

## State Historical Society director notes 30 years with Society

This summer I will have been with the South Dakota State Historical Society for 30 years. After eight years working for Secretary of State Alice Kundert and a few months as a temporary social science teacher, I was hired as the executive assistant to Society Director J.R. Fishburne. Long-time director Dayton Canaday was still with the Society and in charge of our library, and Fred Lillibridge had recently stepped down after a two-year stint as director. Fred had brought the Society through a trying re-organization which remains the foundation of our structure today. Secretary of Education and Cultural Affairs James Hansen informed me that my initial assignment was to “get the Society’s budget under control.” The budget was more complicated than it is today with what seemed like lots of moving pieces, and the challenge of having enough funding to cover all our operating expenses was evident and remains a trial today.

At the time, the State Historical Society was still located in the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Memorial Building across from the State Capitol and the State Library, now known as the MacKay Building. The South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center was under construction. It was exciting to watch the progress on the building. The “deal” that was struck for the Center was that state government would cover the costs of construction and outfitting the building, but funding for the museum exhibits would come from private sources. I was tasked with mobilizing the State Historical Society Endow-

### From the SDSHS Director



Jay D. Vogt

ment to raise the funds for the primary exhibition and became the first executive director. Tom Kilian of Sioux Falls was chair of both the Society and the Endowment. His leadership was crucial, as what became known as the South Dakota Heritage Fund, now the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, began raising money for the first time. First Lady Linda Mickelson was very involved in promoting the new Cultural Heritage Center and raising the funds for “The South Dakota Experience” exhibit. The Cultural Heritage Center was the State of South Dakota’s gift to itself as part of the commemoration of the State’s centennial anniversary. The Society moved into the Center starting in February 1989. The first phase of “The South

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## Field Reports

The 2016 Annual Meeting of the Association of South Dakota Museums is June 3-4 in Huron. Hosted by the Dakotaland Museum, the theme is “ASDM in the Fair City: A Ticket to Success!”

Session topics include cultivating donor relationships, stopping pest problems, engaging diverse ethnic groups, the latest practices in archives care, collaborating with each other, using tech in museums and railroad history.

The deadline for receiving mailed registrations is May 27.

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Current officers of the Hyde County Historical and Genealogical Society in Highmore include: President — Skyla Ratzlaff, Vice-President — Maurine Bouzek, Secretary — Deanne Smith, Treasurer — Sandra Cermak, and Directors — Janice Cermak, Marllys Cermak and Dolores Stoley.

Last year the society hosted two public book signings. John Miller shared from “If We Imagine” and Betsey DeLoache discussed “Country Schools: Past and Present.”

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Current officers of the Garretson Area Historical Society and Heritage Museum in Garretson include: President — Barbara Marsh; Vice-President — Chris Engebretson, Treasurer/Newsletter Editor — Margie Martens,

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## More Field Reports

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Secretary — Kelli Schleuter, Volunteer Coordinator/Board Member — Judy Hanson, Board Members — Dwayne Jacobson, Gloria Sanders and Lorna Sunde; Other Contributors — Sharon Kringen, Oran Sorenson, Bill Hoskins, Lee Hanson and Jakob Etrheim; Paid Staff/Grant Writer — Beverly Calvert.

The society was established in 1984 and the museum in 1989 to preserve and share the heritage of the Garretson area for future generations. Their website is: [www.facebook.com/GarretsonAreaHistoricalSocietyMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/GarretsonAreaHistoricalSocietyMuseum)

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Officers recently re-elected for the Faulkton county Historical Society in Faulkton included: President — Jody Moritz, Vice-President — Virgil Hansen, Secretary — Rosene Royce, and Treasurer — Joyce Arnold.

The guest speaker at this year's annual meeting was Dr. William Bosch speaking about the area's Germans from Russia heritage. The group is making plans to open the John and Alice Pickler Manion for the 28th season on Monday, May 30. The museum will be open daily for guided tours from 1-4 p.m.

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Current officers of the Grant County Historical Society in Milbank include: President — Arlo Levisen, Treasurer — Karen Layher, and Board Members — Joe Holtzmann, Nancy Anderson, Rosie Christianson, Gloria Cooley, Marsha Lundberg, Marge Nowick, Shirley Zahn, Susan Sbei and Daryl Stengel.

The society operates the following museums in Milbank: the Grant County Historical Museum (Old Carnegie Library), the Historical House and Country School, the First Congregational Church and the Dolan-Justice Memorial Museum; plus the Agricultural and Tractor Museums in Stockholm and Brown Earth Indian Church just outside of Stockholm.

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## Vogt

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Dakota Experience" opened in September 1992.

With personnel changes in the organization, Gov. William J. Janklow appointed me the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in 1996, and as part of another re-organization, I was directed to relocate the SHPO office from Vermillion to Pierre. This move was not popular with the staff which resigned in mass. The SHPO office was shoehorned into the Cultural Heritage Center, and during a state government hiring freeze, I was able to announce five positions to get the office functional. This experience was one of the most rewarding times during my career. In 1999, I was asked to take on the day-to-day management of the Society as the deputy director, during which the Society was transferred from the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs to a new Department of Tourism and Economic Development, and in 2003, I was appointed the eighth director of the South Dakota State Historical Society. Since becoming director, the Society has been transferred to the new Department of Tourism and last year, to the Department of Education.

Serving as your director of the State Historical Society is a pleasure. You have an outstanding team of office directors and program personnel. With a staff of nearly 50 people and a budget of \$5.2 million (only half of which is general state tax dollars), we are able to effectively collect, preserve, interpret, and promote the history of the people of South Dakota. We conduct surveys and maintain the records of archaeological sites; we take care of the official state records and an extensive collection of personal papers and photographs; we identify and inventory historic properties and sites; we collect and display historical artifacts; and we publish historical accounts in "South Dakota History" and independent titles. In order to accomplish much of our work, we rely on membership dues, contracts for services, processing charges, museum admission fees, and donations from our friends and members. We work closely with the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation to raise additional funds to support special events, exhibitions and programs.

I realize that I have not been to many of the local history-related groups or facilities during my time with the State Historical Society. I would be glad to come and meet with your organization or visit your operations. Please let me know if you would like to schedule me to stop by sometime. Thank you for all you do for our state and local history. jdv

The Historic Homestake Opera House in Lead hosted an unusual and fun fund-raiser on April 16 when "Sydnee Hamann's Senior Citizen Prom" took place in the theater. The 55 years-and-older crowd was encouraged to formally dress up and come dance the afternoon away to Billboard hits through the decades. The event was organized by Sydnee Hamann, a Lead-Deadwood High School senior who thought it would be fun for local senior citizens to relive their proms.

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The Minnehaha County Historical Society held three events in one night in April at the Old Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls. Society members attended their annual banquet, then participated in the annual election of officers, and finally listened to USD History Professor Steve Bucklin talk about the "History of Interstate Highways in South Dakota."

Current society officers include: President — Jim A. Carlson, 1st Vice-President (Programs and Marketing) — Jennifer Dumke, 2nd Vice-President (Newsletter) — Sandy Dean, Secretary — Celia Benson, Treasurer — Gaylord Helmbrecht, Historian Project Chair — Ryan Tellberg, Board Members — Ken Alvine, Daren Anderson and Wayne Fanebust; and President Emeritus — Bob Kolbe.

The new exhibit at the Pettigrew Home & Museum in Sioux Falls, "Building Sioux Falls: 1883-1919," shows the early years of the city.