



Volume XXXVIII Issue 3

Summer 2007

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

*Friends of the W. H. Over Museum*

## ***PBS Series "The War" to Preview at the Over***

South Dakota Public Television has chosen the Over Museum as one of the sites for a 30-minute screening preview of their newest Ken Burns' series THE WAR. The screening will take place in Sletwold Hall at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 12th, and will last for 30 minutes. Prior to the screening, local World War II veterans will share their experiences from that time. Wives and other citizens are invited to recount their own stories. Prescreening activities will begin at 5:00 pm. All interested people are invited and asked to contribute their own recollections. Light refreshments will be served.

This series consists of 7 episodes which will run from Sunday, September 23rd through October 1st from 7:00 - 9:00 (check your local TV schedule). This series will honor and celebrate the sacrifices and endurance and bravery of the generation who lived through those years of World War II. Part of THE WAR has been an initiative which SDPB has named Homefront South Dakota. The goal of this initiative is to collect the memories of those who lived through those years.

The Friends of the W. H. Over Museum are very pleased and proud to have been chosen as one of the screening sites for this important series. We are very honored that several Vermillion veterans have already agreed to participate in the interviews prior to the screening. This will be a unique opportunity to see the people who made history and thus became part of our nation's history.

## **Museum Website Revision Continues**

Over the past several months, museum volunteers have been working with Steve Heer to completely redesign and update the museum's web page. The new design and format provide more information and easier site navigation for interested parties and surfers. Changes and additions will include: 1) copies of the current and past FOM Newsletters, 2) on-line membership information and forms, and 3) major revisions of existing pages and features. A pictorial Pre-Tour Guide for schools and organizations has been prepared and will be distributed on CD until a means can be found to download the pictures for dial-up connections. Check out what has already been done and watch for the new changes as they emerge in the very near future.

## **Boy Scouts Renovate Discovery Room**



David Rosaker and Wyatt Hunter-Johnson are currently working on their Eagle Scout projects by renovating the Discovery Room at the W. H. Over Museum. David's project involves improving the physical condition of the room and its facilities. Therefore, his attention is on removing fixtures from the walls, filling holes and scratches in the plaster-board, sanding patches, taping door and window frames, repainting the walls, and updating facilities. Wyatt's project is preparing a "new look" for the displays, exhibits, and activity areas in the Discovery Room. His attention is on the function and use of space and resources as well as on the general appearance and atmosphere in the Discovery Room. Both scouts are showing that they are "prepared," willing, and able to provide a service to the museum, their community, and to the generations of youths who wish to "explore" the wonders of South Dakota's natural and cultural heritage. The Friends of the W. H. Over Museum (FOM) appreciate and applaud their selfless and energetic efforts.

## FOM PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

This has got to be one of the hottest and driest summers that I can remember even for South Dakota. Our lawn at the Museum is parched, but with water the precious commodity it is, we will water the potted flowers, but will just have to pretend we are pioneers and let the grass go. At least it saves our hardworking volunteers from getting their mowers to the Museum. We should note that these loyal volunteers furnish not only the machinery to keep us trimmed and mowed, but also show up with full gas tanks.

Our summer has been non-stop busy at the Over. We have had some unique programs and lots and lots of visitors. The prize for distance traveled belongs to an Italian couple. They were impressed by our collection and the gentleman told me that he had never seen such fine examples of Native American artifacts. One of the programs that was especially dear to me was the quilt lecture presented by JoAnn Belling of Des Moines, Iowa. JoAnn is a former student of mine from my other life as a high school English teacher. The month of June saw a beautiful display of quilts which were loaned by local quilters and my sister-in-law from Minnesota. JoAnn's presentation and quilt samples were wonderful to behold. Earlier we had a spectacular display of aprons in Sletwold Hall. The Frogman print exhibit has just been finished and the next set of pictures to be on the walls will be from the Fallon collection.

The Kids' Club enjoyed a day working as CSI agents and writing a newspaper and one day in July we had a busy group of Brownie Girl Scouts taking part in a day camp. They had such a good time and each one left with several craft projects and their faces painted with flowers and butterflies. After that group left, the older girls spent the night at the Over and worked on their sewing badge. On that same day, the Lawrence Brothers Science Camp had their closing activity at the Museum when parents and siblings came to the camp to see what their children and siblings had been doing. They enjoyed a delicious brunch and that day we tallied a grand total of 194 people in and out of the Museum – and that is a conservative estimate – are we a destination or not!?

Early last year, two Boy Scouts approached us about what they could do for us to help them in their quest to become Eagle Scouts. They worked to help me set Sletwold up for a meeting or two, cleaned the yard by pulling weeds and picking up trash and crowned their effort by painting the Discovery Room. The Discovery Room now sports walls of tanager red (they are Vermillion High School students!) and a generally cleaned up feeling. Their next effort in there will be to refurbish some of the exhibits. One of

the things they did was to create a "book nook" complete with soft chairs and a rug. It was wonderful to hear their ideas of what should be in the Discovery Room. They removed some of the woefully outdated and non working exhibits and also removed the messy pile of what was supposed to be a fossil dig. I have volunteered at the Over for a long time, and these were the absolutely first changes ever made in that room and the only time potential users were consulted about what should be in there. They are still looking for projects to do and one probably will be to give the sea turtle a sturdier base on which to repose. I am grateful that these young people sought us out as their project – it has helped us both.

Our next project is to sponsor an ice cream social in conjunction with a band concert by the Lennox Community Band. That will take place on August 5th; just prior to that, we will be helping the Lions serve pancakes at the now annual Biker Breakfast at the I-29 rest area. We will be working there from August 1 through August 5. The Lions are continuing to support us in many ways and this is the third year they are sponsoring this lucrative benefit for us. We are also providing a screening site for PBS when they begin showing the new war series. Several WWII veterans from Vermillion have been invited to be our very special guests. More about this will be forthcoming.

Often during this past year I have heard discussions and comments about leadership here at the Over – let me share my feeling about what I think leadership entails in our unique situation. There is no time for simply "leading", that is, assigning, designating, deciding, whatever one wants to call it, tasks or projects to others. Being part of the support system of the Over Museum calls for taking part in what we do, helping out when and where it's needed, and most importantly, giving positive support to one another in our efforts to keep this fine old institution a viable part of this community and state. The more time I spend at the Over, the more I am convinced that we are alive and well and will continue to be so as long as we continue to work together for that common goal.

I would like to thank our board members and Gift Shop personnel for working so hard to make our Museum an inviting place to visit. However often, whatever task you worked at, whatever event you attended, whatever you did, thank you very sincerely. To define "what is a volunteer" is to come over to the Over and see volunteerism in action.

With warmest regards, Maxine Johnson

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Sam Begay

## Joint Project with the Higgins Museum

The W. H. Over Museum, the Higgins Museum, and the USD Anthropology Department have begun a cooperative project to preserve the Higgins Museum's collection of historic postcards. The postcards show local scenes, people, and events from a six state area. The photographic postcards, produced in the 1800s and 1900s, are beginning to deteriorate as time progresses. Anthropology students and FOM volunteers will utilize high definition scanners to copy the postcards and store the digital images on compact discs.

The museums have agreed to share their digital photographic collections; thus providing students, historians, and researchers access to valuable historical resources while providing USD students with a "real world" learning and service project. The museums will retain their copyright and by-line/citation privileges with respect to images in their respective collections. The Higgins Museum located in Okoboji (Iowa), displays an exceptional collection of National Bank Notes from banks in a six state area (including South Dakota), promotes the study and understanding of the National Banking System and its history, and provides print resources for genealogical, historical, and analytical purposes.

## New Exhibit Programs -

The Exhibits Committee of the FOM has established several new exhibits and are busy renovating and building display cases and display boards and accessories for them. At least two grants have been written and submitted to acquire equipment, software, and materials for the exhibits.

One of the new exhibits has been established to encourage area organizations to record, present and showcase their histories. A special display area in the museum's North Gallery has been designated for exhibiting the histories and descriptions of area organizations (businesses, churches, schools, rural schools, clubs, civic organizations, service organizations, governmental departments, etc.). Exhibits accepted for the History of Area Organizations Exhibit will be displayed for a short-term (at least one month or when replaced thereafter by the next exhibit accepted) on a first come, first served basis. Among organizations that have expressed a desire to participate in this new exhibit include The Vermillion Lions Club, Fullerton Lumber Company, Bank of the West, and the Masonic Lodge.

The Vermillion history Exhibit has been established to chronicle, document, analyze, and present the history of Vermillion and the surrounding area. The primary purpose of this exhibit is to provide museum visitors with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the individuals and groups that have influenced and continue to influence our community.

The first exhibit will be a history of the Flood of 1881 and will include the bell from the Baptist Church in Old Vermillion which was rung to warn residents of the Flood, the history of Vermillion written by Art Rausch and the 10 minute DVD Justus Meyers produced for Nation History Day Contests (1<sup>st</sup> place at the State Contest and competed well at the National Contest).

Two new Guest Collection Exhibits have also been established to make it possible for interested individuals or groups to display their collections in the museum on a short-term, temporary basis. Collections can be composed of any reasonable set of objects and will be displayed for one month or until replaced by another collection. The first collection displayed in this Exhibit was Ray Decker's collection of Firefighting equipment and memorabilia. Cleo Erickson is currently preparing a display of selected buttons (entitled Grace's Buttons) from Dr. Grace Beede's Collection. Presentation of Grace's Buttons is the result of a joint project with the Clay County Historical Society.

The second Guest Collections exhibit will be housed in the display case on the north wall of the museum's Lobby. That case will house smaller displays to create an interest in specific collections or to highlight portions of larger collections or focus on specific topics of interest.

## Welcome New Members

### Business

Paul & Gayle Bliss  
Jan's Printing & Specialities

### Family

Ralph & Lynne Brown  
Claude & Jean Garelik  
John Gors  
Wayne & Billie James  
Bill & Geri Remmes  
Dick & Marlys Stensaas

### Single Family

Charles Weidemann

### Individual

Frances Moore  
Gloria Over  
Paula Verzani

### Senior Citizen

Mary Healen Thomas  
Howard & Lucille O'Conner  
Janice Wojciechowski

## Exhibits

### Lobby Guest Collections Exhibit Case

#### “Grace’s Buttons” Exhibit July - August

The W. H. Over Museum and the Clay County Historical Society have joined together to exhibit Dr. Grace Beede’ button collection. “Grace’s Buttons” will be on display in the museum for the remainder of July and throughout August. Highlights of the collection are displayed in the Lobby Guest Collection exhibit. A larger, more comprehensive display is in the Guest Collections Exhibit in the museum’s North Gallery. The collection is part of the holdings of the Clay County Historical Society and was assembled by Cleo Erickson.



#### HERO Gains National Recognition

A W. H. Over Museum exhibit, “Hero The Elephant,” has become part of an on-line travel guide (<http://www.roadsideamerica.com>). The nationally syndicated website provides travelers with information about interesting places to go and things to see which are located in “less known or talked about areas” of United States. Travelers and net surfers will now have an opportunity to put “HERO” and the W. H. Over Museum on their list of “things to see” and will have an opportunity to learn more about the circus elephant that went on a rampage in Elkton, South Dakota, and was shot by local residents after it had inflicted a significant amount of damage to property in the community. William Henry Over was immediately contacted and asked if he wanted the elephant to make an exhibit in the museum. After boiling the meat off the bones, Hero became part of the museum’s permanent collection and an exhibit was created which includes the history of his demise.

#### Grant Awarded to 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. Remaining funds will be used to renovate, repaint, or construct new display cases and exhibit accessories/aids.

#### INED 411-611 Classes Display Projects

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.



## Quilts and Aprons - All Remind Us of Home, Hearth and Moms

### The Ultimate Cover-Up: Twentieth Century Aprons

In May, Mother's Day was celebrated with an exhibit which honored the history of the aprons which were worn by our mothers. This exhibit curators were Barbara Gauger and Gayla Koerting. This exhibit featured over 100 aprons from Donna Koerting's collection with additional contributions from Emogene Paulson, Nancy Hodgson, Virginia Johnson, Carolyn Kacena (all FOM members) and Joyce Hofer from Freeman, SD. Guests enjoyed tea while sharing apron memories.

The exhibit covered styles of aprons, the varied ranges of colors, unique embellishments for waistbands, pockets and borders along with smocking and pulled work examples. There were reversible aprons, aprons used for advertising and some fine examples of "aging gracefully" aprons which included cloth bags and turn of the century examples dating back to the late 1800s.

### Des Moines Quilt Artist JoAnn Belling Speaks at June 9th Luncheon

Enthusiastic, educational, and entertaining are three words which described the lecture presented by quilt artist, JoAnn Belling. JoAnn, of Des Moines, Iowa, presented her June 9<sup>th</sup> lecture following a luncheon. JoAnn has been a master seamstress since she was 12 and began sewing her own clothing while growing up in Mapleton, Minnesota. The quilting part of her sewing artistry began in 1965; since then, she has taught a variety of quilting classes throughout the United States and Japan.

Her quilts have hung in art galleries and the quilt room in the world-famous Pattee Hotel in Perry, Iowa features one of her creations. Eight of her quilts have hung at Paducah, Kentucky. She has shown quilts at other national shows. Her most recently published article was in Fons and Porter's "Love of Quilting" published in the September/October, 2005 issue. Two versions of the poem "In Flanders Field" have been interpreted in quilting and are featured on her website [www.joannbelling.com](http://www.joannbelling.com). These quilts have been entered in a national competition.

JoAnn is also a professional photographer (who flies her own plane!) and uses many of her artistic photographic techniques in interpreting various designs for

the quilts, borders and backart for either her art pieces or for her own quilt patterns. Quilts included in the showing were loaned by local quilters: Virginia Johnson, Pauline Grossman, Sharon Andrews, and Cyndi Chaney. Ms. Chaney's quilts featured several which have been in the Chaney family for generations. Janet Czapiewski, Spring Valley, Minnesota showed variations on the art of quilting by showing jackets, bags, and table runners. The lecture/luncheon culminated a spring of enjoyment of the needle arts at the Over Museum.



### Book Signing at the Museum

On July 8, the Friends of the W. H. Over Museum, along with the South Dakota State Historical Society, sponsored a book signing event. Paula Nelson was here as part of her tour throughout South Dakota to discuss and sign her book [Sunshine Always](#). The book is a collection of correspondence which took place between Alice Bower and Joseph Gossage of Dakota Territory. Miss Bower was a young woman from Vermillion who was employed as a typesetter for several newspapers in this area and Mr. Gossage was founder and publisher of the Black Hills Journal. Their letters are a reflection of the five months prior to their meeting and continues up to the time of their wedding in 1882. Excerpts from Miss Bower's journal are also included and describe the life and hardships of being the oldest of a large family, being a woman trying to find a way to make a respectable living, and the traumatic experience of the 1881 flood which literally destroyed Vermillion. Both of the Gossages were influential citizens of Rapid City and did much for the benefit of the city and were pioneer publishers. Mrs. Gossage, Alice Bower, is honored by having a statue in the city which commemorates her life and accomplishments.

Paula Nelson wrote the introduction, epilogue, and short history of the Gossages. In between those parts of the books, she included a collection of letters to and from Alice and Joe and entries from Alice's journal. Ms. Nelson noted that all of these original letters and the journal still exist and are in the possession of Maxwell Van Nuys who is Alice Bower Gossage's nephew and the family historian. Mr. Van Nuys lives in Denver, Colorado and participated in one of the state meetings (along with two "older" relatives) of the Historical Society where Paula spoke. Paula M. Nelson is a professor of history and chair of the Department of Social Sciences, University of Wisconsin, Platteville. She has also authored [The Prairie Winnows Out its Own: The West River Country of South Dakota in the Years of Depression and Dust](#) and [After the West Was Won: Homesteaders and Town-Builders in Western South Dakota, 1900-1917](#). The latter book was awarded the Jackson Prize from the Western History Association in 1987.

# Kid's Club

## CSI - Crime Scene Investigation - May 5th

Fingerprinting & Is it a counterfeit?

Dr. Bob



Is it or isn't it?

### Tracking down DNA -

Bananas, cheek tissue and ????



GOT IT!!



**June 20th Journalistic Photography Participants Thank Wal-Mart**

*Kid's Club*

The Kid's Club at the W. H. Over Museum would like to thank Vermillion's Wal-Mart for their support in making this Kid's Club activity happen. Using disposable cameras provided by the Vermillion Wal-Mart, the kids began taking photographs both inside and outside the museum. Each person took photos of plants, buildings or architectural features, people, animals, objects close-up and far away, as well as museum exhibits; they kept a record of each shot on a photo log with comments to assist in the writing of the story.



Photo by Nancy Hodgson

After all the picture taking was completed, the film was taken to Wal-Mart for 1-hour development. The group worked on ideas for the production of the "Kids' Club Cool News". Together we created an action story board about an adventure at the Over Museum which could be illustrated by the photos we took. Wal-Mart's Photographic department made prints from each of our disposable cameras as well as providing the group with a cumulative CD for our use in publishing this story. When the photos were done, we began choosing the ones to use to illustrate the story and how best to arrange them. The Editors have expanded the story to include more photographs so each member has at least two photos published with his own by-line. Original photos and negatives were given to each participant for home use along with a copy of this story.

Thanks go to the Kid's Club participants for such wonderful photos! We hope you enjoy the story we started on June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Kid's Club Journalistic Photography activity.

- Back row: Tyler Carlisle, Tristan Johnson, Bryant Yang, Philip Erikson, Robby Erikson
- Center row: Jillian King, Cassie Donahoe, Mariah Dodson, Steffani Donahoe, Callan Martin, Jeanette Conway
- Front row: Abby Jensen, Atalyssa Myron, Natasha Samudzi, Jackie Buelow, Sophia Dudley, Jordyn Block

"Cool Happenings at the Museum" is the result of this activity. Check out the Over's website to read the "Kid's Club Cool News" with the story and photos from this activity.

- Nancy Hodgson
- Barb Gauger
- Nancy Noiva

P.S. Kid's Club members will receive a color copy of this newsletter soon.



Expanding Your Horizons  
Join Kid's Club

Be a proud wearer of the Kid's Club T-Shirt just like Jackie Buelow is.

Next Activity is August 15th: Mapping with Dimensions

Question: What does Harry Potter's Marauder Map and Muggles have in common with Topographic Maps?



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## Calendar of Events & Exhibits at the Over

### August

- 5 – Sunday Ice Cream Social and Lennon Municipal Band.  
Social starts at 5 pm and band starts at 5:30 pm
- 15 – Wednesday Kid's Club activity "Mapping with Dimensions – Topographic Maps"  
Or Harry Potter's Marauder Map – Muggle version 1 – 4pm

### September

- 12 - Wednesday Ken Burn's The WAR screening starts at 7 pm in Sletwold Hall  
Interviewing starts at 5pm
- 29 - Saturday Rummage Sale

### October

- 28 - Sunday Pumpkin Carving with Maxine at the Over

### November

- 11 - Sunday Veterans Day Celebration, Sletwold Hall

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