

2016: Issue 4

Fall

Alliance Monitor

Peers Helping Peers Since 1991

House museums gather for picture perfect fall workshop

With smart phones in hand, they looked like tourists on a vacation as they followed a tour guide through the Alexander Ramsey House in St. Paul. Visitors paused to take a close-up of formal dinnerware in the dining room or a selfie by an ornate hand railing.

Instead, these "tourists" were learning how to use Instagram to attract visitors to their own house museums located throughout the state.

Instagram was one of three topics at MALHM's fall workshop for house museums, held Oct. 24. Other sessions focused on storytelling in interpretation and historic site and museum security and key management.

WORKSHOP to Page 7



Hormel Historic Home in Austin staff Amanda Barber and Holly Johnson paused for a selfie outside Ramsey House at MALHM's fall workshop.



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New membership benefit: Gaylord Archival discount

MALHM members now receive a 15 percent discount off products, and 50 percent off shipping of orders over \$100, with Gaylord Archival catalog.

Don't miss out! Renew today. The coupon code, recently emailed to current members, is valid through Dec. 31, 2016. A new code will be sent for 2017.

Membership is currently just \$5 for all-volunteer organizations (or individuals) and \$25 for organizations with paid staff. (See form on Page 9) Contact MALHM Coordinator [Marc Matson](#) if you have questions about your renewal date.

Session presenters sought for 2017 conference

We're looking for great sessions for our 2017 Annual Meeting and Conference!

True to MALHM's motto of "peers helping peers," we are looking for people in Minnesota's local history community to share their ideas for collections, education, museum management, audience engagement and more.

The Annual Meeting and Conference will be held April 26-27 at

Chase on the Lake in Walker, MN. Proposals are due by Dec. 8.

MALHM's conference is designed for history museum volunteers, staff, and board members who serve various roles within their organization. Topics on the conference agenda are expected to cover a broad range of work typically found in small- to medium-sized museums. or details, our website's [Annual Con-](#)

[ference](#) page and click on the [Call for Proposals](#) link. Use the form to submit your proposal.

Proposals should be informative, relevant, applicable to the field, and encourage opportunities for participant engagement. Please contact Conference Chair Jill Wohnoutka at 320-235-1881 or by [email](#) if you have any questions or to discuss ideas.

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Road scholar: learning from others around the state



By Marci Matson Coordinator

For someone whose commute is typically the few feet from her coffee pot to her home office, I drove several hundred miles for MALHM in the past couple of months. Meetings and events took me to Shevlin (MALHM Board), Baudette (Minnesota's Historic Northwest), Duluth and Superior. WI (Northland History Coalition), St. Peter (MALHM Mingle), Madison (West Central Minnesota Historical Association) and St. Paul (fall workshop).

Add in a few other planning meetings, and many weeks, I spent more time on the road than at my desk.

I went on the road to find out what local history groups want to learn at regional trainings and sessions at the annual conference in April. I ended up finding people who taught me a thing or two about how to run a history museum.

For example, in the tiny town of Shevlin, Executive Director **Tamara Edevold** has attracted more than 800 members to the **Clearwater County Historical Society**. (That's with a county population of just 8,000.) I'm fortunate to have her on the MALHM Board's Membership Committee; she's the one who secured our discount on Gaylord Archival. (See Page 1).

In Baudette, Executive Director **Marlys Hirst** showed off a new addition to the **Lake of the Woods Historical Society**, funded in part

by more than \$300,000 raised from the community. She also successfully won grants for a new HVAC system and rehousing of collections. Several colleagues from Minnesota's Historic Northwest took notes on the tour to help in planning their own building projects.

During roundtable updates, I was intrigued by the **Beltrami Historical Society** Executive Director **Dan Karalus'** description of his annual "History Mystery" game that draws a crowd every New Year's Eve. Like the board game Clue, the whodunit game requires players to find the murderer—but instead of Colonel Mustard in the library with a candlestick, the killer is a local historical figure in a local landmark.

Similarly, **Steele County Historical Society** Executive Director **Kim Purscell** has started a new series called "History Uncorked," where a real case from the county's history is tried by real lawyers, while attendees act as the jury (while enjoying beer or wine.)

These two groups have inspired us to explore including games into a session or mixer event at our annual conference. Stay tuned!

I snapped lots of photos at **Glensheen** in Duluth and **Fairlawn** mansion in Superior, WI, to show the creative ways they interpret their spaces. I hope to share those ideas on our blog soon!

While I miss easy access to my coffee pot while I'm on the road, I love meeting — and learning from — my local history peers.

Nominations due Feb. 3 for Minnesota History Awards

Even though the year is far from over, it's not too early to start thinking about nominations for the 2017 annual Minnesota History Awards.

Nominate projects accomplished in 2016 in the following categories: Behind the Scenes, Collections, Partnerships, Publications, Public Programs, Preservation and Lifetime Achievement.

Applications are due Feb. 3, 2017 and winners will be honored at the 2017 MALHM Conference, April 26-27, in Walker, Minnesota.

Categories include the Lifetime Achievement Award, created last year for individuals who have demonstrated leadership within their organization, their community, and to Minnesota's history community in the preservation and promotion of local and state history.

Experience should total 25 years in Minnesota.

See [our website](#) for more information about all categories and definitions, as well as [examples of winners](#) from past years to inspire you.

Nominations should be complete but concise and use the form found on our website. To fill in the form, use Adobe Acrobat as your default PDF viewer.

The Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums created the awards in 2008 to honor the excellent work performed in Minnesota's public history community.

In addition to highlighting those who have achieved excellence, the program intends to use the example of winners to show the rest of our peers how it can be

Conference Deadlines

Dec. 5

- Session Proposals due

Dec. 15

- Host Site bids due

January date TBA

- Registration opens! Look for deadlines and pricing information soon.

Feb. 3

- Minnesota History Award nominations due

April 4

- Chase on the Lake deadline for MALHM discount hotel booking Phone only reservations: 888-242-7306

done, hopefully raising the quality of everyone's work.

Please contact Minnesota History Awards Chair Jill Wohnoutka at 320-235-1881 or by [email](#) if you have any questions.

Host sites sought for future MALHM conferences

MALHM is looking for host sites for the 2018 and 2019 annual conferences. To be considered, submit a bid by Dec. 15, 2016.

As an organization representing groups throughout the state, MALHM tries to move the site to different regions every year.

To receive a proposal outline by email, contact Coordinator Marci Matson at 612-500-7460 or by [email](#).

One of the host site partners should be a local history group. Others may include local hotels, Convention and Visitors Bureaus, entertainment venues and others who could host activities before, during or after the conference.



Photo by Marci Matson

The site of the 2017 MALHM Conference, Chase on the Lake resort in Walker, offers views of Leech Lake from its hotel rooms.

MALHM Conference to offer advertising, sponsorships

For the first time, the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums will offer program advertising and event sponsorship for its annual conference.

"We actually had businesses contact us first to find out a way to reach our audience," said MALHM Treasurer Jill Wohnoutka, who also serves as the conference chair. "We didn't want to miss out on this opportunity to earn income and grow the conference, so we created ad and sponsorship rates."

To attract a widely known keynote speaker, MALHM is seeking a \$1,000 sponsor. MALHM also would like a \$600 sponsor for a half-day event on Tuesday, April 25, the day before the two-day conference (April 26-27) at Chase on the Lake in Walker, MN. Sponsorship benefits include listing in the program and on MALHM website, as well as in the program distributed to attendees and circulated to Min-

Advertising	
\$30	1/8 page
\$50	1/4 page
\$100	1/2 page
\$175	full page
\$200	full page—back cover or inside front cover

Ads must be camera ready, in .jpg format, sized for 8.5" by 11" program with trim.

Sponsorship
\$1,000 Keynote speaker
\$600 half-day event

Contact Coordinator **Marci Matson** for more info,
612-500-7460

ning would extend beyond the two-day conference.

"With advertising and sponsorship income, we hope to offer more programming and still keep costs affordable for the local history community," said MALHM President Dustin Heckman.

The MALHM Conference offers two days of sessions for perhaps the lowest price for any professional conferences: just \$60 for members and \$75 for non-members last year. (This year's prices have not been set.)

In its inaugural year, advertising rates are relatively low, beginning at just \$30 for 1/8 page, to give the small to mid-sized local history organization a cost-effective way to reach colleagues. (See sidebar at left.)

To discuss sponsorship opportunities or for more information, contact Coordinator **Marci Matson** at 612-500-7460.

nesota's 500-plus local history organizations.

If MALHM finds a sponsor, this would be the first time program-

MALHM members mingle at September event

Despite a flash flood watch and a torrential thunderstorm, a crowd gathered in September for our first networking event, "MALHM Mingle," at the Nicollet County Historical Society.

The group viewed the Smithsonian traveling exhibit "Water Ways," enjoyed free appetizers and a cash bar, and learned about other traveling exhibit opportunities available to small museums.

The next "Mingle" event will be held at the Becker County Historical Society in Detroit Lakes sometime in April.



Jessica Potter (Blue Earth County Historical Society), Brent Peterson (Washington County Historical Society), Dustin Heckman (Goodhue County Historical Society and MALHM President) and Jessica Becker (Nicollet County Historical Society) were among the group that attended the first MALHM Mingle, held at NCHS in September.

Tips on winning funding from your local townships

Five years ago, Kandiyohi County received just \$250 from one township. Today, almost every township contributes some funding, to total more than \$5,000 in added annual revenue.

Otter Tail County Historical Society receives funding from 50 of its 62 townships to bring in about \$16,000 per year.

Back when Dustin Heckman was a new executive director at the Mower County Historical Society, he wondered how his peers could convince frugal township board members to designate funds for history.

By modeling his colleagues, however, he was able to win township funding at Mower, and then Goodhue County Historical Society when he was hired there as executive director in 2014.

You too can win township funding by following these three executive directors' tips for success.

1. Provide a service

Before you make the pitch for funding, ask yourself how your history organization benefits the township.

To paraphrase President John Kennedy, "Ask not what your township can do for you, ask what you can do (or have done) for your township."

Even if they wanted, townships legally can't write out checks to just any worthy nonprofit. Township supervisors need to justify to taxpayers that they are receiving a service for their money.

Several local history groups have found creative ways to provide valuable services that fit their mission



Photos courtesy Otter Tail County Historical Society

Otter Tail County Historical Society won township funding after taking its "show on the road" with popular downtown history tours.

and benefit townships:

Present outreach programs

Otter Tail County Historical Society received "not one dime" from one township until it presented a tour of its downtown. Funding grew to \$500 and then \$1,000 as township supervisors saw the value of historical programming and preservation of the town's history.

To win community funding, you need to be out in the community, Schuelke said. OCHS staff presents programming at nursing homes, business and service groups and schools throughout the county. He believes that a county historical society needs to represent all areas of the county and not just the town where the museum is based.

Create township historians

In addition, OCHS increased its

outreach efforts by inviting township boards to appoint a township historian to partner with OCHS to collect and preserve local history. Because they know their communities best, these appointees have been successful in gathering family, farm, and school stories and artifacts that are now housed in the museum's permanent collection.

In appreciation, OCHS holds an annual potluck dinner and program for the group.

Microfilm township records

In 2007, Jill Wohnoutka, then executive director of the Renville County Historical Society, proposed microfilming township records — not because she was trying to win funding, but because she wanted to ensure the information was preserved and accessible to researchers.

TOWNSHIP to Page 6

TOWNSHIP from Page 5

"This is critical information," Wohnoutka said. "If a township building goes up in flames, the first records of the county would be gone forever."

She won Minnesota Historical Society grants to microfilm birth, death, clerk and treasurer records in stages over several years. The project provided three copies: one for the townships, one for Renville County Historical Society, and one for the Southwest Minnesota Historical Center at Southwest State University in Marshall, MN.

When she was hired as executive director of the Kandiyohi County Historical Society in 2009, she started a microfilming project there as well.

Preserving township records is really a win-win for all involved, Wohnoutka said. Researchers can find records during regular museum hours, rather than hunting down a volunteer township clerk to open the town hall. Townships receive secure record storage, and



Photo courtesy Goodhue County Historical Society

Burnside Township was featured in a six-month rotating exhibit of townships at Goodhue County Historical Society.

KCHS receives valuable archives and funding for that service.

Heckman and others have followed KCHS's lead and also began microfilming township records with Legacy funding. (See sidebar, lower left.)

Create township exhibits

For the past 11 years, Goodhue County Historical Society has spotlighted a different township

with a six-month exhibit.

"This has presented the opportunity to engage with not only the township board but also local residents in telling the history of their communities," Heckman said.

2. Connect with leaders

Ask residents to advocate

Making connections with exhibits and programs help create advocates for history funding, according to Heckman.

"The best way to engage townships in providing monetary support is to have members of your organization living in each township go to the annual meeting and request support on your behalf," he said. "Elected officials may respond better to taxpayers providing the 'pitch' as opposed to a member of your staff or board, who do not reside within the township."

Attend township meetings

Schuelke advises board members and staff to attend township meetings. While he can't attend all

Try this at home

You too can win funding to microfilm township records. Microfilming records is eligible for Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Program (aka Legacy grants).

Applicants should be sure to check with State Archives when planning as there may be Data Privacy issues to address and the possibility of reuniting township record collections that are split between MNHS and that township.



Image credit: Minnesota Historical Society Collection. Newspaper Indexing, Tradeau School, Minneapolis. Identifiers: L7 r90, YR1943.2738

TOWNSHIP to Page 7

TOWNSHIP from Page 5

62 township annual meetings in one week, Schuelke does attend regional and regular township sessions throughout the year so that leaders can put a face with his name. Personal connections make a difference, he said.

3. *Ask at the right time*

Many, but not all, townships hold their annual meetings the second week in March, when they elect supervisors, set the annual budget and approve the tax levy.

Ask too late and township boards won't have time to consider your proposal. Ask too early and your request may get lost in the shuffle.

Some organizations send a letter to the township clerk in December, while others wait until after the holiday season. This will give the township board at least one or two meetings before the annual meeting to discuss your request.

The county office that oversees elections should be able to provide you the most recent certified listing of township supervisors and contact information so you can ensure the request goes to the right person.

4. *Know your worth*

In order to be successful, local history groups need to "stop feeling sorry for themselves," said Schuelke. Rather than asking townships—or any other funding agency—to give you money because you can't raise funds on your own, "you need to come in from a position of strength. Local history work is important but you need to be able to articulate why you deserve funding."



Glensheen's Marketing Manager Jane Pederson talked about ways Instagram has drawn new audiences to the mansion in Duluth. Other presenters at MALHM's fall workshop were Aaron Novodvorsky from the Minnesota Historical Society on house museum security and Jayne Becker, Program Specialist at Ramsey House, on using storytelling to engage tour visitors.

WORKSHOP from Page 1

The workshop came out of discussions from MALHM's House Museum Affinity Group, which formed in 2015 and advocated for more training.

Of the 31 attendees, only a couple had been using Instagram for their organizations, but several indicated they plan to use Instagram and other ideas from the workshop.

"Wonderful workshop! I came away with lots of info and ideas from the Security session. The Instagram session was quite instructional and hands on. We are planning to use it!" wrote Valerie Ross from Eden Prairie Historical Society, in her feedback for the workshop. "The storytelling session was truly an inspiration to engage audiences differently. Thank you for putting together a very worthwhile day!"

House Museum Affinity Group elects officers

MALHM's House Museum Affinity Group elected its first slate of officers:

- **Jayne Becker**, program specialist at Ramsey House and other MNHS properties, as Chair;
- **Holly Johnson**, Director at Hormel House in Austin, as Vice Chair;
- **Milissa Brooks-Ojibway**, Curator at Glensheen, as Secretary.

In addition, **Eve Burlingame**, program specialist for Eiden Homestead in Brooklyn Park will join the group to help plan sessions for the Annual Conference and future workshops.

Follow the [MALHM House Museum](#) group on Facebook to stay informed of the Affinity Group's activities.

How to host an Instameet to build your audience

Glensheen mansion's Instagram feed is filled with beautiful photos of Lake Superior sunrises, creative close-ups of architectural details, and of course, the house itself from a variety of angles.

Even if you don't have a marketing manager like Glensheen does, your small museum can regularly post gorgeous photos to attract bigger (and younger) audiences.

The key: hosting an Instameet.

A meet-up of Instagrammers at a museum or historic site generates typically 200 to 300 photos. The museum or site can repost those photos on that day or even weeks afterward—a boon to overtaxed staff who don't always have time for social media photography.

Instameets aren't difficult or expensive to host, with these tips offered by Jane Pederson, Marketing Manager for Glensheen, and Rachel Ewell, from the group [@mncommunity](#), “dedicated to supporting and promoting local artists, events and organizations.”

Publicize on all platforms

Promote your Instameet on Instagram, of course, but don't ignore other media, Pederson advises. Just as you would for any other event, post on Facebook and other social media, post on your website, print flyers, and send out press releases. Glensheen also invited a local television station, and a camera crew documented the #sunriseatGlensheen Instameet.

Partner with an Instagram group like @mncommunity

More than 11,400 people follow @mncommunity on Instagram and 100 or more typically show up for



@jlberge5



@mncommunity

Although Glensheen staff posts regularly to social media, they appreciate the fresh perspective of Instagrammers, such as @jlberge5 and @mncommunity, who took these creative photos at #sunriseatglensheen Instameet.

Instameets publicized on its feed, according to Rachel Ewell, who coordinates the group with Jessica Dudas.

“If each person who attends, posts to their 100 to 500 or more followers... well, do the math,” Ewell said. “You'll reach a lot bigger audience with an Instameet than you would on your own.”

Instagrammers tend to be younger than those who use Facebook exclusively, so Instameets

also help museums reach a new demographic: 20- to 30-year-olds, who most likely do not already engage with you on social media.

The group attends one to two Instameets per month, so contact @mncommunity early to discuss possibilities with Dudas and/or Ewell, who often will scout the site in advance to check out photography potential.

Partner with area attractions

Perhaps your site doesn't offer amazing Lake Superior views or extensive property for photographers to roam. “Small museums still can be featured,” Ewell said, “but they might want to coordinate with other attractions in their community for better impact.”

Work with your Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber of Commerce or other local attractions to create an interesting photo tour for an Instameet.

Offer free admission and a unique experience

Instagrammers are looking for INSTAMEET to Page 9



@mncommunity

@mncommunity Instagrammers at the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis.

INSTAMEET from Page 8

great photo opportunities that they wouldn't get if they walked in the door like any other visitor. To attract a crowd, offer a behind the scenes tour, access to closed off areas, or simply private tours before or after regular business hours.

Glensheen opened its grounds at sunrise, for example, while a preservation group "let us into cobwebby old basements and nooks and crannies," Ewell said. "Believe it or not, we loved that."

Offer free stuff

Instagrammers meet for socializing with other creatives, as much as the photography. Accommodating that interest is as easy as providing a space to chat before or after the event and taking a group photo to remember the day.

While not required, participants appreciate refreshments, even just hot coffee on a cold morning photo shoot. (Duluth Coffee provided free coffee to participants, and Glensheen credited them in a post with the shop's Instagram user name. See photo below)

Some organizations give away "swag, that can be as cheap as buttons or pencils or other small

souvenir of the day," Ewell said.

A few museums reward the best photos with prizes, such as free membership or gift shop items.

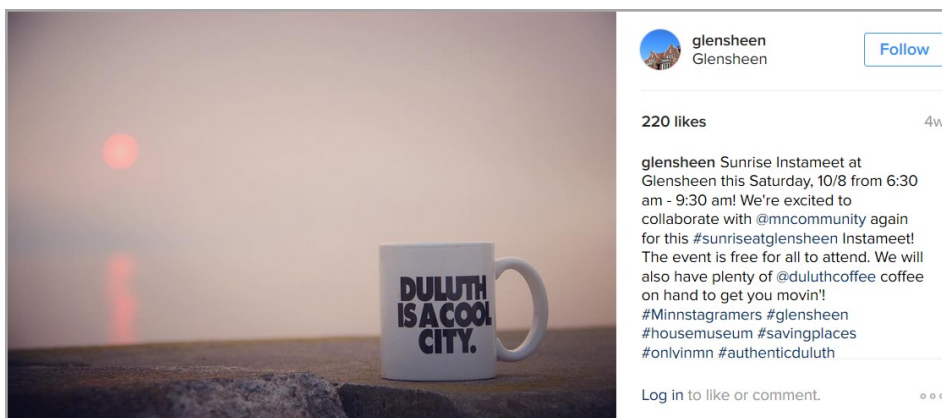


Create a hashtag for your site and your Instameet

Give your Instameet its own hashtag so you and other Instagrammers can easily find the photos generated from the event.

Don't forget to publicize a hashtag for your site as well, so that any visitor on any day can post photos tagged with your name.

Use the free app called [Over](#) to easily place text on top of your photo. Include the hashtag, date, time and place on the photo as well as in the caption.



Glensheen credited Instameet partner Duluth Coffee in an instagram photo featuring a sunrise and — of course — an appropriately titled coffee mug.

Finally, repost photos with credit—and compliments

Instagrammers want to reach a bigger audience for their work, and they're happy when an Instameet host reposts their photos. However, you should credit the photographer and include his or her user name in your post. (Please ask permission for any use outside of Instagram.)

To make reposting easier, @mncommunity uses a free app called [repost](#), which automatically drops in the user name on the photo. In addition, include the photographer's user name in your caption.

Finally, compliment photographers when you repost to ensure good will, such as "Great shot by..." "Kudos to..."

Gratitude and recognition are important rewards for Instagrammers. After all, through the power of Instameets, your museum has been introduced to a new audience through beautiful photographs.

Planning an Instameet? We'll help publicize your event. Contact MALHM Coordinator Marci Matson by email with details.

House Museum Workshop feedback:

"I plan to use some of the (house museum workshop) suggestions in the future. I intend to start having us use Instagram more ... I think it would be great to do an Instameet since we have a very photogenic property."

~Ryan Harren, Olmsted County Historical Society

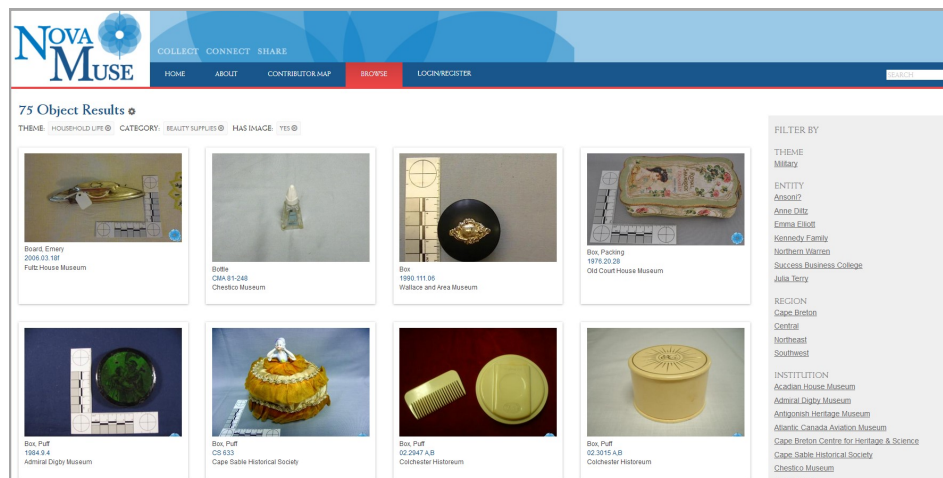
Collective Access reviewed by Collections Task Force

Minnesota's Collections Task Force recently tuned into a webinar showing how museums from Nova Scotia and Connecticut use Collective Access, an open source collections management system.

CollectiveAccess has emerged as a leading alternative to PastPerfect, according to Joe Hoover, Digital Technology Outreach Specialist with the Minnesota Historical Society.

While PastPerfect fits the needs of many museums, others are looking for features like a cloud-based system that PastPerfect has not yet included in its software.

Collective Access already has the basic structure for history collections in place, having been adopted by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, the Connecticut League of History Organizations and the Museum Associa-



Nova Scotia museums have worked together on an online catalog, designed with Collective Access, called NovaMuse. See <http://novamuse.ca/>

tion of Saskatchewan. All the organizations use iWeb as their hosting service.

A common hosting service allows federated searching between museums, so that researchers can find family information, for example, in multiple institutions with one search.

The webinar demonstrated that individual institutions can determine which fields and artifacts to

share in a common database. For example, a military museum chose not to include its gun collection.

The task force will meet to determine whether to pilot the system. If you have feedback on the process, please contact: MALHM board member and task force member Ann **Grandy** at popcountymuseum@gmail.com or **Hoover** at joe.hoover@mnhs.org.

West Central Minnesota Historical Association forms 501(c)3 nonprofit

A group of 10 counties in west central Minnesota have shared ideas and worked on joint projects for years, but they recently made their coalition official. At its Oct. 10 meeting, the West Central Minnesota Historical Association voted to organize as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The designation will help the group when applying for grants and formalize its processes.

The group modeled its Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and dues structure after Minnesota's Historic Northwest, which formed in 1997 and organized as a 501(c)3



West Central Minnesota Historical Association met at Lac Qui Parle County Historical Society in Madison, MN, to incorporate as a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

in 2009. Representatives from both groups met to share ideas and discuss best practices for a regional coalition in advance of

the Oct. 10 meeting.

WCMHA is working on a joint traveling exhibit about World War I in their region.

Join us!

Join MALHM, the voice of Minnesota's local history community since 1991.

Benefits include:

- Quarterly newsletter and regular email news updates
- Access to members only resources on new website, www.minnesotahistorymuseums.org
- Discounts on networking events and Annual Conference
- Advocacy for the local history field on state boards and legislation
- Mutual aid during natural disasters.
- Discount on Gaylord Archival Supplies and more!

Please verify your organization's public contact information on our website listing of [members](#). List any changes below and email a jpg file of your logo or building to MALHM Coordinator [Marci Matson](#).

Your organization: _____

Physical Address: _____ City, State, Zip _____

Mailing Address: _____ City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Public Contact Email: _____

Website (or Facebook) link: _____

Contact person: _____ Title _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please list other organization members who want to receive MALHM notices and discounts:

1. Name: _____ Email: _____

2. Name: _____ Email: _____

3. Name: _____ Email: _____

4. Name: _____ Email: _____

5. Name: _____ Email: _____

Membership dues: ☐ \$25 for organizations with paid staff ☐ \$5 for all-volunteer groups

Make check payable to MALHM and mail to:

Jill Wohnoutka, Kandiyohi County Historical Society, 610 NE Hwy. 71, Willmar, MN 56201.

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MALHM:
Peers Helping Peers
Since 1991

The purpose of the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums shall be to nurture and encourage an appreciation of the local history of the state of Minnesota by providing the structure to foster collaborative local history projects, communicate curatorial and educational information, and encourage professionalism among local and specialized historical organizations in Minnesota.