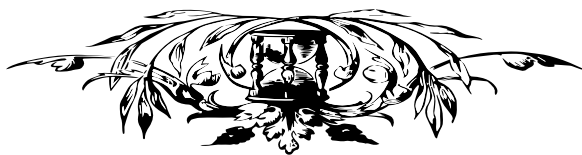


— The Hourglass —



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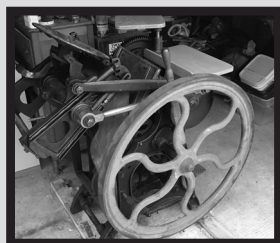
Scandinavian Hjemkomst & Midwest Viking Festival on June 22 & 23

Scandinavian Hjemkomst & Midwest Viking Festival, one of the largest and oldest festivals in the Red River Valley, returns to the Hjemkomst Center on Friday, June 22, and Saturday, June 23. This year's festival follows a great turnout last year for the 40th anniversary celebration, and we're excited to watch it grow into a major Fargo-Moorhead summer event.

In Viking Ship Park, we'll be hosting several familiar faces to guide our 21st-century audience through the

life and time of the Norse in the Viking Age. Food historian Thora Helleloid, blacksmith Doug Swenson, woodturner Roger Abrahamson, artist and jeweler Jordain Kinnander, glass and beadmaker Ashlyn Noble, and the fine folks from Jameson Leatherworks will join dozens of other new and returning demonstrators and historians from around the world. We're also particularly excited about two visiting Viking Connection artists: Swedish Viking games troupe Telge Glima will highlight

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Our thanks to the Moorhead City Council and the Clay County Commission for their continued support of local history and culture at HCSCC.

President's Message

from John Dobmeier



Greetings All,

As we approach another seasonal change (from winter to that other season, before winter starts again), I am reminded of the blessings of friends. I see more of my friends during the summer months as the lure of camping, vacations, and evenings on the deck is just a short time away.

I am also excited about the summer lineup and ongoing events at HCSCC at the Hjemkomst.

We are on our way to a record breaking year and this organization has never looked better. I am honored to announce to all who were not at the annual meeting the Clay County Heritage Award was presented to Jon Evert. Jon has been a friend of mine for many years and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of a recognition for his service to this region and specifically, Clay County.

We will be hosting Scandinavian Hjemkomst & Midwest Viking Festival on the 22nd and 23rd of June. If you have never attended this festival celebrating everything Viking and the rich Scandinavian culture, you are in for a wild ride.

Please check out our events at the Comstock House this summer, too; and we are proud to announce the opening of two new summer exhibitions at the Hjemkomst Center: the Red River Watercolor Society's *25th National Watermedia Exhibition* opening June 18, and *Skal! Scandinavian Spirits* opening June 30.

There is always something to do at the Hjemkomst, and HCSCC drives that motor. Please come see us this summer and revisit relationships with old and new friends.

Finally, this is my last president's message, and I will be stepping down after the May meeting. It has been my pleasure serving this fine organization as board president. I will leave you all with this final thought:

Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies. Those whom God has so joined together, let no man put asunder.

-John F. Kennedy

Many thanks,
John Dobmeier



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HCSCC News & Events

MSUM Professor to Deliver Lecture on 1918 Flu Pandemic on Tuesday, August 14

Moorhead State University Moorhead biosciences professor Dr. Andrew Marry will deliver a lecture on **Tuesday, August 14**, discussing the 1918 influenza epidemic and considering the possibility of a similar outbreak in the future. The epidemic was misnamed the “Spanish Flu” because the press in neutral Spain was the first to report on the disease and its effects. Current estimates indicate that between 50-100 million people died during the epidemic, including 174 in Clay County. The number is staggering when compared to the 17 million who died in WWI.

Dr. Marry’s lecture will begin at 6:00PM. General admission is \$10 (HCSCC Members: Free). Admission includes museum tours and refreshments.

Scandinavian Cocktails: Skål! Reception on July 24

On **Tuesday, July 24**, we host exhibition curator Tova Brandt for a presentation on Scandinavian spirits and a tour of our new exhibition from the Museum of Danish America, *Skål! Scandinavian Spirits*. In addition, we’ll be sharing Scandinavian cocktails, heavy on the aquavit, from our friends at Proof Artisan Distillers.

Focusing on beer and aquavit in Nordic countries as well as the migration of that culture across the Atlantic in the 19th and 20th centuries, *Skål! Scandinavian Spirits* serves as a fitting coda to our recent exploration of alcohol in the heavily Scandinavian Clay County, *Wet & Dry: Alcohol in Clay County, 1871-1937*.

The reception will begin at 6:00PM. Admission is \$5 (HCSCC Members: Free). Refreshments will be served and a cash bar will be available.

Felix Battles Civil War Monument

Thanks to the generosity of several community members (including several HCSCC members), we’re building a monument to local Civil War veteran, Felix Battles. Battles escaped slavery and joined the U.S. Colored Infantry in 1864. Stay tuned for details.

RRWS 25th National Watermedia Exhibition: Reception on June 19

The Red River Watercolor Society will mark a milestone in their history when they open the *25th National Watermedia Exhibition* on June 18. Join us for the opening reception the following evening on **Tuesday, June 19**, to celebrate both the occasion and their success in building a world-class watercolor community here in the Red River Valley.

The reception will include remarks and awards, beginning at 5:00PM and ending at 8:00PM. The reception is free and refreshments will be provided.

New Deals at the Heritage Gift Shop

Heritage Gift Shop Manager Emily Kulzer has been revamping the gift shop’s offerings and our visitors have approved of the moves. Stop in at the Hjemkomst Center, have a look at the new inventory, and take advantage of that member discount! The Heritage Gift Shop will also be holding a Father’s Day Sale from **June 15-17**, including 20% off all non-consignment items storewide. Members receive an extra 10% off.

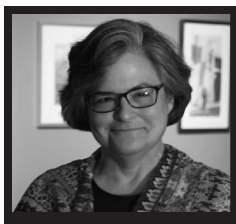
For more information, contact Emily at (218) 299-5511, ext. 6731, or emily.kulzer@hcsmuseum.org.

History On Tap! Continues at Junkyard

HCSCC Programming Director Markus Krueger is continuing his popular lecture series *History On Tap!* at Moorhead’s own Junkyard Brewing Company. Catch some local history at the taproom every first **Monday** at 6:00PM. On **June 4** the subject is Clay County in World War II; on **July 2** Local Moonshine; and on **August 6** Scandinavian Drinking Culture. Remember to tip your server and laugh at Markus’s jokes.

River History Tour on July 18

In collaboration with River Keepers and Moorhead Parks & Rec, we’re hosting a river paddling excursion on **Wednesday, July 18**, from 5:45PM to 8:00PM. HCSCC Senior Archivist Mark Peihl will discuss the Red River’s history as the group canoes and kayaks through the water. Register at MoorheadParks.com.



Letter from the Executive Director

Maureen Kelly Jonason

With the Memorial Day Weekend looming, I am champing at the bit to get into my flower garden. The spring perennials are showing off. My husband and I have diligently suppressed the impulse to plant annuals before now, and it's a good thing considering that last surprise frost. We did something new this year: we cultivated seedlings in a sunny room starting in April. We've been hardening the seedlings in the wind but bringing them in at night. Oh such care and for what? To see if we could do it? To save \$12.44? To delight in seeing something we did come to fruition? I often feel as if so much of our work here at the museum is something like that: working hard in the present so that people in the future will have a history to look back upon.

Led by Programming Director Markus Krueger, the team of staff, graduate assistants, interns, and volunteers has just completed the May school tours – a month of mayhem in which around 1200 children visit the museum for two hours jammed packed with fun learning activities. That intense work is our investment into the future historians and history supporters of the next generation. We have to start early in the history biz cultivating interest so that someone will be here to carry on the work after we are gone.

I look forward to summer as the happy time – when our visitors are on vacation, dressed in shorts and flip flops—and not rushing off to catch a plane. Far too many visitors arrive at the museum at 4pm—one hour before we close! You can watch the documentary about the building and sailing of the ship and take a guided tour of the Hopperstad Stave Church in that time, but you will miss out on the traveling exhibition, the Clay County history exhibition, two hall case displays, and the 4th-floor art gallery.

As I write, I am looking forward, too, to all the special projects this year. Your favorite Clay County historical and cultural society is always up to something – working to make the visitor experience more satisfying, to improve our conditions for collecting and preserving, and for creating fun and educational cultural events.

This year, with grant funding, we will

- * Write and design a book about The Art and Lives of Annie Stein and Orabel Thortvedt
- * Have our museum lighting re-designed for greater impact on our exhibitions
- * Increase our museum artifact storage shelving

Lisa and Emily, along with Board member Gloria Lee and museum assistants Kevin Wander and Joseph Engel, are busy making sure that every paper donation form that was ever produced for the Society since 1932 has been typed into our Past Perfect database in anticipation of a 2019 wall-to-wall inventory of the 3-D collection (all objects big and small). Knowing what we have and where it is in the building are important factors in collections care.

Although summer finds the museum busy with tourists, we still must plan for the other seasons to come: the exhibitions, events, and activities for the next three years take a lot of programming staff time and energy even while the collections staff are processing, assessing, and planning ahead for the collections. And why do we do it? We love the work of keeping history and culture alive and well in Clay County, MN.

-MJK

Consider the Gift of Membership

Are you a member of the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County? Do you have family or friends who might be interested? Sign up or renew your membership today! We have several membership levels to choose from:

- Basic (Individual) – \$40
- Basic+ (Household) – \$60
- Booster – \$85
- Heritage – \$125
- Patron – \$250
- Benefactor – \$500

To sign up or to learn more about what each membership level offers, visit our website (www.hcscconline.org) and click on the “Join & Support” tab at the top menu or give us a call: (218) 299-5511.

HCSCC Exhibitions

Red River Watercolor Society's 25th National Juried Watermedia Exhibition *4th Floor Gallery (June 18 through August 4, 2018)*

We're excited to bring back the Red River Watercolor Society's gorgeous exploration of watermedia during this summer's 25th National Juried Watermedia Exhibition. The exhibition features some of the most prolific and talented watercolor artists of today, from both our local community and across the nation, and it is beautiful.

This year's exhibition is juried by Mark Mehaffey, a signature member of the American Watercolor Society, a Dolphin Fellow with the National Watercolor Society, and an accomplished artist, writer, and teacher.

Join us for the free and public opening reception on **Tuesday, June 19**, from 5:00PM to 8:00PM at the Hjemkomst Center. RRWS artists will discuss their works and Mehaffey will offer remarks and awards.

We Are Water, Minnesota *Heritage Hall (through June 17)*

Drawing from a variety of academic fields and sources from early Native American and Fur Trader accounts to high-profile political battles today, *We Are Water MN* explores the connections between the humanities, the sciences, and water ecologies in the Land of 10,000 Lakes. As we include local supplements in the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to reflect on our local stories to better promote positive communities and share a common vision in water stewardship.

We Are Water was developed by the Minnesota Humanities Center, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and their statewide partners.

FMVA BIG Art Show *4th Floor Gallery (through June 8)*

For two months each spring, the work of the Fargo-Moorhead Visual Artists (FMVA) fills our 4th Floor Gallery. The art comes from educators, emerging artists, and established artists, and together offers one of the most comprehensive (and largest) local art shows in the region. Each piece is identified with artist statements reflecting each artist's influences and goals and each year brings new themes, media, and artists.

War, Flu, & Fear: World War I and Clay County *Heritage Hall (through January, 2021)*

In April 1917, Americans were thrust into the middle of a brutal global war only months after electing a president who campaigned on isolationism. The following year brought casualties, peace, and a global flu pandemic that subsided in 1920. Throughout those years, Americans in Clay County responded with courage, sacrifice, fear, and disillusionment. *War, Flu, and Fear: World War I and Clay County* gathers these stories to explore life in Clay County 100 years ago in a time dominated by the War to End All Wars, the ill-named Spanish Influenza, and the fear and paranoia of a dark time at the dawn of the American 20th century.

War, Flu, and Fear: World War I and Clay County is sponsored by BNSF Railway Foundation.

Skål! Scandinavian Spirits *Heritage Hall (July 1 through October 8)*

Skål! Scandinavian Spirits shares the history and traditions of drinking culture in the Scandinavian countries and begins to explain how those traditions were carried into the U.S, primarily focusing on two drinks in particular: beer and aquavit, the latter a traditional drink that means "the water of life."

Scandinavians have brewed beer for over 1,500 years. In pre-Christian times, the Norse god Odin was even credited with teaching humans how to brew beer, influencing the role of beer in worship and offering. Beer was also a major component of battle victory celebrations and sometimes drinking challenges. In the 1500s, distilled liquor proliferated throughout the Nordic countries, often highlighted as a tonic or medical cure-all. These early spirits often possessed terrible flavors, so herbs and other plants were used to improve the taste - bringing about aquavit.

On **Tuesday, July 24**, we'll be hosting a special tasting with Proof Artisan Distillers showcasing the variety and depth of Scandinavian spirits and Museum of Danish America curator Tova Brandt leading a tour.

Skål! is presented by Aalborg and Linie Aquavits and organized by the Museum of Danish America.

(continued from front page)

the more lighthearted (and acrobatic) pasttimes of the Viking Age; and Seattle woodcarver Jay Haavik will share the work that earned him a spot as the lead woodcarver on the replica Viking ship *The Saga Oseberg* for the New Oseberg Ship Foundation in Tonsberg, Norway. Haavik is one of the most capable and notable shipbuilders in the world and we're incredibly excited to share his work with our community (in a museum highlighting our community's own famous shipbuilders).

Inside the Hjemkomst Center, Nordic Culture Clubs has filled the museum with the largest offering of vendors, entertainers, chefs, and historians we've ever had at this festival. New additions include a Swedish candymaker, a Swedish Maypole (outside in Viking Ship Park), and several new performers, including Swedish opera singer Peter Tornberg. Clearly, Sweden is the featured country this year; however, seasoned vets from the entirety of the Nordic countries (and their American immigrant counterparts) will be here. A full weekend's worth of musicians including Trio con Brio, Soiva, Kari

Tauring, and Bud Larsen will perform throughout the museum; and some familiar aromas and flavors will be back in the auditorium, or "Tastes of Scandinavia." Classic menu items like rømmegrøt, lefse, lutefisk, lingonberries, vínarterta and aebelskiver will be on the menu once again, and the Swedish Society will be serving some special items in the Troll Bar. Outside, Lino Lakes brewers and Viking enthusiasts HammerHeart Brewing Company will once again be serving ice cold Minnesota brews in the Viking Beer Garden.

Festival admission is free for HCSCC members, so bring your card. General admission is \$15 per day for adults, \$10 for teens and seniors, and FREE for children.

For more information, please contact HCSCC Communications Manager Davin Wait at (218) 299-5511, ext. 6733, or davin.wait@hcsmuseum.org. For questions about accessibility and accommodations at the festival, please contact HCSCC Programming Director Markus Krueger at (218) 299-5511, ext. 6738, or markus.krueger@hcsmuseum.org. Skål!



The Saga Oseberg in Tonsberg, Norway. This replica Viking ship features the work of lead woodcarver Jay Haavik, who will join us this year for Scandinavian Hjemkomst & Midwest Viking Festival. Photo: Jay Haavik



Charles Amundson, Jerome Ekre, and John Schaffer printing the 2017 issue of the Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion's *Pioneer Press*. The printing press belonged to Charles Amundson's father in Browns Valley. Photo: HCSCC.

The Steam Thresher Printer's Apprentice: Bringing an 1897 *Ulen Union* Press to Life

By Markus Krueger

Jerome Ekre is the kind of guy who has 19th-century printing presses under tarps in his shelterbelt. Mr. Ekre, a longtime member of our historical society, is the volunteer head of Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion's printing shop, the *Pioneer Press*. About four years ago, someone dropped off one of the old printing presses from the *Ulen Union* newspaper at the WMSTR print shop. The problem was the print shop already had one just like it from the *Hawley Herald* as well as five similar presses of varying sizes. There was no room to add another. Mr. Ekre already has one in his basement. So he put it in his shelterbelt, covered it with a tarp, and hoped someday to find a good home for it. Last spring, he found a new owner who would give it the love it deserves. It's in my garage.

I've been a printmaker since I took an intro to printmaking class at Minnesota State University Moorhead fifteen years ago. I carve a picture into a block of wood, roll ink over the

carved block, slap a piece of paper on top of it, squish it in a homemade printing press that my dad made out of scrap wood, and I get a picture. As a hobby, it suits me perfectly – I love woodworking and I'm a cheapskate. For about \$10 worth of pine, ink, and paper – and with an evening or two of creative goofing off in my basement print shop – I can make a portrait of Grandma that knocks five people off of my Christmas shopping list.

Well, when you do something for 15 years, you start to get good at it. Two years ago I landed a commission from The Arts Partnership that paid me an amount generous enough to make a 6'4" middle-aged, bearded man jump up and down for joy. Flush with cash for new toys, I decided to buy some movable type so I could add words to the pictures I carve. It snowballed from there. As soon as my little lead letters came in the mail, I realized they were useless without little lead lack-of-letters – I needed

spaces or everything would be one long word. So I dropped more money on spaces – little slugs of metal just the right size to fit with my letters. The more I learned about my new toys, the more I learned that I needed a bunch more equipment to make them work, including metal trays called “chases,” an adjustable “composing stick,” wooden “furniture” to wedge against the letters to ensure they don’t move, and the like.

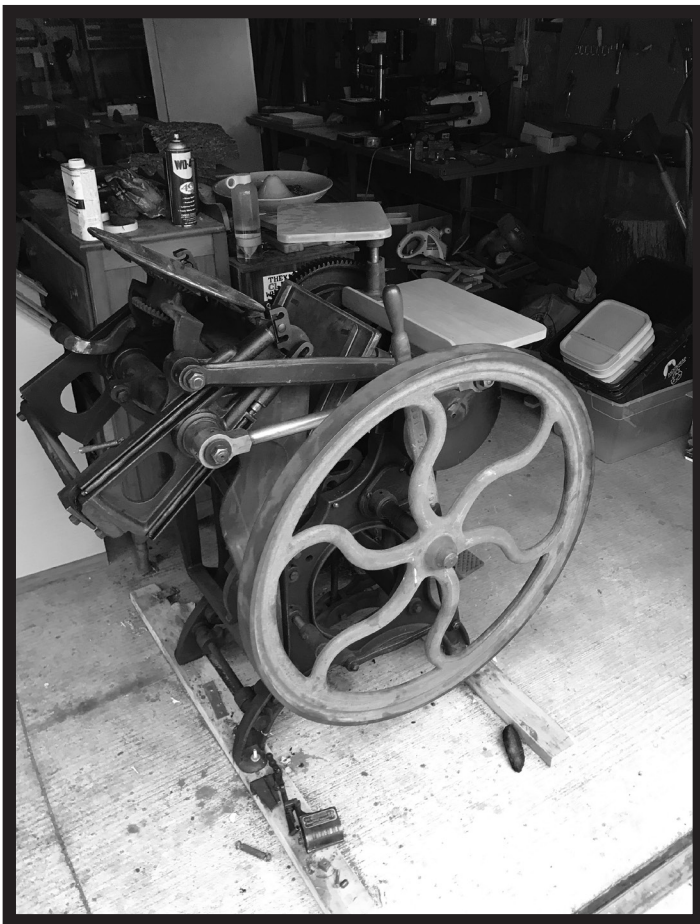
I dinked around with my new type for months, reading old printing text books from the 1950s when we used to teach high school kids how to do this previously-vital but now completely obsolete set of skills. I organized all the As, Bs, Cs, and so on into little compartments so I could spell out words. I learned how to snug it all up so the letters didn’t fall over into a mess. I minded my Ps and Qs (all letters and images to be printed are mirror images of the final copy, so you have to be mindful not to confuse letters p and q, b and d). But the images were not coming out right and I realized I needed someone to teach me how this all works. But where can someone apprentice to be a 19th century printer? Why, Rollag. Of course.

Every Labor Day weekend for the last 64 years, Rollag, Minnesota, is flooded with people coming to see gigantic machines in action, show off the vintage farming machinery that they restore, and experience history at Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion. There are other “steam shows” like this throughout our region, but the scale of WMSTR (dozens of buildings on 210 acres) and the scope of what they show (everything from blacksmiths to sawmills to quilting) certainly make it one of the biggest events of its kind in America and just maybe even the largest in the world. My favorite part is the print shop. Rollag’s Pioneer Press is filled with old printing equipment that was made obsolete decades ago. Retired printers or their enthusiastic grandkids will show you how these things work. A few years ago, I chatted with Jerome Ekre as he let me use an old press at Rollag. Some months later, I saw him doing research in the archives and struck up the conversation again. I said I’d like to volunteer at WMSTR because I bought some type and I want to learn how to use it. After some talking, to my astonishment, he said he has a Chandler & Price printing press that needs a home.

The Press

The printing press in question was made in Cleveland, Ohio, by the Chandler & Price company, who specialized in letterpress printing presses. These presses printed a piece of paper one at a time, rather like a modern copy machine – but they’re way, way cooler. Mine is made of cast iron and steel and weighs 1050 pounds. Looking at it, one first notices the two wheels on either side, the larger about 4 feet in diameter. Stand in front of the machine and give the wheel a spin, and you will experience the complexity and brutal sophistication of this 19th-century machine. Once in motion, it is pedaled like a half-ton sewing machine. A metal disk at top center is smeared with ink and turns with each revolution to keep the ink even across the disk. At each revolution, three rubber rollers coat themselves with ink and then go down into the center of the machine where they spread the ink over the words and pictures you arranged in the belly of the beast below. As soon as the rollers are safely out of the way, a steel plate covered with your piece of paper is smashed at just the right pressure against the inked-up words, then smoothly separated from the words and tilted up to be offered to the pressman, who quickly takes the finished print out of the machine and replaces it with a new sheet of paper to be printed in the next revolution. It is mesmerizing to watch, like a Sherman tank doing ballet.

Mine is an 8x12 Chandler & Price, so named because



The 8x12 Chandler & Price press, formerly housed in the *Ulen Union* offices and currently housed in Markus Krueger’s garage. Photo: HCSCC.

it can print anything 8 inches by 12 inches or less. It is called a “job press” because it printed odd jobs like church bulletins, auction fliers, birthday cards, graduation notices, or anything else that size. If you look up my press on ebay, you’ll see they sell for \$3000. Just like how your old vinyl records are hip again, old time letterpress printmaking is back in style. In our throwaway culture, letterpress printing is used for projects that are special enough to have attention paid to them: hand-printed wedding invitations, impressive business cards, or fine art. And even after 120 years, nothing does this work better than my 8x12 Chandler & Price. They don’t make ‘em like they used to – and in fact they simply don’t make ‘em anymore. One would think that century-old printing presses are hard to come by, but 60 years ago they were in every print shop in America, plus every jobbing printer (like modern-day Kinkos), and even many funeral homes who would have to print up bulletins on short notice. While thousands were sold for scrap over the decades, thousands were saved because, like an old Chevy or Harley, those who used these presses loved them (and also because they literally weigh half a ton and they are REALLY hard to move to the dump).

I asked my in-laws, Wes and Betty Jo Sorenson, to meet me at Mr. Ekre’s house with their pickup and trailer. Mr. Ekre already had the press in the bucket of an old tractor when we arrived and we put it on the trailer with ease. After some nice conversation (Pam Ekre, it turns out, used to live above the Sorenson Café in Hawley when Wes’ parents ran it in the 1960s), we were off to Moorhead. I had lined up my brother Shaun Kohanowski and friends Derek Olson and Cory Nicklay to help me get the heavy thing off of the trailer and into my basement print shop. How heavy can it be? I move cast iron stoves at the museum for a living, and I was confident that with 5 guys and a furniture dolly, anything can be moved. Boy, was I wrong!

It took a tumble getting off the trailer. Then we five tried to lift it up off the concrete. Gosh, 1050 pounds sounds heavy, but it’s really a lot heavier than it sounds. We got it upright with a lot of grunting and the help of a 6-foot-long steel prybar. We surveyed the damage: two snapped doohickies, a thingy broke off, and part of the frame cracked. I gave the press’ big wheel a careful spin. Sure, it was broken, but by God it mostly worked! That’s the quality of American engineers and American workers – 120 years old, kept in a shelter belt for half a decade, falls off a truck and still spun six ways to Sunday. No way on Earth that thing was going down a flight of stairs into my

basement print shop, though! By bolting the press to two 2x4s and rolling it on metal pipes, we were able to get it into my garage, where it’s just gonna have to stay.

I spent the summer cleaning and fixing the press. Mechanical things have never made any sense to me, so I appreciated the help and guidance of my motorhead buddy Derek Olson, who has been fixing up the same El Camino since we were in high school. My old cat hung out with me in the back yard as I took off each piece one at a time, cleaned off the old ink and grime with steel wool and alcohol, put every piece back quick before I forgot how to do it, and oiled the heck out of it. I gained an appreciation for JB Weld. I also learned a bit about bolts. Did you know that modern-day half-inch bolts have a standard 13 threads per inch? Did you know that in the 1800s, half-inch bolts had 12 threads per inch? Did you know that it costs \$42 for a machinist to make a custom half-inch bolt? By the last week of August, Derek, my cat, and I had all the dozens of parts moving smoothly. I couldn’t walk by it without giving it a satisfying spin. Now I just need to learn how to use it.

WMSTR

Western Minnesota Steam Thresher’s Reunion is a magical place that keeps history alive and forges bonds between people with quirky hobbies. The festival has its roots in 1940 when, just for kicks, some families from the Rollag area fired up their old, outdated steam engines to thresh wheat the old-fashioned way. It became a yearly tradition. The crew of nostalgic threshermen grew until they made the Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion group official and invited the public to join them in 1954. Six decades later, the get-together on Threshermen’s Hill overlooking Rollag has grown to be a pioneer town of historic buildings that is bigger than Rollag itself. Every Labor Day weekend it comes alive with 20-25,000 people a day. The scope of the get-together has also expanded from steam-fueled farm machinery to, well, pretty much everything old and requiring work. There are rows and rows of old tractors that look like train engines with wheels as tall as I am, pristinely restored yet muddy. There are also blacksmiths all over the place, a museum in a log cabin, a steam-powered 1920s carousel with painted horses to ride, a turn-of-the-century farm with horses plowing the field, a one room school house, a three-story-tall engine that had something to do with making Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, a working steam shovel that is the same model as what dug the Panama Canal, the Hitterdal train station and, perhaps most amazing, a steam locomotive offering you a ride!

(continued next page)

We history lovers are fortunate to have such a place as Rollag so close to us, and in Clay County no less! It's no surprise that I saw a lot of friends on my way to the print shop. I bought my ticket from HCSCC board member Jon Evert and started walking toward Main Street. Along the way, I stopped in to Earl's Mill, one of three or four sawmills at WMSTR, to say hello to Merlyn Meyer and to thank his crew again for providing free wood for the *Wet & Dry* exhibition at the museum. Once I got to Main Street, I popped into the Ladies' Activities building to say hello to our former collections manager Pam Burkhardt, who was making lace. I can always count on HCSCC member Arnie Ellingson coming to all of our museum events, and on Labor Day weekend you can always count on him being in a little shed convincing people to donate to WMSTR's endowment fund. Next, I stopped into the Cormorant Cabin to talk with the couple who saved it from destruction by relocating it to Rollag: Don Kounovsky and his wife Laurine, one of the original Hjemkomst Center volunteers from opening day in 1986. I just missed them, so I crossed Main Street to The Pioneer Press print shop.

The Pioneer Press has everything you need and more to produce a mid-1900s newspaper. It is a square yellow building with a tin roof about 50 feet wide by 50 feet long, split into two rooms by a wall down the middle. It was established in 1972 when *Hawley Herald* editor Bob Brecken and his employee Jerome Ekre brought an out-of-date linotype machine and a press out to Rollag for the festival. Brecken, like a lot of old newspapermen, could not bear to throw out his perfectly good equipment when new technology made it obsolete, so he brought the old machines to Rollag and kept them in working order. People could see how newspapers used to be printed. Forty-five years later, the Pioneer Press is a working museum that puts out 1500 copies of a newspaper every Labor Day weekend, sold for the antique price of 25 cents. They also print a series of brightly colored cards with funny sayings that sell for a quarter ("You don't have to attend every argument you're invited to"; "Live Steam Engineers make the Hottest Lovers"; and "Private Sign – Do Not Read" are among the 170-some sayings to choose from).

As the years went by, Bob Brecken's Hawley equipment was joined by old printing equipment donated by other area printers to create a working print shop that has it all. There are drawers upon drawers of movable type that allow you to spell out words one at a time. In the late 1800s, Linotype machines were invented, allowing an operator at a keyboard to type a whole line of text at a time and cast it in molten hot lead in seconds – at the

Pioneer Press there are two machines from Hawley, one from Ada, and one from Pelican Rapids. All 100 years old or close to it. There are six printing presses similar to mine churning out souvenir fliers, as well as a little desktop press and a gigantic 1871 Washington Press that looks like a metal version of what Johannes Guttenberg used half a millennium ago. A quarter of one room is devoted to a huge machine that prints the newspapers and spits the paper onto a moving rack where it is folded once, twice, and then three times before your eyes. Other artifacts in this museum include a picture of my press in Ole Riersgord's *Ulen Union* printshop in 1905, Bob Brecken's instamatic camera, and a couple of books printed in Germany 500 years ago. Of particular interest to me was the metal version of the November 25, 1971, issue of Browns Valley's *Valley News* waiting to be inked up and printed. That was the last issue of the paper to be printed with hot metal linotype, the day all this beautiful machinery became obsolete in Browns Valley, Minnesota.

I reported for duty to Jerome Ekre, the volunteer in charge of the Pioneer Press print shop. Mr. Ekre is a retired police officer, but he started off working for Bob Brecken at the *Hawley Herald*. He spoke much about Bob Brecken, all good. Mr. Ekre introduced me to the other volunteers. It was pouring rain on Friday, which kept the crowds down and allowed me to talk to the other volunteers and get to know the machines. There was Bill Anderson, who worked for Bob Brecken at the *Hawley Herald* as a young man until he was awarded a scholarship to attend Concordia College, at which point his boss kindly fired him so he would concentrate on his studies. Jerome Ekre joined the *Hawley Herald* to fill Bill Anderson's spot. Tall and thin Ron Odegard was also chatting among the linotype machines. He taught printing in Wisconsin back when high schools taught kids this trade, he was editor of a paper in Fosston, and was at one time a "tramp printer" who temporarily took the reins of print shops around the region so small-town newspapermen could go on vacation once in a while. These men all had newspaper backgrounds and mostly hung out on the linotype machines, typing people's names in lead for 50 cents or, more often, tweaking and poking at various machines when they weren't working right.

Albert Frisinger was the hardest for me to talk to because he was always moving, always engaging an audience, always handing out fliers from one of two or three letterpresses that he was working. Mr. Frisinger worked at Fargo Rubber Stamp for 30 years on presses like these, and watching him work the knobs and levers of the

huge and beautiful Old Heidelberg press is like watching a conductor in front of an orchestra that made yellow souvenir fliers. For his work in job printing, these old machines never did go obsolete. They're still the best at what they do.

Another category of volunteers are the kids of printers, although they're not kids anymore. Charles Amundson grew up working in his father's newspaper in Browns Valley. Some real gems in the print shop's collection once belonged to Charles' dad and are worked by Charles' grandkids every Labor Day weekend. He walked me around the shop, pointing at something and showing me what it does and how it does it. Volunteer Bryan Nordhougen's father Alvin was a machinist who took care of the equipment at *The Forum* and fixed printing machines all around the region. The knowledge of their fathers passes through them and keeps this print shop running.

Added to old printers and the kids of printers is a third group of volunteers, into which I fall: people who just think all this stuff is really neat. Jerome put me in the care of the Schaffers, John and Donna, whose interest in the old letterpresses made them good teachers for me. Donna is outgoing and gregarious, the enthusiastic fun grandma of every kid who walks through the door. She is typically hanging out with Pam Ekre at the front desk, corralling all the younger volunteers, many of whom are the grandkids of the older volunteers. John Schaffer brought me to an 8x12 Chandler & Price just like mine and showed me how to use it. After all the reading I had done over the summer, learning to use the press took all of three minutes, but I needed to learn by hand and ask someone questions. Then we chatted. About 40 years ago, he and Donna were just WMSTR volunteers looking for something to do. They heard the print shop needed help, so they stopped in. Now they have a house full of letterpress equipment that they use for fun, they run the print shop in East Grand Forks' Heritage Village, and they have an additional building full of printing equipment in Montana. This hobby can get out of hand.

I got pretty much all of this information on Friday because it was cold and rainy and the crowds were thin. On Saturday it was beautiful and therefore extremely busy, so I stuck close to Kyler Mattson, who I just called "Boss." Kyler is the Schaffers' grandson and although he is only 10 years old, he's been selling newspapers at Rollag since he was three, which means he's been working in the print shop for 70% of his life. He's a veteran. The Boss typed away at a 1923 linotype machine from Pelican Rapids,

writing people's names in hot lead slugs for 50 cents a line, while I took the money and folded hundreds of pressmen's hats out of old newspapers ("keeps the ink out of your hair, the sweat off of your work, and makes you look really good. Just 25 cents!"). The Boss was very impressive, fun to work with, and he even brought an extra chocolate milk for me at lunchtime.

But sometimes the Boss had other business to attend and I found myself fumbling with a linotype machine that is older than my grandpa, about 7 feet tall, 4 feet wide, made of cast iron with moving parts all over the place and filled with molten hot lead. I got a bit of training and a lot of encouragement from Jerome and the guys, but things kept getting mucked up in ways I didn't understand and I had to be rescued by volunteers in their 20s. Working with machines this complex and this old, there seemed to be two crews of volunteers – one crew working on them, the other crew fixing whatever isn't working right. Spencer Christianson is one of the best at fixing these things even though he is right out of Hawley High School (he started when he was nine). On my last day there, when I was



Jerome Ekre at the Pioneer Press Linotype machine, August of 2017. Photo: HCSCC.

really having trouble, it was Jake Bastyr who had my back and politely blamed everything on mechanical failures instead of operator error (I think it was really the latter). Jake is probably in his mid-20s. His parents were involved at Rollag when he was young, and at about 6 or 7 he saw Jerome Ekre setting the type for the newspaper in the week before the festival. It looked like a fun place to help. Fifteen years later, he is a trucker who knows how to fix hundred-year-old linotype machines and has an impressive hobby print shop at his home near Mahanomen. Like so many volunteers at Rollag, Jake's hobby has saved a lot of history from the scrapheap and his knowledge keeps that history working into the 21st century.

Maybe part of why machines are easy to love is that we have to take care of them. They help us do whatever it is they do – drive, plow, fly, print - and we nurture them with

oil, rubbing alcohol, and replacement parts. Taking care of a machine can sure be frustrating, but so can taking care of kids or dogs. And many times, getting our machines purring again is a good excuse to spend an evening with friends or dads or kids who can help us fix what's wrong between jokes.

Every Labor Day weekend, people go to little Rollag, Minnesota, for Western Minnesota Steam Threshers Reunion to talk with others who share their interest, to learn from people who know more, and to show off the machine that makes them proud. Museums are important for preserving artifacts, but the love of history that is instilled by the thrill of seeing old machines in action has saved farm equipment as far as the eye can see, a town's worth of buildings, a handful of sawmills and, importantly, the practical knowledge of how to work this old stuff.



Charles Amundson operating the Pioneer Press's 1871 Washington Press used and owned by his father at the *Browns Valley News*. Photo: HCSCC.

#COUNTME

Giving Hearts Gave \$10,000!

By Maureen Kelly Jonason

Giving Hearts Day was held on February 8 this spring, but long before that, our board members went to work raising \$5500 in matching funds. This generous match was provided by the following giving hearts:

American Crystal Sugar	Amy Lammers
Dennis & Sandy Herbranson	Drs. Anu and Vijay Gaba
Eileen Michels	Gloria Lee
Heartland Trust	Jim Danielson
Jim Saueressig	Jo Nell Moore
Jon and Phyllis Evert	Korsmo Funeral Services
Monica and Tom Millette	Peter H. Anderson

This matching gift prompted a day of generosity that included donations from the following businesses...

Bell Bank	Junkyard Brewing
Mickelson Body Shop	Northwestern Bank
RE/MAX Realty	Sir Speedy
T-Squared Screen Printing	Great Outcomes Consulting
Widmer Roel, PC	Wright Funeral Home

...and the individuals listed below. All together they generously gave HCSCC \$10,620. We cannot thank you all enough, but we hope you know our appreciation.

Alan and Patricia Otto
Ann Overby
Anonymous (7)
Ardell and Audrey Olson
Bernice Peihl
Bette and Paul Vandersteen
Candace Mathiowetz
Carol Larson
Carol Zielinski
Carolyn Nelson
Cassie Wiste
Chelsey Ewen
Cynthia Bleier
Dale White
Dayna Del Val
Denese Norris
Dr. Julie Blehm
Gayle Robertson
Gloria and David Lee
Gloria Nygard
Helen and Dick Bolton
Holly Heitkamp
Jackie Kinnert
Janet Ostercamp
Jennifer Ehrichs
Jim Danielson

Jo Nell Moore
John David Lee
John Jorgenson
John Peterson
Jon and Phyllis Evert
Joy Becker
Judith Fuglestad
Judy Haugo
Judy Rippentrop
Kacie Beatch
Karen Erickson
Kay Harmon
Kenneth Tangen
Kevin and Lora Elfstrum
Laurine Muhle
Linda Boyd
Linda Mandsager
Lynne Flanders
Margaret Erickson
Mark and Betsy Vinz
Mary Dahl
Mary Mayer
Meghan Thompson
Michael Lochow
Michael Olsen
Mina and Tom Hall

Nancy Anderson
Nancy Edmonds Hanson
Nate Haugen
Patricia and Burton Belknap
Rachel Asleson
Rebecca Smith
Redgie Bohnet
Reid Strand
Richard Stern
Robin Williams
Ronnie and Donnie Tang
Sally Sterk
Sarah King
Steve and Christine Sopko
Steve and Penny Retzer
Steve Wright
Steven Lunde
Susan Risher
Tamara Blanich
Tania Blanich
Tara Krabbenhoft
Tracee Buethner
Trygve Olson
Warren Hilde
Wendy Berland
Willy Jacobson



News from the Comstock House

Lawn Games and Local Beer

Beginning **Thursday, June 14**, and held every other Thursday thereafter until **Thursday, August 23**, we're hosting a neighborhood party on the Comstock House lawn from 6:30PM to 8:30PM. The focus? Building local community, playing lawn games, and enjoying some of our community's fine local food and brew.

We'll be playing classic lawn games like kubbb, molkky, skittles, bocce ball, and croquet; and we'll be drinking local brews from community brewers like Junkyard Brewing Company, Drekker Brewing Company, and Fargo Brewing Company.

Admission is free and the beer costs \$5 a pour. Pico Food Truck will be available on the first night, June 14, selling the regular fare from their delicious taco menu. Depending on the crowd, they may be back. So make your June 14 dinner plans now!

Comstock Summer Tour Hours

Summer hours have begun at the historic Comstock House. Through **Sunday, September 2**, the house will be available for tours Saturday and Sunday from 1PM to 4PM. Tours and events may also be reserved by contacting site manager and HCSCC Director of Operations Matt Eidem at (218) 291-4211 or matt.eidem@hcsmuseum.org.

Yoga on the Comstock Lawn

On **Monday nights at 6:00PM** throughout the summer, we're hosting certified yoga instructor Amanda Nordick who will lead outdoor yoga classes designed for all levels of ability. A limited number of yoga mats are available, but we encourage you to bring your own (and your own water bottle).

Classes will be canceled in case of rain or low temps, so watch our social media pages for updates!



The Comstock House, Moorhead's gorgeous Queen Anne and Eastlake mansion, will feature regular weekly programs and tours this summer. Photo: Martin Jonason.

HCSCC Summer Calendar

HC = Hjemkomst Center
CH = Comstock House

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, June 4, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **History On Tap!**

Monday, June 4, 6:00PM - 7:00PM

Junkyard Brewing Company

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, June 11, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **Lawn Games and Local Beer Night**

Thursday, June 14, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CH

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, June 18, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **OPENING RECEPTION**

- **25th National Watermedia Exhibition**

Tuesday, June 19, 5:00PM - 8:00PM, HC

- **Scandinavian Hjemkomst &
Midwest Viking Festival**

Friday, June 22, 10:00AM - 5:00PM, HC

Saturday, June 23, 10:00AM - 5:00PM, HC

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, June 25, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **Lawn Games and Local Beer Night**

Thursday, June 28, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CH

- **History On Tap!**

Monday, July 2, 6:00PM - 7:00PM

Junkyard Brewing Company

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, July 9, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **Lawn Games and Local Beer Night**

Thursday, July 12, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CH

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, July 16, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **River Excursion: Red River History**

Wednesday, July 18, 5:45PM - 8:00PM

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, July 23, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **Nordic Cocktails & Skål Reception**

Tuesday, July 24, 6:00PM - 8:00PM, HC

- **Lawn Games and Local Beer Night**

Thursday, July 26, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CH

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, July 30, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, August 6, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **History On Tap!**

Monday, August 6, 6:00PM - 7:00PM

Junkyard Brewing Company

- **Lawn Games and Local Beer Night**

Thursday, August 9, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CH

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, August 13, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **A Scientific History of the Spanish Flu**

Tuesday, August 14, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, HC

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, August 20, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

- **Lawn Games and Local Beer Night**

Thursday, August 23, 6:30PM - 8:30PM, CH

- **Yoga On the Lawn**

Monday, August 27, 6:00PM - 7:00PM, CH

Want to Reserve Seats for HCSCC Events?

Perfect! Go to www.hcscconline.org and click on the 'Visit Us' tab on the top drop menu. You'll find the option!

Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County

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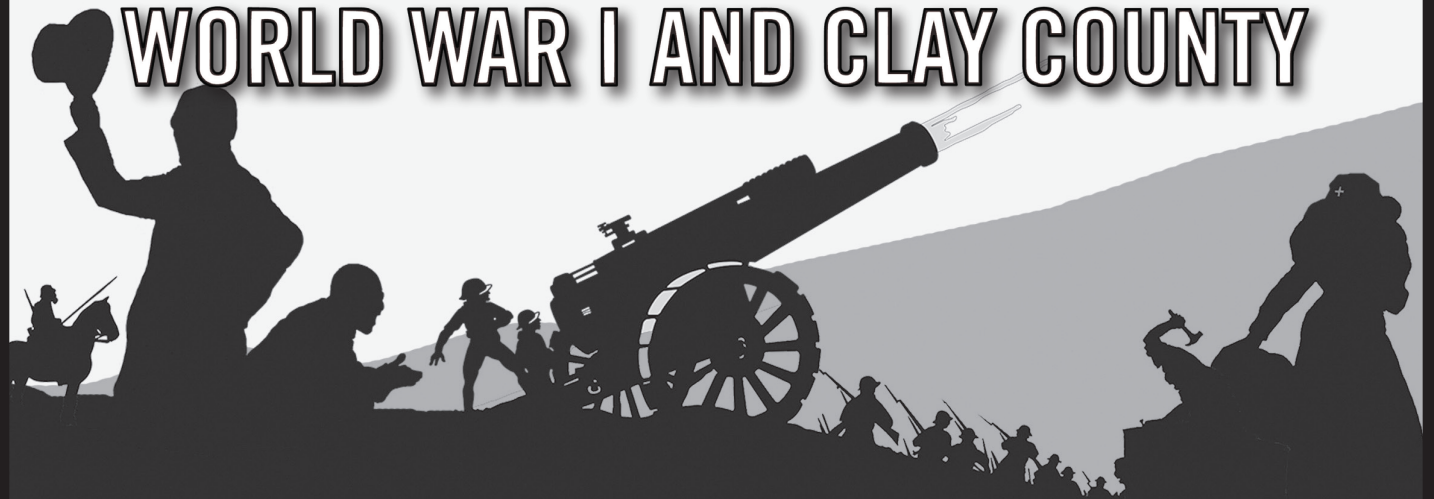


To collect, preserve, interpret, and share the history and culture of Clay County, Minnesota.

WAR, FLU, AND FEAR



WORLD WAR I AND CLAY COUNTY



on exhibition through 2020