

# Miracle of America Museum

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

Summer 2021

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

36094 Memory Lane Polson, MT 59860 406-883-6804 [www.miracleofamericamuseum.org](http://www.miracleofamericamuseum.org) • [info@miracleofamericamuseum.org](mailto:info@miracleofamericamuseum.org)

## Executive Board of Directors

Gil Mangels, Chief Executive Officer;

David Bauer, Board Chair;

Helen Mangels, Secretary;

Ryan Gage, Treasurer;

Board members:

Brandy Wallace, Cathleen Wilde,

Art Mangels, Sam Allred,

Carol Edger, Nola Dupuis-Catlett,

*Welcome new board member Julie Weber*

## MOAM Record-Setting Attendance

Visitation seems to be setting new attendance records with 18 countries and all states recorded except Rhode Island. Drive-bys, personal referrals, and social media/ the internet seem to draw the most folks.

## MOAM goes live with YouTube channel

Thanks to a generous donation, Miracle of America Museum is now accessible to people all over the world on our new [YouTube](#) channel! A professional production company filmed the history behind several of our exhibits, and these clips are organized into playlists.

**But now we need YOUR help.** Please go to our YouTube channel and subscribe. Please “like” and comment on the various videos, and forward the link to your family and friends. **Our rating depends on interaction.** It’s easy –just Google us and scroll down to the YouTube button.

We installed WiFi throughout the museum grounds, and these same clips are viewable via QR codes at their corresponding exhibits for a more complete museum experience.



## Bring the family to Live History Days, July 17 and 18!

Live History Days promises to be better than ever, with larger than previous attendance! We added a barber again this year, as well as a glass blower, flint napper, leatherworker, and spinner. Enjoy music, food, rides, school house activities, and the operating sawmill. However, our blacksmith has moved away, and due to out

of town reunions, we are also short of operators of certain machines that we could easily show you how to operate.

If you would enjoy displaying your pioneer exhibits or crafts you are welcome to be part of the fun! Please coordinate with Gil at 883-6804.



## A very sad story . . . So now the bad news – and I can’t blame this on Mrs. O’Leary’s cow.

Weeds! We have been reluctant to use chemical weed spray, and with the prevailing dearth of willing labor these days, it is nearly impossible to find either paid or volunteer help.

On an early Friday morning in June, I thought I would end the spread of dandelions near the barn which were in full seed mode, by burning the weed fluff. As careful as I was, a spark apparently got

into some duff or a spider web and smoldered into a very hot fire when I went in to breakfast.

Long story short, we lost the small agricultural building, and the 1936 barn which was full of nice agriculture items. Most of them I had purchased over the years and there were few donated items. We did not lose any vehicles or tractors. *(Story continued, next page)*



## Thanks to Polson Rural Fire Department

With the help of Polson Rural and other fire departments and me wetting the dairy barn down with a garden hose we kept the fire from spreading to other buildings. Clean up will be slow and tedious. There was no insurance. If we insured everything on the grounds, we wouldn't have money left to turn the lights on. It will be sometime before we make hard decisions. Many smaller items survived and will just need repainted and we need help doing that. For example, our collection of corn shellers, or organizing our collection of about 300 pieces of different barb wire.



The early McCormick original Daisy grain harvesting reaper that I bought and hauled from upstate New York over 30 years ago will be the easiest of the largest machines to restore as just the wood was destroyed and the paint scorched off. Here is a nicely restored one from the Fort Benton Ag Museum that we could get wood patterns from.



## MOAM leverages grants for improvements

Thanks to Greater Polson Community Foundation, Walmart Community Grant, Glacier Bank, Northstar Roofing, Whetzel Concrete Construction, Jim Beyer, and Richwines Burgerville, we were able to install badly needed roofing on the Fiddlers Hall of Fame/1912 Bank, and the military vehicle display lean-to.

A past grant from Greater Polson Community Foundation, Total Boat, and Dupuis Lumber has been applied to the Paul Bunyan preservation project, but the long cold spring and lack of help has delayed that project for a bit.

Repeat museum visitors do notice improvements we make. A donation from Rocky Mountain Twist was applied to improvements in the antique machine shop which is in the same building as the blacksmith equipment.

## A Similar Find Long-ago . . .

**OUT OF THE ASHES** of this disaster I found the brass ball end of a hame. These were used in pairs around the horse collars and were attached to the heavy leather

tugs attached to the load or machinery.

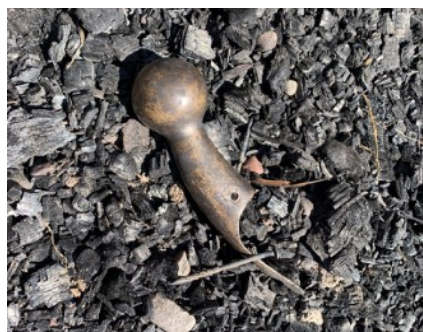
How ironic, as it brought back memories from over 50 years ago.

As a youth, I had saved and stored many farm antiques including the wagon and harness from my grandfather's work horses in his barn along Minesinger Road.

After my grandparents passed, my dad rented the house out. In the late 1960s, the tenant's kids were playing with a chemistry set in the barn

and accidentally set it on fire. As I sifted through those ashes, the only thing recognizable was a brass hame end. Many years later, I would use it as the end of a cane when my late brother needed one.

I now have it ready for me when and if I ever need it.



## Gil Gives Gun Facts

Don't know if anyone caught my typo in last newsletter listed the unique set gun as 1964, when it is in fact from 1864.

Speaking of guns, Elmer Johnston, master gunsmith from Washington – the donor of the majority pre-cartridge guns in our antique gun smithing shop – paid us a visit. He brought three more guns, and restored the wood on my rare Lamsom and Ball carbine. It has 1863 and 1864 patent dates on it.



The reason many things have more than one patent date is that the inventor thought of an improvement in his design and had to protect that as well. This was rather unique in that the magazine tube was under the barrel protected by the forend wood instead of in the buttstock like the Spencer and Evans.

## Museum Friends Who've Passed

Many times, death releases friends from pain and suffering. Among those leaving us this last quarter were **Tom Drebes**, who provided one of our stationary engines; **Gail Lewis**, who donated items used in the Standard station his father had built at Rollins; **Vern Frisk**, who hauled our A7 attack bomber from Spokane for just fuel cost; and **Keith McCurdy**, who did the legal work for us to acquire the vintage IHC combine from the Hanelt estate.

A memorial donation for Keith was received from Suzy Haack Aders, as well as a donation for our barn fund.

## A Tribute to Army Veteran Bob

*At the time I'm writing this, my dear friend and former MP Army buddy has passed from pneumonia in Ronan*

*Bob and Elke moved to the St. Ignatius area about 15 years ago and we became reacquainted during his visit to the museum when he recognized the markings I had placed on my MP jeep like we had in Germany.*

*We hadn't kept in contact since November of 1963 when I came home to Polson, and here it was 2007.*

*While we must recognize the Lord's will in all things, our thoughts are with Elke. - Gil*

# MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

By far our cleanest donation was a new washer and dryer combo for our laundry facilities with a \$900 retail value from **Sam Allred of Appliance Care**, who also delivered, installed, and disposed of the old units.

**JaNeil Devlin Grace** brought several Polson High school yearbooks dating back to 1950. I took typing class from her father who taught here for many years. I could never get very fast, but my fingers worked a lot better then than now. A lot of time is spent going back over what I have written. Seems like my fingers like to hit two keys at once. I am so grateful to **Carmine Mowbray** for formatting and proofing for us. While

still on the subject of typing, **Bill Jones** of Spokane brought several (now vintage) electric IBM typewriters.

**Suzanne Brown Fish** donated her mother's, Alberta G. Brown's, 1960s Campfire Girls leaders manual which she used for the benefit of some Polson girls.

**Rick Wallace** donated a nice original and clean antique boat motor with a later stand. We haven't researched the actual date yet, but the last patent date is 1916. If you didn't have the spark (distributor advance) set just right, on starting it could kick back (backfire!) and possibly break your wrist or blacken some finger nails. While we accept something this complete and collectible in need of

restoration, it is nice to receive something like this ready for display.

**Ray Burton** brought in a nice box of assorted vintage tool including monkey and pipe wrenches. *What's the difference, you ask?* Well, the monkey wrench has adjustable smooth jaws similar to a Crescent wrench. On a pipe wrench, both jaws have serrations, kind of like teeth, and the adjustable jaw



*Continued, next page*

## Community Outpouring of Goodwill

This catastrophe has been met with helpful folks, prayers, phone calls, and monetary donations. Scott Heisel of the Lake County Leader did a nice report on us. KERR and KGEZ radio stations and KPAX TV did current reports to let people know we were still open.

For all this, we are grateful. I have a dilemma when it comes to thanking folks for monetary donations. Some probably would want recognition, some don't, some can afford it, and for some it is like the widow's mite. Some don't want a thank you, and some probably wonder why I wait to make a note on the next newsletter. I wish I had a crystal ball. At this point I will probably just list names of donors.

A good friend from Oregon has discovered a novel idea to double his donation. *A company he has stock in will match his donation to us, because of our non-profit status.*

*Will you consider this way to double the impact of your gift?*



Unlike the hound in this 1945 postcard, we are financially healthy with two areas of continuing need. One, of course is the Endowment fund.

The other is the recent loss of the barn. We are not rushing into replacement at this time, and we will welcome input of ideas, and exhibit patience.

## Our financial friends are so important to us

I'm always fearful of missing someone, but among others making generous donations for our barn fund or an unspecified donation, which will be useful in trying to restore some of the damaged items, are:

**Donna Rolfson Trust/John Mercer**

**Mark Bennett**

**Mary Jane and Mike Siegford**

**Jimmy Jones**

**Ronan Chiropractic**

**Nick Poncelet**

Family \$100 memberships include the following:

**Grace Larson**

**John Bonner**

**Butch Stewart family**

**Irv and Mimi Milheim**

**Rick Van Voast family**

**Clay Smith**

Generous barn fund donation was received from

**Hazel Rudolph and Larry Janesky and**

**Dan and Sally Feil**

**Michael R. Wood** added \$200 to our endowment fund and with accumulated gift shop sales, tips, etc. we were able to enlarge the endowment fund another \$10,000!

The money is invested in the Montana Community Foundation, and the interest from that is used to hire staff when Gil doesn't show up for breakfast. Please remember us in your wills, trusts, donations, stock plans, and gifts, and we'll preserve the museum to benefit future generations.

**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

has movement so it can grip a pipe more securely. Some of Ray's gift will join our "wrenching experience" exhibit.

Former classmate of "60" (dang that makes me old) **Carl Skabronski** usually brings some goodies when he visits. I like the fact that he researches thing and even shows a picture of the item from the internet. This unique saw, with its scabbard will go in our forest service display.



How many remember "Sen-Sens", the licorice flavored breath mint? While I guess they still manufactured a variation of them into this century, Sen-Sens were developed in 1890. Carl donated this package which included its display box circa 1901. It will go in our General Store. The Magic Cream Remover Siphon – still in its original box from 1935 – will go in the Dairy Building, miraculously saved from the barn fire.



**Bill Cross** mailed me a mint condition never worn WWII leather aviator's helmet that he had found at a garage sale.

As baby boomers have to clean out their now deceased parents' home, occasionally rare items like this surface. We are grateful for folks who check with us before making a dump run. The priceless items that some folks throw away would make you cry.

Sorry I'm not listing every one of our donors this time, but I wanted to give credit to some new ones, or those who hadn't been mentioned for some time – *Gil*



## MOAM benefits from Amazon Smile

People smile at us and make a contribution each time they use "Amazon Smile" while purchasing items on the internet. There is no additional cost to the shopper. We are registered as **Miracle of America Story, Inc.** among the nonprofits, even though we do business under our full name.

Folks who remembered to select us were responsible for Amazon Smile donating around \$225 to the Museum last year.

We encourage people to shop at home, but when you shop using Amazon Smile and select Miracle of America Story, Inc. as your charity we get a small contribution at no extra cost to you!



## We're open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. all year long!

The Museum Gift shop can help with your gift giving needs with meaningful and reasonably-priced books, collectibles and more.



Shopping for that person who already "has it all?" Consider a Museum membership! No wrapping or size to worry about! Help MOAM preserve history for posterity. You can choose any amount and it is entirely tax deductible to the extent of the law. Your contribution goes into the MOAM Endowment, or your choice of projects, in the recipient's name.



**You are cordially invited to bring your family and friends to Live History days, July 17 and 18.**

**Exhibitors from 10am to 4 pm both days!**

**Join us for a safe, outdoor opportunity**

**to see living history,**

**where kids of all ages**

**have fun!**

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