The Durham Presents Two from the Library of Congress

The Durham Western Heritage Museum is fortunate to have not one but two exhibitions from the Library of Congress opening for the holiday season. “From the Home Front and the Front Lines” and “Reflections: Russian Photographs 1992-2002” open together on October 7 in our Velde Gallery, and both present a stunning, stirring look at past and recent times. (Both exhibits run through Sunday, January 7, 2007.)

“Home Front” presents the human side of America at war, through the letters, photographs, diaries, albums and other artifacts of men and women who fought for our country, as well as those of civilian volunteers, support staff, and war industry workers.

During the exhibit, the Durham will record the oral histories and reminiscences of wartime service men and women. The recordings produced from the museum will become part of the Library of Congress’s permanent collection through the Veterans History Project. With nearly 1,700 veterans passing away each day, the collection of these personal accounts of service men and women has become an urgent endeavor, and why we ask you to share of your memories from the wars in which you served. Limited recording times are available, so please call (402) 444-5499 to make an appointment.

“Reflections” also includes the recording of human conflict and emotion, but entirely through the medium of photography. The 1990s was a time of extraordinary turmoil in Russia. These 51 photographs depict the dramatic news events in Moscow that had the whole world watching; they also show a human insight that can be passionate, poetic, ironic, sad, and humorous.


Renovations Underway for Permanent Exhibits

Whether it’s been two years or just two weeks since you’ve visited the Durham Western Heritage Museum, you have some major changes waiting for you.

For the last two months, the million-dollar renovation of the museum’s permanent exhibit space has been underway and the results are spectacular. The updating is immediately visible once entering the south gallery from the main waiting room, where you see the new and enhanced presentation of Omaha Union Station. The story of our home is now told through bold new panels enhanced by our historic photographs and artifacts, highlighting its development as one of the most beautiful of train stations through its transition to “Omaha’s Home for History.”

Continuing downstairs to the lower level, you can’t help but notice our new mascot - a 7 1/2-foot tall American buffalo bull (yet unnamed as of press time) “grazing” in front of a wall-sized mural outside of the Mutual of

Continued on Page 3
Executive Director’s Letter

So much to report!

Engineer III, our summer exhibit from the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry was a huge success both from the standpoint of attendance and from the educational perspective. Thanks to all of you for your comments on how much you enjoyed your experience as well as your observations on how we can continue to improve on our delivery of exhibit messages.

If you have not visited in the last month or so we have a wealth of new and exciting projects ongoing or just around the corner. For example:

Our buffalo has arrived. He is HUGE and is on display on the lower level in front of the Mutual of Omaha Theater. It is difficult to miss him when you exit the elevator.

Work on our rejuvenation of the permanent galleries is about 50 percent complete and we anticipate the new life, vibrancy and interactivity already on display will immeasurably improve your museum experience when the project is complete in early November.

The Gems and Minerals from the Smithsonian Collection exhibit opened in late August and will be on display through January 14, 2007, the final day of the Diamond Jubilee Year of Union Station. The selections from the national collection are truly magnificent. You will not want to miss seeing them.

In just a few days we are opening two spectacular exhibits from the Library of Congress, Reflections: Russian Photographs 1992 – 2002 and From the Home Front and the Front Lines. The former is a powerful exhibit that examines, through the eyes of Russian photo-journalists, the struggle to emerge from the old Soviet Union and develop a form of democratic government in the new Russia. The latter, an equally compelling exhibit, examines the contributions of veterans and those who served on the home front to the conflicts this nation has endured. Personal letters, photos, documents and memorabilia form the core of this moving and emotional look at those who preserved the liberty we enjoy today.

In conjunction the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, we will offer the opportunity for veterans and home front supporters to record oral histories that will become a part of the Library’s permanent archives and available for use by scholars in years to come. If you or a family member or friend would like to be a part of this very important work, please call the museum and set up an appointment for the collection of an oral history.

With all this on our plate we also have the annual Tree Lighting and Christmas at Union Station just around the corner! It seems almost impossible that the year has flown by so quickly.

As always, we welcome your observations and suggestions. Your continued membership and patronage is important to us as we expand and refine our offerings.

Until next time,

Leo W. Smith II
Executive Director

Partnerships

As we approach the end of this calendar year, I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your interest in and support of the Durham Western Heritage Museum. 2006 has been a memorable year for us, and we could not have accomplished our work without the assistance of many friends like you. We remain committed to providing a memorable experience for museum visitors through our traveling exhibitions, our growing education programs, and our newly refurbished permanent exhibits. However, because these programs cannot be funded through membership sales and admission revenues alone, we need your help.

To continue our success at the Durham Western Heritage Museum, I invite you to make an investment in your museum, and contribute to the Annual Fund. Every gift to the Durham Western Heritage Museum’s Annual Fund makes a difference – no matter how big or small. An annual fund gift provides unrestricted operating funds that will support the greatest needs of the museum. Also, with the end of the year almost upon us, a gift received by December 31st may mean a significant 2006 tax deduction for you. To make your donation, simply mail your payment in the self-addressed envelope included in this newsletter.

For additional information on the Durham Western Heritage Museum’s Annual Fund, please contact me at 444-5071 ext. 577, or at muher@dwhm.org. Again, thank you for your continued support of our efforts.

Mary Uher
Director of Development

Thanks for your support!

Our deepest appreciation to the following supporters of our exhibitions:

Gems and Minerals from the Smithsonian Collection
Lexus of Omaha
Borsheim’s Fine Jewelry and Gifts

From the Home Front and the Front Lines
Douglas County Commissioners
ConAgra Foods Foundation
The Hawks Foundation
Carmen and John Gottschalk Foundation
Robert H. Storz Foundation
Iowa West Foundation
Dr. C.C. & Mabel L. Criss Memorial Foundation
U.S. Bank

Reflections: Russian Photographs 1992-2002
The Burlington Capital Group and America First Foundation

TIMELINES is a quarterly newsletter published for the members and friends of the Durham Western Heritage Museum.

EDITOR: Jeff Barnes, Director of Marketing
Autumn is in the Air at Hitchcock Gift Shop

First of all, our sincere appreciation to all the retail area volunteers for your hard work and loyalty during the busy summer months. We couldn’t have done it without you and your untiring dedication to our museum. Thank you!

The beauty of autumn and the fall holidays are now upon us in the Hitchcock Gift Shop. Stop in to see our selection of fall and Halloween items to decorate your home. We have a number of ghosts, goblins, and witches to bring your home to life. Our Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations and gift items will include pieces from Demdaco, Department 56, Bulova, Appletree and many other quality vendors.

As always you will find a wide selection of merchandise for the junior and senior train enthusiast on your Christmas list. If it’s books on railroading, Omaha or Nebraska history, we’re your destination. To enhance our assortment we will offer pieces of work from talented local artists for your gift choice.

Happy Holidays!

Volunteer Corner

Volunteers are the reason the museum stays running. Our volunteer staff dedicates hundreds of hours each month to all aspects of the museum including retail areas, photo archives, education departments and many more places behind the scenes. We are very grateful to all of the individuals that do so much for the Durham Western Heritage Museum, so thank you!

Upcoming Volunteer Events
October 3: Brown Bag Lunch and Learn
November 20: Holiday Potluck
December 5: Brown Bag Lunch and Learn

Volunteers of the Month
July: William Gonzalez
August: Robert Willeyns
September: Del Nielsen

If you’re a college student, or know of one looking for an internship, explore the non-profit work environment of an internship at the museum. Drop me an e-mail at alabens@dwhm.org to find out how to apply.

On a side note, recently my position has been moved into the Education Department here at the museum. I will continue to be the Volunteer Coordinator, but will become more involved with the docent program and educational aspects of the museum as well. I look forward to the challenges and new projects on the horizon.

Audrey Labens
Volunteer Coordinator

Enlist Today!

Join the DWHM volunteer team! The holiday season is extra busy, and we are always looking for dependable volunteers during this time of year. Please contact Audrey at (402) 444-5071 or email alabens@dwhm.org to learn how you can become involved.

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The 2006 corporate membership drive, “Let’s Build It,” took place during the months of July and August. We received tremendous support from area businesses who agreed to promote memberships within their companies. We extend our sincere appreciation to all of them for their hard work and commitment to this historic institution:


Phone-a-thon Brings Back 100+

On June 26th the museum conducted a dropped member phone-a-thon. With the help of volunteers, we welcomed more than 100 members back to the museum!

We wish to express our sincere appreciation to the following for their support: Morse Communications, Hy-Vee, Panera Bread, Steve and Pat Maji, Bob Fahey, Doreen Sherman, Julie Lasto, Sandee Cartwright, Virginia Claussen, Marv and Kay Anderson, Judy Janisch, Maureen Brady, Linda Buehlmann and Kathy Guilliam. We wouldn’t have had our success without your generous help!

‘The Whole Town’s Talking’ About 2006 Sentimental Journey

The museum’s annual fundraiser, Sentimental Journey, is scheduled for Friday, November 3, 2006. This year’s theme, “The Whole Town’s Talking,” derives from a 1935 gangster film of the same name. Honorary Chairs John and Anne Nelson help celebrate the Union Station’s 75th Anniversary by taking us back to the spirit of the late ’20s and early ’30s. Guests will be invited into our “speakeasy” and will be entertained by our “home brewed” version of the 1935 classic.

Please contact Christi Janssen at (402) 444-5071 ext. 530 or cjanssen@dwhm.org for ticket information.

Mark Your Calendars!

Christmas at Union Station: “We Remember When...”
November 24, 2006 - January 7, 2007

Seventy-five years ago, Omaha’s Union Station opened its door to thousands of rail travelers. Today, the Durham Western Heritage Museum welcomes thousands of guests annually to view its permanent and traveling exhibitions. This year’s theme, “We Remember When...” celebrates our journey through time by highlighting the experiences that originated within these walls. We would like to invite you to share your memories with us. Whether you boarded a train to see family or made your first school field trip via rail, we encourage all ages to submit a story about their favorite experience. These can be hand-written or typed and mailed to the museum or e-mailed to membership@dwhm.org. Submissions will be collected and displayed at the museum during Christmas at Union Station. Deadline is November 5, 2006.

Tree Lighting Ceremony
November 24, 2006: 5 - 7 p.m.

Christmas at Union Station kicks off with the annual lighting of Omaha’s largest indoor Christmas tree, adorned with thousands of lights and decorations. The evening is filled with fun for children of all ages. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand to listen to the wish lists of all the boys and girls, followed by the traditional countdown to the lighting of the tree. Members of the museum can enjoy Santa’s Snackshop, located in the Swanson Gallery.

Ethnic Holiday Festival
December 1, 2006: 5 - 9 p.m.

Grab your passports and take a trip around the world without leaving Omaha! The Ethnic Holiday Festival is back and bigger than ever. This annual festival features food and entertainment from all corners of the globe. Local cultural organizations proudly display their crafts and traditional dress while musicians and dancers fill the Main Waiting Room and Swanson Gallery. Visit Track Level for a sampling of ethnic foods.

Weekend Holiday Performances
Saturday/Sunday December 2 - December 17

Each weekend throughout Christmas at Union Station, enjoy holiday music performed by local church and school organizations. The performance schedule will be listed on our website a week in advance.

Gift Memberships: The Perfect Gift

A membership is the perfect gift for every occasion! From grandparents to new neighbors, everyone will appreciate this gift that keeps on giving. Please contact the membership department at (402) 444-5071 to purchase your gift membership over the phone or visit our website at www.dwhm.org. Let us help you make gift giving easy.
Busy Summer Ends for Education Dept.

It was a busy summer in the education department as ENGINEER IT! brought many eager visitors of all ages to the museum. More than 550 kids went through the Summer Day Camp program enjoying Drama Camp, Recycled Art and Pioneer Living experiences. Also, many took a special camp designed around the ENGINEER IT! exhibit and spent an entire week learning related engineering concepts. Add to that more than 150 workshops and tours and the summer just flew by.

Through a new partnership with the University of Nebraska Foundation, seven college students were in the museum doing internships related to their chosen field of study. Brent Griffin, Oliver Bonham-Carter, Chris Tuan and Charles Foxhoven spent the summer sharing their knowledge with visitors on science and engineering in ENGINEER IT! Jill Hansen worked in the marketing and special events departments while Mike Pray worked for curatorial and Melissa Aden helped the education department. This pilot program was a huge success for both the students and the museum and we are looking forward to continuing the partnership.

The Smithsonian speaker series was a big hit this summer with crowds of 200 or more at several of the presentations.

But, without a doubt, the highlight of the summer was the inaugural run of the “Gritty City” tour, made possible by The Paxton and Jobber’s Canyon. Following an exciting opening event on July 11th with the author of “A Dirty, Wicked Town,” David Bristow, the tours were packed through the end of September. More than 2,000 people experienced early Omaha as it has rarely been seen. Because of the great interest in this tour, stay tuned next spring for “The Gritty City, Chapter II.”

Education Calendar

October 7: I’ve Been Reading on the Railroad, 11 a.m.
October 8: Season’s final Gritty City dinner tour, 4 p.m.
October 12: Home School Happenings (10-11:30 a.m. and 1-2:30 p.m.)
October 23-27: Library of Congress teacher workshops, Veterans Exhibit and the Song of America workshop
October 28: Halloween Classes
November 4: I’ve Been Reading on the Railroad, 11 a.m.
Nov. 14-16: Scholars in the Schools (Millard, Omaha Public, Council Bluffs Lewis Central, Bellevue and Omaha Duchesne will participate.)
Editor’s note: This new feature in Timelines takes a closer look at the origin and behind-the-scenes stories of some of the more treasured items in our collection.

Did you know the Durham Western Heritage Museum is “home” to one of the world’s most sought-after coins? With its beautiful blue and silver hues, the 1804 dollar is truly the centerpiece of the Byron Reed collection. These coins are extremely rare, with only 15 known specimens in existence. In fact, the 1804 dollar holds the world record of reaching $4.14 million at auction. No wonder renowned numismatist B. Max Mehl dubbed the 1804 dollar “The King of American Coins.”

The 1804 dollars were not intended for circulation, but as gifts to dignitaries—thus their rarity. Mint records indicate that in early 1804, 19,570 coins were produced. However, experts agree that all of these coins are dated 1803. Later into the year, all production of the silver dollar came to a halt. It wasn’t until thirty years later that the sought after 1804 coins came into existence.

The Byron Reed 1804 dollar is a Class I specimen. It is among eight so-called “original” pieces believed to have been struck in the mid-1830s exclusively for coin sets President Jackson gave to rulers in the Far and Middle East. There also are seven re-strikes thought to have been minted in the late 1850s. During this time, Mint employees secretly began making the 1804 dollars to sell to eager coin collectors. One of the coins is listed as Class II because of its plain edge; the other six, which have crushed lettered edges, are said to be Class III. The Class II and Class III coins were struck with a different reverse die than the Class I examples.

The Byron Reed coin has a mysterious past. It was surely coined in the mid-1830s along with the other seven Class I coins. However, it was kept at the Mint for almost a decade until an unknown “aged lady” claimed to purchase the coin for one dollar around 1868. According to the story, the aged lady gave the coin to her son, who sold it to E. Harrison Sandford in May 1868. In 1874, Sandford sold the coin to Lorin G. Parmelee, who found success in the Boston bean-baking arena. Parmelee held on to the coin for 16 years until the Parmelee collection was offered up for auction in 1890.

At this time, the famous Omaha real estate agent Byron Reed spent much of his time collecting rare coins, autographs, books and maps for his extensive library. In 1890, he purchased the 1804 coin for $570 at the Parmelee sale. When Reed died in 1891, he left his fabulous coin and document collection to the Omaha City Library. In 1999 the collection was transferred to its current home, the Durham Western Heritage Museum, for permanent display.
Coming up at the Durham Western Heritage Museum

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**Call (402) 444-5071 for more information, or log on to www.dw.hm.org**