



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

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Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

March, 2014

GREETINGS! from your PCHS president!

As I sit at my kitchen table writing this message, I wonder why we must still freeze and have such cold weather this late into the winter. I hope by the time you are reading this we are enjoying a little warmer temperatures. I am thankful to you supporters who help us pay the bills and keep the heat on in the building. We keep the temperature on the first floor at 50 degrees during the winter; it's cooler than that upstairs, but no danger of water freezing up there. Several of us share the duty of checking on the building several times a week to be sure everything is okay. And it's easy to just turn on the blowers to add more heat when we are working or get visitors during the cold months. Though we don't have regular open hours now, we will gladly open the building to visitors at any time. Just call 715-672-5423 to leave a message.

The PCHS board has set the dates for this year's events: Annual Membership Meeting in April, Summer Picnic in July and Autumn Education Event in October. We have become accustomed to great presentations and very good attendance. Hope to see you there.

We will once again be hiring an intern for the summer. We have had great interns who not only make it possible to open four days a week, but they are budding historians who have helped with research, filing, exhibits and leading tours.

We are, of course, a not-for-profit, volunteer run society and rely on your donations to help us with our mission of preserving the history and traditions of Pepin County. Keep us in mind when you are writing your will or thinking about making a tax-deductible donation. We are a 501(c)(3) tax exempt educational organization.

One of the projects we need your help with is replacing the fluorescent lighting in the upstairs courtroom with hanging globe lights which will make the room fit the early 1900 period better. The courtroom is as close as we have to the original appearance inside the building. Period lighting will make it feel even more historic.

Thanks to all our volunteers and to all you members who make it possible. God Bless...

- Kim Wagenbach, PCHS President

PCHS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Sunday, April 13 - 2pm

at Durand Jr-Sr High School Cafeteria

Educational event featuring

"Only in Eau Galle"

Presented by **Audrey Biesterveld & Bernard Brantner**

The Pepin County Historical Society will hold its Annual Membership Meeting and Spring Educational Event at 2pm on Sunday, April 13 at the Durand Junior-Senior High School Cafeteria. Featured presenters will be Audrey Biesterveld and Bernard Brantner, who will reminisce about the past with tales of people and events from the area.

Audrey recently published her second book, "Only in Eau Galle", which is a history of the Eau Galle Sportsmen's Club. In addition to providing the basic facts about the club, Audrey tells many of the stories and anecdotes about the club and the village of Eau Galle which have come down through the years. Bernard Brantner is quoted in her book and Audrey asked for his assistance during her presentation to PCHS members.

Audrey began her literary career with publication of her first book, "Missy Sippy River Saloon" several years ago. The self-published project "*Missy Sippy...*" contains stories of the Red Ram Saloon, a bar that her daughter owns in Alma, WI, where Audrey helped out. She has sold more than 700 copies and the book is now in its fourth printing.

Although she was a bit worried about people's reactions to some of the stories she wrote about, her first book was a positive experience. Since assuming her duties as the Secretary of the Eau Galle Sportsmen's Club in 1986, dozens of funny and interesting stories have emerged. Encouraged by her earlier success at writing a book, she decided to try it again.

Audrey is the proprietor of Audrey's Barbershop in Durand, where she undoubtedly accumulates a huge amount of material for future volumes. She will have her books available for sale at the PCHS Annual Meeting.

Prior to this presentation, PCHS will hold its Annual Membership Meeting at which the organization's annual report will be presented and election of three members to its Board of Directors will be held. Board members whose terms expire this year are Jean Kannel, Rita Conlin and Lois Laehn, 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 2013. Expenditures totaled \$5,856.00, more than half of which was for the museum's summer intern's wages, income taxes, social security, unemployment insurance, etc. Revenues from memberships, grants, memorials, donations, sales of books and cards, interest, and a transfer from savings totaled \$7,031.00. At the year's end, the society's checking and savings accounts and Certificates of Deposit totaled \$36,837.00. Anyone interested in seeing budget details can contact PCHS Treasurer Galen Radle.

Volunteers and guest hosts logged more than 300 hours working in the museum last year. Their hard work is greatly appreciated. We had approximately 700 visitors to the museum, a decrease of 100 over the year before.

The Old Courthouse Museum's busiest month was May when we hosted the Spring Fresh Art Tour, the "Fresh Paint" Plein-air Art event, Law Day for 5th graders from four area school districts, and 3rd graders from Arkansaw Elementary School.

Volunteer staff members put together holiday displays 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.

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

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

Memorials Received:

For:	From:
Warren Walters	Brian Gabriel
Steven Brantner	Judy Schwellenbach

"Fresh Paint" Outdoor Art Event

The Museum will be co-sponsoring with Accola Gallery the "Fresh Paint" Pleine Aire (outdoor) Art event May 18-24. The week long painting competition is expected to attract two dozen talented artists to the area. They will set up their easels at different locations in and around Durand and submit their works to compete for cash prizes.

Finished works will be hung at the Museum and at Accola Gallery for viewing and purchase by the public. A two-hour quick-paint event will be held on Washington Square on Sunday, May 18 and the paintings will be displayed at the Museum. The Museum will be open that Sunday from 1 to 6pm and the following Friday & Saturday, May 23 & 24 from 11am to 5pm.

The Spring Fresh Art Tour has changed weekends this year to the second weekend after Memorial Day, which coincides with Durand Funfest. Since Funfest is already a busy weekend at the Museum, we will not be hosting a guest artist this year.

Meanwhile, plans are in the works for hosting a special showing of quilts at the Museum during Funfest weekend.

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

Coming Summer of 2014

Marliss Pittman Beland has announced her new book, "One-Room Rural Country Schools In Pepin County 1850-1963", will be published this summer. The 500-page volume has been a "labor of love" for Marliss, who also credits a lot of help from Jean Black Kannel. Marliss has travelled through every coulee and valley in the county during this research project. The book can be preordered by contacting her by email at littlepitt@att.net or Jean at jmkannel@nelson-tel.net. Or leave a message for Jean at 715-285-5740.

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



Recent Acquisition

Another C. H. Gleason work has been given to the Museum, bringing to ten the total number of pieces in our collection. This untitled piece is a pastel (chalk) drawing and is unique for Gleason for its medium and its subject matter. It is the first lighthouse to be found among the dozens of his works known to the Museum staff. The work appears to be in its original frame and likely dates to the early 1900s. The location of this lighthouse is unknown.

Gleason's paintings in the museum's permanent collection have been dated as early as 1896 and as late as 1947. Born in 1874 in New York state, he came with his family to live in Pepin County when he was a very young boy. It is believed he moved to the state of Washington in the late 1920s, where he continued to paint. Three others of his works hang in the upstairs auditorium of the village hall in Elmwood, Wis., including a 12'x20' stage back drop and two large landscapes painted in oil colors. Gleason's subject matter was mostly landscapes during his early life and he worked primarily with oils and watercolors. He was a prolific painter and seemed to have a fascination for windmills and mountains. Several murals on the walls of local residences still exist.

More of his works continue to be discovered and the Old Courthouse Museum occasionally receives inquiries from people about a piece they bought at auction or found among a relative's possessions.

Gift from Funfest Fun Run

Organizers of the 2013 Funfest Fun Run chose the Old Courthouse Museum and PCHS to receive a generous gift from the proceeds of their event. The donation of \$1500 will help the Museum with future projects

2014 MUSEUM VOLUNTEER LIST

May 24 -	Rita Conlin & Pat Rosenberg
May 31 -	Paul & Lou Simpson
June 7 -	Judy Schwellenbach & Joyce Haigh
June 14 -	Tom Garnevicus & Terry Mesch
June 21 -	Alice & Roger Bauer
June 28 -	Carl Morsbach & Pat Sutterlin
July 5 -	Dick & Judy Schlosser
July 12 -	Diane Bauer & Carol F. Bauer
July 19 -	John & Linda Solie
July 26 -	Evelyn Holmstadt & Carol Danzinger
Aug 2 -	Gerald & Deanna Rippley
Aug 9 -	Kim & Lynette Wagenbach
Aug 16 -	Jane Jafferi & Lee Grippen
Aug 23 -	Lorraine & Bun Brenner
Aug 30 -	Roberta Stuart & Jean Kannel
Sept 6 -	Galen & Bernadine Radle
Sept 13 -	Rosemary Achenbach & Delores Pittman
Sept 20 -	Julie Reinholen & daughter
Sept 27 -	Don & Irma Bauer
Oct 4 -	Linda DeLong & Terry Mesch
Oct 11 -	Jean & Don 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 715-672-4883 or Terry Mesch at 715-285-5659. 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.

"History of the Old Pepin County Courthouse & Jail"

During the past four years, the museum's summer interns have been filling their time painstakingly researching the minutes of the proceedings of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors to determine the history of the old Pepin County Courthouse and county jails.

Ben Clark, Charity Moore and Bob Bell have compiled hundreds of pages of detailed information which tell the story of the buildings from 1858 to 1985, when the courthouse and jail moved from Washington Square in downtown Durand to its present location on 7th Avenue West. Also, volunteer Julie Rinholen sifted through 15 years of old newspapers (1873-1888) for copies of the board meeting minutes for which the originals have been lost.

Museum manager Terry Mesch is now writing a narrative history based on the interns' research and expects to complete the manuscript later this year. He reports fascinating details about the first and second county jails, the politics surrounding construction of the courthouse in Durand, the impact of moving the county seat to Arkansaw and back during the 1880s, the damages from a 1931 fire in the courthouse attic, and continual controversies about the needs for more room, outdated facilities and utilities, etc.

The narrative makes not only an interesting story, but will serve as the basis for a Historic Structures Report (HSR), which will be necessary for future restoration projects. Potential granting agencies will require an HSR, plus reports from architects, engineers and historians to consider applications for assistance.

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
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PAID.
THANK YOU

**COLORED DOT HERE IS
A REMINDER TO RENEW
YOUR 2014 MEMBERSHIP**

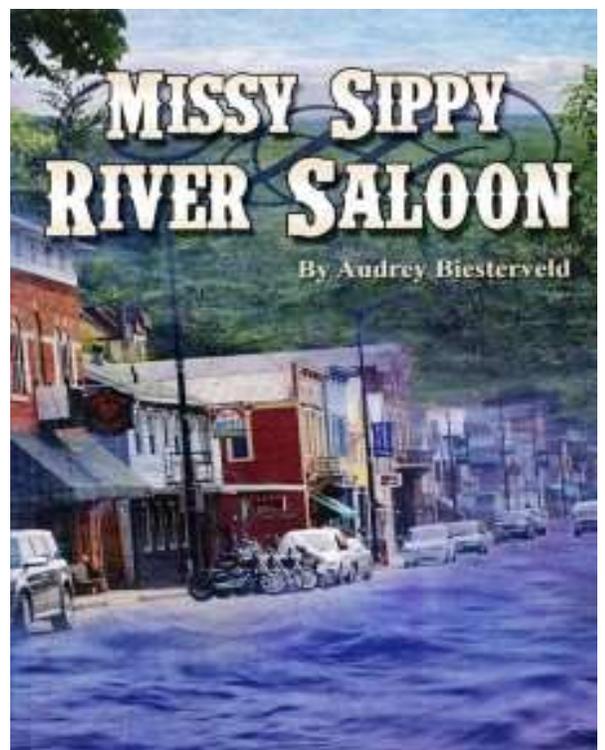
*Pass this newsletter on
to a friend & encourage
him/her to join PCHS!*

NAME _____
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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 \$ _____



Cover of Audrey Biesterveld's first book inspired while helping at a tavern in Alma owned by her daughter. Now in its 4th printing, Audrey will have copies for sale at her Apr. 13 presentation to PCHS Annual Meeting.