

# NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

Land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue



**St. Francis**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## The Newsletter of the St. Francis Historical Society September 2014

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Vice-President.....Anna Passante  
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### Newsletter

Anna Passante  
Barbara Janiszewski

### Dave Goltz's Big Red Fire Truck

*by Barbara Janiszewski*

When the St. Francis Fire Department was formed in 1954, they had two fire engines. One came from the Town of Lake as part of a division settlement and the other came from the city of Milwaukee. In 1956, the fire department purchased a new 1012 International truck, their first brand new truck. It served the department well but in 1991 it was decided to sell it along with a 1964 GMC van. The sale was done by sealed bid.

Growing up on the south side of Milwaukee, Dave Goltz wasn't especially interested in fire trucks. When he joined the St. Francis Fire Department in 1973 as a paid on-call firefighter and then was hired full time in 1977, the trucks were just part of the job. At the sale, Dave wanted the van but he bid on both the van and the truck and ended up with the truck.

In 1992, when Dave married his wife, Nancy, they wanted to hold the ceremony in the firehouse.

Their intention was to have a small, intimate ceremony with family and just a few close friends. The fire chief and the City gave them permission to use the firehouse. But then as more people heard about their plans and wanted to come, they had to get permission again for the additional people. The firehouse was cleared out and risers were put up for the occasion. The firefighters decorated and it turned out to be quite a festive affair. The invitation said that guests should come and meet Dave's "new chief." After the ceremony the couple rode in the fire truck to their reception, held at the Blue Canary on College Avenue.



Through the years the truck has been used by different organizations in many parades. The St. Francis Historical Society used it for the past two Fourth of July parades.

Dave has been involved with many civic organizations, namely the St. Francis Arts Council and the Miss St. Francis pageants. He is the board chairman of Project Concern in Cudahy where he picks up food from the Hunger Task Force and delivers it to needy families in the area.

When asked what his future plans are for the truck, he said that he mentioned to the present fire chief

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that they should make room for it in the new firehouse. However, his six-year-old granddaughter told him that he could never get rid of it. The fire truck, said Dave, has turned out to be his favorite toy.



Members of the St. Francis Historical Society pose with Dave and his fire truck after the 2014 Fourth of July parade

### **Do You Have Old Newsletters?**

The Society is starting a project to gather a complete set of the Society's newsletters. With all the moves and changes in membership, the original archive has unfortunately been lost. If you have previous issues that you are willing to let the Society borrow, we would like to make copies and then return your copies to you. The archive will also be digitized and made available through the Society website. Please contact Randy Borland (rsborland@gmx.com 703-599-1033) and he will help determine which of your issues are still needed.

### **Society Launches Website**

In addition to the Facebook page (St. Francis Historical Society) created in November of 2013, Society news, events, and information are now available through a new website. The website contains articles describing artifacts and documents and historical photographs from the Society holdings. The website introduces the Society board members, provides a brief history of the Society, and includes information and links to support research. The website will include oral histories from members of pioneer families, prominent citizens, and articles from various local historians. Site URL is [www.stfranciswihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.stfranciswihistoricalsociety.org). Do you have anything to add to the website? Any and all comments or suggestions are welcomed.

## **What's New?**

### **Membership**

Welcome new members: Jeanie Laabs-Kolodzek, Diane Piedt, Christine Schaubel, John & Terri Kloppenburg, Andy & Tabitha Neary, Al Guglielme, and Neil and Judy Witt. A student membership level of \$5.00 has been added.

### **We Have a Lease**

We have signed a 60 year lease with the city for our space in the new Civic Center, with a 10-year extension.

### **Display Cases**

The display cases are nearing completion. Installation will be the third week of September.

### **Pine Cone Wreath**

A wreath made from pine cones collected from the Cupertino tree is being framed and will be displayed in our work room at the Civic Center. We also have a branch from the tree that will be on display.

### **Civic Center Dedication**

The dedication for the new civic center is scheduled for Sunday, October 26, at 1:00. The Society plans to have a sofa throw sale. The background of the throw will have a map of St. Francis with pictures of various historical locations in the city. We are also looking to sell t-shirts that have our logo on it.

### **Wish List:**

Slide projector/screen

Tape recorder that holds mini-cassettes.

### **Christmas Dinner**

Due to the Civic Center Gala being scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 4, the historical society will not be having their dinner at the Polonez restaurant.

However, the Society is planning a "meet and greet" at our new digs in November. A flyer will be sent with the information.

### **Facebook**

Like us on Facebook St. Francis Historical Society.

### **Join Us!!**

Our meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month from 10 am to noon at the St. Francis library. All are welcome!

# Nojoshing Trail Dedication



We are the land. All who have walked this land are part of this land. That belief was repeated a number of times at the Nojoshing Trail dedication in St. Francis on Sunday, June 22, 2014. The trail follows an access road on the former electric company land that extends east/west between Kinnickinnic and Packard Avenues, with Sivyer Avenue to the south and the Cousins Center property to the north.

A year ago, in the early planning stage, Terry Duffey a historical society member, suggested the trail be named Nojoshing, an Indian word meaning a piece of land jutting out into a lake or river. For tens of thousands of years, Native Americans had occupied this land, and it was fitting, thought Duffey, that it be named for the earliest of occupants.

Mayor Cory Ann St. Marie-Carls declared the day “Nojoshing Trail Native American History Day.” Menominee Indian Gary Besaw, a member of the Tribal Council, spoke about the Native American contribution to the area. Ronnie Preston, of the San Carlos Apache tribe and a St. Francis resident, sang an honor song with his daughter, Emma.

Besaw brought a pouch of tobacco, which he identified as “medicine.” The spirits no longer have access to tobacco, said Besaw, “so we give this to them.” He recited a prayer in the Menominee language, praying that the spirits grant them what they prayed for. Besaw spread the tobacco in a “clean place” on the trail. The trail is a place where people can promote a good, healthy life, and help them feel grounded, said Besaw.

The Menomonee tribe has been in Wisconsin for thousands of years, reaching from Marinette County south to northern Illinois. The tribe followed the seasons, moving from rice camps to fishing camps, to sugar maple camps, etc. They were gardeners and grew their food.

When Besaw declared, “We are the land,” he meant it literally. His people buried their dead in trees and under logs, the bodies decomposing and becoming part of the soil, enriching the soil that would grow crops and feed the people. His people picked berries grown in soil that was enriched by their dead ancestors. They shot deer that had eaten grass that was enriched by their ancestors.

Aldersperson Sue Bostedt and city engineer Melinda Dejewski began planning the trail a year ago. One section of the Nojoshing trail system is completed--a gravel path leading east from the Trestle Creek subdivision to South Packard Avenue, as well as a wood chip path that leads to the city-owned portion of a wooded area that borders the Seminary Woods. Jesse Blunt, technology teacher at St. Francis High School, had his tech classes make plant identification signs. Science teacher Erich Gottfried had students identify the plants.

The next phase of the trail system will extend a former electric company path that originates at Howard Avenue and connects it to a path that will lead to the new Civic Center. Once the Civic Center parking lot is completed in fall, the lot will be the official trailhead. Until then, those interested in walking the trail need to park in the small parking area on South Packard Avenue.

The land surrounding the trail will not be mowed, nor the paths shoveled in winter, but rather left in its natural state. There are, however, some invasive plants and trees that will need to be removed, so volunteers are being sought to help with this removal.

St. Francis Historical Society members Terry Duffey and Anna Passante were involved in the planning of the trail. Passante and Society member Kay Beres planted a small flower garden of native plants at the edge of the Packard Avenue parking lot. More native plant flowerbeds will follow next spring. Do you want to help preservation of this land and trail? Contact Sue Bostedt at [BostedtS@stfranwi.org](mailto:BostedtS@stfranwi.org).



Top: Ronnie and Emma Preston  
Middle: Terry Duffey and Anna Passante, at far left  
Below: Gary Besaw





## Nathanael Greene Park, Milwaukee County Park System by Anna Passante

Did you have a chance to catch a Sprecher brew at the mobile beer garden in Greene Park on a nice August night? If you did, perhaps as you sipped your brew and listened to the music, you wondered about the history of Greene Park.

Nathanael Greene Park, a Milwaukee County park in St. Francis, is not named for Nathanael Greene, a major general of the Continental Army in the American Revolutionary War, according to Amy Sternig, a staff writer for the former *Reminder Enterprise* newspaper. She claims that the park was named for Nathanael Greene, a Milwaukee realtor and member of the Milwaukee County Park Commission. But there may be a connection with the major general. Terry Duffey, a historical society member, thinks that perhaps Nathanael's parents named him for the general. Traditionally, a number of county parks were named for past board members celebrating their dedicated service on the commission board. Curry, McGovern, Dineen, Kletzsch, and Whitnall parks are examples.

Nathanael Greene, the park's namesake, did not live in the South Shore area but rather on Milwaukee's east side on North Lake Drive. He was born in 1872 and died in 1945. He became a member of the Park Commission in 1921 and was elected Commission president in 1931.

Greene Park spans 38 acres and was built in 1960. Before it was a park the location served as temporary veteran housing, called Harbor View Veterans' Housing Project, which was part of the Veteran Housing Program run by Milwaukee County government, for returning WWII veterans. The residents lived in trailers, and the present-day Greene Park pavilion provided bathroom facilities and showers for the residents. The park offered veterans an opportunity to get on their feet and save money to buy a house. The trailers were probably similar to the ones in Sheridan Park's Veterans' Housing Project, which ranged in length from 18 to 25 feet and had two rooms, containing such items as a double bed, studio couch, and oil and gas stoves.<sup>1</sup> A number of other county parks also participated in the program, which ran from late 1946 until it was disbanded around 1955. Supposedly, before the veteran housing was located here, a quarry was at this site, and Lipton Avenue ran through the property.

At one time, 4<sup>th</sup> of July festivities were held at the park, until the municipal park on East Lunham Avenue opened. Most recently the recreation areas of the park got a major facelift. There is much to do in the park: wading pool for the toddlers, tennis courts, basketball hoops, baseball diamonds, and other playground equipment for the kids.



Wisconsin Historical Society

Nathanael Greene, Park Commissioner (photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society)



St. Francis Historical Society

Harbor View Veterans Housing Project, now Greene Park. The present-day pavilion is in the background, on the far left side of photo.

<sup>1</sup> Information from *Generations of Pride: A Centennial History of Cudahy, Wisconsin*.



Don't Bill Drehfal and Anna Passante resemble the *American Gothic* painting? All they need is the pitch fork. Is there one in the archives?



## National Night Out, August 6, 2014

Members of the St. Francis Historical Society Kay Beres, Barbara Janiszewski, and Anna Passante pose with Miss St. Francis, Brynn Weinzirl.

*Be sure to get your copy of the  
St. Francis Historical Society's newest book  
detailing the histories of the following local institutions:  
Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi Convent,  
St. Francis Seminary, St. Aemilian's Orphanage,  
St. John's School for the Deaf, Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish,  
Lake Protestant Cemetery.*

Available October 1, 2014

Written by St. Francis Historical Society Member Anna Passante

96 pages illustrated

All profits go to the St. Francis Historical Society

*From Nojoshing to St. Francis,  
From Settlement to City:  
the Early History of  
St. Francis, Wisconsin  
Part I*



by  
Anna M. Passante

Fill out this form and mail with your check or money order for \$15.00 (plus \$3.00 shipping) per book payable to the St. Francis Historical Society to: St. Francis Historical Society 4235 South Nicholson Avenue, St. Francis, WI 53235. To save on shipping, contact Anna (see below) to arrange for a pick-up.

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Number of books: \_\_\_\_\_ X 15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ Shipping per book \$3.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Grand Total \_\_\_\_\_

Questions: contact Anna Passante 482-1781 or [st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

St. Francis Historical Society  
4235 S. Nicholson Avenue  
St. Francis, WI 53235



## Membership Form

Do you need to pay your dues for 2014? Do you want to join the St. Francis Historical Society? Please complete this form.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$8.00      \_\_\_\_\_ Student \$5.00      \_\_\_\_\_ Life \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Family \$10.00      \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to donate materials to the Society

Checks payable to St. Francis Historical Society. Membership runs Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

Clip and mail this membership form to:

St. Francis Historical Society c/o Barbara Janiszewski 4007 S. Lipton Avenue, St. Francis, WI 53235

Would you like to have the newsletter sent by email?

Questions? Email us: [st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com)