



Dodge County Historical Society

1643 N. Nye Ave. / P.O. Box 766 / Fremont, NE / 68025 / 402.721.4515
www.maymuseum.com

2024 Board of Directors

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Jeff Kappeler, executive director
Pam Pettitt, office manager
Joyce Winfield, newsletter ed.

Angie Olson, secretary

Getting to Know Officers

Angie Olson remembers spending time at the May Museum with her dad when she was maybe 7 years old. The newly elected secretary for the Dodge County Historical Society (DCHS), Angie said those visits were her first connection with the Museum.

Elected as secretary in June 2023, Angie said she looks forward to learning a lot more about the Museum from staff and other board members.

Angie admits she was in “the right place at the right time” when Jeff Kappeler, executive director for the May Museum, asked if she would consider becoming a DCHS board member.

From those times spent at the Museum as a young girl, Angie said she has grown to appreciate the history of the building. She also likes that the Museum has materials available that can be accessed to help with research to learn more about Fremont and city buildings.



Angie Olson is serving as secretary for the Dodge County Historical Society. She is holding the 1974 Fremont City Directory. In the May Museum library, many reference books are available for people to use on site.

Olson, continued on p. 2

Director's Column

Jeff Kappeler



Where is the executive director? For the past 2½ months, I have been at home in bed recovering from a case of long COVID.

Some people are not inclined to get their COVID or booster shots. I truly wish you to stay well and would not wish this nightmare on anyone. It's not like anything we have had with COVID in the previous years.

Some of my symptoms have included extreme fatigue, excessive sleep, painful muscles and joints, no appetite, and brain fog. Sometimes my balance has been affected.

On the bright side, I have been able to use my accumulated vacation days.

Stay well and happy.

Calendar of Events

Mon., March 11; April 8
ENGS meeting, 5:30 p.m.

Mon., March 4 & Wed., March 6
Day in the Past (for)
Dodge County 4th graders

Wed., April 24, 10 a.m.
Docent Tea

Wed., April 24, 1:30 p.m.
Museum Opens for Season

Thurs., April 25, noon
Quarterly Meeting
Dodge County Historical Society

Sat., May 4, 9 a.m.-noon
Plant Sale

Tues., May 7
Fremont Area Big Give

Memorials & Gifts

In Memory of Loretta Batten
Beta Sigma Phi

In Memory of Shirley Kuss
Beta Sigma Phi

In Memory of Ellen Haskins
Jim & Patty Manhart

In Memory of Wanda Johnson Lambourn
Roger & Melissa Lambourn

In Memory of Paul Marsh
Anonymous

In Memory of Nanette Missel
Anonymous
Rod & Janet Borgmeyer
Lloyd & Betty Brooks
Thomas & Sandra Brune

Lori Dahl
Ruth Downing
Michael & Michele Emanuel
Erickson & Brooks
Larry & Mary Flamme
Scott Getzschman
John & Holly Goldsberry
Albert & Angela Hammang
Jeff Kappeler
Kandace Kucera
Jim & Patty Manhart
Thomas & Tami Nielsen
Lonnie & Susan Nuttelman
P.E.O. Chapter AJ
Gary & Pam Pettitt
Alan Reeh
William & Catherine Saeger
Deb Spicka
Shelley Pettit-Staples

Olson, continued from p. 1

Museum Offers Glimpse Into History

Angie admitted that she doesn't collect anything specific. "When growing up, my parents had a lot of antiques," she said. "I got used to wanting to hang onto things because I thought they would be valuable." Angie smiled when she said that never happened.

Employed by the City of Fremont since October 2021, Angie is executive assistant and grant coordinator. She previously worked as gallery assistant at the Fremont Area Art Association in 2015, was promoted to development director in 2019, and became executive director in 2021.

Both Angie and Kelly, her husband, are Fremont natives. They have two daughters — Emma is 29 and Elayna is 15.

For people who have never been to the May Museum, Angie said she would tell them, "It's a fantastic place to come and feel nostalgic and get a glimpse into history and even learn a lot about Fremont history."

Maybe another young 7-year-old girl or boy brought to the Museum will remember those visits and want to continue coming back. Just like Angie.

DCHS Participates In Local Nonprofit Leadership Program

Officers of the Dodge County Historical Society (DCHS) are participating in 9-monthly sessions as part of a Nonprofit Leadership Program (NLP). Jeff Kappeler, executive director for the May Museum, is also a participant.

The Fremont Area Community Foundation (FACF) sponsors the NLP that helps organizations:

- develop and implement a strategic plan
- build and engage strong leadership
- develop board engagement, and
- foster community peer networks and collaboration

Melissa Diers, FACF executive director, said each participating nonprofit organization will receive a \$5,000 capacity-building grant from the FACF at completion of the program.

The \$5,000 is to be used for something that will enhance the organization's capacity to achieve its mission, Melissa explained.

Greta Leach from Mission Matters, a Nebraska-based consulting firm, was hired as facilitator.

The Dodge County Historical Society has been represented by Joe Dickmeyer, president, and Lori Dahl, 1st vice president.

Joe said that he has gained an understanding on what is being achieved by the DCHS board could be done better. "Maybe we are a little slacking with things and not following up."

For example, Joe said current committee structure can be reviewed and the board can consider how things could get done more effectively.

Lori also used the word "effective" when she commented about the program being "a tremendous tool to help us be more effective as a board." She added, "We are fortunate to be part of the program."

After sharing about the program at a recent DCHS board meeting, Joe said the information was well received. Now he wants the board to not just talk about something, but rather "step up to the plate and do it."



Thanks For Christmas Decorations

The Winter 2023 issue of this newsletter included a request for donations of older/vintage items related to Christmas. Jeff Kappeler, executive director, said he is so pleased that people noticed the list and responded. "We received a wonderful collection of old ribbons, wrapping paper, and ornaments that will be used in future Christmas displays."

The collection above includes a small blue handmade felt stocking with sequins and a box of hangers for ornament hanging.

A nice selection of Christmas wrapping paper and ribbon (below left) is a reminder that they were saved for use the next year. Sometimes the paper was even ironed.

The box of ornaments (below right) dates from around 1900-1910. The two small ornaments (light blue and light pink) in the center of the top left divider are made of spun cotton. Cotton ornaments have their origins in 19th century Germany. Originally, shapes would have been made from cotton batting that was hand-molded around wire forms. The rest of the ornaments are glass. The two red balls are hand painted.

Looking beyond Christmas, Jeff said other older holiday decorations can be donated.



Soukup Loves Valentine Cards

Anne Soukup says she is passionate about valentine's cards. And her collection that she estimates between 800-1,000 supports that statement. Her first cards were given to her at an early age (see picture below).

"I bought just a few probably in the '80s at an auction," Anne said. After she displayed the cards, Anne related that is when her collection started growing.

"Almost all of my collection has been given to me by family and friends."

Anne's collection spans the 1890s-1950s. She said older valentine's cards (pre-1930s) were very elaborate until after World War II. Then the flat card became the norm.

A card that is very special to Anne is one she received in her youth from her four brothers. "I lost my brother, Roger, when he was 15 and my brothers all signed that card."



Anne Soukup was maybe 8 or 9 years old when a family friend gave her some valentine's cards, including the two she is holding, from the 1890s to early 1900s. "I have never found any exactly like these," Anne said. The card in Anne's right hand has painted flowers on silk and a satin ribbon. The pink celluloid (a synthetic material categorized as a plastic) is the original color. Anne said she has had this card for at least 65 years. The card in Anne's left hand is made of tan parchment and satin ribbon.

Anne doesn't just display her collection on Feb. 14. She said if some cards, for example, have a patriotic theme, they will be used for a July 4 table display.

So, what happens to a collection of 800-1,000 valentine's cards? "Some of my family might want a few," Anne said.



A variety of valentine's cards from Anne Soukup's collection is displayed at the May Museum.



This large multi-colored honeycomb valentine's card is from Anne Soukup's collection. The Heart of the Matter: A History of Valentine Cards states that around 1900, valentine cards grew more elaborate and layered, sometimes with fabric fringes, ribbons, silk cords, or tassels. Some cards reached such dimensions that they required boxes to mail, not just envelopes. Honeycomb paper added further dimensions to the fold-out valentines of the early 20th century.