS Outreach & Interpretation Manager, Kirby Lambert; MHS Museum Curator, Jennifer Bottomly-O'looney; MHS Assistant Registrar; MHS Research Center Manager, Molly Kruckenberg

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Crystal Wong Shors called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Joy took roll call.

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Tom Nygard noted the omission of Thomas Minckler's name and asked that the minutes be amended to reflect the addition. **George Dennison moved approval of the April 23, 2015 meeting minutes with the correction. The motion was seconded by Kent Kleinkopf and carried unanimously.**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Tom Nygard gave a brief summary of the meeting. He said that SHPO is moving, Original Governor's Mansion needs renovation and summer programs are busier than ever.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Crystal Wong Shors**

President Shors said she was honored to attend and speak briefly at the volunteer's luncheon. She encouraged Board members to try attend this function in the future because they will be very impressed with the volunteer dedication and the hundreds of hours they donate to the work of the society. She was impressed with the "Forgotten Pioneers" exhibit and said it was a pleasure to work with the staff on this exhibit, and it was one of the "highlights" of her life. She said that we all see the end result but what we don't see is all of the hard work and effort the staff puts into researching, designing and making these exhibits happen. She encouraged the members to visit the exhibit before they leave. She acknowledged the contributions of Bob Morgan, director emeritus, who passed away in June. He will be missed but his presence will always be felt. She acknowledged in absentia, retiring Board members Jim Murry and Shirley Groff and said that their dedication and contributions were

significant. She thanked everyone in the meeting for all that they had done to help her in her position as President. She acknowledged and praised the staff and Bruce for all their help and hard work.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Bruce Whittenberg**

Bruce thanked the Board for the staff picnic and for their extra contributions toward the holiday party. He said that it's been a busy "anniversary" year and there is a lot going on currently. He asked Mark to introduce Lisa Pocha, a new, but also former employee. Lisa explained that she had worked in the 1980's for about 7 years and is happy to be back in the grants manager position.

Bruce covered some recent highlights noting that *Montana's Charlie Russell: Art in the Collection of the Montana Historical Society* has been selling well. In June the Charles M. Russell 21st Century Perspective on the Cowboy Artist Symposium was a great success with about 190 attendees. The event reinforced the Montana Historical Society as a key player in the "Russell world." He thanked Kirby for his vision and for all his and Jennifer's work on the event, as well as other staff.

He explained that we are right in the middle of the "Richest Hills," a program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of their "Landmark" grant program. Teachers from all over the country apply to attend a week-long study of Montana's mining history. Bruce explained that this is an example of something we don't have to do and it shows the passion, dedication and commitment of the staff to pull this together and provide a great learning opportunity for teachers and ultimately their students. He congratulated and thanked the staff for all their hard work and efforts. It's another great event that puts MHS on the national stage.

The Mid-Year appeal went out the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June. We have received 91 gifts - \$15,000. Since April 1 through June 30 we have received 161 gifts - \$31,000 and this includes some larger gifts. For the year January 1 through April 30 we've received \$120,000, mostly in small gifts. He highlighted a few other large gifts and said that overall, fundraising has been a success.

The new book *People Before the Park* was recently released and an official release party will take place on August 27 with the author. He will be visiting tribal leaders in the next 2 months and distributing copies.

The History conference is coming up in Bozeman September 24 – 26 and is primarily taking place at the Hilton Garden Inn.

He said that we have 11 Internships this summer and it speaks to the commitment of MHS and the staff to provide these opportunities. It also provides great support to various programs and a wonderful learning experience for the interns.

Bruce updated the Trustees on events, tours and anniversaries. He said he attended the Mullan Road conference at Fort Benton over Memorial Day weekend with Kirby and Becca and had a great time. The Capitol Camp-out with State Parks was on a weekend in June and was hosted by the Governor for kids and their families. MHS had a flashlight tour for the kids and it was a great success. He gave a brief overview of the Mike Wong memorial and the Sieben family reunion and explained that even though these events were a stretch for the MHS, they were important for us to host. The Original

Governor's Mansion Ice Cream social was a huge success with 250 people attending and the Secret Garden Tour had 400 attendees. There is free admission to the MHS to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. MHS has accommodated a number of private tours recently that take place on Sunday and require staffing – another example of MHS hospitality.

He discussed his visit with the History Foundation Board and spoke of visiting with them again in August. He also gave a presentation to the Greater Montana Foundation Board a month ago. He informed the Board that the books for Fiscal Year 2014 were successfully finalized earlier in the day.

The new exhibit “Our Forgotten Pioneers” opened on May 14 with a full house in attendance. He noted the gallery guide that features the exhibit. He encouraged the Trustees to visit the exhibit. He showed the anniversary poster that unfortunately was not ready in time for the Russell Symposium and offered the posters to the Trustees.

He informed the Trustees about the Lewis and Clark Bridge that crosses the Missouri River at Wolf Point. The state of Montana owns the bridge and MHS is responsible for it. It's currently closed to traffic. An inspection of the bridge is scheduled later in the year. There is money in a fund for this project and he is looking for a responsible party to take over ownership. There is interest in the community for preserving it but not much interest in taking responsibility for it.

He gave a recap on the Legislative session and thanked Denise for providing the lead on some of the work that needed to be done. He said it will be full steam ahead in the next session.

Bruce talked about the importance of Digital Access and Strategies and how hard the staff has been working to implement access. The top project is the digital newspaper project representing 56 historical newspapers. The MHS is moving ahead on the social media front providing better connectivity with the help of Christy Eckerle. The Montana Memory Project has 800,000 pages recorded. SHPO is moving forward with the State Antiquities database. Jennifer has completed uploading the entire Russell collection and it is now available online.

Bruce talked about the Security and Preservation of art, artifacts and archives conservation projects primarily in the Museum and in Research. The Original Governor's mansion requires some serious repairs and there is \$300,000 available for the repairs. SHPO will be moving to the old Board of Health building behind the Capitol this fall.

Bruce asked the Trustees to continue to help raise funds for the Heritage Center and other projects, and to identify potential donors, and host events. He asked them to join the MHS for events and said it has a big impact on staff, volunteers and visitors when Trustees show up for events. He encouraged them to visit all the exhibits.

Steve Lozar had two comments:

One concerned Bruce's meeting with the Kootenai elders after the book signing. He encouraged Bruce to meet with them before the signing.

He also said that he had the opportunity to visit with some of the interns at the picnic and said it was uplifting and exciting to be around these young people and it gave him great hope that the future looks bright.

Tom Cook and Kirby Lambert clarified the consideration given to the elders and assured Steve that had been included in the process.

### **Membership – Rebecca Baumann**

Rebecca reported that Membership continues to grow and many people are increasing their membership levels. A lot of members have also been responding to the donor letter.

### **MHS PR/Media Manager – Tom Cook**

Tom spoke about the loss of Bob Morgan and how everyone came together to help honor him and his legacy. It was a tremendous team effort. He gave an update on his social media efforts and passed out news clippings (handouts made permanent part of record) from the Great Falls Tribune that showcases Montana History happenings daily in the column “This Day in Montana” and bi-monthly in the “Montana Moment.” He continues to get statewide coverage for MHS activities and events.

## **PROGRAM MANAGERS’ REPORTS:**

### **MUSEUM PROGRAM – Motion Action -- Jennifer Bottomly-O’looney**

Jennifer Bottomly-O’looney presented the deaccession request from the Smith Family asking for their father’s sled back to put in the Museum of the Northern Great Plains, Fort Benton, but explained that she had a recent conversation with them and they informed her they were withdrawing their request. They hope to request the sled for an on-loan transfer to the Fort Benton Museum sometime in the future. **Jim Court made a motion to table the deaccession and George Dennison seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.** She explained that the new museum storage projects are being designed to be easily moved to a new facility. She said that they are slowly putting up other collections on line as they can. Amanda and the exhibit team are working on a Stan Lynde exhibit that will open in January in the Lobby. Bruce commented on the Pinterest site and Jennifer said that there are some beautiful photographs on the site already. Amanda Streeter Trum presented two sculptures that Bob Morgan donated, “Watcher of the Plains” by CM Russell and “Buffalo Bust” by Joe De Yong. She showed a painting that Bob had painted as a “thank you” for MHS participating in “Bob Morgan Day.” Jennifer shared that she misses Bob a lot and she feels like a bit of an orphan now that he is gone. Bruce shared a funny anecdote about Bob.

### **RESEARCH CENTER – Motion Action -- Deaccession Request – Molly Kruckenberg**

Molly explained a handout she passed around, the “Core Statistics” of the MHS (handout made permanent part of record) that detailed visitor traffic, reference interactions with the public, the total number of members and subscribers, total number of people involved in outreach activities, public relations activities, website and social media visits and viewers, and the total number of acquisitions from April to June in 2015.

She presented two deaccession lists: one was a regular deaccession list with duplicate items, non-Montana items, outdated or not significant to the collection. The second list involved older state

publications that Research Center has two copies of. **Ed Jasmin moved to approve the deaccession lists and it was seconded by Jude Sheppard. The motion passed unanimously.** Molly explained that the item information is sent out to interested parties who submit a bid. The highest bidder wins the batch and the money goes into an acquisition account. Some discussion followed on the deaccession process.

She gave an overview of the five interns helping out in Research for the summer. The Digital Manager's position is close to being filled. They are rearranging staff to accommodate the new position. She shared a fascinating story about some letters they received about a gentleman who came to Montana in the 1860's and lived in the mountains around Malta.

### **STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE – Mark Baumler**

Mark talked about the imminent move to the old Board of Health building behind the Capitol and the move is planned for early September. Some discussion followed about the former building's residents, the building's space issues and parking availability.

Jessica Bush, the Review and Compliance Officer gave a slide presentation about the BLM Henry Smith Burn and Mapping project located about 30 minutes north of Malta along the Milk River. The project collected data on how burning affected significant archeological sites located above the river. The data is still coming in but the artifacts were not really affected by the burn and it uncovered them enough for photographing the features and mapping with a drone. Some discussion followed about "drive lines", where the stones came from, teepee rings, sites on surrounding property, engaging Indian elders, and building an appreciation for the site's significance.

Mark reiterated that this was a good example of SHPO working with other agencies and sharing information and ideas.

### **OUTREACH AND INTERPRETATION – Kirby Lambert**

Kirby talked about the \$160,000 Landmarks Grant that provides a great learning experience to teachers from all over the country, as well as brings in quite a bit of money to Montana. It also provides the MHS the opportunity to connect and work with other Historical Societies in the state.

Bobi Harris talked about the Original Governor's Mansion and the advent of more interactive and hands-on exhibits specifically for kids. They include a vintage phone set, a Victrola, a quilt box, a knife rest, potato masher, sock darning and an ice picker. These have generated a lot more enthusiasm. The goal is to create more dialogue and less monologue with visitors. Kirby said that Bobi is also involved in a travel trunk that describes life in the OMG.

### **PUBLICATIONS –Molly Holz**

Christy Eckerle, Assistant Editor, filled in for Molly Holz and presented the latest publication, *People before the Park: The Kootenai & Blackfeet Before Glacier National Park*. She highlighted the chapters written by Kootenai and Blackfeet tribes. She also presented the latest edition of the *Montana The Magazine of Western History* and she highlighted the pull-out section on the "Forgotten Pioneers" exhibit. Bruce explained that Christy is chairing the Social Media committee and has provided leadership that has greatly expanded our audiences.

### **Central Services – Denise King**

Denise explained that financial statements will be available at the October meeting for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter and the final quarter of the previous year. On Friday, July 17, Bruce, Denise, Ellen and Jeff attended the Bannack sign dedication for the town and for the first Territorial Governor of Montana, Sidney Edgerton.

She explained that we need to renew our request every four years to purchase federal surplus property and also to be able to sell our surplus property. She asked for a motion to continue to participate. **Kent Kleinkopf made a motion that the Board of Trustees authorize the Montana Historical Society to acquire Federal surplus property from the state of Montana Property Surplus Bureau and the State of Montana, Montana Historical Society has the ability to purchase and donate things to the Surplus Bureau. Tom Nygard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.** She reminded Trustees who reserved the Charlie Russell book to pick them up today. She handed out several new books that are available in the museum store and said the store is doing quite well.

She commented on the strength of the ending year balance and said we are right on target with our budget. All the operating money has been spent and \$500.00 remains in the general fund. She thanked the Program Managers for being timely with their reports.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Government Relations - Bob Brown**

Bob said that with the legislative session over there wasn't much to report. He encouraged the Board to keep the legislature and the upcoming 2017 session in mind and suggested a thank you card to the Governor for all his support.

#### **Donor Relations – Ed Jasmin and George Dennison**

George and Ed said that they were discussing possible approaches to getting more money. Ed said that the Baucus /Sieben donation will carry over to the next session for the Heritage Center.

#### **MHS Nominating Committee – Steve Lozar**

Steve said that the committee recommended Bob Brown for President. **Crystal Shors asked for nominations from the floor. George Dennison made a motion to close the nominations. Ed Jasmin seconded the motion. Bob Brown was elected President of the Board unanimously.** Bob delivered a short acceptance speech. Steve said that the nominating recommended Tom Nygard for Vice-President. Crystal asked for nominations from the floor and there were none. **Tom Nygard was elected Vice-President of the Board unanimously.** Tom delivered a short speech. Steve said the nominating committee recommended Kent Kleinkopf for Secretary/Treasurer. Crystal asked for nominations from the floor and there were none. **Kent was elected Secretary/Treasurer unanimously.** He delivered a short speech.

### **LUNCH BREAK**

The meeting resumed and Bob Brown opened the discussion on Bob Morgan and recounted when he met Bob. Crystal recounted some experiences she had with Bob. Ed Jasmin recalled Bob working at Fliegelman's New York Store painting signs and designing store front windows. He said that Bob has

always supported Helena activities and his fame never went to his head. Steve recounted how he had gotten some art advice from Bob and that it had a huge impact on his own art career. Ed recalled a rumor that later in his life Bob had trouble with faces and he had another artist help him. Kirby clarified that he felt this wasn't true universally but occasionally his good friend Newman Myrah would help him. More discussion followed. Crystal discussed his one-person show. Tom Nygard said he met Bob in 1977 and Bob said that Tom needed to meet Newman Myrah. Tom said that the two of them together made up one huge character. Tom Cook told a funny story about Bob and Newman. More discussion followed about Bob and Newman. Bruce said that he was so glad that Bob got to see the book before he lost his sight. Bruce also said that Bob came into the MHS about once a week to visit. Bruce recalled having to discuss with Bob about the possibility of shutting down the Western Rendezvous of Art and Bob gave him some great advice.

**Bob Brown read the motion to rename the Western Rendezvous of Art fund to the Robert F. Morgan Fund for Art Acquisition and Education (handout made permanent part of record). Tom Nygard made a motion to rename the fund and Kent Kleinkopf seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.** The fund has approximately \$42,000 in it and any future donations made in Bob's memory and not specifically designated for a program or event will be deposited in the fund.

Kent Kleinkopf asked about the Stan Lynde exhibition and advanced publicity. Tom Cook replied that as soon as he has the information in hand he would be getting it out to the media and members.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **NEXT BOARD MEETING – October 15, 2015 - 9:00 a.m. - Executive Committee – 8:00 a.m.**

Steve Lozar thanked retiring Trustee members Shirley Groff and Jim Murry for their time and commitment on the Board and he especially thanked Crystal for her leadership and her ability to see the big picture. He said that she was a terrific President.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Bob adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

***“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***