



Dodge County Historical Society

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

2023 Board of Directors

Joe Dickmeyer, president
Cynthia Lauritsen, 1st v.p.
Julie O’Hanlon, 2nd v.p.
Mary Buller, secretary
Jane Petersen, asst. treasurer
Cathy Driver, Ames
Renee Bunck, Fremont
Lori Dahl, Fremont
Judy Ekeler, Fremont
Jim Manhart, Fremont
Art Sorensen, Fremont
Joanne Thietje, Fremont
Sherry Jarose, Nickerson
Bill Wagner, Hooper
Nona Wiese, Scribner
Joyce Uehling, Uehling
Russ Uehling, Uehling

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

Volunteers Enjoy Time at Museum



(From Left) Karen Burns, Loretta Meistrell and Annette Welander have a combined total of about 30 years serving as volunteers at the May Museum.

Anyone attending the December 2022 Christmas Open House at the May Museum had to appreciate all the beautiful holiday decorations and items displayed for the current exhibit “Wedding Bells: Customs and Attire Through the Decades.”

Referring to the time commitment necessary to prepare the Museum for visitors, Jeff Kappeler, Museum director, said, “Our staff does not have a magic wand to wave so we are very thankful for our volunteer help.” At the same time, Jeff stresses the need for more volunteers.

Annette Welander began volunteering in 2016, first as a docent and currently helping with exhibit displays. She said the Museum is a gem in Fremont. Learning about the history of Dodge County is something Annette enjoys about being at the Museum.

Volunteers, continued on p. 2

Director's Column

Jeff Kappeler



The Museum closes at the end of December but, contrary to popular belief, we do not go on vacation. The next four months are some of our busiest times.

In January, I was able to catch up with some cleaning and sorting in the basement. We had some late Christmas parties and there is always year-end book work for the office.

February will be devoted to putting away 12 Christmas trees and all the decorations. It is also the month for planning Day in the Past for the Dodge County 4th graders, which will be held on March 6 and 8. So, also in February, letters need to be sent to the schools with individual schedules. Presenters also are secured. Referring to the page 1 article about volunteers, I want to add my thanks to those who donate their time to Day in the Past.

For Day in the Past, approximately 60 pieces of furniture, including folding chairs and tables, need to be relocated and afterwards all has to be put away. When this event is completed, it is time to clean the entire house, which requires dusting, moving most of the furniture, cleaning floors, washing curtains and windows. There may be time to adjust the exhibit, plan the docent tea and suddenly it is once again time to open.

Vacation? No, most of our time is spent in constant motion and the Museum operates like a machine finely tuned with very little down time.

Memorials & Gifts

In Memory of Anne Boschult
Carol A. Bockhaus

In Memory of Rolin & Gertrude Carlberg
Janet Hofer

In Memory of Wanda Lambourn
Roger & Melissa Lambourn

In Memory of Paul Marsh
Marlene McClean

In Memory of Michele Missel
John & Holly Goldsberry

In Memory of Julie Jurgenson
Anonymous donor
Ronald & Anita Bowman
Jeff & Nancy Christensen
Richard & Barbara Coke

Kimberly Cuda
Clifford & Meldene Cushman
Margo Diedrichsen
Dawn Fritz
Mark & Caryl Grorud
Michael Guillatt
Nick & Cheryl Lamme
Charlene Manes
Kenneth McElhose
Ryan Pawling
Faith Perry
William & Katherine Rhea
Charles & Sharon Sass
Skip & Judy Sawyer
Larry & Linda Shepard
Robert Jr. & Janet Therien
Cynthia Thew
Dr. F.T. Waring

In Honor of Alice Nott's 90th Birthday
Deb Spicka

Volunteers, continued from p. 1

Museum Offers Volunteer Opportunities

Karen Burns has volunteered as a docent since 2008. "I feel rewarded being a docent because of the reaction I get from guests. They love the beauty and enjoy the history."

Loretta Meistrell began volunteering in 2015. When Jeff talked with her and asked if she would consider being a docent, Loretta said she thought it sounded interesting. Eight years later, she said it's still fun being at the Museum. "I enjoy being here. It's so relaxing."

Karen said she would encourage others to volunteer because it's a way to give back to the community. "I would tell others that you don't have to know everything about the house. It has taken me years to learn and I am still learning."

After a docent-led tour, Jeff said he can help with unanswered questions. He added that docents are provided with a guide book that gives information about the Museum rooms and furnishings.

Annette encourages others to be willing to try something new. Lots can be learned about the history of Dodge County, she said.

Loretta commented that she loves the people who come and appreciate the same things that she does.

Director Seeks Volunteers To Serve As Docents

“Our docents at one time numbered approximately 75. Due to aging, health issues, moving and other reasons, we are down to about 15,” said Jeff Kappeler, May Museum director.

The lack of docents requires that Jeff and Pam Pettitt, office manager, must lead tours. This takes them away from other things they need to do.

Currently, the Museum is open for tours beginning the end of April until the end of December, Wednesday-Saturday from 1:30-4:30 p.m. The last tour begins at 3:30 p.m. Jeff said each tour takes about an hour, plus additional time if visitors want to go outside to the log cabin and garden.

Docents can choose the number of days they want to volunteer. Jeff said it is preferable that each open day has two docents so if a tour is in progress another docent is available.

There will be days that may not have visitors, but Jeff said in 2022 there was good attendance. Visitors are generally polite and interested and the docents enjoy talking with them.

Jeff, of course, appreciates those who currently serve as docents.

“Most of the docents are very proud of the Museum and want to share about it with others. I am very grateful for their involvement,” Jeff said.

If the number of docents does not increase, Jeff said one possible result will be that the Museum must be closed another day of the week. “Of course, I hope that will not happen.”

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer, and specifically a docent, should contact Jeff at the Museum.

Event Draws Great Attendance

After hosting the Christmas Open House outdoors for the last two years, the event moved indoors last December.

Jeff Kappeler, May Museum executive director, called the attendance “amazing.”

Estimating the number of visitors between 250 and 300, Jeff said there has never been an indoor open house with that many people attending

Jeff emphasized that it takes over two months to prepare for the open house.

In addition to trees, every room in the Museum is appropriately decorated for the holiday season.

Also, items are sorted, displayed and priced for sale in the gift shop.

Preparing specifically for the day of the open house, Joe Dickmeyer, Dodge County Historical Society president, baked 46 dozen Springerle cookies.

The cookies were sold and the money will benefit the Museum.



Joan Svoboda (left), volunteering as a docent, tells visitors about items in the Museum dining room.

Other Board members contributed in a variety of ways. “I certainly appreciated their generous time,” Jeff said.

Acknowledging that so many people attended the open house and hearing comments about needing to return to the Museum, Jeff asked, “Who could ask for anything more?”

Calendar of Events

Sat., March 11

& Sat., April 8, 3:30 p.m.

ENGs meeting

Mon., March 6 & Wed., March 8

Day in the Past (for)

Dodge County 4th graders

Thurs., March 16

Quarterly Meeting, 7 p.m.

Dodge County Historical Society

Tues., April 18, 2 p.m.

Docent Tea

Wed., April 26

Museum Opens for Season

Sat., May 6, 9 a.m.-noon

Plant Sale

Tues., May 9

Fremont Area Big Give

Wedding Exhibit Features 1873 Dress

When the May Museum opens for the season on April 26, the exhibit will feature the last year for “Wedding Bells: Customs and Attire Through the Decades.”

Among other items, visitors will see wedding china, cake toppers, invitations, and an 1870 German wedding suit.

Accessories for both brides and grooms include gloves, fans, jewelry, watches, ties, shoes, shaving mugs and quilts.

Jeff Kappeler, May Museum director, stated the exhibit will include some changes from the first year.

Of course, the main attraction at any wedding may be the bride and her dress.

The dress pictured at right was for Florence Miller’s wedding to Arundel (A.C.) Hull on Oct. 23, 1873 in Fremont.

Florence’s dress is the oldest gown on display.

The hand-sewn dress of white wool features silk fringe along the sleeves and back bustle.

The front of the dress has 12 cloth-covered buttons.



Florence was 25 when she married A.C. who was 27. A.C. was a photographer who owned A.C. Hull’s Photograph Gallery (1870-1893) located at 331 Main St. in downtown Fremont.

“Photographer of the Early West: The Story of Arundel Hull” was written by Eugene Miller, grandson of A.C.

An excerpt from the book includes what Florence wrote in her diary on her wedding day. “When Mr. Hull came he gave me a tiny blue locket with his picture in it.”

The book can be purchased in the Museum gift shop.

At the Miller/Hull wedding, Theron and Caroline Nye were witnesses and signed the wedding certificate (right).

In 1874, the Nyes moved into their newly built home in Fremont that is now the May Museum.



(Below) Florence painted the landscape with mountains using watercolors. It hangs above the fireplace in the Museum upstairs parlor.



The oil portrait of A.C. Hull (below) can be seen in an upstairs bedroom.

