

# MFT EXPRESS #15

September 2012

*A Quarterly Newsletter from the Museum of the Fur Trade for its Members*

## Feast of the Hunter's Moon

The Fifteenth Annual FHM will be held Saturday, October 20, 2012. Festivities will begin at 6:00 p.m. and conclude at 9 p.m. Parking will be provided at the old District Three Alpha School just west of the museum, and a shuttle bus will bring participants to the museum.

Feast on traditional 18th century dishes! A variety of wild game will be served, much of it contributed and cooked by museum members. Dishes will be made from buffalo, venison, salmon, elk, and squirrel. And maybe a moose nose, chicken feet, or sheep's head . . .

Omaha pumpkin from the museum's garden, colonial succotash, fur trade era refreshment from hailstorms to mint juleps, as well as artisanal wines will be available. Excellent traditional desserts are included.

Entertainment by the Bald Mountain Rounders bluegrass band.

Advance tickets \$20. Call 308-432-3843 or email [museum@furtrade.org](mailto:museum@furtrade.org) for tickets. Only 300 dinner tickets will be sold. Tickets purchased at the door are \$20 but are good only for drinks and music.



A good time for everyone at the 2011 FHM!

## Fires are Out for Now

As the world knows, drought has its grip on the West and lightning has ignited a whole string of dangerous fires within a few miles of the museum. Shifting winds brought the fires across the highways west and south of the museum, much of the state park suffered some damage, and several of our volunteers were forced to evacuate when fire threatened their homes. All's well that ends well, but there's still no moisture in sight. That said, the museum's visitation and income have never been higher. Thanks for your ongoing support!

## **New Exhibits Planned**

The penultimate (next to last) renovation of the museum's exhibit halls will commence on November 1, 2012, and will involve replacement of the exhibits relating to Russian America and the Northwest Coast, Greenland and the sealing industry, the Mountain Men, St. Louis and the Upper Missouri fur trade, and the Comanchero trade. This long stretch is dictated in part by the necessity of the tilers to reach the entrance to the Textile Hall, which will provide a seamless floor surface throughout the exhibit areas. However, the extent of the project means that there will be no off-season visitation because of ongoing construction. Sorry for the inconvenience, but it can't be helped.

## **Fur Trade Symposium at Pinedale**

Both Director Gail DeBuse Potter and Historian Jim Hanson attended the triennial (sometimes biennial) fur trade symposium; this was the best attended ever, and simply a fine gathering at all levels. Hanson gave a talk about the China trade, introducing the overall topic of the 200th anniversary of Astoria. The next symposium is set for Bent's Fort, LaJunta, Colorado, in 2015.

## **Plan for New Book A REQUEST FOR YOUR HELP!**

In the course of historical research on the Western fur trade, we have all encountered the names of "ephemeral" individuals, people mentioned once or twice in letters, journals, and published works by fur trade participants. These men—laborers, hired trappers, hunters, clerks, keelboat hands, teamsters, or free-lance travelers—deserve more recognition than a few obscure references. I propose the compilation and publication of a book in their honor to be tentatively entitled:

### **MARGINAL MEN: LESSER LIGHTS of the WESTERN FUR TRADE, 1800–1850**

The title derives from the fertile genius John D. McDermott, who has already contributed to the biographies. The book will be a useful reference for historians, genealogists, and fur trade enthusiasts. It will make available in a single location a worthwhile continuation of Dr. LeRoy Hafen's monumental *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*.

The book will be published as soon as we have received a minimum of 300 entries. If you have contributed, you will receive a complimentary copy of the published work, plus special discounts on additional copies. But wait! There's more! You will also receive the plaudits of your peers for an important job well done.

The only criterion for inclusion in the volume is that the individuals were associated with the fur trade of the Plains or Rockies of Western America in the period before the Civil War.

#### **WHAT TO SUBMIT:**

1. The individual's name.
2. One or two sentences summarizing what is known about the individual, i. e., "Blacksmith at Fort Union, 1843," or "Keelboat man for the Office of Indian Trade, 1811, drowned rescuing a man overboard, 1811. African American."
3. Citation or source of reference.
4. Your name, address, and phone number via mail or email.

#### **WHERE TO SUBMIT:**

Email to [museum@furtrade.org](mailto:museum@furtrade.org) with subject: marginal men, or mail to Jim Hanson, editor, *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly*, 6321 Highway 20, Chadron, NE 69337.