

# THE CAPITOL SOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME SIX | NUMBER TWO | JUNE 2014

## Elevators back in service

All four tower elevators are back in service now that the Tower Elevator Modernization Project is completed. One of the most visible components of the project, the elevator floor indicator restoration, is receiving rave reviews. Visitors and staff have commented on the indicators and how the original look of the bronze matches the historic character of the building. The hidden life safety improvements which formed the major portion of the modernization and upgrade have gone unnoticed but have had the greatest impact on staff and visitors.

The thousands of students on field trips this Spring benefitted from the new mechanical and electrical equipment installed in the hoist ways. Their trips to the observation decks were quick and quiet, without the frequent breakdowns of past years. While it once took 30 - 40 minutes to move a large group up to the top of the Capitol it now takes about half that time. The trip from ground level to the top now takes about 30 seconds. The new access system for staff has improved security and made office access more convenient. 



*Over 400 students visit the Capitol during the annual Boys State activities sponsored by the American Legion. In past years access to the tower was restricted because of concerns with weight limits and the potential for elevator malfunction. The upgraded elevators allowed Boys State participants to once again visit the 14th floor observation decks.*

### Nebraska Capitol Commission Membership

Dave Heineman  
Governor  
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Congressional District 2

Jim Cudaback  
Congressional District 3

Robert C. Ripley AIA  
Capitol Administrator  
Office of the Capitol Commission  
Secretary

*To commemorate the completion of the elevator modernization project, the 2014 Office of the Capitol Commission holiday ornament is modeled after the historic floor indicator in the center of the bronze floor dial. The 2014 OCC ornament will be available in the Landmark Store at the Capitol in July. For information please contact the store at (402)471-2062.*



The People of the  
**OCC**  
Office of the Capitol  
Commission

**ADMINISTRATION**

Bob Ripley, *Administrator*  
Tom Kaspar, *Architect*  
Matt Hansen, *Architect*  
Mark Tonjes, *Capitol Manager*  
Tammy Honnor, *Facilities  
Construction Coordinator*  
Cecilia Curtis-Beard,  
*Administrative Assistant*

**ARCHIVE**

Karen Wagner, *Archivist*

**CARPENTRY**

Brett Daugherty, *Shop Supervisor*  
Ron Dulas, *Furniture Conservator*  
Roger Frink,  
*Hardware Conservator*  
Steve Janssen, *Furniture Finisher*  
Phil Lagoni, *Mason*  
Mike Marshall, *Cabinet Maker*

**CUSTODIAL**

Perry Shuman,  
*Capitol Conservation Supervisor*  
Richard Mallam, *Custodial Leader*  
Rich Naber, *Custodial Leader*

**GROUNDS**

Mike Hoppmann,  
*Arborist/Groundskeeper*  
Don Pracheil, *Mechanic*

**MAINTENANCE**

Michael Jordan, *Shop Supervisor*  
Kent Bonebright, *Metalsmith*  
Tahir Karimi, *Electrician*  
John MacKichan, *Plumber*  
John Steele,  
*Maintenance Technician*

**TOURS**

Roxanne Smith,  
*Tourism Supervisor/  
Special Events Coordinator*  
Gloria Witherspoon,  
*Tourism Aide*  
Daniel Hutt, *Tourism Aide*

**EXPERIENCE AND SERVICE**



*Left to right: Bob Ripley, Steve Janssen, Mark Tonjes, AS Director Gerry Oglemueller, Mike Marshall, Brett Daugherty, Bill McClurg, Ron Dulas, Roger Frink, Phil Lagoni.*

Office of the Capitol Commission Carpentry Shop staff were recognized for their contribution to the 2012-2014 Elevator Renovation Project at a May 15 ceremony. Their work was the most visible during the \$2.9 million project. The inlaid walnut wood elevator cab walls and doors were removed and scratches, graffiti, missing wood veneer and general wear over the last 32 years repaired and restored while contractors updated the mechanical components.

Fifty six new ornamental bronze floor indicators, replicated from the 1920's originals, were installed by members of the team. This very precise, technical restoration work required staff to fill 4" x 30" x 4" holes cut into the original finishes above each elevator doorway. Staff filled and patched each hole with material that essentially made the holes cut into limestone or plaster walls at each floor level during the

1950's disappear. In the two 14th floor Memorial Hall elevator vestibules, damaged Kasota Buff marble wall panels above each elevator doors were removed and replaced with stone panels mined from the original Minnesota quarry. Staff succeeded in precisely placing each 30" x 48" x 1.5" 250 pound panel into an existing wall opening with only a 1/16 inch tolerance between each slab. The color and finish of the marble, and staff's skillful work hide the repair completely.

While cab and vestibule restoration was proceeding, the hardware specialist designed and machined 56 1" diameter pipe sleeves with needle bearings. These were needed to install the floor indicator drives through the 18" thick elevator shaft wall. OCC staff did an exceptional job of designing, fabricating and installing work essential to the visual and operational success of this project. 

*The grandson of William L. Younkin, supervising architect on site for Bertram Goodhue during the construction of the Nebraska Capitol, visited the Office of the Capitol Commission on April 24, 2014. After a thorough tour of the Capitol and visits to other sites in Lincoln, including Younkin's grave at Wyuka Cemetary, Bill Younkin (right) and Toan Do, his nephew, posed with the portrait of Goodhue in the Capitol Commission's conference room. This was the first visit to the Capitol by Younkin's grandson who was most impressed with the scale and scope of his grandfather's work.*



# CONSERVATION PROJECTS

## Cleaning and repairing stone

Capitol mason Phil Lagoni is called upon for the daily care and conservation of the many varieties of stone used in the Nebraska State Capitol. Because of his expertise and experience, Lagoni is involved in every major project undertaken in the building. When the Office of the Capitol Commission removed the outdated Medal of Honor plaque from the great hall and installed a new updated Medal of Honor plaque on 14th floor, Lagoni was called upon to restore the Kasota stone pier face.

The removal of the plaque revealed many holes and the adhesive used to secure the plaque to the wall. Lagoni's first task was to carefully remove the adhesive and pencil marks without damaging the Kasota stone. This first step toward restoration demonstrated a need to further clean the wall to remove many years of soiling. Using a technique learned during the West Chamber Restoration project, Lagoni applied a latex poultice to remove the surface grime. Cleaning the surface prior to hole filling was necessary for staff to match patch stone color precisely. 



*Above, before and after images demonstrate the talent of Capitol staff in the restoration of stone.*



*The above left image shows the Kasota stone wall immediately after plaque removal and the liberal application of adhesive. The above right image shows what the wall looked like with adhesive removed prior to complete cleaning.*



*Left, Lagoni applies the latex and detergent poultice to clean a section of the pier where the plaque hung. Right, after drying for forty-eight hours the poultice was peeled away to reveal a very clean piece of stone.*



*Left, the cleaned wall with holes patched by Lagoni.*

*Right, after the patch material was expertly colored by Mike Marshall, Capitol Cabinet Maker, the holes disappeared.*



# Our Geologic Treasure

*Capitol notable for the great variety of stone used.*

The Nebraska State Capitol was the site of a field trip excursion during the 2014 Geologic Society of America's 2014 North-Central Regional Meeting in Lincoln earlier this spring. Joe Hannibal, a curator with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, researched the stone used in construction of the Capitol for a presentation at the conference. He also organized the tour which highlighted the many different and rare types of stone used to construct Nebraska's magnificent Capitol, and discussed the paleontological iconography of the 2nd floor Rotunda. Capitol staff played a supporting role in the multi-discipline tour.

During his presentation to the group Dr. Hannibal discussed the research work of early Twentieth Century University of Nebraska paleontologist Erwin Barbour, and how his scientific drawings and sketches became the basis for Hildreth Meiere's accurate mosaics of prehistoric life in Nebraska. Hartley Burr Alexander, Capitol Thematic Consultant and Professor of Philosophy at the University, recruited Barbour to provide guidance to the artist. Hannibal reinforced the link between the rotunda mosaics and the stone used by pointing out fossils of the animals portrayed in the guilloche which appear in the stone on the floor.

At every stop on the tour, Hannibal identified the stone used, its likely place of origin, and the geologic processes which formed the stone. With over 40 different kinds of stone used, including Indiana limestone, Red Verona marble, Ridgeway bluestone, Yellow Kasota stone, Napoleon Gray marble, Belgian Black marble, Portoro marble and Verde Antique marble, the Capitol is a geology treasure trove. 



*Above, Hannibal shows the tour group an enlarged photo of the Missouri quarry where the Napoleon Gray stone in the rotunda floor was mined. Right, Capitol staff uses a loop to view the tiny crinoid fossils in the Napoleon Gray stone.*



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## Finding the fossils

The surfaces of the stone used in the Nebraska State Capitol are an amazing visual display of the ancient sea life which lived in the oceans which once covered this region. Fossils of crinoids, marine animals which attach themselves to the sea bottom, ammonites, extinct mollusks which swam free in the oceans, and fossil corals can be seen in the surfaces of stone throughout the Capitol.



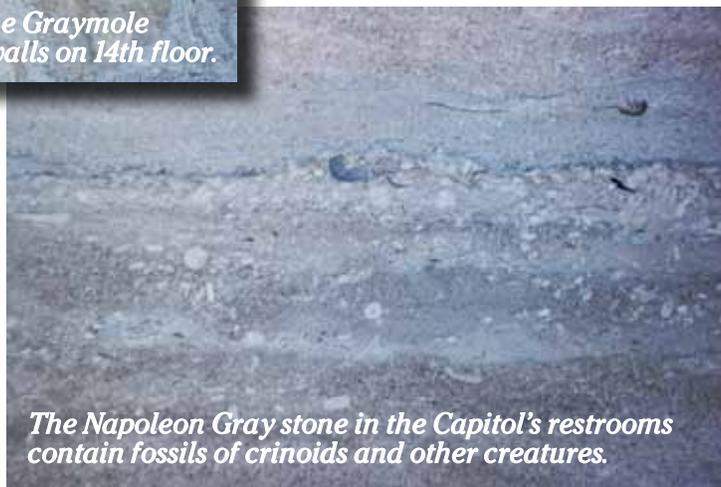
Above, the Rosso Ammonitico marble columns in the Vestibule were quarried in Italy. The marble derives its name from the ammonite fossils (the circular form in these photos) found in the stone. An ammonite is included in Hildreth Meiere's rotunda floor mosaic.



Indiana limestone building blocks contain crinoid fossils.



Layered fossils in the Graymole marble floors and walls on 14th floor.



The Napoleon Gray stone in the Capitol's restrooms contain fossils of crinoids and other creatures.



Left, the State Law Library features wainscoting of Ste. Genevieve Rose marble. This buff pink marble quarried in Missouri contains crinoid fossils and fossils of other creatures. Crinoids are the repeated element in the rotunda guilloche around the water tondi.

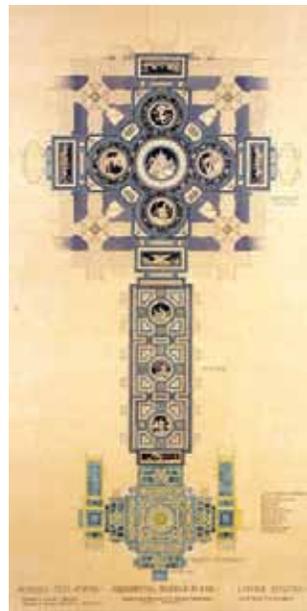
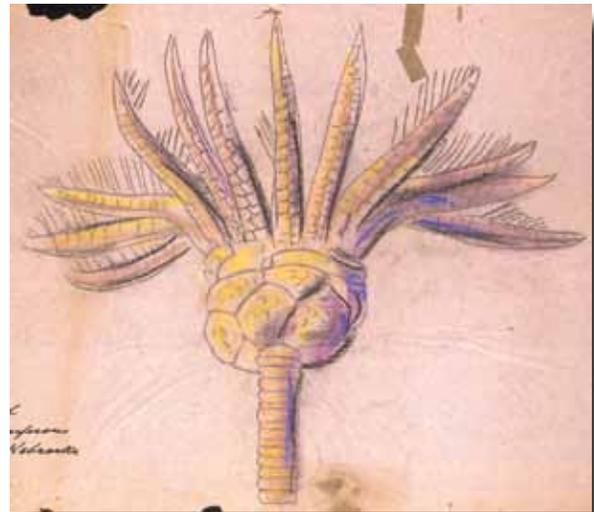
# WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

## Archive supports research

Scholars and Capitol Commission staff use the Archive within the Nebraska Capitol Collection for research and reference purposes. Generally, the archive materials provide information about the design team and the construction of the building. Joe Hannibal, Curator of Invertebrate Paleontology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, used the resources in the archive to refine his research paper and further identify the different types of stone used in the Capitol. Capitol Archivist, Karen Wagner, selected items for view on this spring's Geological Society of America field trip that were especially interesting to the group. Featured were the pastel sketches University of Nebraska Professor of Paleontology Erwin Barbour provided to guide Hildreth Meiere in her rotunda mosaics, a copy of the Tompkins-Kiel Marble catalog, and architectural drawings calling out the type of stone used and the placement of the mosaics in the floor. 



*Above, the geology tour group views archival material related to the use of decorative stone in the Capitol. Below, Barbour's sketch of a crinoid was adapted by Meiere and used in the rotunda floor design.*



*Right, a 36" tall drawing of the mosaic floors in the Nebraska Capitol was provided to the Nebraska Capitol Commission by the Sunderlund Marble Company in Omaha. The Nebraska Capitol supplied marble and aided in the installation of the mosaics and columns.*



*Left, a page from the Tompkins-Kiel Marble book in the Archive Collection. Capitol architects would have used a similar book to identify marble for use in the Capitol.*

# CAPITOL EVENTS

## **Cornhusker Girls State**

**June 5, 2014**

An American Legion Auxiliary program for high school girls in the 2nd floor rotunda at 2:00 p.m.

## **Cornhusker Boys State**

**June 6, 2014**

The Nebraska American Legion will bring high school boys to the Capitol to visit their elected officials.

## **Probation Officer Induction**

**June 10, 2014**

The Nebraska Probation Administration will swear in 100 new probation officers at 3:00 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Rotunda.

## **Girl Awards Ceremony**

**June 14, 2014**

Annual Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska Homestead Service Silver and Gold Awards program at 2:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## **Teacher Exchange Recognition**

**June 23, 2014**

Nebraska Department of Education Program at 10:00 a.m. in the 2nd floor rotunda recognizes teachers from Mexico who participate in the Nebraska Binational Migrant Education Teacher Exchange.

## **State Patrol Graduation Ceremony**

**July 25, 2014**

Nebraska State Patrol Recruit Academy graduation at 10:00 a.m. in the 2nd Floor Rotunda.

## **Pediatric Cancer Awareness**

**August 24, 2014**

The Capitol will be illuminated with golden colored light to bring awareness to pediatric cancer.

## **Jr. Duck Stamp Exhibit**

**September 15-26, 2014**

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service display of student artwork in the 1st floor rotunda.

## **Alzheimer's Action Day**

**September 21, 2014**

The Capitol will be illuminated with purple light to bring awareness to Alzheimer's disease.

## **Bar Induction Ceremony**

**September 23, 2014**

The Nebraska Supreme Court inducts new members of the Nebraska Bar Association in the 2nd floor rotunda at 10:00 a.m.

## **Annual Awards Program**

**September 24, 2014**

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services will recognize employees in the 2nd floor rotunda at 2:00 p.m.

## **Probation Officer Induction**

**October 8, 2014**

The Nebraska Probation Administration will swear in new probation officers at 3:00 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Rotunda.

## **Pancreatic Cancer Awareness**

**October 11, 2014**

The Capitol will be lit purple to promote awareness of Pancreatic cancer.

## **Gettysburg Address Commemoration**

**November 15, 2014**

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will stand vigil at the Lincoln Monument from 9:00 a.m. until noon.

## **Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony**

**December 7, 2014**

The Pinewood Bowl Committee, Inc. sponsors this annual carol sing in the Capitol Rotunda at 2:00 p.m.

**The Governor will sign Proclamations at 10:30 a.m. in the Warner Chamber on February 12, March 13, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 11, October 8, November 12 and December 10.**

**For proclamation information please contact Sarah in the Lt. Governor's Office at (402)471-2256.**

*All events at the Nebraska State Capitol are free and open to the public.*

## **Nebraska State Capitol**

**Guided Tours** are offered Monday-Friday hourly from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, except at noon. Saturday and Holidays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, except at noon and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Please call 402.471.0448 or visit [www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org) for more information. 

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## Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony Held

**A**lvin Saunders Johnson (1874-1971) became the 25th Nebraskan inducted to the Nebraska Hall of Fame on May 30, 2014. Johnson, a humanitarian, educator and economist, was an innovator in American adult education, created

a safe haven for Jewish scholars fleeing Nazism and authored America's first anti-discrimination legislation. His bust, by sculptor Wesley Wofford, of North Carolina, is on display in the Capitol's Southwest Courtyard Gallery. 



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## Nebraska Capitol Commission

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*Capitol Architect  
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1869-1924*

Historic Footnote - Capitol architect Bertram G. Goodhue designed the chapel at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Ten years later Goodhue started work on the Nebraska State Capitol. West Point historian Sherman Fleek has stated, "The chapel is recognized as a crowning achievement in design, architecture, and a splendid example of the beauty and reverence of an earlier time."

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## Arbor Day and the First Lady



*First Lady Sally Ganem, center, reads the April 25, 2014, Governor's Arbor Day proclamation to students assembled on the Capitol's west lawn while dignitaries from the Nebraska Forest Service, the Arbor Day Foundation, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts and the Capitol look on.*

*The Capitol Sower*, published by the Office of the Capitol Commission, is available on line at [www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org). Contact the Tourism Supervisor at [<roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov>](mailto:roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov) for more information.

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**F**irst Lady Sally Ganem has been a steadfast supporter of tree planting in Nebraska, including the annual Arbor Day tree planting ceremony at the Capitol. As an honorary chair of ReTree Nebraska, Mrs. Ganem has generously given her time to promote the importance of trees and to encourage students to plant trees. The Office of the Capitol Commission thanks the First Lady for supporting tree planting state wide and at the Capitol. 