



Waupaca County Historical Messenger

Waupaca County Think Tank a Success

Summary of the Fall Think Tank of the Waupaca County Historical Societies

The Fall Think Tank of the Ten Waupaca County Historical Societies, sponsored by the Waupaca Historical Society, opened Saturday 19, 2009 in the Waupaca Holly History Center with a continental breakfast, followed by greetings from WHS President Dick Bidwell.

In attendance were representatives from Clintonville, Fremont, Iola, Scandinavia, New London, Waupaca, Rural, Weyauwega and the Friends of Hartman Creek State Park. Hopefully all the historical organizations within the county will participate in this worthwhile venture.

The speakers' (Arthur and Ursula Rathburn) enthusiastic presentation on "Guidelines for Oral History Interviewing and Story Writing" covered all steps in the professional process from finding a subject with an interesting life story to publishing the story. However, for those who interview to preserve a story only for a family record, all you need to do is ask a few questions of your subject, record comments, transcribe, and bind. The capturing and preserving of only

a set of recalled statements will also be precious for descendants forever.

The historians in attendance then enjoyed mingling as they consumed a luncheon prepared and served by WHS members.

The Think Tank rap session commenced with updates on the brochure for historic sites, the Passport to History, and the joint newsletter, the Messenger. Representatives from all of the societies presented updates on their key spring-through-fall activities and any concerns they had relative to managing a historical society. **Jerry Chappell**

Fremont

On October 26th the Fremont Area Historical Society held "Experience School Days During The 1900's" at the Fremont Town Hall. Some of the "students" in attendance were dressed in period clothing. A history of the Beaver Dam School was presented.

Elsie May Yohr spoke about the childhood school years of the Laura Engles family. Everyone was asked to bring along a dinner pail or bucket, and a favorite storybook or schoolbook from

their childhood years.

On Saturday November 28 there will be a Christmas tree lighting and winter carnival. The event will be begin at the Fremont Village Hall starting at 5:30.

The carnival will have games and prizes, a holiday bake sale, and food provided by the scouts. A visit from Santa Claus will highlight this year's event and will take place at the Wolf River Crossing Park. The Kramer family will be honored as one of the early pioneer settlers in the Town of Fremont. They will join the candlelight caroling procession as it walks to the Wolf River Crossing Park. **Wanda Harrison**

Iola

The Iola Historical Society would like to thank the Waupaca Historical Society for hosting the second "Waupaca County Historical Think Tank" and having a great program on oral history, and a great luncheon.

Our society feels that over all we have had a pretty good year. The Strawberry Fest held in June was a success. In addition, numerous donations of archival items have been received.

In our quarterly newsletter *Window* we are publishing stories that are not only interesting to our membership but also the general public. *Window* is

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Photograph a few of the violins from the Stromberg collection that were donated to the Iola Historical Society.

IOLA--from front page

mailed to all our members but we also place additional copies at local businesses and assisted living facility. Also, when a person makes any kind of donation we mail them a copy of our next newsletter and list their names in a section called "Donors and Loaners."

Some have also donated display fixtures, of which two cabinets were brought to Iola by the donor all the way from New York City on top of his car.

This year we assigned 105 accession numbers, all from different donors. We have received donations from one item up to almost 100 old photographs at one time. Other multiple items from individual donors have also been received.

One of the most interesting donations was made by Maynard Stromberg, son of Engebret 'Bert' Stromberg, who was Iola's constable for about 15 years, from the early 1940s into the mid-50s. Bert had a passion for music, especially violins which

he made. Maynard, who is 92 years young, donated the collection of violins and a partially assembled violin along with parts which will provide an opportunity to create a display showing the necessary steps in making a violin. Also donated were small hand tools and jigs used to shape and assemble the violins.

The Iola Historical Society had a successful year for visitors. This was only the second year being open Saturdays during the summer months, and we had close to 600 visitors go through our historical village. Some of our visitors arrived as groups.

Each year the Iola-Scandinavia Elementary School third graders tour our historical village. This year we had a new program in which middle school

teachers brought four groups of approximately 12 social study students. Instead of touring all the building, each group was assigned a specific building, their assignment being to write a report on that particular structure. The teachers gave the students a list of questions to ask in order to motivate their thought processes. Hopefully this program will continue as it is a great way to get students more involved in local history.

This summer and fall we began setting up displays in our "museum/office.". With this additional space we will be able to remove items from the Iola and Northern depot, the country school house, town hall, and the log cabin which are not related to the theme of those buildings and place them on display.

Lyle Mork.



New London's caboose is receiving tender loving care by society members.

New London

This past summer Bob Polaske and Charlie Stern finished restoring the Simmon's guard shack by removing old insulation and replacing it with new in the walls and ceiling. In addition they installed electricity, sealed the cement floor, and put plywood on the walls and painted everything.

The Simmons Company began

operations in the 1890's manufacturing cabinets for the Edison phonograph. Leona Mech, who was one of the organizers of our historical society, worked in the office for Simmons and remembers seeing Thomas Edison there. During the 1930s the Simmons Company changed directions when they began manufacturing juvenile furniture. Over the years our Society

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New London—from page two

acquired four pieces of Simmons juvenile furniture. The guard shack was built around 1910 and served as the first office. The company is no longer in business. The building currently serves as a storage building for Simmons memorabilia, such as the time card board hanging on the wall, a steel desk, adding machine and typewriter from there.

Bob and Charlie also sealed the roof and walls of the old log cabin and did tuck pointing on the walls. Extensive repair work was also done on the Soo Line caboose. While the siding was replaced and painted, the windows are still a work in progress.

About 320 feet of cement sidewalk was poured to connect the church to the Simmon's building and the log cabin, making it more accessible to the handicapped.

The open house in August was successful with a variety of activities taking place.

Sylvia Stern

Rural

We had an interesting summer with an annual meeting highlighted by an original play written about the very early history of the village of Rural. It was performed by the members of the Society and was written as a radio play consequently requiring no props or costumes.

The author was Jerry Cahppell, a rather new resident of the area, who retired here with his wife Chris, from UWSP where he had been a professor. He has become very interested in the history of the area and has also written two volumes about early settler families. It was a most enjoyable evening and we may perform it again at some future time and place. Acting awards and offers are coming in

from everywhere!

In October we had another unique program. Hugh Kress talked about "A Christian Walk With the Stockbridge-Munsee." Hugh had done a research program with a group of fourth grade students when he was teaching in Appleton. They had become acquainted with the tribe living in the southwest corner of the Menominee Reservation. Hugh and his wife Karen are new residents in our village. He retired from being principal of Grace Lutheran School in River Forest, Illinois. The program was a very interesting and informative presentation on a little known group of our neighbors. *Helen Robinson*

Scandinavia

In the Summer issue of *The Courier* I wrote about our on-going project of reconstructing the Eliason cabin. Well, it is still on-going, and probably will be for another year or two. The project pretty much took care of each Saturday morning during the Spring, Summer and Fall. As is the problem with many organizations the work fell on the shoulders of a dedicated few.

This summer we were very excited to acquire another historical landmark! George and Darlene Kriewaldt purchased

the old Cities Service station, which was originally located on the southeast corner of Hwy 49 just inside the village, and donated the building to FOSH. The station was built in 1931 on the P.H. Peterson property and was operated by Victor Peterson. Sometime later it made the change from Cities Service to Standard Oil. In 1947 it was sold to Howard Jergeson who operated the business until the early 1960s. George and his able assistant, Doug Nelson, moved the building to the park in late summer, where it has since resided on a trailer waiting for its final resting place on a cement slab. As this is being written, the slab has been poured, and should be ready for the big move within a week. Before moving back to town the ex-service station was used as a summer cottage in rural Scandinavia. The structure is in quite acceptable condition, or "excellent for its age" as antique dealers say.

Next year plans are to have a cement apron poured in front of the building so we can display an antique automobile during Scandinavia's annual corn roast. We also have our eye on an old gas pump which would most certainly add to the atmosphere.

Once these two projects are completed, and most likely before this happens, the Knopf

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Service station donated to FOSH by George and Darlene Kriewaldt.



Scandinavia—from page three cabin and Jole's barbershop, will be relocated from the park to our Historic Street. *Doug Watson*

Waupaca

Special events held this year were our annual Strawberry Festival; a 4th of July Celebration; Rod and Classic Car show and bake sale; Fall fourth grade school field trips; dedication of the Cynthia Phillips Holly Room; display of special exhibit "Remember Last Winter" at the Holly Center; and hosting of the "Chamber After 5" social gathering.

Other projects our society participated in were: the engagement in a "Director's Challenge" to raise funds; completion of the replacement of the lower level floor for the Holly History Center; participation in the Waupaca Music and Memories Concert; display of vintage children's clothing exhibit at the Hutcheson House; sponsorship of open depot during the strawberry festival" and "Art at the Depot;" engagement in the annual membership meeting and potluck picnic with guest speaker; continued restoration of the Waupaca train depot; building the train baggage car barn; hosting of the "Waupaca City Council After 5" social gathering; presentation of the "On The Hunt" speaker (Robert C. Willging's history of deer hunting in Wisconsin); and a display of "On the Hunt Exhibit" of vintage guns and vintage deer hunting photos.

Four issues of the WHS Newsletter (The Reporter) were published during the year.

We also distributed copies of the "Passport to History" to all visitors at our historic sites.

Joyce Woldt attended the regional meeting of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Weyauwega

We have seen some very significant changes affecting our history over the past few months. Weyauwega has had a local newspaper for over 150 years up until this year. As most folks from the area are aware, our small local papers have either been sold or simply could no longer exist. So, the Weyauwega Chronicle closed its doors this summer.

Weyauwega Area Historical Society was already working on a project with Waupaca Genealogical Society (and other organizations) to microfilm copies of the Chronicle for posterity. The Wisconsin State Historical Society has been working so hard to complete this project before the paper is totally destroyed (not far from it on some copies). There are three years (1917-1919) that are unavailable at this time.

In view of the fact that the office closed, the new owners gave permission to retain old pictures that would have otherwise



Interior of Weyauwega's "Little Red Schoolhouse" museum which is located in the Weyauwega Community Park. Weyauwega Area Historical Society members and other interested community members offered to "man" it from 1 - 4 p.m. during the summer Sundays and through Labor Day.

been disposed of. This effort is much appreciated, as well as all the help and information our young organization receives from both experienced curators, Elsie Mae Yohr and Darlene Ryan of Waupaca. Our organization meets the fourth Tuesday of bi-months in the Weyauwega Library meeting room. The opposite months we designate as "work" times to archive.

Mary Baehman

Wisconsin Council for Local History

As accredited local historical societies we are all members of the Council for Local History (CLH). It is an organization of over 380 local groups; was organized by the Board of Curators which oversees the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) and the Council. Its purpose is to promote local history in all ways. The relationship of the Council and the WSH is one in which the Council can advise the state society on the interests and needs of the local groups and can also provide assistance and consultation for them.

There are two consultants assigned by WHS with that duty; one in Eau Claire for the northern part of the state, and the other in Madison for the southern part. The state is divided into 10 regions for the Council, and each region has a representative who serves on the administrative council of the CLH along with four members at large.

Each local society is requested to pay annual dues to the Council. The Council also is responsible for choosing recipients for mini-grants each year that are funded cooperatively with the state society.

The Council hosts regional meetings each year at various local societies with topics suggested by the local organizations.

The Central Region, where we are located, has a new regional representative, Lori McCloud of the Wautoma Historical Society. Lori will begin her duties on this coming January 1st. She is anxious to being involved and assist in any way she can. If you have any suggestions in which the Council can be of assistance relevant to your organization please give her a call at (920) 765-2558. *Helen Robinson*