

**Testimony Before Montana Legislature Long Range Planning Joint Subcommittee**

Mark A. Sherouse, Executive Director  
Montana Committee for the Humanities  
February 8, 2005

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, for the record, my name is Mark A. Sherouse. I am Executive Director of the Montana Committee for the Humanities, a statewide nonprofit organization with offices in Missoula. I am testifying on behalf of grant #1126, requesting funding for a special project grant to support the Montana Committee for the Humanities' *Speakers Bureau*. [Materials distributed: 2004-2006 *Speakers Bureau* catalog, MCH bookmark, list of *Speakers Bureau* communities served]

The members of the Montana Committee for the Humanities and I are grateful to have the opportunity to request state support for our *Speakers Bureau*. The Legislature has chosen to fund the *Speakers Bureau* in seven previous sessions, and we are hopeful that you and your colleagues also will appreciate the benefits of this program and give it your support. We are grateful also to the Cultural and Aesthetics Projects Advisory Committee for the strong recommendation our proposal received.

The Montana Committee for the Humanities is Montana's independent nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency. The Committee itself consists of nineteen Montana citizens, broadly representative of the state's civic, academic, geographical, and other diversities; four are appointed by the Governor. The Committee was founded by thirteen Montana citizens in 1972, in response to Congress' National Arts and Humanities Act of 1965. Every state has a humanities council similar to ours. The Committee meets quarterly to make policy and to review proposals from the public for the grants it provides. It is served by a small staff with offices in Missoula.

The humanities include such disciplines as history, philosophy, literature, languages, religious studies, jurisprudence, and a variety of other fields. The original and still basic purpose of state humanities councils such as MCH is to distribute grant funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of public programs in the humanities, to nonprofit organizations throughout the state. Over the past thirty years, MCH has awarded grants to hundreds of Montana organizations: museums, libraries, churches, schools, colleges and universities, governmental entities, civic, service, and professional groups. MCH-funded conferences, workshops, exhibitions, publications, television and radio programs, films, videos and other media, have reached thousands of Montanans. We are also the Montana Center for the Book, affiliated with the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, and sponsor the statewide Montana Festival of the Book as well as *Letters About Literature*, a national reading and writing contest for junior and senior high school students, as well as the One Book Montana statewide reading and discussion program. And, in 2006, we are following on the popular success of the MCH-sponsored *Barn Again!* tour by sponsoring *Key Ingredients: America by Food*—a traveling exhibit and celebration of America's agricultural and culinary heritage that will tour among six of Montana's rural museums in 2006-2007.

Not every community nor organization has the resources to develop a major proposal or event, and, in recognition of this, some twenty-two years ago, MCH developed its so-called "packaged programs," including the *Speakers Bureau*. The *Speakers Bureau* program has thrived since then, meeting ever-increasing demand, and is easily the Committee's most popular and effective vehicle for bringing the humanities to *all* of Montana.

The workings of the *Speakers Bureau* are simple and straightforward. An organization—a library, museum, school, or other nonprofit group—chooses a speaker and topic from our *Speakers Bureau* catalog and books the speaker directly for the appointed date. The organization sends an application to MCH, and, assuming that very minimal conditions are met, *and that funds are available*, it is approved. With NEH and Cultural Trust funds, MCH then pays the speaker's *honorarium* and travel expenses. The local sponsoring organization's contribution—mostly in-kind or volunteer—consists in planning and coordinating the event, providing space, advertising, and an audience. The *Speakers Bureau* thus combines the community's private resources *and* public funds, both state and federal, in bringing the reflection, discussion, and insights of the humanities to the communities it serves.

As you can see from the current *Speakers Bureau* catalog, our programs emphasize Montana and western history, Montana literature, Native American affairs, Lewis and Clark, and many other topics of interest to our citizens. Late in 2001, we developed a special 9-11 edition of the *Speakers Bureau*. This special edition brought together poets and professors, historians, former State Department officials, and many others of widely divergent views, to help Montana citizens and community groups work their ways through the many issues raised by the tragic events of that date and their aftermath.

Demand for MCH's *Speakers Bureau* continues to increase dramatically. For the period July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2004, the *Speakers Bureau* provided 780 programs across Montana. (This compares with 868 programs in preceding two *biennia*.) In the past 5 years the *Speakers Bureau* has presented in *every* Montana county. In the past two years 78 Montana communities hosted these programs, adding 10 communities brand new to the *Speakers Bureau*. As in past years, nearly 70% of communities served have populations of 2,500 or less. The 2004-2006 *Speakers Bureau* brochure includes some 99 presentations, available from 78 different speakers. Attendance at *Speakers Bureau* programs varies from 5 to 500, but its average had grown to 90 persons per event. The programs are well distributed across the state, with eastern Montana receiving 19%, south central Montana 30%, north central Montana 23%, and western Montana 28%.

Montanans are an engaged and reflective people, and, as the increases in usage and demand for the *Speakers Bureau* program show, their appetite for humanities and cultural enrichment is strong. The *Speakers Bureau* is one of MCH's most popular programs—responding to a genuine need among the state's people—and is certainly our most effective means of providing cultural programs for *all* of Montana.

While we bear *all* the costs of administering and marketing the *Speakers Bureau*—more than \$30,000 per year—MCH asks that the state *share* in meeting the costs of individual programs. MCH itself supports these programs with an additional \$30,000 or more per year. Additional support from the state will enable the Committee to maintain the present *Speakers Bureau* level of service across Montana. We are already very nearly at the end of budgeted federal funds for 2005, and, unless relief is in sight, we will have to contemplate a reduction in programs offered in the remainder of this year.

For much of its existence, the *Speakers Bureau* has benefited greatly from the funding of Montana's Cultural Trust. With Cultural Trust funds, we have extended the *Speakers Bureau* far more widely than might otherwise have been the case and helped ever more Montanans to help themselves to its benefits. We hope you are proud to have been a part of this program over the years and ask that you help us to extend its benefits even more widely among our citizens.

I appreciate your interest and will be pleased to respond to your questions. Thank you

## COMMUNITIES SERVED BY *SPEAKERS BUREAU*, JULY, 2002-JUNE, 2004

### Montana Committee for the Humanities

In the past 5 years the *Speakers Bureau* has presented in *every* Montana county. During this 2-year period it made 337 presentations in 78 communities, 9 of which (+) had never before hosted a speaker. Of the cities and towns listed, 65% have populations under 2,500. Among underserved populations, rural, aging, youth, ethnic minority, and low-income audiences were frequently served, with disabled members of the audience, less frequent, but also represented.

Absarokee	Gallatin Gateway	Plentywood
Anaconda	Garnet +	Polson
Augusta	Glasgow	Pony +
Baker	Glendive	Potomac +
Bannack	Great Falls	Pryor
Belgrade	Hamilton	Red Lodge
Big Sky	Hardin	Rosebud
Big Timber	Havre	Roundup
Bigfork	Helena	Saint Ignatius
Billings	Helmville +	Scobey
Bozeman	Heron +	Seeley Lake
Broadus	Hot Springs	Sheridan
Browning	Huntley	Sidney
Butte	Jordan	Terry
Cascade	Kalispell	Three Forks
Chinook	Laurel	Townsend
Choteau	Lewistown	Troy
Clancy	Libby	Valier
Colstrip	Livingston	Victor
Columbus	Lolo	Virginia City
Conrad	Loring +	West Glacier
Cut Bank	Malta	West Yellowstone
Deer Lodge	Miles City	Whitehall
Dillon	Missoula	Wolf Point
East Helena +	Nashua +	Zortman +
Eureka		
Fort Benton		
Fort Peck		

**Exhibit Number:** 7

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**The following exhibit is a booklet that exceeds the 5-page limit therefore it cannot be scanned. The booklets' cover has been scanned to help you when requesting information. The exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and can be viewed there.**

Montana Committee for the Humanities

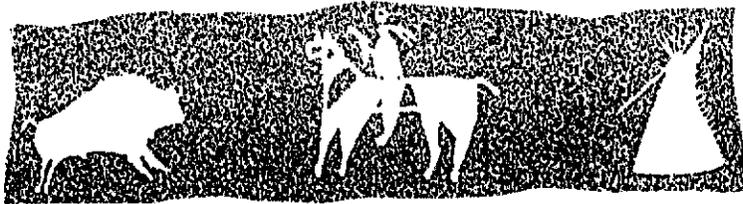
# SPEAKERS BUREAU

2004-2006

Montana & Western History

## Lewis & Clark

U.S. & World History



## THE ARTS

LITERATURE

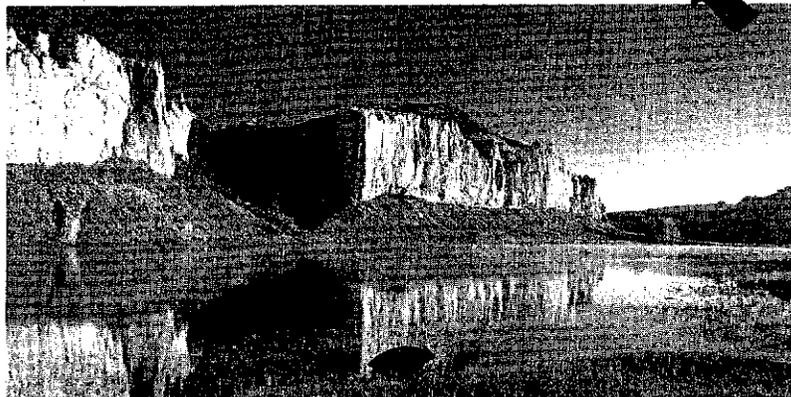


Native Peoples' Histories and Culture



## CHAUTAUQUA

In Times Like These...



CIVIC CULTURE

# Montana Committee for the Humanities

**MONTANA** The Montana Committee for the Humanities (MCH) is Montana's independent nonprofit affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). MCH was founded in 1972 by diverse Montana citizens—academic and civic leaders—in response to Congress' National Humanities Act of 1965. Since that time, MCH has benefited hundreds of Montanans and thousands of its citizens, providing support for public programs in the humanities. The specific educational and cultural programs sponsored by MCH help Montanans gain a better understanding of humanity's values and beliefs, intellectual achievements, and historical heritage.

**THE HUMANITIES** The humanities include literature, history, art, music, drama, languages, ethics, and jurisprudence; the theory and criticism of literature, art, and music; religion, archaeology, and the philosophy of language, history, and the social and natural sciences.

**GOVERNANCE** MCH is governed by a board of directors representing the general public. The board is elected by the membership for four-year terms. The board meets quarterly to make policy decisions and to review the organization's financial and programmatic activities.

**PROGRAMS** MCH sponsors a wide variety of programs, including lectures, workshops, seminars, exhibits, a state-wide speaker's bureau, a state-wide scholar-in-the-schools program, oral history and linguistic projects, radio, video, and audio productions, radio and television programs, a media center, and humanities research and scholarship.

**DELIVERABLES AND ORGANIZATION** MCH programs reach schools for Montana children and adults. Organizations that deliver these programs include schools, libraries, libraries, colleges and universities, professional groups, church, service organizations, and many others.

**GRANTS** MCH awards grants to organizations on a competitive proposal basis, requiring an in-kind match. The grants support the humanities and are administered by humanities organizations. The grants are used to support a wide variety of projects and proposals and are subject to the NEH's regulations.

**LECTURES** MCH also conducts several "lectures" series, including the *Speakers Bureau*, *OpenBook*, and *OpenBook*—all of which are designed to provide opportunities to benefit from high quality humanistic thought and a wide range of speakers. The most expenditure of resources.

**SPEAKERS BUREAU** The Speakers Bureau provides presentations on Montana history and literature, Lewis and Clark, and other topics. The bureau also addresses public policy issues, the arts, and other issues. MCH provides for speaker's fees, travel, and other expenses. Local sponsors provide a \$50.00 deposit, a venue, publicity, and coordination of the event.

**OPENBOOK** Popular especially among libraries and library book groups, the OpenBook reading and discussion program lends multiple copies of books on a variety of topics as well as scholar-lecturers to assist in book discussion.

**MEDIA COLLECTION** The MCH Media Collection consists of more than 600 audio and video tapes, CDs and DVDs on humanities topics. Items in the Collection are available for loan to Montana individuals and organizations, without cost except for return postage. The Media Collection is administered by the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at The University of Montana.

**MONTANA CENTER FOR THE BOOK** In 1998, the Library of Congress designated MCH as the new Montana Center for the Book. With this new affiliation MCH has expanded and strengthened its support for Montana readers and writers through programs on literature, literacy, and libraries. The Center's website is [www.montanabook.org](http://www.montanabook.org).

**MONTANA FESTIVAL OF THE BOOK** On September 22-24, 2005 MCH and the Montana Center for the Book will sponsor the sixth Montana Festival of the Book, in Missoula. Past Festivals have featured more than 100 writers—some of the most important voices of the West—in some sixty sessions, attracting a cumulative audience over 5,000. Updated information appears at [www.bookfest-mt.org](http://www.bookfest-mt.org).

**KEY INGREDIENTS: MONTANA BY FOOD** In 2006-2007, MCH will bring the Smithsonian Institution to Montana—in the form of the acclaimed "Key Ingredients: America by Food" exhibit. The Key Ingredients exhibit will tour the state, with extended stays and associated programming in six Montana communities. For further information, see the *Key Ingredients Montana* website, [www.humanities-mt.org/keyingredients.htm](http://www.humanities-mt.org/keyingredients.htm).

**MCH COMMITMENT** MCH is committed to serving the needs of Montana and its people. The Committee particularly encourages programs that:

- stimulate statewide dialogue on topics of concern including cultural change and developments causing social stress
- promote dialogue between humanities scholars and the adult public, benefiting both
- foster discussion among the state's diverse cultures and across its geographical distances
- strengthen cooperative relationships among Montana communities and their cultural organizations—museums, libraries, schools, colleges and universities, and tribal organizations, and,
- deepen deliberative dialogue and civic discourse among all the citizens of our state.

**SUPPORT THE HUMANITIES IN MONTANA!** MCH augments its NEH funds with Montana Cultural Trust and other foundation and corporation grants, and with gifts from individuals. Your gift—whether through MCH's annual fund drive, its endowment with the Montana Community Foundation, or in some other way—will bring the humanities, their insights and joys, to ever more Montanans, now and in the future. A gift coupon is available.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** Contact the MCH offices at: 311 Brantly Hall, The University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812-7848; telephone 406-243-6022; toll-free in Montana 800-624-6001; fax 406-243-4836; or email at [humanities.mt@umontana.edu](mailto:humanities.mt@umontana.edu). The MCH website is <http://www.humanities-mt.org>.