



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

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Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

March, 2013

GREETINGS! from your PCHS president!

As I sit here writing the snow is falling outside and I can't help thinking what this winter would have been like if all the rain we had would have been snow instead. It would be a lot safer out there in the coming weeks when the snow melts to reveal the slippery ice below. I also think back to my childhood on the farm in Barron County and how we played for hours in the snow. We made forts in huge drifts near the barn, and, we never thought about the danger. Today we know otherwise, but we survived. My father would tell us stories about taking the horse-drawn sleigh to town and skating or skiing on the frozen Yellow River. Our ancestors were hardy souls who brought their rich history and wonderful stories from the Old Country to this young nation. Memories and stories are what history is all about and I would like to tell you about Harold Kringle, an old family neighbor in Barron, who published his memoirs in 2012, "The Good Old Days: Life Stories from a Rural Wisconsin Farmer and Veteran." It is for sale at the Barron Public Library. Harold has since passed away, but he is a reminder to all of us to write down our stories because they are too easily forgotten.

Last September, PCHS lost one of its early pioneers. Richard Slabey was a charter member of PCHS and was instrumental in saving the Old Pepin County Courthouse from the wrecking ball. Richard and his wife Vera led the effort to develop our beautiful old building into a museum. We are all very much indebted to the tireless work and dedication of Richard.

Also, one of our most devoted and hardworking volunteers retired at the end of 2012 after many years of service. Irma Bauer was always thoughtful and calm as she managed the office at the museum. She provided the guidance to those who stepped in to take over museum operations when Richard and Vera decided to "retire". Thank you, Irma, for all your work.

I would like to invite everyone to attend our Spring Education Event on April 14 when our guest speaker will be Arlyn Colby. He was a teacher and coach at Barron High School when I was student there. His history of railroading in Western Wisconsin will be interesting.

As always, I want to thank our dedicated Tuesday workday volunteers, our guest hosts, PCHS board members, the Pepin County Board and, of course all our members; all of you help keep our little gem of a museum a polished focal point in downtown Durand. We are always looking for new members, so spread the word to your friends and relatives. And, we can always use new volunteers; we need your help and expertise.

- Kim Wagenbach, PCHS President

PCHS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Sunday, April 14 - 2pm

at Durand Jr-Sr High School Cafeteria

Educational event featuring
"The Chippewa Valley Line"

Presented by author and historian
Arlyn Colby

The Pepin County Historical Society will hold its Annual Membership Meeting and Spring Educational Event at 2pm on Sunday, April 14 at the Durand Junior-Senior High School Cafeteria. Featured presenter will be Arlyn Colby, who has been researching and writing about railroads in Wisconsin during the past several years. His presentation is entitled, "The Chippewa Valley Line".

The Chippewa Valley Line (CVL) was the Milwaukee Road trackage that ran from Wabasha, Minn. across the Mississippi River on a unique pontoon bridge, and then northeast parallel to the Chippewa River through Durand, Red Cedar, Meridean, Caryville, Eau Claire and on to Chippewa Falls. There was a branch line from Red Cedar to Menomonie and Cedar Falls. There is no rail service on this line any more. The roadbeds from Durand to Eau Claire and Red Cedar to Menomonie have been turned into two beautiful state bike trails. The track south of Durand is still in place and used by the Chippewa Valley Motorcar Club.

Colby has hundreds of photographs of the CVL, but for this presentation he will focus on the southern portion from Red Cedar to Wabasha. Attendees will find the experience educational and entertaining. He has been researching the Chippewa Valley Line for the past five years.

In 2008, he completed his first railroad book, "The Mondovi Line", the 36-mile railroad between Mondovi and Fairchild, Wis. He has nearly completed "The Blueberry Line", which ran from Ridgeland through Barron, Cameron, Rice Lake, Birchwood to Reserve, Wis.

Colby has considerable experience speaking in front of groups; he was a mathematics teacher for 34 years (much of that time at Barron High School in Barron, Wis.). He always had a special interest in trains and is a member of the Chippewa Valley Motorcar Club, which operates on the old Milwaukee Road tracks southwest of Durand.

Prior to Arlyn's presentation, PCHS will hold its Annual Membership Meeting to elect three members to its Board of Directors. Board members whose terms expire this year are Dick Schlosser, John Solie and Lynn Coulson, who have all indicated they are willing to serve another term. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

SOCIETY NEWS

PCHS had another successful financial year during 2012. Expenditures totaled \$6,509, more than half of which was for the museum's summer intern's wages, income taxes, social security, unemployment insurance, etc. Revenues from memberships, bequests/memorials, donations, sales of books and cards, interest, and a transfer from savings totaled \$7,134. At the year's end, the society's checking and savings accounts and Certificates of Deposit totaled \$35,256. Anyone interested in seeing budget details can contact PCHS Treasurer Galen Radle.

Volunteers and guest hosts logged more than 500 hours working in the museum last year. Their hard work is greatly appreciated. We had approximately 800 visitors to the museum, an increase of 100 over the year before.

This year is Durand Funfest's 50th anniversary and PCHS has been invited to participate in the festivities. Volunteers at the Museum are planning a special exhibit honoring the milestone and PCHS will likely have an interesting or unique entry in the Funfest Parade.

Unique Gift Ideas from PCHS

Dime Novel Desperadoes - The Notorious Maxwell Brothers, by John Hallwas, 2008, published by University of Illinois Press; winner - "Best Biography from the Midwest" by the Society of Midland Authors, \$32.00

Brothers in Blood, by Les Kruger, 2008 - \$20.00

Durand 1881, compiled by Vera Slabey, published by PCHS, 1987 - \$3.00

Steamboat Navigation on the Chippewa River, by Peter A. Adler, published by PCHS, 2004 - \$10.00

Mary Plummer Clemenceau - Sweetheart of Pepin County, by Vern Pinkowski, published by PCHS, 1997 - \$10.00

Helen Parkhurst - Educator, by Vern Pinkowski, published by PCHS, 1999 - \$10.00

Elizabeth Clarke Hardy - Wife, Writer, Farmer, Poet and Editor, by Vern Pinkowski, published by PCHS, 2001 - \$10.00

A Pathway to Pepin County's Stone Age People, by Vern Pinkowski, published by PCHS, 2003 - \$10.00

A Vanished Community - The Waubeek Saw Mill Settlement, by Vern Pinkowski, published by PCHS, 2004 - \$10.00

Phil Scheckel - The Man & The River He Loved, by Don Rahman, published by PCHS, 2006 - \$10.00

A Twisted Pig's Tale, by Vern Pinkowski, 2008 - \$5.00

25th Anniversary T-Shirts - sizes s-m-l-xl, \$5.00

Your purchase will help support the PCHS mission of "preserving the history and traditions of Pepin County."

The Old Courthouse Museum is open anytime by appointment! Call 715-672-5423 to set up a time.

Memorials Received:

For:	From:
Richard Slabey	Galen/Bernadine Radle, Carol Krings Bauer, Don/Irma Bauer, Karen Sundstrom, Bernard/Lorraine Brenner, Daniel Langlois, David/Patricia Jan-koski, Bauer Built, Inc., Judy Schwellenbach, Joyce Haigh, Charles/Lois Laehn, Evelyn Holmstadt, Ruth Morey, Lee Grippen, Marjorie Greeley
Julianne Selz	Bernard/Lorraine Brenner
Tony Pittman	Don/Irma Bauer
Carol Weishapple	Bernard/Lorraine Brenner, Thalice Nicklas
Irene A. Bradshaw	Ruth E. Hofland

Museum Notes

The Museum will host the annual "Law Day" event developed and produced by members of the Tri-County Bar Association. On May 2 & 3 fifth graders from Arkansaw, Assumption, Pepin, Mondovi and Plum City schools will participate in a mock trial in the second floor courtroom and tour the Old Courthouse Museum and Jail.

The Museum will host "Fresh Paint", an outdoor painting event during the "Spring Fresh Art Tour" May 15-19. The Old Courthouse Museum and Washington Square will host the participating artists, who will be in Durand and the surrounding area painting and drawing. The resulting works of art will be displayed in the Museum and will be for sale to the public during the annual Fresh Art Tour.

Also, on Friday May 24, Arkansaw Elem. School 3rd graders will get their whirlwind tours of the Museum.

Arrangements are being made to once again to hire a summer intern. This internship in "Museum Operations" provides university students valuable experience making history accessible to the public.

Volunteer staff members put together wonderful holiday displays throughout the building for Durand Dazzle Day last November. Exhibits included old skis, ice skates, a sled, antique lights and ornaments, a model railroad set, vintage clothing and more. Several dozen people visited the Museum.

Pepin County Historical Society

Officers: President: Kim Wagenbach

Vice-Pres.: Lynn Coulson

Secretary: Roberta Stuart

Treasurer: Galen Radle

Directors: Rita Conlin, John Solie, Lois Laehn, Jean Kannel, Dick Schlosser

"THE COLUMNS" is published three times a year by the Pepin County Historical Society.

Editor: Terry J. Mesch



Richard F. Slabey, charter member and long-time President of the Pepin County Historical Society passed away September 27, 2012. During the mid-1980s, Dick led the charge to save the Old Courthouse from demolition when Pepin County government moved to its present location.

Richard and his wife Vera were instrumental in

in the development of what would become the Old Courthouse Museum. Their tireless efforts to preserve the building itself and the history of Pepin County have resulted in the wonderful museum we have today.

Richard owned and operated the Ben Franklin Store in Durand for more than thirty years, while Vera focused her efforts on music therapy. But both had serious interest in history and jumped fearlessly into this new adventure. In 1984, they secured a formal agreement with the county which allowed the newly organized Pepin County Historical Society to operate a historical museum in the Old Courthouse. The initial lease for ten years with rent of \$1 per year was signed Nov. 13, 1984.

During the next two decades, Richard and Vera attended dozens (if not hundreds) of meetings, seminars, trainings, etc. to educate themselves in the operations of a history museum. They recruited volunteers; solicited help from local craftsmen, plumbers and electricians; and, worked closely with service organizations to transform the building into a suitable space for history displays and exhibits.

Soon artifacts, photographs, family histories, documents, manuscripts, books and other historical materials began arriving. The Slabey duo developed procedures and manuals for cataloguing and archiving these items, and, planned and implemented annual and seasonal events and exhibits. They retired from PCHS duties in 2004.

The Old Courthouse Museum is forever indebted to the dedicated efforts of Richard and Vera.

Original Artwork on Display at Museum

Beautiful artwork by numerous local artists from the past are on display throughout the Museum. Watercolors, oils, acrylics, pastels, replicas, carvings, sculptures, photographs, drawings by Michael Anibas, Midge Bolt, Bernard Brantner, Lorraine Brenner, Roger Britton, Jr., Carol Davis, Michael Flickr, C.H. Gleason, Ed Grippen, Rozan Henning, Floyd Hubbard, Burton Gjefle, Eula Johnson and others can be seen in nearly every room in the building.

2013 Saturday Volunteer Host Schedule

May 25	-	Rita Conlin & Pat Rosenberg
June 1	-	Paul & Lou Simpson
June 8	-	Judy Schwellenbach & Joyce Haigh
June 15	-	Tom Garnevicus & Colleen Forster
June 22	-	Alice & Roger Bauer
June 29	-	Don & Irma Bauer
July 6	-	Dick & Judy Schlosser
July 13	-	Diane Bauer & Carol F. Bauer
July 20	-	John & Linda Solie
July 27	-	Evelyn Holmstad & Carol Danzinger
Aug 3	-	Gerald and Deanna Ripley
Aug 10	-	Kim & Lynette Wagenbach
Aug 17	-	Jane Jafferi & Lee Grippen
Aug 24	-	Lorraine & Bun Brenner
Aug 31	-	Roberta Stuart & Jean Kannel
Sept 7	-	Galen & Bernadine Radle
Sept 14	-	Rosemary Achenbach & Barb Bauer
Sept 21	-	Julie Rinholen & daughter
Sept 28	-	Lynn & Kelly Coulson
Oct 5	-	Chuck & Lois Laehn
Oct 12	-	Don & Jean Kannel

If a conflict arises for the Saturday you are scheduled as a Volunteer Host, please try to make arrangements to trade with another host or contact Lois Laehn at 672-4883 or Terry Mesch at 672-5709. Your help is very important to the success of the Museum. Other volunteer hosts may be needed for special events, if you are interested contact Lois or Terry.

Orientation sessions for Volunteer Hosts can be arranged by contacting Terry Mesch at 672-5709.

"FRESH PAINT" to be Applied During May

Imagination Nation, Inc. and the Old Courthouse Museum will host a new arts event on Washington Square May 15 through 19. "Fresh Paint" is an art event that challenges visual artists to paint and draw outdoor scenes in and around Durand. Their incentive will be cash prizes for the best works and the possibility of selling their creations. Known and unknown artists from the region will be invited to participate.

The first challenge for the artists will be to find and paint one of the many beautiful scenes available here in the Lower Chippewa River Valley. This is a public event and local residents and visitors will be able watch these artists as they work.

Artists will have 2½ days to complete their work(s), and, by Friday, will begin submitting them framed-and- ready-to-be-hung in the Old Courthouse Museum, where they will be on display during the Spring "Fresh Art Tour".

On Saturday, artists will participate in a two hour "Quick Paint" challenge at Washington Square. Again, the public will have the opportunity to watch the artists at work. At 6pm Saturday, winners in both categories will be announced during a reception at Washington Square.

Imagination Nation is looking for Purchase Award sponsors who are willing to promise a minimum amount of money for the purchase of a piece of their choice.

Pepin County Historical Society
OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM
Washington Square
315 W. Madison St.
Durand, WI 54736

Find us on the Internet!
www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org

IF YOU CAN
READ THIS
YOU HAVE
PAID.
THANK YOU

**COLORED DOT HERE IS
A REMINDER TO RENEW
YOUR 2013 MEMBERSHIP**

*Pass this newsletter on
to a friend & encourage
him/her to join PCHS!*

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____
STATE/ZIP _____

MEMBERSHIPS:

- \$8 Individual
- \$12 Family
- \$25 Friends of Museum
- \$25 Business/Professional
- \$50 Contributing
- \$100 Sponsor
- \$1000 Lifetime

And, here's my extra donation of \$ _____



For a firsthand look at the Chippewa Valley Line, climb aboard one of the many train rides into the Tiffany Wildlife Area which are provided by the Chippewa Valley Motor Car Railway. The excursions occur during the Spring and Fall and free rides have been provided during the Durand Funfest, which is held the second weekend after Memorial Day. Arlyn Colby, presenter at the PCHS Spring Meeting, often helps out on the rides.