



THE MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

May 1997

Vol. XXV, No. 5

INSIDE

Tech Talk: Media Relations 2
 Gág family exhibit & house. 5
 Zumbrota covered bridge 6

Grants Review Committee Celebrates 20th Year & Salutes Karen Humphrey for 20 Years as Chair

by Jeri Niedenfuer

One of the hardest-working committees of the Minnesota Historical Society's Executive Council is the Grants Review Committee, established in 1977 to recommend matching grants for local historical projects. MHS had made its first grant with funds from the state grants-in-aid program in 1969 to the Nicollet County Historical Society, for restoration of the Eugene Saint Julien Cox House in St. Peter. Since then, the Society has awarded 1,400 grants totaling \$10.3 million in state and federal funds to historical organizations and local governments throughout Minnesota.

Every one of Minnesota's 87 counties has benefited from the grants review process: the Pickwick Mill in rural Winona County; the New Ulm Post Office, now home of the Brown County Historical Society; Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul; Washington County Courthouse, overlooking Stillwater; and the Tugboat Edna G, at anchor in Agate Bay at Two Harbors, are among the many special historic places that have received often-crucial grant support. Grants also assist historical organizations in their efforts to support research, publishing, exhibits, and care of collections. The grants review process has stimulated a fruitful partnership between MHS and the many organizations in Minnesota devoted to local history.



Minnesota Historical Society photo by Eric Mortenson

L-r: Nina Archabal, MHS Director; Marshall Hatfield, Immediate Past President; Fred Perez, member, Grants Review Committee; Bill Melton, Chair, Grants Review Committee; Britta Bloomberg, Head, Historic Preservation, Field Services & Grants; and Karen Humphrey, MHS President. The special cake was decorated with a map of the state of Minnesota and embellished with pictures of a number of historic places that have been supported by the grants program.

For the Society's trustees, a seat on the Grants Review Committee is a coveted assignment. The reasons: This committee works directly with people who care deeply about their communities. It's a hands-on committee that gets a close look at Minnesota history in all its diversity and particularity. Members of the committee also have the satisfaction of being part of a process that in many cases makes a difference in whether or not a building is saved or an essential project completed.

A sampling of the projects recommended by the committee at a recent meeting reflects the kinds of needs brought before it: restoration of the unique water tower in Kasson in Dodge County; measures to improve the storage and exhibit environment at the Clearwater County Historical Society; preserving the Hubert Humphrey collections at the Hubert Humphrey Museum in Wright County; restoring the roof of the St. James Opera House in Watonwan



Published
by the Minnesota
Historical Society
for local and county
historical societies
and heritage
preservation
commissions

Grand Rapids Festival to Mark Judy Garland's 75th Birthday

A "Jubilee" celebrating Judy Garland's birthday begins in the evening of Thursday, June 26, and ends with a showing of the "Just...JUDY!" video at 7 p.m. on Sunday, June 29. The festival will take place at several venues in Grand Rapids, Judy's birthplace, and will feature showings of two of her movies, a Ruby Slipper contest, a collectors' exchange and antique show, and appearances by: her son and daughter; biographer John Fricke; Roger Baum, great grandson of L. Frank Baum, author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; and several members of the original cast of munchkins.

For information and registration forms, call toll free 1-800-664-JUDY (5839) or write, P.O. Box 724, Grand Rapids, MN 55744.



Media Relations for Small Non-profit Organizations

by Barbara Averill

Some Things to Consider

One of the primary ways a non-profit organization tells its story to its key audiences is through the press. You may not have a major television station in your area, but chances are you have a local newspaper, a local radio station, and perhaps a local-access cable television station. Before long, you also will be using the Internet, whether you post your news on someone else's World Wide Web

site or develop your own.

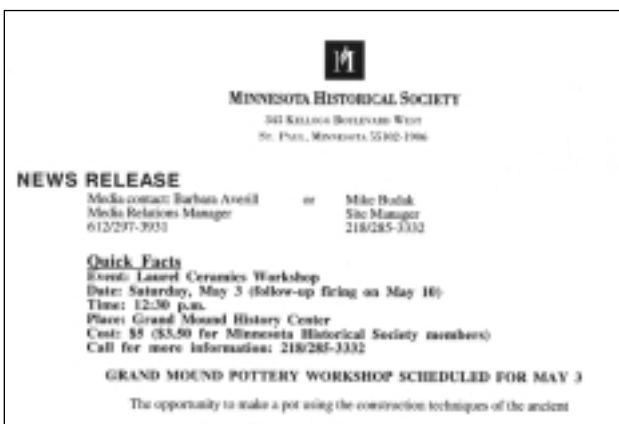
Media relations is only one part of a public relations plan, but it can be your most valuable and efficient tool. Once you know how to get your message not only accepted, but valued, as important news by your local media, you've made a big step toward the success of your program.

Publicity is not only low cost but has high return. Placing a news story about your event or your organization gives your message credibility and recognition, whether broadcast or printed.

Good editors and news directors, however, appreciate timely, well-written and well-organized news releases and will use them appropriately. They also like story tips that they can follow up on their own time. But don't ask for blatant advertising to be treated as news. News professionals are very adept at recognizing real news and culling out thinly disguised ads. They know their audiences, and they know their continuation as a business depends upon advertising sales.

Continued on page 3

This is the top, or "Quick Facts" section, of the first page of a typical MHS two-page press release. It is sent to names on the list that have been selected as outlets most likely to inform their readers of such an event.



Minnesota Historical Society

Grants Review Committee

Continued from page 1

County; and providing handicap access for the Pope County Historical Society Museum in Glenwood.

On March 20, the Grants Review Committee celebrated its work during a special luncheon at the James J. Hill House in honor of Karen Humphrey, who served as its chair for the past 20 years. At the luncheon, Immediate Past President Marshall Hatfield and Director Nina Archabal spoke about the importance of the grants review process and about Karen's special qualities as chair.

Ms. Archabal noted that Karen has a genuine interest in grassroots places and the practice of history. "Of all Karen's qualities that make a difference, grace comes first. Karen made people feel welcome and appreciated. She knew the effort and personal commitments that their projects involved. Karen was fair. Every project was given a full hearing. With 1,400 awards, yes, projects were turned down, but people never were."

Karen Humphrey grew up on a Century Farm at Norseland in Nicollet County, and lives with her

family in Watertown. She remains enthusiastic about her experience: "In 20 years it was never repetitive. Every project was interesting and compelling, each one reflecting a unique part of the tapestry of Minnesota."

Karen stepped down as chair in November, when she was elected president of the Society. Executive Council member William Melton was appointed to succeed Karen as chair. He brings a deep interest and experience to his new role: He was responsible for saving and restoring the historic Veblen Farmstead in rural Rice County, and for researching and writing about the Veblen family.

Application materials for the next round of grants will be available in early summer. For information about the grants program or to obtain application materials, please write or call the Minnesota Historical Society Grants Office, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; (612) 296-5434.

Jeri Niedenfuer is management assistant in the MHS Director's Office.



Media Relations

Continued from page 2

Four Basic Guidelines

- The first skill to develop is to recognize the difference between news and advertising. Do that by reading, listening and watching the local media to see how they treat news so that you can conform to their choices and styles. News is something unusual or important and/or affects a large number of people in a significant way. It must be timely. For example: Don't announce your relocation after you are settled in. Feature stories also should be timely. If you keep on top of what's in the news you might be able to tie today's headlines to something in your collections. If your part of the state is bracing for a flood, what do you have in your collections that tell the stories of past floods? When the Legislature wrangles with school funding issues, can you find the records of a country school that operated on a small salary for a teacher, some slates and a pile of firewood? When June dairy days roll around, can you write a short piece on your collection of cream separators, or cowbells? Or offer to let the local paper photograph these pieces of history?
- Second, learn to write good news releases. Put the news in the first paragraph; don't hide it under a paragraph about your organization (that goes last). Be brief, be clear, and be accurate. Neatness counts. Proofread three times, not just for typographical errors, but for content. Make sure your release has the "who, what, when, where, why and how" within the text. Every name must be spelled correctly. Using a quote from a credible source is great, but make sure it is lively.

Double space your copy. Indicate the end with a "-30-" mark or the symbols ###. If your release goes over one page in length use "more" at the bottom to indicate to typesetters that they should look for the rest of the release. But don't write more than two pages. Newspaper space is valuable. Broadcasters will cut your news release to fit a very small time frame. You might want to write shorter releases for local radio stations. If they take Public Service Announcements, or PSAs, the rule of thumb is that a minute is filled with 150 words maximum, and no PSA should be more than a minute.

Be sure to put the name of the person editors can call for more information at the top.

- Third, learn media deadlines so your releases reach the right place at the right time. No one appreciates working at the last minute, and sometimes there just isn't room for late news.
- Fourth, get to know your local press so that when you have a good story idea, they will listen and follow through.

Organizing Your Media Relations Work

If media relations sounds like a big job, it is. But it can be organized into a job that can be handled by a volunteer. The key is timely information flow within the organization. Your publicity chairperson must have information early so he or she isn't rushed into providing the press with a hastily written release or one that is nearly too late to print.

Part of the planning for any event, new acquisition or any major project should include a plan for publicity. Designate someone to provide accurate information to the publicity chairperson by a specific deadline—at least one month prior to when you plan to hold your event or make an announcement. This information could be on a form designed to capture the essential "who, what, when, where, why and how" information from the project manager. It should also have a phone number that will be published in the release as a number the public can call for more information. Information about outside funding sources and sponsors also is appropriate.

Although your local editor might rewrite your release, if the information is printed, your release has done its job. Organizations that receive public funding have a duty to let the public know what they are doing and how to access their programs. That makes media relations one of the most important roles of your organization. Take the time to do it right and it will return good will, attendance at events, recognition for your organization and a chance to promote the appreciation of history through the media.

Before becoming Media Relations Manager for the Minnesota Historical Society in 1993, Barbara Averill worked in public relations at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Before that, she was a newspaper reporter for 18 years.

*who?
what?
when?
where?
why?
&
how? —
the
essential
questions.*

Continued on page 4



Special Guest at Traverse des Sioux Encampment in September

The 1997 Commemorative Encampment of the Traverse des Sioux Treaty of 1851 will be held Sept. 5-7 at the park adjoining the Treaty Site History Center, one mile north of St. Peter. The Encampment is designed to recognize the impact the treaty had on the cultures of American Indians and European settlers and to serve as a reconciliation experience for both cultures.

The three-day program includes music, buckskinners demonstrating flint-knapping, black powder shooting and pewter work, and drumming and dancing by American Indian dancers. Once again there will be an authentic Red River Cart, and also a Wings of the Wild program, the game of LaCrosse, and plenty of

food.

Chief Sitting Bull's great-great-grandson, an artist, a highly decorated veteran, a Cherokee and Sioux Clan chief, and a descendant of Sam Houston on his mother's side, plans to attend and be an active participant in the program.

Friday, Sept. 5, will be education day, and more than 2,400 students will attend to participate in encampment activities.

For more information, contact the Nicollet County Historical Society, 1851 North

Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082; call (507) 931-2160; fax (507) 931-0172; e-mail: nicolletco@aol.com



Members of the Bueller family (left) and the Schultz family (right) played at the 1996 encampment.

Courtesy Nicollet County Historical Society; photo by Ed Weaberville



Media Relations

Continued from page 3

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Definitions of Some Basic Terms

There have been numerous definitions of public relations, but my favorite comes from Frank Wylie, a former president of the Public Relations Society of America. "Senior-level public relations people are likely to spend 10 percent of their time with techniques, 40 percent with administration, and 50 percent with analysis and judgment. At entry level it's 50 percent techniques, 5 percent judgment and 45 percent running like hell."

Most small organizations do not have senior-level public relations professionals working on their team, so that leaves the job to someone with many other duties, such as a museum manager, or to a volunteer, who might be anywhere on the scale from entry-level to pro.

PR is both an art and a science—essentially it means being aware of your audiences (your "publics") and planning policies and actions that serve the interest of both the organization and the public.

Advertising is space purchased or time purchased to deliver a message prepared by the purchaser.

Publicity is information supplied to a news medium without cost. The decision to use it and its final form are controlled by the medium.

Media relations involves understanding the needs of the media you wish to deal with and meeting those needs. It includes meeting deadlines, making your news releases newsworthy and easy to use, and maintaining good relationships with reporters, editors and news directors.



Gág Family History in Brown County Spotlight

Flavia Gág Exhibit Opens

The achievements of Wanda Gág's youngest sister Flavia have not received the attention they deserve. An exhibit on Flavia's life and work, mounted at the Brown County Historical Museum in New Ulm from May 1 to Oct. 15, should help solidify a place for her in Minnesota history.

Flavia was born in New Ulm in 1907, the youngest of the Gág children. When she graduated from high school in Minneapolis, she and three sisters

and her brother moved to New York City to be near Wanda. Flavia worked as a stenographer and studied art, then decided to take up writing and illustrating magazines and books. Wanda's success enabled her to buy the house in New Jersey that she named "All

Creation," and in the 1930s, Flavia moved there and began her career as author, illustrator, artist, and songwriter.

She wrote and illustrated eight children's books, including *Melon Patch Mystery*, *Fourth Floor Menagerie*, *Florida Snow Party*, *Chubby's First Year*, and *A Wish for Mimi* (a book based on her early life in New Ulm). She also illustrated stories in children's magazines and 14 children's books. When she died of cancer in 1978, she was writing a book for children about Wanda's life.

The exhibit will include 16 of Flavia's watercolor paintings, diaries and samples of her writing, copies of her books and original art and manuscripts (loaned by the Kerlan Children's Book Collection of the University of Minnesota), selected magazine art, and songs. (She wrote the music for Wanda's *ABC Bunny Book*.) Objects for the exhibit have been collected with the help of Gary Harm, Flavia's nephew and administrator of the Wanda Gág estate, who provided the photograph of the drawing above. The exhibit will be open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 5 p.m. For further information, call the Brown County Historical Museum, 2 North Broadway, New Ulm, MN; (507) 354-2016.



Courtesy Wanda Gág House Association

Flavia Gág possibly drew this "self-caricature" when she was mixing careers as stenographer and illustrator.

Restoration of Gág House Reveals Anton's Artistry

The house at 226 N. Washington St. in New Ulm was the home of the Gág family between 1897 and 1918. The house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is being carefully restored by Dan Tarnoveanu for the Wanda Gág House Association (WGHA). Restoration shows that even the walls and hallways were creatively painted by Anton, father of the artistically inclined family and an artist in his own right. As Leah Pockrandt says in the Jan. 26 issue of the *New Ulm Journal*, Tarnoveanu has found that Anton "maneuvered the brushes like he was painting (a mural)."

Colors as well as designs are of special interest; Pockrandt goes on, "Some of the walls are covered in unique shades of red and green accented with borders and designs—from geometric images to rampant lions and abstract flowers. The depth of the colors is, perhaps, achieved by the myriad of brush strokes and overlaying of subtle degrees of color." Tarnoveanu believes the type of decoration he is finding may be unique in Minnesota, maybe even in the Midwest and beyond.

Tarnoveanu had the paint chemically analyzed so that he can stay as close as possible to the original. He is using casein (milk-based) paint imported from Germany.

According to Jim Boeck, WGHA board member and renovation coordinator, and Christine Carmichael, former WGHA board member and now consulting designer, the work on the entry, stairway and hall is nearly complete. As Carmichael put it, Tarnoveanu has "replicated what was lost, repaired what was there and cleaned what was original." This includes not disturbing Anton's original "errors" such as "running dribbles of shellac or lacquer," and replicating three colors of brown found in the hallway.

According to Pockrandt, WGHA is paying for the project on its own at a cost of \$11,500. Additional funds will be needed before the project can be finished, so no completion date has been set. For information, call the WGHA at (507) 359-2632, or Dan Tarnoveanu's company, Renaissance Art and Restoration, in St. Paul, (612) 306-0452.



Zumbrota Covered Bridge Moved to Home on the River

The state's only remaining covered bridge was successfully moved on March 4, and once again spans the Zumbro River in Zumbrota. The bridge had been moved twice before: once in 1932, to the Goodhue County Fairgrounds, and then in 1970 to Zumbrota's Covered Bridge Park. Zumbrota residents and the Zumbrota Covered Bridge Society had worked since then to restore the bridge and have it moved to the



Courtesy Zumbrota Covered Bridge Society

Then, in the words of Alma Swanson, president of the Zumbrota Covered Bridge Society:

“... The bridge was lowered onto the rig and a truck assisted by a ‘Cat’ rolled along about a block easily and gracefully. We were so happy that nothing happened; it was supported very carefully so that it would not tip. The abutments and a center pier were ready. The bridge was pulled over the Zumbro River onto a temporary trestle by a cable that was winched from a truck on the opposite shore. When it was in place the foreman said, ‘*The bridge is home!*’ ”



Courtesy Zumbrota Covered Bridge Society

Above: The Zumbrota Covered Bridge, placed on the rig, ready to be moved to the trestle over the Zumbro River (right).

river again. In its present location, it stands next to the new library and will be used as a walking and bicycle path into the park.

The 1869 bridge is 116 feet long, weighs approximately 52 tons, and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Workmen from the Minnowa Construction Co. in Harmony, Minn., prepared for four weeks to make the move. First, a steel supporting framework was made and painted to match the bridge. Four narrow sections of siding were removed on both sides near both ends. Girders were placed in the openings and hooked to two 70-ton cranes. The cranes lifted the bridge onto a house-moving rig.

The cost of the project, including construction of walking and bike trails, is more than \$400,000. About 80 percent of the funds are administered through the Minnesota Department of Transportation, with enhancement funds from the federal ISTEA program (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act).

For further information, including a video of the two-day-long moving for \$20 plus \$1.50 shipping and handling, contact Alma Swanson, president, Zumbrota Covered Bridge Society, 7124 River Shore Lane, Champlin, MN 55316; (612) 427-2615.

Night Flying Woman Now in Audio Format

Ignatia Broker's deservedly popular recounting of the life of her great-great-grandmother, *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative*, is now available as a three-cassette audio set as well as a paperback book. Ni-bo-wi-se-gwe, or Night Flying Woman, was born in the mid-19th century and lived through the subsequent period of tumultuous change in the society and culture of the Minnesota Ojibway.

The reader is Debra Smith, a poet and an enrolled member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. The reading is unabridged, lasts 3 hours, 42 minutes, and costs \$22. To order, contact the MHS Press Order Dept., 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; (612) 297-3243 or 1-800-647-7827 or fax, (612) 297-1345.



Religious Architecture Program at Wright County Historical Society

For more than 15 years, Marilyn Chiat, Ph.D., has been doing research into religious architecture in Minnesota. She has found that, when religious buildings are read as texts as well as structures, religious buildings can teach us much about the state's ethnic and religious heritage. Dr. Chiat will give an illustrated lecture on the findings of her extensive research at the Wright County Heritage Center in Buffalo on Sunday, May 18—the last day of Preservation Week 1997.

The program is co-sponsored by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office and supported with funds from the Minnesota Humanities Commission. For information, contact Maureen Galvin, Wright County Historical Society, (612) 682-7322.

Swedish Institute to Celebrate Coming of Summer

The American Swedish Institute's annual *midsommar* festival of music, folk dancing, arts and crafts, and food and fun, will be held Saturday, June 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (It is actually the *beginning* of summer—when daylight returns to the northern reaches of Sweden—which is a strong reason to celebrate.) The festival is open to the public, and there is no charge for admission to the festival and the Institute's museum in the historic Turnblad mansion.

For information, contact Jan McElfish at (612) 871-4907 or (612) 870-3342. The Swedish American Institute is located at 2600 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, 55407.

Historic Architecture & Landscapes: Two-state Research Conference

CALL FOR PAPERS

The fourth "Breaking New Ground on Old Buildings—Historic Architecture and Landscapes in Minnesota and Wisconsin" conference, sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, will be held in St. Paul on Sept. 13.

The topics for the conference will range widely over the history of architecture, including commercial, community and agricultural architecture; ethnic building; women in architecture; interior design; architects and designers; and planning—in both states. Researchers in these and related fields have an opportunity to present a 20-minute paper or a 10-minute report on the progress of their current work.

Proposals should be no more than 400 words long. **The deadline for proposals is May 16, 1997.** Send them to Michael Koop, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Boulevard West, St. Paul, MN 55102; fax: (612) 282-2374. For further information, contact Koop at (612) 296-5451 or Geoffrey Gyrisco, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, (608) 264-6510.

E-mail addresses: Koop: michael.koop@mnhs.org

OR Gyrisco: geoff.gyrisco@ccmail.adp.wisc.edu

State Arts Board Selects New Director

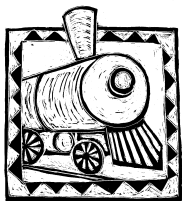
Robert C. Booker, who was assistant director of the Minnesota State Arts Board for six years, has been appointed executive director.

Before joining the Arts Board in 1985, Booker was supervisor of the Arts Resource and Information Center at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and before that, he was administrative assistant at the South Dakota Arts Council. In accepting his new responsibilities, he stated that "The agency is working with the governor and the legislature on an arts initiative that will have a significant positive impact on the arts statewide."

Preservation Week Walking Tour of the "U"

A free walking tour of the University of Minnesota Campus Historic District will be offered to Preservation Week participants on Thursday, May 15. The 6 to 8 p.m. tour will focus on the 19th- and early 20th-century buildings in the National Register of Historic Places Historic District.

The tour will be led by Robert Mack, assistant professor in the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Minnesota. To make reservations, call Marvel Anderson at the Preservation Alliance at (612) 338-6763.





Schedule for New Round of MAP Grants

The Museum Assessments Program (MAP) provides opportunities for consulting in institutional planning and development for museums of all shapes and sizes. Teams of experienced museum professionals and specialists visit sites and work with staff and boards to organize the appraisal methods that are most appropriate to each institution.

MAP administrators advise against waiting for some kind of institutional benchmark before undertaking the MAP process of self-study and peer review. Though there never is a perfect time, little is gained from such delays. MAP is particularly useful for museums contemplating:

- strategic planning
- facilities construction, renovation or expansion
- major capital campaigns
- hiring the first professional director
- applying for accreditation
- mergers, partnerships or restructuring.

Participation in MAP is paid for in two ways. Grants are available through a federally supported grants program, the Institute for Museum and Library Services; the schedule of deadlines is listed below. Participation can also be purchased on a fee-for-service basis at any time.

The deadlines for each of the three levels of assessment are:

- Institutional (MAP I: \$1,775): Oct. 31, 1997 and April 24, 1998
- Collections Management (MAP II: \$1,775): March 13, 1998
- Public Dimension (MAP III: \$2,970): Feb. 27, 1998.

MAP is managed by the American Association for Museums (AAM). For information and application materials, call MAP/AAM at (202) 289-9118.



The Minnesota History **Interpreter** is published by the Historic Preservation, Field Services and Grants Department of the Minnesota Historical Society, and distributed to Minnesota's county and local historical societies and heritage preservation commissions.

Readers are invited to submit information for publication. To be considered, items must reach the editor by the 25th of the month, two months before publication (example: publication date, October 1; submission deadline, August 25). Send to: **Interpreter** Editor, Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906. For more information call (612) 296-5434 or (612) 296-8196.

Upon request, this publication can be made available in alternative formats: audiotape, large print or computer disk.

Britta Bloomberg, Head,
Historic Preservation, Field Services and
Grants Department
David Nystuen, Field Coordinator
James Smith, Editor

<http://www.mnhs.org>



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
345 KELLOGG BOULEVARD WEST
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102-1906

NonProfit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Paul, MN
Permit No. 854