



NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

Newsletter published quarterly

Non-Profit Organization 501c3

March 2020

Meet Your New Board Members

George Ramponi

George Ramponi was born in St. Francis and has lived here all of his life. He attended Faircrest School, Willow Glen and finally St. Francis High School. After high school, he went to University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where he earned a degree in history in 1973. While in college he worked part time at American Motors.

After graduation, George got a job in the health care industry. He worked for 2 years as a medical assistant. Then for 38 years he monitored heart rhythm machines, working the night shift.

He has since retired and spends his time at the gym and enjoying his hobbies. He belongs to a book club at the library and reads history, biographies, and novels. He also goes to movies and the symphony.

George has recently been getting into genealogy and found that he is one-third Irish and one-third German, and his family came from Tyrol, Germany. He also has Neanderthal in his heritage and says he wished he could go back that far!

Bill Drehfal

I have been married to my wife, Mary, for 49 years. We have two children and two grandchildren. We have lived in St. Francis since 1973, in our home at 4500 South Whitnall Avenue, which was built in 1865. Owning this old house is



Above: George Ramponi
Below: Bill Drehfal Drehfal



most likely what got me interested in our local history. I retired from Northwestern Mutual 14 years ago after working there for 29 years.

With the support of my wife, I have been involved with our historical society in some form since its founding. As the most recent past president of our society, I was active in its transition from our prior Lupo house location to our newer location in the civic center. I love the important work our historical society is involved with and honored to be an active member.



Please consider including a gift to the St. Francis Historical Society in your will, trust or beneficiary designation. For more information, please contact Anna Passante at 414-316-4391 or st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

What's New?

Welcome New Members

Michael and Susan Robinson

Election of Board of Directors

Elections were held and we have two new board members: Bill Drehfal and George Ramponi. Jay Wesner was re-elected for another three-year term. Jennifer Mertz chose not to run again and Juliet Hills has stepped down.

Great News!

On February 16, Anna Passante made a presentation at South Shore Soup asking for money to pay for a state historical marker to be placed at the Lake Protestant Cemetery. We won \$980 to help defray the cost!

Operation Eat Local

We will be eating at the Landing restaurant at 2234 East Layton Avenue after our general meeting on April 18th! Lori Grzybowski from St. Ann Generational Center will be speaking at this meeting.

Lake Protestant Cemetery

A gravestone was purchased by the historical society and placed in the Lake Protestant Cemetery to remember the five shipwreck victims who are buried there: three sailors from the ship *Sebastopol* and one child and one adult from the shipwreck *Niagara*.

Watch the mail for your invitation!!

John Gurda will be speaking at the St. Francis Civic Center on Thursday, April 23. He will be presenting "Smokestacks on the Lakefront: A History of Milwaukee's South Shore--The Story of the Industrial Corridor From Bay View to Oak Creek." This program is a collaboration between the St. Francis Historical Society and the South Milwaukee Historical Society. It is free to the public but a donation would be appreciated. Doors open at 6:00 pm for refreshments, and the presentation is from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

Remember the Schwin Bike Store at 2244 East St. Francis Avenue? Did you know that it was originally a general store in the late 1800s?

History has layers to it and that includes the history of old buildings in St. Francis. The buildings have had changes of ownership throughout their lifetimes. The building at 2244 East St. Francis Avenue is such a building. It began as a general mercantile store owned by Adolph Schulte. Constructed in 1881, it had a store at the front of the building and the family dwelling in the rear and above. Since Adolph's father, Victor, was an architect, Victor may have designed this building. Adolph was the postmaster from 1882 to 1904, with the post office located in his store. In addition to running the store for 50 years, Schulte served as a Town of Lake supervisor, treasurer, assessor, and school clerk for District 6.

Adolph said the following in an interview about his life in the St. Francis neighborhood:

St. Francis had changed a lot. From dense woods it has become a busy suburb---some think it is too congested for the seminary. There have been rumors of moving the buildings. My whole life seems to be bound up in the place. I learned my catechism here, was confirmed, and married at the 'sem' by the late Msgr. Rainer. One of our family's most prized possessions is a ring given to my father by the Archbishop Henni in recognition of his services in building churches and the seminary in particular. I gave it to my youngest daughter when she married. Living in the shadow of the seminary is remembrance enough for me.

Adolph Paul Schulte, the son of Victor Schulte, grew up in Milwaukee's Seventh Ward. He attended public schools, as well as parochial schools at the Old St. Mary's and St. Gall's parishes. At age fourteen, his father moved the family to Town of Lake. Adolph's formal education ended then, and he worked on his father's farm. Eventually he took up an apprenticeship as a mason and spent ten years in the trade. He married Harriet Emerson, daughter of a nearby farmer George Emerson, and they had nine daughters. After his father, Victor, died in 1890, Adolph ran his father's farm on South



Top right: Adolph Schulte

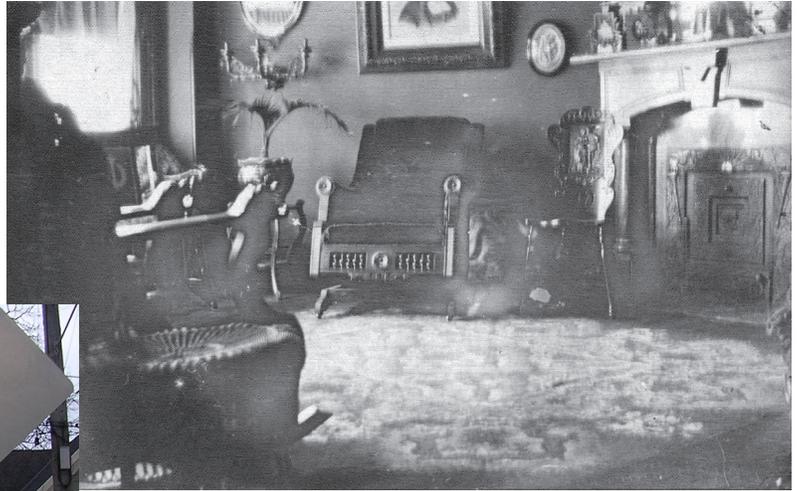
Left: Adolph's daughter Frances Schulte Campbell, standing at the west end of the building.

Bottom right: Adolph with his wife and 8 of their 9 daughters



Pennsylvania Avenue. He subsequently sold the farm, and Adolph Schulte opened the general mercantile store at the St. Francis Avenue location.

The store would later become the site of a Schwinn bike store. Later the large storefront windows were removed, and the building is now a multi-family residence. The cream city brick exterior is now covered in siding.

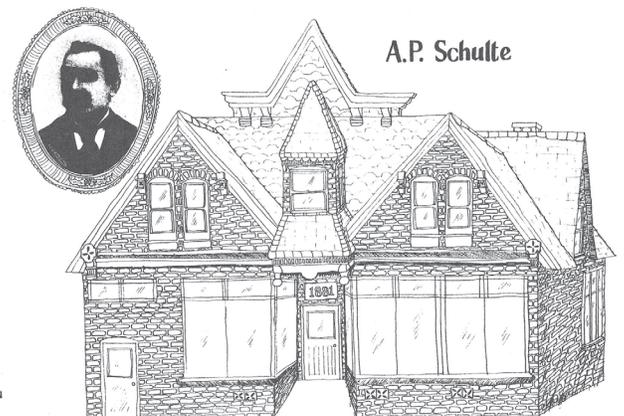


Top right: Interior shot of the parlor

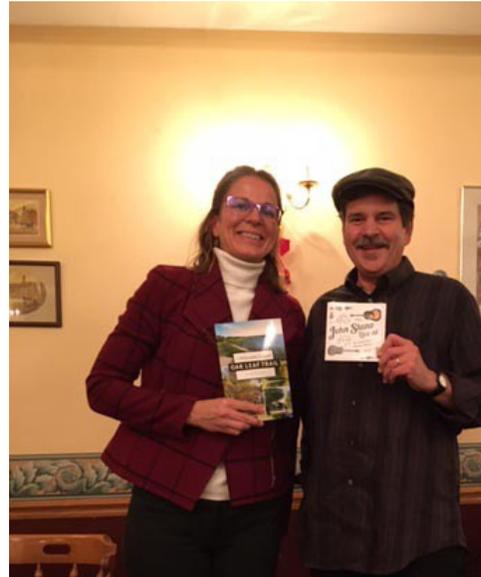
Above: Current photo of building

Right: Historical photo of the building when it was a bike store

Bottom: Drawing of the building when it was built in 1881



Christmas 2019



Top left: St. Francis Historical Society members enjoying the Christmas dinner at the Polonez Restaurant in December.

Above: At the Christmas dinner, Jill Maher spoke about her new book on the Oak Leaf Trail. John Stano performed some original music about the area.

Left: George Ramponi, Dillon Drehfal, Bill Drehal, and Anna Passante marched in the city of St. Francis Christmas parade.

Thanks to all members who included an extra donation to their renewal notices. Every donation helps the historical society fulfill its mission to collect, preserve and display St. Francis history, offer historical talks, continue our historic landmark plaque program, and fund the Lake Protestant cemetery restoration project.

Ray Klug
Patty Robinson
Terry & Diane Duffey
George & Phyllis George
Robert & Mary Jo Hallfeld
James Hempel
Mary Hoppe
Tom & Betty Javorek

Stanley & Penny Raclaw
Allan & Nancy Scott
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Carl & Karen Kitzinger
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Chris & Pam Barney
Jim & Kathy Matthew
Rich Gamroth
New Assisi Archives
John Janiszewski
George Ramponi
John Janiszewski

St. Francis Seminary - An Insider's View

by Juliet Hills, M.A.P.S. 1999

In the late 1990s, an opportunity arose for me to study at St. Francis de Sales Seminary, and I began a three year program in Pastoral Studies as a lay woman from the Protestant tradition. This was unusually kind of the Archdiocese to allow me to participate, although it did have limits. It became clear that I could not usually receive the sacrament, but I did attend many services, and my final contribution was to give the graduating service and sermon for my (small) class that included 5 lay students. As a "dyed in the wool" socialist, I invited a member of the local kitchen staff and one of the office staff, also local, to participate in the service. They held water and salt, part of the ceremony of blessing. My intention to also include a member of the groundkeeping staff was thwarted, however, by the exam schedule of Marquette University, requiring the regular mower of lawns to be otherwise engaged the day of the service, in his philosophy exam.

On my first day, I was welcomed by a spread of tiny white lesser bindweed flowers smiling up at me from the grass along the driveway. As I would wander through the Seminary Woods between classes, I would see birds and dogs being walked, as chipmunks hunted for food. In the spring of each year, the trillium shouted their silent trumpets of white and pink throughout the area. On one walk, I skipped through a gap in the fence to find myself watching wood ducks on the pond behind the Archbishop's house. I was familiar with the woods from my first walk there with Tom Hanratty, a local tracker who trained in the Pine Barrens with Tom Brown, and formerly on the staff of the coroner's office. He worked for the FBI and in the lab at St. Luke's Hospital. Tom and his wife Ellen lived in Bay View and then in Cudahy. He showed me bloodroot, aconite, rare and huge bass trees, May apples, and all that good spring stuff. I have since also enjoyed the sight and sound of great horned owls and their big fluffy babies, seen frogs and toads, and been observed by deer and fox as I sat on a log. A raccoon once peered over at me from a lofty nest in the hollow tree at the edge of the clay pit. My annual Boxing Day ramble on the Nojoshing Trail leads both the Woods and the Seminary campus.

The attached sketch is a reminder that one summer, the cupola over the center of Henni Hall was removed for renovation, and I watched the workmen as they worked it after it had been lowered to the ground by crane. Two other sketches I made of a student wearing a cassolet in the robing room and the

hands of one of the Latino students. He asked me if he could use the drawing for his ordination invitation, so I did not keep a copy.

One year the sacristan, Ruth Bartz, who lived at Canticle Court, invited people to participate in making a quilt to be auctioned off at the last annual fall craft event on the front lawn, around the great beech tree that is now no longer there. It turned out to be a very large quilt, and 11 of us worked on it. I was the only student, and the others were women and girls from the kitchens and office. One of the priests won it in the raffle, then donated it back to the seminary, and it now hangs in the seminary library, a separate building to the south of Henni Hall next to the gymnasium building (where my Unitarian minister played soccer for many winters). Ruth also wanted help with the Christmas tree one year, and I suggested an international tree of decorations from around the world, which drew some attention. I was a member of the local U.N.



association, along with Frank Zeidler and the Bleidorn twins, Frank and Gene. In fact, the Bleidorns were in the cafeteria on my very first lunchtime visit. There they were, old friends from the peace community, assembling the alumni magazine, which they edited. They had entered the Seminary in the 1960s together, and had both left the priesthood later to marry, one to a former religious sister and one to a nurse, both active peaceniks.

At Halloween one year, the ministry students had a great party. One of the young men was from Colombia, and he was a brilliant mime artist. He whitened his face, wore black clothing, white gloves, and a bowler hat, and drew black plus signs on his eyes, and copied every move you made. It was very impressive. The students had to learn how to do all kinds of services, including funerals, and on an upper floor was kept a coffin to practice in the chapel. For the party, they filled the coffin with ice and it held all the beer! One year we held a spiritual retreat day, and my physical therapist friend came to inspire us with expressive dance, resulting in some of my serious professors cruising around the room in their socks. They were no strangers to fun, or to the arts. Early on in my time there I watched a complex sound system being delivered to the Archbishop's house for Rembert Weakland, who would have been a concert pianist if he had not gone into the ministry, just like Rector Andy Nelson's mother had been. Long after they retired, both Andy and Rembert could be seen attending the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra performances and stayed great friends. One of our professors had a huge collection of fine art books in his rooms at Henni Hall, and many of the priests were symphony orchestra aficionados. One was a devoted student of Karl Rahner, and I was fortunate to attend his funeral and pay my last respects to that sweet and gentle priest.

In my off-semester ethics class, we were only a class of four students. I was a divorced former librarian from England, Jenny was the daughter of a local car wash owner, Mary was the wife of a Case executive in Racine, and Oriole was a Catalan ordination candidate. Not all of my professors were priests or brothers. My Old Testament professor had a family, and he called me one summer to ask what I knew about J.K. Rowling. I said "who's he?" and he told me about the Harry Potter books. His son was at Harvard and the books were all the rage. One of my fellow students had an alter ego as a radio host of rock music, calling himself Jasper Carrot. He gave a wonderful workshop at the seminary on the spirituality of the words in rock songs, and I still have the audio tape of that presentation, although he later died unexpectedly after a routine operation went haywire. I was able to spend time with him and his new wife at the bedside. Creative thinkers are in short supply, and he is sorely missed.

I sang in the Schola under Sister Mary Ellen Collins, and we took part in some lovely services, including the Easter service. After which the gigantic bonfire was lit outside the front doors (which were only used at Easter), and some of the crazy young seminarians jumped over the flames in their cassocks, which looked terrifying. One mass song I did not know from my own tradition was "Jesus Remember Me," a haunting chant that stays with me even now. There were no Sunday services at the seminary, as all the priesthood students were required to be based in a local parish where they would serve at the altar and learn parish ways. All were archdiocesan candidates. Now all of those students go to Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners for their classes, along with men and women working towards ministry and lay people.

On a memorable summer weekend, the librarian, a delightful Episcopalian ordination candidate, asked me to accompany her to Mauston to help identify items stolen from local churches and convents. We witnessed huge garbage bags of moldy green bread, statues, relics, vestments, bibles and lecterns, all taken to "restart the church after the Apocalypse" by an extremist from this area. He had posed as a painter in overalls, carried a stepladder, and was never questioned. We were met and escorted by police to see this odd "collection" stored in lockups and a garage.

So if you visit my house and see a copy of Vatican II on my bookshelf, you may remember the chapter on the "priesthood of all believers." I give thanks for the hospitality of the seminary, the M.A. that enabled me to create a new career in pastoral care, and the deep exposure to the workings of the oldest Christian church system in the Western world. Several of my teachers have passed on and colleagues have scattered to the four winds, but we still carry with us the understanding we developed, and the calm and loving intentions of the community of Francis de Sales, whose birthday I shared, 326 years later. It is now very good to live close by the lake, the seminary, and the life of the woods.



St. Francis Historical Society
3400 E. Howard Ave.
St. Francis, WI 53235

2020 Officers

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Vice-President..... Sister Ceil Struck
Secretary.....Stephanie Maxwell
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Kathy Matthew
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Newsletter

Anna Passante
Barbara Janiszewski

Mark Your Calendar

Meetings at the civic center:

March 21, 2020, Board Meeting at 9:30 am
April 18, 2020, Annual Meeting at 9:30 am
May 16, 2020, Board Meeting at 9:30 am

Upcoming events (see "What's New" column for details)

The historical society office (3400 E. Howard Avenue) is open by appointment only. Contact us at our office phone or email.

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