



Volume XXXVIII Issue 2

Spring 2007

# The W. H. Over Museum of Natural and Cultural History

*Friends of the W. H. Over Museum*

## Activities at the W. H. Over Museum

A grant from a Vermillion area family has allowed Marion Kryger (seen at the right) to produce 24 art display easels, which will allow the Friends of the W. H. Over Museum (FOM) to display signs, exhibit titles, art prints, paintings, and other graphic renderings in the museum. Mr. Kryger, a museum volunteer, was assisted in his efforts by the FOM Board Secretary who produced trays for the easels and stained the solid oak pieces. The volunteers are also producing smaller tabletop easels, which will be sold in the museum's Gift Shop to raise funds for exhibit projects and displays.

Con't. Activities p. 3



## Grant and Visiting Curator at the W. H. Over Museum

The Friends of the W.H. Over Museum (FOM) have received a grant from a Vermillion area family to remodel and resurface the display case used to exhibit rocks and minerals. The grant will allow museum volunteers to repair, remodel, and overlay the existing case with oak plywood and trim to match other display cases and fixtures utilized throughout the museum. The display case has been used to display exceptional rock and mineral specimens since the museum was located in Slagle Hall and will continue its service in the museum's North Gallery. This grant represents another significant contribution to the museum's efforts to continue Dr. William Henry Over's legacy of preserving the natural and cultural heritage of South Dakota and the surrounding area and passing it on to present and future generations.

The W. H. Over Museum and the Clay County Historical Society are currently utilizing Sletwold Hall to display wedding gowns from their collections. The dresses will remain on display in Sletwold Hall for several weeks. Kerstin Schneider (Curator of the Museum Schloss in Romhild, Germany) helped W. H. Over Museum volunteers set up the exhibit. Frau Schneider has been in South Dakota visiting her daughter and has worked as a volunteer on several projects for the Exhibits Committee during her stay.

The Friends of the W.H. Over Museum is a non-profit, volunteer organization, which was established in 1966 to provide financial and volunteer support for museum exhibits and activities. Today, The Friends organization is totally responsible for operating, maintaining, and financing the W. H. Over Museum, its collections, and its activities and programs.

## LAST RITES FOR DR. FARBER

The W.H. Over Museum has lost a devoted friend. Dr. William O. "Doc" Farber died on March 24, 2007. Funeral services were held at the United Church of Christ, Congregational in Vermillion. Pastor Steve Miller served as celebrant for the services. The Over Museum has known few benefactors and supporters who could surpass Dr. Farber. The Friends of the Museum extend their condolences to his family.



Pictures of Kerstin Schneider, a recent volunteer at the W. H. Over Museum Curator of the Museum Schloss located in Romhild, Germany

## FOM PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

What an exciting year we have had! Just about a year ago, we had just finished installing and welcoming the American Rivers exhibit which stayed at the Over until last December. It was exhibit out and Christmas Festival in and both the exhibit and the Festival were great fun and well attended. Our annual meeting included a tour of the Museum, which was staged just for members at our meeting, and we were excited to display the new exhibits and plans in the making. Our year ended with the wonderful exhibit of local artist Charles Weidemann and his students. When those pictures were still up, the local PTA exhibited a wonderful exhibit of art and writing projects by our local Vermillion students. Right now, we have an exhibit showing the history of the School of Medicine and some wedding dresses from the collection as well as from local citizens.

This time of the year is always busy with school groups coming to the Museum for tours. The first graders from Austin School always spend a day each spring and have a good time being led by their teachers. We have many new things to show the children, so we are anxious for them to start their visits. We also had privilege of having a guest curator from Germany work with us for a few weeks this past winter.

One of the best things to happen is that Ken Wurtz and Gene Iverson, both board members, have been hard at work in the shop area of the Museum and have completed 12 free-standing cases for exhibits. Thanks to a happy accident, they have devised a method to hold brochures or informational sheets for each exhibit. Ken Wurtz also designed a beautiful oak trim for each new case. The tops are beautiful clear acrylic and the bases are equipped with wheels to make for ease of locating them throughout the Museum. The next project will be the refurbishing of an old wood and glass case, which will house a collection of bald eagles. Our workshop hasn't been so busy or productive since the days that Alex devoted so many hours for the betterment of the Museum. In addition, one of our newest volunteers, Marion Kryger, has designed a sign for us to place on the lawn to declare that we are "OPEN" and has also built many, many easels for display purposes and also designed small easels for sale in the Gift Shop at the bargain price of \$5.00. (Personally, I am hoping that they won't sell so they can be utilized to identify our guest artists at Christmas Festival time!)

Very soon, we will be displaying a new sign, which will identify the Museum so people won't tell us they don't know where we are. Look for a sign on the corner of Taylor and Ratigen Strasse, which will identify us as the W. H. Over Museum. The new sign will match those on the rest of the campus. Also, the Gift Shop has a fresh new look and the staff is working hard to find new ways to display merchandise and is also looking for new items to feature this summer. Two young men from Vermillion will be working in the Discovery Room to make it even more inviting to the young children who visit us. This will be part of the Eagle Scout requirement and they will also be working on projects in the garden and yard to keep us looking attractive. The Kid's Club and their sponsors are working hard to create some projects to beautify our grounds.

There have been many subtle improvements made this past year including safety chains on the dock area, cleaning the workshop and organizing the curator's space. A workstation has been created in the library to enable our student volunteers to work on their projects. One not so subtle change has been to bring our coyote down to child's eye level – we saw how successful this was when one little guy proceeded to howl like a coyote as soon as he saw the display. He (the coyote, not the child) sits in one of those new cases and is just about the first exhibit one sees when entering the Museum.

I would like to invite all of you to come to see what we are doing; we enjoy visiting with our guests and serving up a cup of coffee while we do so. We are also encouraging anyone who would like to display a personal collection to do so – we have done two so far and both were very popular and enjoyed by those who visited us.

As usual, I would be remiss if I neglected to once again thank all who volunteered in any way here at the Over – our volunteers are the life's blood of this fine old institution and we appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you, everyone, for your continued support and, please, come on over to the Over!

With warm regards,

*Maxine Johnson*

### **Board of Directors**

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**Activities from p. 1**

Students from the USD Native American Studies class taught by Dr. Mary Jones in the USD School of Education have designed, produced, and displayed class projects at various locations on the USD campus. The two interactive projects on display in the W.H. Over Museum this semester provide cultural learning activities and museum-oriented lessons for middle and high school students relative to 1) the history of the Sioux peoples prior to 1850 and 2) a basic introduction to bead and quill work used to decorate objects common in the Lakota culture. Both exhibits will remain on display in the museum for the remainder of the semester and will, therefore, be available to area students from over 40 schools as they tour the museum this Spring.

Other activities at the W.H. Over Museum include: 1) a 50% OFF sale table in the Museum's Gift Shop, 2) a Guest Collection featuring tin storage containers, 3) the USD School of Medicine's Centennial Photo Exhibit, 4) the Wedding Dress exhibit, 5) April 21 – "Spreading Seeds", an intergenerational activity with a seed-planting activity, and 6) a Guest firefighter's collection. Vermillion High School students preparing projects for the South Dakota History Day state contest and individuals preparing for Vermillion's 150<sup>th</sup> Centennial have been busy exploring the museum's photograph collections this month. Numerous heretofore-unpublished photos have been found for use in centennial publications. Work continues on display cases and exhibit projects as the new plan for the museum's North Gallery is implemented. That plan provides for displaying topical histories of the City of Vermillion and USD as well as guest collections from area residents and historical exhibits pertaining to area organizations (businesses, churches, schools, rural schools, clubs, civic organizations, service organizations, governmental departments, etc.).

***PUSH FOR NEW MEMBERS***

The Membership Committee, under the chairmanship of Virginia Johnson, is organizing a membership drive. Membership is the lifeline of any institution. The W.H. Over Museum is no different. Except that our organization is entirely volunteer, not only in workers but also in funding. We receive no state or university funds.

The Museum is fortunate in having a group of dedicated friends and volunteers. There are ongoing improvements in the facilities and exhibits that need constant addressing.

The Committee is asking the membership for its assistance in providing it with names of persons (friends, neighbors, relatives, etc.) who should be members but are not. If you know of potential members please forward their names to the Museum office. Include name, address, and phone number; the committee will screen the list and remove names of those already on our rolls. You need not do this checking yourself. Personal contacts with prospective members are encouraged, which could include an invitation to them to visit the Museum. The Committee earnestly seeks your help. (Membership Committee; Virginia Johnson, Chair, Joe Reedy and Cleo Erickson.)

**Weather Foils Help with Photo Collection**

In February the weather foiled the Friends attempt at offering a History Detective's activity at the Over. Larry Bradley and Bob Noiva (FOM Board members) scanned several local area photographs to be used at the event. The Museum needs your assistance in supplying additional information about who is in, what the event was, where it was taken and when. The information will be added the collections database to ease its searching capabilities.

This activity will be rescheduled during the summertime. Look for the announcement.



<b>Guest Collection Case - Museum Foyer</b>	
<b>May</b>	
1 - 31	Miniature Houses - Guest Collection
	Firefighter Display - Guest Collection

## FACILITIES AND EXHIBITS COMMITTEES SUBMIT REPORTS

During the past year the Facilities Committee and the Exhibits Committee have been assessing those aspects of the W.H. Over Museum which fall under their jurisdiction. What follows is a summary of their findings. Members of the Facilities Committee are Allen Johnson, chair, Ken Wurtz, Gene Iverson, Ray Decker, Bob Freese, and Maxine Johnson (ex officio). Members of the Exhibits Committee are the same except that Ken Wurtz serves as chair. Marion Kryger also assists on a project-by-project basis. The Board of Directors is grateful to these people for their service.

Inspection of the fire extinguishers revealed that while some of them were found to meet current codes, nine of them did not. These were replaced and now all sixteen bear appropriate inspection tags. Thanks to the efforts of Joe Reedy the replacement extinguishers were purchased at a considerable saving. Fire safety procedures have been written for fire extinguishers, fire alarm boxes and the fire zone locator panel and periodic inspection will continue to be conducted.

The number code of the burglar alarm needs to be changed. The manual containing directions for changing the code was found to be missing. However, Johnson Controls, who installed the alarm, has agreed to find an appropriate manual. The videotape security system needs to be replaced with a digital system and additional cameras are needed in certain areas. Many of the trees and shrubs on the grounds were trimmed last summer and fall. A few need attention this Spring, as does the brickwork at the entrance. Certain lawn tools and materials, which are currently stored in the shop area, need to be removed and placed in more appropriate storage area outside the building. The Committee would like to see the Heritage Garden renovated. Local organizations will be approached for assistance.

The concern about lighting for the front walkways was also addressed. An electrician has been consulted, funds are being raised, and it is hoped that the project can be completed this summer. The Committee also recognizes that interior lighting needs to be reevaluated and several specific recommendations to this problem have been made.

The carpet in certain hallways needs to be replaced. Carpet is on hand to complete that project. The carpet in the Discovery room should be replaced with tile for easier cleaning.

The Facilities Committee wishes to assure members that although their report might give the impression that the building is in need of attention, it is in good shape and improving with each new project. Replacement of the heating, cooling, and temperature control systems last year has resulted in a significant difference in the buildings environment and a significant reduction in utility bills. Thanks to the many volunteers who have given so freely of their time and talents to help get the museum building and grounds in order. A full copy of the report is in the Museum office and can be viewed by anyone interested.



The members of the Exhibits committee have also been busy. Most recently, they have been constructing bases for the Plexiglas cubes (donated by the National Music Museum). Ken Wurtz and Gene Iverson (see above) have been doing the lion's share of the work. You are invited to the museum to admire their handiwork.

The Rock display case has also been undergoing a facelift thanks to a generous financial donation by a local family. The five display cabinets, which present the Archeological and Anthropological timelines and periods, have been moved together to form one long exhibit, which will be used to introduce the cultural history exhibits. The sod house model has found a new home in a portable, secured display case and is now located near the Midland Claim Shanty in the west Gallery.

The hawks and sitting eagles also have a more secure location. They are now in a locked display case on the south wall of the North Gallery rather than being displayed in the open. The Lewis and Clark display materials, formerly housed on the south wall of the North Gallery have been moved across the hall and behind the Lewis and Clark rifle, documents and artifact display case.

The beaded vests and artifacts display can now be seen at the north end of the Spirit Mound mural. You can also view, in the same area, the drums, dancing bells and baskets, which were formerly on the south wall of the North Gallery.

The framed artworks in the Gentry collection were moved from the north wall of the North Gallery and re-hung on the west wall between the display cases, which hold pieces from the Clark collection. FOM volunteers on the Exhibits committee are renovating one of the oak and glass display cases, which were a part of Dr. Over's museum when it was in Slagle Hall. This case, when completed, will house the eagles and join the other oak display case which houses the Endangered Species specimens at the entrance to the bird and water fowl exhibit in the North Gallery.

The committee is now working on a "Vermillion History Exhibit". The centerpiece of this exhibit will be the bell, which rang all night to warn residents of the rising floodwaters in 1881. The bell exhibit has been moved to the North Gallery and will serve as the foundation for exhibits addressing Vermillion's history. The exhibit will change from time to time. The first display will feature photos from the museums collection

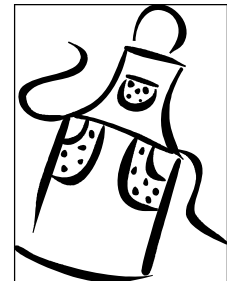
Con't: Exhibits p. 7

## Coming Events at the Over

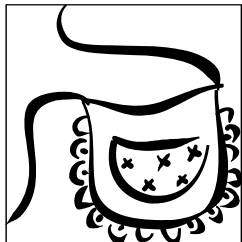
### The Ultimate Cover-Up: Exhibit and Tea 'n Talk

During May (13th - 31st) the Over Museum will be presenting an exhibit on twentieth century aprons. Aprons provide direct ties to our personal and shared histories; they are a social fabric that hold both a historical and a symbolic meaning for us. We like to touch them as well as look at them; they are manifestations of resourcefulness, artifacts of important work and examples of creativity. You may have memories of purchasing flour or sugar in cloth bags, of using these same bags to make quilts, aprons, and other clothing. You may remember your mother or grandmother embroidering or cross stitching an apron. Remember that special cake you made in 19?????

Joyce Cheney, a collector and author of several books on aprons, often states that the power of aprons lies in how they make us feel and what they help us to remember. For many aprons are nostalgic. They represent being loved and loving others, security, stability, simpler times and very different times. FOM members Barb Gauger, Emogene Paulson and Virginia Johnson have rummaged in their cedar chests, closets and even suitcases to locate treasures to share with you. The core of this exhibit is from with Donna Koerting's collection of half aprons. Mrs Koerting is from Norfolk, NE and will be at the May 19th Tea 'n Talk to informally share with us how her collection came to be.



Come help celebrate our mothers, grandmothers and our own pasts as we explore the history of aprons, their infinite variety, the craftsmanship of homemade aprons in addition to home, motherhood and housewifery. Tea 'n Talk starts at 2pm in Sletwold Hall. There will be a slight charge (\$5 per person) to defray the costs of the tea (FOM members at a reduced price). Reserve a spot by May 17th (605/677-5228); some tickets will be available at the door.



If you can't make the Tea, stop by to view this unique and interesting exhibit of aprons from the Midwest dating from the late 1800s to the present will bring back memories.

### Newsletter Now Available via E-mail or at Website

Members have an option of receiving the newsletter via e-mail instead of a paper copy. The membership renewal form contains a check-off box whereby this option can be requested. Simply provide us with your e-mail address. If you would like this option before the December's membership renewal period simply email the Museum office, attention Newsletter and let us know your email address.

Some of you will be receiving our test newsletter this month in addition to the printed copy. You will need to have the PDF reader for Adobe Acrobat 7.0 to view the newsletter.

We also plan to publish the newsletter on the Museum's website < <http://usd.edu/whover> > in the near future.

Wendell Gauger, Editor

### Members Quilt Show and Luncheon

In June the Over Museum will exhibit quilts in Sletwold Hall from FOM members. On Saturday, June 9, there will be a luncheon and quilt lecture. The speaker is JoAnn Belling, award winning quilter and photographer from Des Moines, IA. Concepts of color and composition used in her photographic art are applied to the designing of quilts, borders and quilt backart. All phases of quilting are enjoyed by JoAnn but her greatest interests are in the color and design area. To learn more about JoAnn and her art go to <http://www.joannbelling.com>.

The luncheon will take place at noon. The fee for this event has not been set as yet. Contact person for this event is Maxine Johnson. You will learn more about this event later in May.

### ***Spreading the Seeds - an Intergenerational Activity***

On Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> from 2-4 PM, the Friends of the W. H. Over Museum presented "Spreading the Seeds". This was an intergenerational activity where all had a chance to handle and learn about historic tools used by our ancestors. Starting at the homestead claim shanty and sod hut exhibit Nancy Hodgson showed the living conditions for the early settlers in the Dakotas. Then Marion Kryger introduced the tools needed to work the land and build a successful home and farm.



First we tried the plows and cultivators beside the shanty and then moved into the tool exhibits in "A Time To Remember" room. Barb Gauger helped Marion show and explain many of the farm tools on display. Both parents and children had a good time and asked lots of questions.

After a break for cookies and lemonade, we moved into the Discovery Room to plant some native flower seeds (Purple Coneflower and Black-eyed Susan) in peat pots to later be used in the gardens around the Museum. Also each child planted cups of seeds to make a butterfly garden at home (zinnias, marigolds and parsley). About twenty parents and children enjoyed the shared activity.



## **Sale Sale Sale**

W.H.OVER MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

Come to our 50% and 75% off sale tables at the W.H.Over Gift Shop

Lots of bargains: 10 cent greeting cards, Books, Feathers, Oscar Howe cards, all Turquoise/Silver jewelry and select beads that sell for \$1.00 a bag containing values of \$13.50 to 25.00 each

Something new added each week.

GIFT SHOP HOURS:

1 - 4 pm daily and weekends

## **Coming Kids Club Activity!!**

For all Kids Club Members, there will be a Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) event at the W. H. Over on Saturday, May 5, 2007 from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. You will discover a crime scene, help with and learn about fingerprint analysis, blood detection and DNA fingerprinting. Refreshments will be served. You must be a Kids Club member to participate. To sign up for the CSI event, call the museum at 605-677-5228. You may join Kids Club for \$10/year which includes your tee shirt. There is no additional cost for the CSI activity. **COME JOIN THE FUN!!**

## Verzani Family Reunion Visits W H Over to See Baby Shoe

On Saturday, April 21, 2007, fifty-eight members of the Verzani Family visited the W.H. Over Museum to see the shoe that had been worn by a great uncle who had died in infancy.

In 1853, two Verzani brothers, Andrew and Francesco (Frank) came to America from Italy. They separately worked their way west, met and married wives, eventually coming up the Missouri River by steamboat to Sioux City, Iowa and settled in Nebraska by 1858. By 1860, Andrew had moved across the river to Elk Point and Frank to Burbank in Dakota Territory. When a large tract of land in southeastern Dakota was opened for homesteading as of January 1, 1868, Frank came to Vermillion to file his claim. Believing that New Year's Day was a legal day, he waited till just after midnight to awaken the registrar and file. However, six other men had not waited and thus his claim was listed as Number 7. None of the first six men stayed through the five years required to secure a patent from the United States, thus Frank Verzani held Patent No. 1 signed by President U. S. Grant and dated July 22, 1872. .



Frances Verzani Finn holding her Uncle Peter's shoe in 1990

Peter Verzani was born June 16, 1874, the first child to be born on the Verzani homestead in South Dakota. Thus he was the first child born on the first homestead in South Dakota (not the first European child born in South Dakota – numerous children, including siblings and cousins of his had been born to Europeans before this.) Peter lived only until September 1875, just long enough to start wearing the little shoe now in the museum.

### Exhibits from p. 4

(Morrow and W.H. Over collections) of the 1881 flood. The next exhibit will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Vermillion. If you have materials, which could be used in these or other displays, please contact the Exhibits Committee through the Museum's office.

The committee is now working on a "Vermillion History Exhibit". The centerpiece of this exhibit will be the bell, which rang all night to warn residents of the rising floodwaters in 1881. The bell exhibit has been moved to the North Gallery and will serve as the foundation for exhibits addressing Vermillion's history. The exhibit will change from time to time. The first display will feature photos from the museum's collection (Morrow and W.H. Over collections) of the 1881 flood. The next exhibit will commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Vermillion. If you have materials, which could be used in these or other displays, please contact the Exhibits Committee through the Museum's office.

The Committee is anxious to receive ideas and suggestions from members and others. A copy of the complete report of the committee can be viewed by contacting the museum office. The committee would like to express its appreciation to all those who have assisted their efforts.

### Welcome New Members

Patron

Jerry Simmons

Individual

Daniel Brosz

Senior Citizen

John Spurlock



Friends of the W. H. Over Museum Newsletter  
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## Calendar of Events & Exhibits at the Over

*Monday - Saturday 10 am - 4 pm; Sunday 1pm - 4pm*

### *Sletwold Hall Exhibits and Activities*

#### **April**

- 23 - May 12 Iris Teng - USD BFA Graphic Arts Show  
27 Iris Teng - USD BFA reception @ 7- 9pm

#### **May**

- 13 – 31 The Ultimate Cover-up: Twentieth Century Aprons  
19 Mother's Day Tea with "The Ultimate Cover-up" presentation @ 2 – 4pm (Fee event)

#### **June**

- 4 - 30 FOM Members Quilt Show  
9 Quilt Lecture by JoAnn Belling and Luncheon @ 12 - 3 (Fee event)

#### **July**

- 3 – 14 Frogman Show - Art by Lloyd Menard

W. H. Over Museum  
E-Mail: [whover@usd.edu](mailto:whover@usd.edu)

Phone: 605/ 677-5228  
Web site: <http://www.usd.edu/whover>

Gift Shop 605/ 677-5277  
Gift Shop Hours: 1 - 4 M - F, Sat - Sun.