

# 'NOJOSHING'

The official Newsletter of the St. Francis Historical Society

4235 South Nicholson Avenue  
St. Francis, Wisconsin 53207  
(414) 481-2300

Summer 1989

## 1989 - 1990 OFFICERS

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Vice President ..... Adele Lenz  
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## ST. FRANCIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY: WE ARE

**"SERIOUS ABOUT NOJOSHING"**

## ST. FRANCIS/OLD TOWN OF LAKE AREA TRAILS"

by Chris Barney

### "BANDING TOGETHER"

Even though thirty-five years have passed since the Town of Lake went out of existence and became the best part of Milwaukee's south side, one of its greatest, continuing legacies has been the stellar performances of its award-winning Lake Band.

Back in 1952, a group of graduating teenage Town of Lake musicians approached their Burdick grade school music teacher, George Cerwin, and asked him if there was a way for them to stay together as a band even though they were all going on to different schools. Using his resourcefulness,

*Continued on page 4*

## GENERAL MEETING — JULY 31st

On Monday, July 31, 1989, the next general meeting of the St. Francis Historical Society will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Francis Community Center, 3476 E. Howard Avenue. As is becoming our custom, there will once again be a "potluck" supper at 6:00 p.m., with the evening's program to follow at about 7:00 p.m. Both the potluck supper and the program are open to the public. To attend the potluck supper, simply bring a dish serving eight people.

The entertainment for this summer's meeting will be a very special presentation, created and presented by Mr. Matt Joseph, which he calls "The Automobile and American Society: 100 Years of Change." Mr. Joseph will take us on an hour-long journey beginning with the early evolution of self-propelled vehicles from the mid-to-late nineteenth century, giving us a "scenic view" of how the automobile age and the mass-produced car have affected our society up to the present day. He will then field any questions his audience may have for "as long as (they) can endure it."

A native New Yorker and New Englander, the 44-year-old Mr. Joseph attended Deerfield Academy, the University of Chicago, and did graduate work in United States History at UW-Madison.

From 1971 through 1983, Mr. Joseph served as an Assistant Professor of History at the UW-Extension. He has taught college classes at four college campuses in the UW system, and continues to do so on an ad hoc basis.

Mr. Joseph began his love affair with the automobile in the 1950s, when he began collecting and restoring them. Since 1983, he has had over 100 automotive articles published in a broad range of newspapers and periodicals; is a contributing editor of *Skinned Knuckles* magazine, having a monthly column in that publication as well as *Cars & Parts* magazine, being an associate editor of that periodical. His articles cover a wide scope of topics relating to the auto industry, from innovations and economics to industry bios and histories.

He is on the Board of Directors of the Society of Automotive Historians, and is a board member and past president of the Wisconsin SAH chapter. He is in constant speaking demand and has appeared on radio and television.

Mr. Joseph owns and operates his own small auto restoration and consulting firm, MATTCO (Martinsville Antique Transportation Technologies Company) in south-central Wisconsin near Madison, where he resides with his wife and

three children, ages 9, 18 and 22. This should be one of SFHS's most interesting presentations this year, so mark Monday, July 31st on your calendar and don't miss it!! The general public is invited to attend.

## RE-CAP OF APRIL 24th GENERAL MEETING

John Otis, known statewide as "The Church Man," gave his talk and slide presentation of churches in Wisconsin, following the potluck supper at the Community Center. The program was well received by those in attendance. Mr. Otis has traveled 90,000 miles in photographing more than 5,000 Wisconsin churches. He has also completed more than 3,000 church histories as well. We thank him for his fine presentation.

## WE HAVE A NEW NAME!!

Our Board of Directors has decided to use the original Indian name for the St. Francis area for our newsletter title. "Nojoshing," translated as "tongue of land," was suggested by Terry Duffey and agreed upon and approved by the board members and president Ron Tessmer. This name has also been incorporated into our society's motto, "Serious About Nojoshing." We are still in need of a society logo, however. If any of you talented people out there would like to contribute one, don't be bashful — call Chris at 744-5833 or Ron at 744-0653. You may be more artistic than you think!

## BOARD DIRECTIONS

The following are items discussed at recent SFHS board meetings:

- The cataloging sessions which have been going on for quite some time at our office and storage facility at Thompson School have taken a summer hiatus. Laura Staats, catalog committee chairperson, is currently absorbed in family and maternal duties and is not presently available to the society. She suggested that cataloging may begin again sometime this fall, and will inform us prior to our fall newsletter. Meanwhile, we thank her for her invaluable assistance thus far and wish her well during her tour of duty at the "Home Station"!
- Our society and its members have received an invitation from the Very Reverend Daniel J. Pakenham, Rector of St. Francis Seminary, to tour the recently restored and renovated **Henni Hall** in late October or early November. The tour or "Open House" invitation is also extended to the general public as well as St. Francis and other area residents, according to the Rector's letter. The restoration of the Hall's dome, not expected to be complete until sometime in October, is a gift from the Conrad Schmitt Studios, which has completed similar restoration efforts such as the Pabst Theater, Milwaukee Grain Exchange and other historical buildings throughout the area and the nation. Specifics on when the tour and open house will take place will be included in the fall newsletter.

- We have been invited to construct a display highlighting St. Francis' history in the east mezzanine of the Milwaukee County Historical Society located on Old World 3rd Street in downtown Milwaukee. Our board is grateful for the invitation but is uncertain as to when such a display could be created, since we are currently in the process of creating displays on specific subjects to be presented locally. The action was tabled until a future date.
- The fate of the **Lakeside Power Plant Gatehouse** is not yet decided; our board has decided it is worth preserving and would like permission to move the building to St. Francis Memorial Park. However, the decision may rest with the St. Francis Common Council. At this writing, the board has not been informed whether the issue has been placed on the Council's agenda yet. We will keep you posted in future issues of this newsletter.

## PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

The **Thompson Grade School 50th Anniversary celebration** is quickly taking shape — a mailing list of former students and school officials is being prepared to send information updates out to them concerning the event. A steering committee is being formed and will meet July 18th to firm up plans for the many programs and displays, scheduled tentatively for October 18th as an Open House, with the school's rededication slated for October 21st. There are a number of historical notes concerning the school's history, as well as thoughts from past principals at Thompson. An attempt will be made to consolidate these into a single historical booklet, in time to be made available to those attending the Open House and rededication. The general public is invited to attend. For further information, call Society president Ron Tessmer at 483-5100 or 744-0653.

## DO YOU REMEMBER?

It was 30 years ago, in April 1959, that permission was given to the school board to purchase 27 acres of land on the northwest corner of Lake Drive and Lunham Avenue to build **St. Francis High School**. The land, purchased from the Wisconsin Electric Power Company, was originally part of the Wentworth farm. Voters approved a \$1,000,000 bond issue for the school on June 8, 1961, and the school was dedicated November 10, 1963.

## NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD SCHOOL

The **Tippecanoe Grade School**, located at 357 East Howard Avenue, will reopen as a Milwaukee Public School in late August to approximately 250 students and a staff of about 13 teachers. It had closed in 1984 due to declining enrollment and high heating and maintenance costs.

During the past five years, the school building has been leased and operated as a K-8 school and day care center by Messiah Lutheran Church, 2015 E. Fernwood Ave. and Resurrection Lutheran Church, 213 E. Howard Ave., and was known as Risen Christ Lutheran Center. The school was built in 1936, replacing a structure built in 1892 by the Town of Lake. A

one-room log schoolhouse originally stood on the site. Tippecanoe came into the MPS system, through annexation, in 1930. The school's curriculum will stress the humanities.



## OTHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Looking to the future as well as the past, the **Wisconsin Council for Local History** and the **Office of Local History** has compiled "The Handbook of Youth History Projects in Wisconsin" — a booklet issued to all SHS of Wisconsin-affiliated historical societies this spring; and a WCLH sub-committee which focuses on Teaching History in Public Schools, or THIPS. WCLH President Sharon Leair appointed the THIPS committee last year in response to concerns expressed by local historians that school children were not receiving sufficient education in Wisconsin state and local history. The programs are also intended to assist local historical societies in encouraging young people to take a more active part in learning about their community's history. For further information, write to Sharon L. Leair, P.O. Box 183, Genesee Depot, WI 53127. We applaud this effort and encourage active participation!

The **Wisconsin State Old Cemetery Society** recently moved its archives to a new home located at 10001 W. St. Martins Rd., Franklin, providing much larger accommodations for storage, projects and meetings. Researchers can use the archives, with or without an appointment, every first Wednesday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The **Dane County Historical Society** has reprinted the 1877 "History of Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns" by William J. Parks and Company. A new name index of more than 10,000 settlers and early residents mentioned in the book has been added. Interested persons should contact the society at P.O. Box 5003, Madison, WI 53705.

The **Milwaukee County Historical Society** has published a new book called "The Fisherfolk of Jones Island" by Ruth Kriehn, tracing the mile-long peninsula's history as a ship-building site, fishing village, sewage treatment plant and port facility. Purchase information can be obtained by calling 273-8288.

"Women's Work on the Farm," a traveling exhibit of 68 historical photographs which picture the family farm, daily chores, care of poultry and livestock and field work during the 1800s and early 1900s will be displayed in the meeting room of the Oak Creek Public Library, 8620 S. Howell Avenue, from July 31st through August 31st. It is sponsored by the **Oak Creek Historical Society**, and will be open to the public free of charge every Saturday in August (5th, 12th,

19th and 26th) from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. On other days and evenings during the month, it can be viewed by anyone attending meetings at the library, located next to the City Hall on the northeast corner of Howell Avenue and Puetz Road. The exhibit, professionally produced by SHS of Wisconsin, has been displayed at several large historical societies over the last two years. The general public is invited to view the display, which goes on to the Wade House in Greenbush, WI, after leaving Oak Creek. For more information, contact society member Leroy Meyer at 761-2489. The society recently replaced deteriorating timbers at its pioneer village and museum complex located at Forest Hill and 15th Avenues. Age and decay had weakened several timbers in the society's log cabin. Society volunteers were assisted by a barn repair company in completing the repairs.

On June 20, 1989, Judge Richard Cudahy, a grandson of Patrick Cudahy, founder of the city of Cudahy, presented a \$50,000 check to the **Cudahy Historical Society** in a ceremony at the Cudahy Depot on Kinnickinnic Avenue. The donation will be used to complete some of the final steps in the restoration of the depot in time for its 100th Anniversary in 1992. The funds are a gift of the Patrick and Anna Cudahy Foundation.



## CHAIRMAN NEEDED FOR ST. FRANCIS DAY BOOTH

Once again, St. Francis Days, this city's celebration held annually for twenty-five years each Labor Day weekend, is approaching. The Board has had lengthy discussions spanning the past several board meetings regarding our role in this year's celebration. However, to date, no one appears interested or willing to accept the chairmanship. This is, therefore, an appeal for someone in our membership to step forward and show a willingness to help out. If that someone is you, or someone you know, call President Ron Tessmer at 744-0653 or 483-5100. There appears to be plenty of helpers but our leaders seem to be indisposed.

## OVERNIGHT TRIP TO MANITOWOC

Tentative plans are being made to host an overnight trip to the Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, WI. August 19th has been suggested as a good date. We would also consider late September/October as an alternate date.

For more information or to express your interest, contact Diane Johnston at 483-5883.

**"Banding Together"** *Continued from page 1*

Cerwin came through and the Town of Lake Municipal/Recreational Band was born. (Cerwin was band director from 1952 to 1961.)

Within two weeks of their first rehearsal, on July 9, 1952, the "new" band performed in the South Milwaukee Music Festival. Even though they did not yet have uniforms, they agreed to perform in blue jeans, white shirts, red neck scarves and straw hats - and proudly did they perform, letting their talent do the talking in spite of their makeshift attire.

Before they could catch their breath, they were asked to play and march in several area parades including the South Shore Water Frolics and the Marquette University Homecoming Parade, after which they began their regular weekly two-hour rehearsals, rain or shine.

The band parents, realizing regular uniforms were needed to hold the band together, tried unsuccessfully to raise the money on their own. They finally approached the Town of Lake Town Board which authorized uniform funds in 1953 and again in 1954. One of the town's last official acts, approved at the budget meeting on April 6, 1954, was the allotment of \$2,500 for uniform coats for the band, according to news articles. Ironically, that was the very same day that town residents narrowly (1,945 to 1,716) voted to con-

solidate with Milwaukee, leaving the band without uniform funds. They apparently even "lost" their uniforms for awhile through the consolidation process, according to a "Remember When" article in the band's 1986 concert booklet. However, the article also goes on to say that the band "pulled together" and secured the uniforms back, and were also able to secure funds for the desperately needed red uniform coats.

Realizing that the band would no longer receive municipal funding, the band and parents came together to organize successful fund-raising activities and established an affiliation with St. Francis-Bay View American Legion Post 180 to have regularly scheduled bingo nights, with proceeds going to support band expenses. The Post has also made its building facilities available to the band for parents' meetings, band rehearsals and parties over the years.

Following the consolidation, the band also shortened its name to "Lake Band," and following the demise of the Burdick Grade School Band, the Lake Junior Band was founded in 1956. Like the Burdick band, the Lake Junior Band (known since 1987 as the Lake Cadets) is a feeder group for the "senior" Lake Band and performs in anticipation of the day they are old enough to "move up."



*Lake Band shown here in the 1960's under the direction of Harold Lorenz*

The senior band, comprised of 15- to 21-year-old musicians, performs under the direction of Dr. Dennis King. Dr. King is currently the supervisor of instrumental music for the Milwaukee Public Schools; has a B.S. in music education from UW-Whitewater; is a performing saxophonist with New Vintage, a professional dance band; and is active as a clinician, guest conductor and adjudicator at schools throughout Wisconsin. Dr. King directed the band's Annual Spring Concert in May at the Cousins Center, 3501 S. Lake Drive, St. Francis. Other tentatively scheduled Milwaukee-area performances this year include the July 4th Cavalcade of Parks; the South Shore Water Frolics parade on July 8th; the Great Circus Parade on July 16th; and the annual Christmas tree lighting in downtown Milwaukee in December.

The Lake Cadets are directed by David Miles, long involved with the Lake Band organization. Beginning with the Lake Junior Band in the fall of 1967, Mr. Miles graduated to the senior band in the fall of 1970, performing as trumpet section leader, feature soloist and student conductor until aging out of the band following the 1979 season.

Between 1979 and 1981, Mr. Miles was drill writer and instructor until being promoted to Assistant Director of the senior band in the fall of 1981. Over the next four seasons, Lake Band attained more victories and national championships than any other midwest band. Following a three-year hiatus, Mr. Miles returned and was appointed director of the Lake Cadets in September 1988. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from UW-Milwaukee; is a music teacher in the Milwaukee Public Schools; teaches summer school in the South Milwaukee school system and is a charter member and feature soloist with the Lake Shore Wind Ensemble. Like the senior band, the Cadets performed in the Annual Spring Concert at the Cousins Center and the Memorial Day parade, and will also perform with the seniors in the July 4th Cavalcade of Parks. However, the Cadets do perform on their own, as they did on June 15th in the West Allis Western Days parade and will again in the State Fair parade

on August 5th, just to mention two of their appearances.

Over the years, the Lake Bands have been a source of continuing pride, satisfaction and enjoyment not only to the band members and their parents but also the millions of spectators who have been treated to their spectacular performances over their 37-year history. Their story is a perfect example of what perseverance and dedication to excellence can achieve while, as founder George Cerwin coined it, "have fun with music."

Lake Band has performed for presidents, participated in numerous dedication ceremonies, and made several appearances in and around Wisconsin during the summer. They have previously appeared at St. Francis Days.

Comaraderie makes Lake Band, a volunteer organization, click, requiring help from all band parents to make each season a success. Working behind the scenes for months prior to each season, the parents and even alumni do everything from sewing on buttons to fund raisers to pitch in, creating friendships for kids and parents alike that have lasted through the years. Some of those friendships have even resulted in marriages.

The senior band practices every Monday from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., while the Cadets practice every Tuesday from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Practices are held at the Lake Water Tower, 4001 South 6th Street. One look or listen to these energetic youngsters will convince anyone that the 37-year tradition of "banding together" has earned our National Champion Lake Band its recognition as "Champions in Every Way."

The Lake Band organization accepts applications from interested young musicians throughout the Milwaukee metro area and suburbs. If you know someone with a desire to excel musically, stop by the Lake Water Tower on 6th and Howard, Monday or Tuesday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.; or write to: Lake Band Parents, P.O. Box 07418, Milwaukee, WI 53207; or call 483-6327. You are guaranteed to be made welcome!!



## 1989-1990 DATES TO REMEMBER

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| <p><b>July 31</b> ..... General Membership Meeting,<br/>St. Francis Community Center<br/>6:00 p.m. Potluck Supper — Program:<br/>Mr. Matt Joseph, the History of the Automobile</p> <p><b>August 2</b> ..... Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.<br/>Thompson School</p> <p><b>September 1, 2, 3</b> ..... St. Francis Days<br/>Memorial Park</p> <p><b>September 6</b> ..... Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.<br/>Thompson School</p> <p><b>September 29 - October 1</b> ..... Milwaukee County<br/>Historical Society Antiques Show and Sale,<br/>Mackie Bldg., 325 E. Michigan St., Milwaukee</p> <p><b>October 11</b> ..... Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.<br/>Thompson School</p> <p><b>October 14</b> ..... Milwaukee County Historical Society<br/>Regional Convention<br/>(place and time to be announced)</p> <p><b>October 18</b> ..... Thompson School<br/>50th Anniversary Open House<br/>Time to be announced</p> | <p><b>October 21</b> ..... Thompson School<br/>50th Anniversary Rededication<br/>Time to be announced</p> <p><b>October 29</b> ..... Open House at Henni Hall<br/>at St. Francis Seminary<br/>as guests of the school. Open to all<br/>society members and friends. Come see the<br/>new remodeling and restoration work<br/>that the school is so proud of</p> <p><b>November 1</b> ..... Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.<br/>Thompson School</p> <p><b>November 5</b> ..... Arts and Crafts Show, St. Francis<br/>Community Center (time to be announced)</p> <p><b>November 11</b> ..... Wisconsin Council on Local History<br/>Annual Convention, Madison<br/>(place and time to be announced)</p> <p><b>January 3, 1990</b> ..... Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.<br/>Thompson School</p> <p><b>January 29</b> ..... Annual Membership Meeting,<br/>St. Francis Community Center, 6:00 p.m.<br/>Potluck Supper (Program to be announced)</p> |
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