

ONLINE BONUS PHOTO SECTION

SUMMER

HERITAGE HALL MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

20

h e a d l i n e s

EXTRA

Here are some images from the summer of 2024 at Heritage Hall Museum & Archives

The flowers that grace the front sign that welcomes summer guests to Heritage Hall Museum & Archives are the handiwork of volunteers Dennis and Shirley Ries.



A young guest and her mother enjoy watching "I Love Lucy" on the 1953 Zenith television in the Kauffman Wing of the museum. Jerry Merkouris of Valley Springs donated both materials and time to convert the 1953 Zenith TV into a working model.

A special exhibit in the Arrival on the Prairie Gallery documents the trip Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family made through this community in 1894 en route to their new home in Missouri.



Friday evening before the South Dakota Chislic Festival, Kevin Waltner pulled the 1884 Frick Eclipse Steam Traction Engine out of the museum and onto the lawn that borders the Freeman Prairie Arboretum. That's Kevin Albrecht steering the Eclipse. It and other large artifacts were placed along the entrance to the festival to encourage people to visit the museum.

Caleb Epp staffed the rope-making demonstration on the museum lawn.

Intern Kat Boeding (green shirt) staffed the "archeological dig" in which kids found five different items – a cephalopod, a coin, a key, a pottery shard and a seashell – in a pile of sand. A successful dig entitled them to a prize.





Freeman's next-level museum

I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent last week at Heritage Hall Museum & Archives watching local youngsters take in what was probably a first for most of them — a local museum that is nothing short of a treasure.

More than 30 boys and girls and adult chaperones were there as part of the Freeman Public Library Summer Reading Program, a right-of-passage for many children that has been part of the outstanding quality of life enjoyed here in Freeman for decades. With the theme of "adventure," the museum was a perfect landing spot for one of the program's weekly installments, and Heritage Hall delivered.



Publisher's Desk

Jeremy Waltner

Children delighted in working with Terry Waterman to crack open geodes and were wide-eyed when they saw the crystals revealed inside, and around the corner, the Natural World gallery was the perfect platform for exploration and education. I had seen the exhibit before, but standing there with the children on Thursday, experiencing it as though it was my first time, I was awe-struck by my surroundings. There is the centerpiece, Molly the Mosasaur, a spectacular look at the extinct aquatic reptile based on a fossil the museum has in its collection. There are other stuffed animals on display, framed photos of Mother Nature at work, and the story of the 1965 tornado that visited the community and which Willis Wipf famously photographed from his home on the east side of Freeman.

The Natural World exhibit is new and representative of the work and attention to detail that has taken place at the museum since Marnette Hofer stepped in as archivist and executive director. Since then, additional staff members have been added and they have collectively invested time and energy to take the museum to another level of awesomeness.

Heritage Hall Museum & Archives is one of this community's oldest institutions and has a storied history of establishment and growth. It lived a wandering life for its first decades of existence before settling in at its current home in 1976, the year I was born. Soon after, outbuildings began joining the campus, the collections were improved and refined, a major addition was built in the late 1990s and, just in the past few years, there has been a high level of attention paid to the curation process.

It only makes sense that the Freeman Public Library would use it as a platform for its Summer Reading Program, and hopefully other groups will see its value and use it to their advantage, too.

And if you've never been to Heritage Hall Museum & Archives — or if it's been a while — by all means, go and check it out. The collections are priceless, the stories are fascinating and there is something for everybody, guaranteed.

Everything you need to know is on the museum's website found at heritagehallmuseum.com. Not only is it one of the community's hidden gems, but one of South Dakota's greatest finds. It's too bad more people don't know about it.

Joey Walder

Husband to Stacey and Dad to Ella & Oliver, who takes particular interest in the story of the 1965 tornado.



Elementary students in the Freeman Public Library Summer Reading Program visited HHM&A on June 27. The collaboration between the two organizations enabled a hands-on look at geodes, rocks featuring a cavity lined with crystals and other minerals. Museum volunteer Terry Waterman helped them use a hammer to gently tap on their own geodes until it split open to reveal colorful crystals.

The June 27 museum visit gave kids an up-close look at the Natural World Exhibit that included a word scavenger hunt that invited the youth to find the answers to 12 questions, like, "What crystal does pegmatite contain?" "How long ago do scientists believe the Earth was created?" and, "What flying animal is perched in the tree over the entrance of the exhibit?" Crystal Nelson, of Freeman Public Library, said the trip to the museum was a perfect fit. "We really appreciated the collaboration." This photo is by Jeremy Waltner, who reported on the event in the July 4 Freeman Courier. He also offered his affirming take on HHM&A in his page 2 column that week.





HHM&A joined the Harvest Host network in early 2024, opening the museum parking lot to self-contained RVers from Memorial Day through mid-August. The membership program enables travelers to visit and stay overnight at museums, farms, wineries, breweries and other unique attractions. HHM&A is one of 5,197 host locations across North America.



Lisa Mueller Howard and Joan Mueller Peters signed copies of "Katy," their recently published book following an Aug. 18 program at the Interpretive Center at the Prairie Arboretum. The sisters shared details about their research and read excerpts of "Katy." It tells the immigration story through the eyes of a five-year-old girl who travels from Russia to Turner County in 1874; the book is for sale in our mercantile.



Kennedy Bechard and Donovan Friesen have been loyal and essential volunteers at the museum this summer, particularly with the facility manager position open since mid-2023. Kennedy will be a junior at Tea High School this fall. She's a granddaughter of Betty Albrecht and niece of HHM&A Board Member Kevin Albrecht. She assisted with maintenance projects as well as data entry and staffing for special events.