

h e a d l i n e s

Summer programs to focus on 150th

Heritage Hall Museum & Archives has scheduled a series of monthly summer programs that focus on the 150th anniversary of the wave of Germans-from-Russia immigration that began in 1874. Three moderated panel discussions featuring Dan Flyger, Marnette (Ortman) Hofer, Norman Hofer and S. Roy Kaufman will provide specific perspectives on different aspects of this story. The Sunday afternoon programs will start at 3 p.m. at the Bethel Church; the museum will be open those Sunday afternoons from 1 to 5.

• **June 2: Life in Russia.** What brought people to Ukraine starting in the 1700s, what life was like there, and what prompted them to leave starting in the 1870s.

• **July 14: Leaving Russia.** What went into preparations for leaving, what the emigration entailed, and what it was like traveling the various steps from Ukraine to Yankton.

• **August 4: Arriving in Dakota.** Why these groups settled here, what they discovered when they arrived, the specific areas in which they settled, the opportunities and challenges they faced, and what they created.

Two weeks later, another 3 p.m. Sunday program will provide a unique perspective on this story.

August 18: "A Little Girl's Journey from Ukraine to Dakota Territory."



The revamped Arrival on the Prairie Gallery in Heritage Hall Museum & Archives reflects a focus on our immigration stories. This year marks the 150-year anniversary of the wave of Germans from Russia arriving in Dakota Territory in 1874.

Sisters Joan (Mueller) Peters and Lisa (Mueller) Howard have written a delightful children's book, "Katie, the Little Rose From Ukraine." This historical-fiction book tells the story of their forebears coming to Dakota Territory from Ukraine in the 1870s. The book is coming out this summer and they will present a program about the book and their research, which included time spent in the HHM&A archives. They will also be available to sign books before and after the program.

Additional programs are being planned for fall and will continue the immigration theme. One will explore the early history of the community that emerged following their arrival and the arrival of the railroad in 1879. Another will share the perspective of the Great Sioux Nation that called this land home for centuries before European

immigrants arrived; dates for these programs have not been set.

Here are a few other activities at HHM&A this summer.

• The museum is partnering with the Freeman Public Library for a one-hour afternoon program/activity on geodes on June 27.

• The museum is making plans for the July 27 Chislic Festival, which takes place next door at the Prairie Arboretum. We will be offering extended hours and family-friendly experiences at the museum and on the

museum grounds.

• Although it's not a museum initiative, HHM&A is working as a resource for the 150th program being developed by the Salem and Salem-Zion Mennonite churches scheduled for September 8 and 9.

• HHM&A has joined the Harvest Hosts network for the summer of 2024. The RV membership program allows self-contained RVers to stay overnight at unique, small businesses around the country. This will allow HHM&A visitors to stay in the museum's parking lot – located directly west of the museum and north of the Prairie Arboretum from Memorial Day through August 10. More information is available at HarvestHosts.com. You can also call or stop in at the museum for details.



Heritage Hall Museum & Archives

PO Box 693 • 880 S Cedar St. • Freeman, SD 57029

(605) 925-7545 • info@heritagehallmuseum.com • www.heritagehallmuseum.com

Mapping our future

As we were preparing for this newsletter, three words in a quote from board chair Jeanne Carter jumped out at me: “move forward intentionally.”

Jeanne was referring to the opportunity we now have after participating in AAM’s MAP program over the past year. She wrote, “...it gives us a way to move forward intentionally, in a productive and professional way.”

I’ve been mulling that phrase over ever since.

Move. This word implies action. There is progress. A process has been set into place and there are steps taken to change, to advance or to develop. It is a powerful and exciting word, as the possibilities are endless.

Forward. This gives us a direction. We’re not going to go back to what was. Or even just move sideways. We are looking ahead and advancing or progressing. There is positive momentum. This is a word that energizes, propels, and prods us to think about all the options before us.

Intentionally. This word implies a conscious decision and a challenge taken on. This is not an accident or something that “just happened.” We knowingly act with deliberation and purposefulness. This requires research and forethought and a plan. It is a challenging word because it also implies responsibility.

I would like to add one more word to this. **Collaboratively.** I think it takes all of us, not just the HHM&A board, not just the staff or the volunteers or the members. If you are reading this, you are part of the collaboration! We need your ideas, your opinions, your skills, your resources, and yes, your donations.

Sustaining and growing a successful museum with a mind-blowing collection like ours takes more than just a few. We need to *Move Forward Intentionally and Collaboratively*. Everyone needs to take part, even if it is in a very small way. Come visit. Bring a friend. Recommend us to a friend or on social media. Write a Google review. Attend a program. Lead a program. Buy something in our mercantile. Become a member. Set up an automatic monthly donation. Preserve your genealogies, heritage stories, documents or old photos in our archives. Volunteer in the archives. Or as a docent. Or by helping with an event or a project, building, cleaning, fixing, organizing, researching, demonstrating, creating.... Think about the people you know – who might be a resource for us in our journey?

These are exciting times. So many possibilities lie ahead. We will not stagnate. We will not sit still. We will not move aimlessly. We will not do it alone. Thanks to each of you, we will *Move Forward Intentionally and Collaboratively*!



Director’s View

Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer
Executive Director/ Archivist

HHM&A plans ‘next steps’ after final MAP report

A year ago, Heritage Hall Museum & Archives launched a major project through the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). The self-assessment, institutional activities and an on-site visit explored “big picture” issues, including policies, budget, governance and other aspects unique to the museum.

Several members of the board and the museum staff met weekly in spring and summer of 2023 to complete a workbook that identified strengths and weaknesses. Karrie Porter Brace, a museum professional from New Mexico, visited the museum last September.

While AAM’s final report earlier this year affirmed HHM&A’s vitality, recommendations included board development, stronger fiduciary responsibility, increasing staff and strengthening the museum’s relevance as a regional cultural resource.

The local MAP team resumed meetings to outline the next steps. On April 13, the board and staff met to review the report, exploring details and how to respond to the AAM recommendations. Three primary goals emerged:

- Building long-term financial stability, including establishing or contracting for a development position/services
- Increasing security of both the exterior complex and artifacts
- Assessing and strengthening IT components throughout the complex for both programming and security.

These goals are similar to those that emerged in a board/staff strategic planning session held in April 2023.

Jeanne Carter, a member of the HHM&A board since 2020, became board chair this year and joined the MAP team in the final phases of the process. She says the project has been very worthwhile. “Self-assessment is important,” she said. “We too often get complacent in what we’re doing. Having a professional museum consul-

Our Mission

is to preserve, educate and foster appreciation for the diverse natural and cultural history of the greater Freeman area, settled largely by Germans from Russia in the 1870s.

HERITAGE HALL
Museum
& ARCHIVES

PO Box 693 • 880 S Cedar St.
Freeman, SD 57029 • (605) 925-7545

HHM&A Board of Directors

Jeanne Carter, chair
Nathan Bates, vice-chair
Chantel Hofer, secretary
Brett Eisenbeis, treasurer
Kevin Albrecht, Viki Graber, Rod Janzen,
Marlan Kaufman, Charles Schrag,
Kevin Waltner

Staff

Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer, executive director/archivist
Heather Haggerty, curator
Tim L. Waltner, communication/ education coordinator

info@heritagehallmuseum.com • www.heritagehallmuseum.com

continued on page 4



Schmeckfest 2024 drew more than 900 guests to the museum, open 10 to 7 on March 16 and 17, with steady traffic throughout the museum and the historical buildings both days. That included scores of families who enjoyed the family-friendly experience full of interactive displays demonstrations, programs and the always popular Heritage Pickers. Dozens of youth participated in the HHM&A 20 Questions scavenger hunt that helps them explore the artifacts and displays. Wristbands enabled guests to return throughout both days of the festival.



Schmeckfest 2024 photos courtesy of Jeremy Waltner - Freeman Courier.



HHM&A recently hosted two school field trips. On May 10, 26 Freeman Academy elementary students enjoyed hands-on opportunities including printing and making butter and rope. Forty-two K-8 students from Maxwell Colony visited May 7; that included a historical presentation by HHM&A staff.

Mystery histories

The depths of Heritage Hall Museum & Archives hold a multitude of artifacts. Eight months after starting here, I still walk past something and stop and stare. What is that object? Has that always been here? How have I never noticed it before?

The museum storage room holds countless more items. Packed in boxes or stacked on shelves nearly to the ceiling, it's a treasure trove of history. Three artifacts have stared down at me for months, until finally I pulled over a chair to climb on and lift them down.

The first is a ceramic bust of a young girl, rosy cheeked and looking

demurely down with the slightest of smiles. Her catalog number lists no donor's name or any history. Where and who did she come from?

Then there is the cat. The two-foot-high bronze paper mache sculpture sits on her haunches with a (not surprisingly) irritated look on her face. Most disconcerting is the one gold and one green glass eye. I stared into those eyes, but she offered up no answers about her origins and how she ended up on a top shelf at the museum with no known history. The word "Mexico" is etched on her back side. Was she a vacation souvenir or a thrift store find? Was she a

gift to a cat lover?

Lastly, there is the tall plaster statue of a woman; with her maroon dress and ivy in her hair, her graceful pose perhaps suggests a dancer or Greek goddess. Her history states that she was donated by Rumie and Grace Gering and was part of a collection imported from Germany after World War I. Here the provenance leads to more questions. What did this item mean to someone for them to make the careful effort to bring it all the way to Freeman? Why is she here now?

So much history lost, making the point that stories need to be told, or better yet, written down.

Label the photos; tell your family about the people in them. Why is this quilt or candy dish important and what did its owner mean to the family? Tell them these stories because in the future, cats still reveal no secrets.



Curator's Corner
Heather Haggerty, Curator

MAP *continued from front page*

tant point out what we are doing well and what we need to improve upon is so valuable.

"It prompts us to think about what we're about—our foundation and how to build on it. And it gives us a way to move forward intentionally, in a productive and professional way."

The next steps are for the HHM&A

Board and committees to set a process for implementing the goals. In addition, staff is pursuing other goals outlined in the MAP report, including strengthening the museum's exhibits and programs and exploring HHM&A's role as a community and regional resource.

"The report has been very helpful in helping us think through what we do

on a daily basis and ways that we can expand the storytelling aspects of the museum and the experience for our guests," said director Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer. "It has been energizing."

MAP team members have included Jeanne Carter, Brett Eisenbeis, Heather Haggerty, Marnette D. (Ortman) Hofer, Marlan Kaufman, Terry Quam, Charles Schrag and Tim L. Waltner.

Thank You

To Our Current Heritage Hall Museum & Archives Members

January-April 2024

Platinum

D & D Storage – Donovan & Cheryl Friesen, Freeman
Dennis Epp, Freeman
Steve C. & Janie Hofer, Energy, Texas
Vernon J. & Norma Hofer, Freeman
Wyona Hofer family, Freeman
Ron & Lois Preheim, Newton, Kan.
Rural Mfg. Co. – Colin Hofer, Freeman
Salem Mennonite Mission Fund, Freeman
Donald & Mary Schenk, Sioux City, Iowa
Dawn Stahl, Freeman
Jorgiann Waltner, Robbinale, Minn.

Gold

Joe L. Graber, Augusta KS

Silver

Jeanne Carter, Sioux Falls
Larry Hoellwarth, Chicago, Ill.
Stewart & Chantel Hofer, Bridgewater
Laurel & Twila Preheim, Omaha, Neb.

Bronze

LeRoy & Janette Epp, Freeman
Steve & Charlene Friesen, Freeman
Jake Jr. & Irene Gross, Freeman
Keith & Joann Smith Hofer, Marion
Kerry & Lori Hofer, Freeman
Vernon P. & Twyla Hofer, Freeman
Ken & Deanna Kehn, Benson, Ariz.
Cheryl Lehmann, Sioux Falls
Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman
Larry & Edie Tschetter, Freeman

Conductor

Joanne Becker, Marion
Jerome & Yvonne Bentz, Platte
Michael Brubaker, South Bend, Ind.
John & Jeri Butkus, Freeman
Duane & Shella Franz, Mt. Lake, Minn.
Freeman Lumber Co., Freeman
Phil & Judy Glanzer, Sioux Falls
Darryll & Linda Graber, Renton, Wash.
LaVerne & Janice Graber, Freeman

Kevin Gross, Goshen, Ind.
Josh & Lynelle Hofer, Parkston
James & Darleen Kautz, Omaha, Neb.
Marlo & Mavis Ortman, Marion
Garnet Perman, Lowry
Ted & Marlene Pidde, Freeman
Gayle & Jana Preheim, Iowa City, Iowa
Reed & Susan Schrag, Freeman
Dale & Lois Link Solberg, Freeman
Sam & Linda Sorenson, Freeman

Shopkeeper

AnnaMarie Cornett, Georgetown, Kent.
Philip Eisenbeis, Marion
Ted & Diane Ellinger, Freeman
Terry & Christine Graber, Newton, Kan.
Dallas & Cindy Hofer, Sioux Falls
Ron & Kathy Lehman Hofer, Sioux Falls
Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman
David & Judy Mendel, Doland

Nicklaus & Sonja Schrag, Marion
Barry Stahl, Sioux Falls
Don & Eileen Sturzenbecher, Sioux Falls
Craig & Lois Wollman, Menno
Barb Yoder, Freeman
Donna Zeeb, Menno

Homesteader

Marilyn & Bill Augst, Lake City, Minn.
Janice Dunlap, Phoenix, Ariz.
Megan EisenVos, Sioux Falls
Gerald Klassen, Prince George, British Columbia
Dennis Lehmann, Freeman
Lonnie Mettler, Wala Wala, Wash.
Sharon Mueller, Hagerstown, Md.
Everett Waltner, Freeman

Gifts in Memory of:

John & Ida (Haar) Hoellwarth by
Larry Hoellwarth, Chicago, Ill.
Wyona Hofer by the Hofer family.



Your memberships & donations support Heritage Hall Museum & Archives.

If you have a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your retirement account, you can give a portion of your RMD directly to HHM&A. This qualified charitable contribution (QCD) offers several advantages. It allows you to give from pre-tax assets, your distribution is excluded from taxable income, and it simplifies the giving process. Contact your IRA account holder for details.

Heritage Hall Museum & Archives Membership/Donation

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Membership: \$ _____ Donation \$ _____

Date ____/____/____ Newsletter Preference: ☐ Paper ☐ Digital edition ☐ Both Digital/Paper

HHM&A, PO Box 693, Freeman, SD 57029 • 605-925-7545 • info@heritagehallmuseum.com

BASIC MEMBERSHIPS



HOMESTEADER \$30
SHOPKEEPER \$50
CONDUCTOR \$100

SUSTAINING DONATIONS *include all membership benefits*



BRONZE \$250
SILVER \$500
GOLD \$750
PLATINUM \$1,000
EMERALD \$5,000
RUBY \$10,000
SAPPHIRE \$25,000
DIAMOND \$50,000
FOUNDER \$75,000+

We offer three basic membership levels and nine sustaining donation levels. We will acknowledge sustaining donations as tax-deductible contributions.
Homesteaders: 1 annual patron pass; Shopkeepers: 2 annual patron passes; Conductors: 4 annual patron passes; Sustaining Donors: 6 annual patron passes