

November
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HOW TIME FLIES...

Monthly News & Events

HIGH PLAINS WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER ~ SPEARFISH, SD



Setting the Stage

From Exec. Director
Karla Scovell

October continued the trend of busy months for us at the Heritage Center by wrapping up the bus season with 20 buses and 2 dinner shows just in the first 2 weeks alone! Later in the month, we were honored by a visit from Anya Mueller of KNBN News Center 1. Anya brought her camera and interviewed some volunteers and founders to tell the story of the High Plains Western Heritage Center. Her story will be aired on the evening news November 4 and an additional story will be available on their website. We will have a link to the story on the Heritage Center's website as soon as it is available. Thank you Anya and KNBN News!

The highlight of the month was our Annual "Friendraiser" on the 26th, featuring Gary Mule Deer! In spite of the weather, our over 100 guests, enjoyed delicious food from Cheyenne Crossing, beautiful music by singer/songwriter Lacy Nelson, and an incredible evening of music and laughter with our friend, Gary Mule Deer! Gary's talent and humor had the entire place on their feet. Along with the Grand Ole Opry, we couldn't get enough of him! Thank you, Gary! An additional thank you goes to Rick McBride, as always, for donating a portion of his time to provide sound for Gary. All in all, we raised nearly \$6,000 toward our Theater upgrade. A heartfelt thank you to all of our guests and generous donors!

During the Fundraiser, we were able to make the announcement that the South Dakota Community Foundation has approved a matching grant of \$10,000 toward the funds we still need to raise for our theater upgrade project. Every dollar we raised that night will be doubled! Thank you SDCF!

There are many exciting events yet to come this year so please be sure to check out our Events Calendar in this newsletter so you won't miss a thing! We wish all of you and your families a very happy & blessed Thanksgiving!

Watch the video newsletter!

Log on to:

WesternHeritageCenter.com/now

THANK YOU VETERANS! VETERANS DAY Nov. 11th

Visiting Veterans Have Their Own Remarkable History

A group of veterans and their spouses – some 63 in all – converged on Deadwood and the northern Black Hills in late September for a reunion – and High Plains Western Heritage in Spearfish was one of their stops. Mostly Army and Navy veterans, they all had gone through a select training at Fort Belvoir, Virginia in the midst of the "Cold War." While they came to our museum to learn more about High Plains history – they brought their own fascinating stories, some of which have ties to our region.

To understand what brings them together for their annual reunions, it's necessary to reach back to the decade following the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and the end of World War Two.

It was during those years that the new Department of Defense charged the Navy and legendary Admiral Hyman Rickover to develop nuclear propulsion systems for Navy ships and submarines. The Air Force would concentrate on warheads for ballistic missiles; and the Army would build and operate small land-based nuclear power plants to provide electricity and heat to military facilities at far-flung and remote locations with divergent climates.

Navy Captain Chuck Fegley, a retired Navy Construction Battalion (SeaBee) officer from New Jersey, was a spokesman for our visitors, and he shared a brief history of these "Belvoir Nuke" veterans.

"The Army Nuclear Power Program (ANPP) ran from about 1955 to 1977 under the auspices of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and most of our guys were Army and Navy" said Fegley.

"It was basically a plan to develop nuclear power for remote shore locations. The Atomic Energy Commission was involved, and civilian contractors, too."

The Glen L. Martin Company of Baltimore would become a significant player in the program.

"The first plant was at Fort Belvoir," according to Fegley – the first of eight nuclear projects and was used primarily for training and testing. It became the



first U.S. nuclear plant to connect to an electrical grid.

Some of the trainees remained at Fort Belvoir, but most saw duty at the seven other sites, including:

- * A boiling water reactor built in the high plains area of eastern Idaho, specifically designed to power a Defense Early Warning (DEW Line) radar station.

- * A 2-megawatt electric/heating reactor at "Camp Century" in Greenland.

- * A mobile closed-cycle gas turbine designed for 300-kilowatts, but only achieving 140 kilowatts. It operated for just a few hundred hours of testing.

- * A Navy-owned 1.75-megawatt electric/heating/desalinization facility at McMurdo Station in Antarctica; it operated from 1962 until decommissioned in 1972 – one of the first shore-based power plants to use solid-state equipment.

- * A 2-megawatt electric and heating plant at Fort Greely, Alaska – the first field facility developed under the ANPP. Opened in 1962, it was selected to develop construction methods in a remote, arctic location. It closed in 1972.

- * A low-power unit mounted on a barge in the Panama Canal Zone, which operated from 1968 to 1977. It was the last of the eight plants to permanently cease operation.

- * A 1.25-megawatt electric/heating plant at Sundance Air Force Station in Wyoming. Designed by the Martin Company, it provided power to the 731st Radar

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Monday November 11th at 1:00pm Annual Veterans Day Program

Col. Mike Kain will emcee. Orion & Stacy Potter with the Davis Sisters will perform. Open to the public. Suggested \$10 donation with proceeds going to the Spearfish Veterans Monument.

Sponsored by: First Interstate Bank

Tuesday November 12th at 6:30pm

The History of the Star Spangled Banner
The HPWHC is hosting this Lawrence County GOP event. Sturgis historian Randy Bender brings Col. Caleb Carlton to life as we learn the little known story of how Ft. Meade gave us our national anthem.

NOVEMBER

Sunday November 17th at 2:00pm High Plains Live! with: Buffalo Grass & Kim Plender

Tickets: \$10 General Admission / \$15 for reserved seating. Back by popular demand with their unique style from cowboy to contemporary. We'll have door prizes and refreshments as always!

DECEMBER

Sat. December 7th - Dec. 24th Our Annual Christmas Shopper's Village Sat. December 7th at 2:00pm

Gordy & Dalyce Christmas Show!
Enjoy music and laughs as we kick off Christmas at the High Plains!
Suggested donation: \$10

DECEMBER

**Sat. December 14th at 1:00pm
Paul Higbee Book Presentation**
Author Paul Higbee presents his latest book, "Belle Fourche's Doolittle Raider, Don Smith." Admission Free

Sun. December 15th at 3:00pm A Very Potter Christmas!

Orion & Stacey are joined by Luke and Lizzie Anderson for this Christmas gala!
Tickets: \$15 General \$20 Reserved

Sun. December 22nd at 3:00pm High Plains Live! Presents:

The Campfire Christmas Concerto
The finest in holiday entertainment comes to Spearfish as Paul Larsen, Kenny Putnam, Boyd Bristow and Chet Murray combine for a wonderful evening of music!
Tickets: \$30 ALL Seats Reserved



825 Heritage Drive | Spearfish, SD 57783

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Squadron, part of the North American Air Defense Command. It operated from 1962 until the plant on Warren Peak was shut down in 1968.

If the reminder of a nuclear facility on nearby Warren Peak was interesting – it was a real surprise when we learned that retired Senior Chief Petty Officer Jerry Schloredt, who lives in Sundance, was among this group of “Belvoir Nuke” veterans. Alas, although a native of Sundance, he was never assigned to the Warren Peak facility. Schloredt and Fegley – both Seabees – worked together at the plants in Greenland and Antarctica.

During their two-hour visit to the museum, many of the veterans and their spouses expressed great appreciation

for the presentation by Sturgis historian Randy Bender. His superb portrayal of Colonel Caleb Carlton, post commander of Old Fort Meade, tells of the origin of the Star Spangled Banner at Fort Mead – eventually becoming our National Anthem many decades later.

“Veterans have done so much in defense of our country...our way of life,” says High Plains Western Heritage Center director Karla Scovell, “it was an honor and a privilege to host the Fort Belvoir veterans. Sharing history is wonderful – especially when it’s a two-way street. These veterans have remarkable stories of service!”

November Newsletter Contributors:
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BUY A BLOCK

On our NEW Heritage Wall
As part of our fundraising efforts you can now purchase a block on our Heritage Wall. It’s a perfect way to show your support for the HPWHC. Each block is beautifully laser engraved on faux leather with either your name or the name of someone you wish to honor, and their hometown. A full block is \$500 and a half block is \$250. They will be on permanent display in the entrance to our Bruce Miller theater.



Sample HPWHC Heritage Block