

June  
2021

Vol. 04 Edition 4

# HOW TIME FLIES...

## Monthly News & Events

HIGH PLAINS WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER  SPEARFISH, SD



HAPPY  
*Father's*  
DAY

## Setting the Stage

From Exec.  
Director  
Karla Scovell

It has been so good to see people coming through our doors from all over the nation this past month! We have seen approximately 400 walk-in guests and 4 bus groups from Collette Tours for our Cowboy Supper Show!



And by the looks of things we're just getting started. Activity will be ramping up in June and July as we anticipate a busy tourist season. And as we head into summer I just want to say a thank you in advance to our mighty volunteers who make things possible and keep things running smoothly.

I am particularly excited about the lineup of shows we have this year in our Bruch Miller theater. We'll begin the month with a HPWHC fan favorite, the Orion & Stacy Potter Gospel Show. They will inspire you with all the standards and some newer impactful selections. That will be Sunday June 13th at 2:00pm. Donations are suggested and they go to support our great friends the Potters.

A week later come celebrate Father's Day with us on June 20th at 2:00pm with "Fiddles and Flutes" – another edition of our music series High Plains Live! Gordy and Dalcyce bring two friends, the always popular Kenny Putnam and flutist Rod Garnett. Rod has toured internationally with the Denver Opera and plays a variety of instruments. The four of them team up with some amazing music. All seats will be reserved at just \$10, please call the center to make your reservation before they are gone. We're grateful to the South Dakota Arts Council for their sponsorship.

And this month we welcome the return of the Spirit of the American Cowboy chuckwagon supper and show. Show dates are June 15th, 22nd and 29th. Tickets are selling very well! We will also have dates in September.

STAGE Page 2

Board Member Spotlight

## Jim Clarkson's Deep Roots in Cattle Country

*While growing up, Jim's ranching neighbor was HPWHC co-founder Ed Gardner. Feature by Larry Miller.*

Jim Clarkson of Spearfish is serving his second term on the Board of Directors for the High Plains Western Heritage Center and is the current Vice President of the Board.

Clarkson's grandfather, J.A. "Al" Clarkson came to western South Dakota from West Virginia in 1888, working near Fruitdale his first winter before going north to Harding County to find work. When his parents back east became ill, Clarkson returned to West Virginia for a time, but returned to Harding County in 1890, remaining there for the rest of his life. "It was all open range when he started," says Jim, "and he began putting the ranch together in the Cave Creek area during the 'teens and 1920's, when homesteaders decided to abandon their homesteads and move on. He paid 40 to 50 cents per acre."

Jim's dad grew up on the Harding County ranch around the Cave Hills area – as did he. Jim was the third generation on the same family ranching operation.

In addition to ranching, the Clarkson family became involved in a successful banking business, but their love of ranch life seems always to have been a core family value.

Our Jim Clarkson was born at the Belle Fourche hospital in May 1948, along with his twin brother, Bill. Interestingly, Jim and Bill were two years younger than their sisters, Ilene and Lea, who were also twins! What are the odds? He also has another brother Merton.

Jim grew up on the ancestral home ranch and went to high school in Buffalo, graduating in 1966. He became fully engaged in ranch operations after high school and would remain there for nearly 28 years.

Early on, he met Janice Hett, a young lady who had grown up on a ranch southwest of Buffalo. They were married in 1970.

"Janice was a nurse in Spearfish when we got married. She spent the next 25



Board Vice President Jim Clarkson

years on the ranch with me, and she always had a desire to get back in to nursing, so when the opportunity occurred, she did."

The Clarksons had bought some land in the Spearfish area in the early 1980's, always thinking they would retire in here. And they did just that in 1994.

Clarkson expresses delight in the fact that his wife shares his passion for history. For him, love of history was almost inevitable.

"When I was a kid, whenever our family went anywhere, it was a history tour. Dad was a huge historian. We went to Medora, the Custer battlefield in Montana, and the old cavalry post at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, among others. It was always western history time at our house!"

Asked if he misses ranching, he wistfully responds "yes," recalling the numerous friendships that developed over a lifetime.

His awareness of the High Plains Western Heritage Center came early.

"Our neighbor up on the ranch was Ed Gardner, one of the founders of the museum, so we heard a lot about it. Of course, Les Kleven and his staff at KBHB Radio in Sturgis promoted the museum, too."

After moving to Spearfish, Jim began volunteering at the High Plains Western Center.

"I was usually up around the sheep wagon, and I really enjoyed it! That's how I got roped in to this job on the Board," he

CLARKSON Page 2

---

# High Plains Events

---

**Sunday June 13th 2pm**

**High Plains Live!**

Gospel concert with Orion & Stacey Potter  
Donations accepted at the door

**2021 Cowboy Supper Show**

Tuesdays: June 15, 22, 29

More dates in September

5:30pm Chuckwagon Buffet Supper

6:15pm Spirit of the American Cowboy Show

With Gordy Pratt & Dalyce Sellers

Dinner features all the best cowboy fixin's catered by Cheyenne Crossing & served from the back of our authentic 1800's chuckwagon.

The show is also available for booking for groups of 30 or more.

**Tickets at: [WesternHeritageCenter.com](http://WesternHeritageCenter.com)**

**Sunday June 20th 2pm**

**High Plains Live!**

Gordy & Dalyce present: "Fiddles and Flutes" with special guests Kenny Putnam and Rod Garnett

Tickets: \$10 Call for tickets reserved seating

**July 24th, 2021**

**Day of the American Cowboy**

Reserve Saturday July 24th for our annual observation of the "National Day of the American Cowboy." Visit our exhibits, learn about great American cattle drives and the role the cowboy played in establishing our local economy. Head to our theater for a special program featuring the awesome duo of Allen & Jill Kirkham with

their award winning show

"The History of Traditional Western Music."

Donations suggested for the show.

Show time 1:30pm

**Sun. July 25th 2021 3pm**

**High Plains Live!**

Joey Leone - "The History of Blues"

We're going to stretch our wings a bit and enjoy the history of another genre of American music - blues. Joey Leone and company will take the Bruce Miller stage for a very special presentation on the "The History of Blues in America."

They cover the history, influence and impact of American blues music through stories and historical facts. Joey has toured with artist such as Etta James, The Coasters, Wilson Pickett and many more.



825 Heritage Drive | Spearfish, SD 57783

---

**CLARKSON** From Page 1

added with a grin.

Clarkson was first elected to the museum Board of Directors in 2017 and is now in his second term.

Asked about the biggest challenge for the Western Heritage Center – and the biggest opportunity – his response was immediate.

"The Covid epidemic without a doubt. It was almost devastating. Thank heavens for Karla getting us through it."

"And while it's been a bit disappointing that many local folks don't know what we have here, it's exciting to be a part of the Western Heritage Center – and helping people to learn what a great facility we have!"

Clarkson reflects on many recent im-

provements, including a newly asphalted parking lot and entry road to the museum. He sees room for growth and increased awareness, portending even better years ahead for the High Plains Western Heritage Center.

With the leadership of Jim Clarkson and his colleagues on the Board of Directors, we're confident that our future is brighter than ever, and that more and more people will discover the treasure that is the High Plains Western Heritage Center! Thank you, Jim!

**Check out Larry's video interview with Jim on the HPWHC website home page or the High Plains' YouTube channel!**

---

**STAGE** From Page 1

And coming up in July is the award-winning show "The History of Traditional Western Music" by the wonderful duo of Allen & Jill Kirkham. Don't miss that on July 24th, the National Day of the American Cowboy.

And finally something different on July 25th – "The History of Blues in America" performed by Joey Leone and his band from back east. This group has toured nationally with artists such as The Coasters, Etta James and Wilson Pickett. We're so excited to have them on stage for High Plains Live! in July.

Happy Father's Day and hope to see you at the center this month!

---

June Newsletter Contributors:  
Western Sky Media, Inc. Larry Miller