

St. Francis Historical Society

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vol. 5 no. 3

NEWSLETTER

fall 1984

Winter

COME TO THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Historical Society will feature Fr. William Wallaik of St. Paul's Catholic Church. He will describe his trip to the Holy Land. A slide presentation is included. The date is Monday, November 26th, 7:30 p.m. at the Community Center.

CATCHING UP

Our participation in St. Francis Days was successful and profitable for the Society. The annual fall Arts and Crafts Show was also a success. Thirty people sold their wares during the well-attended fair. Thank you to everyone who participated in the two events.

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . .

The results of our annual fall raffle are in. Names of the lucky winners were drawn during the November 7th meeting of the Society's Board. First prize of a bushel of cheer was won by Gina Palvermacher, South Milwaukee. The handmade quilt went to Ken Ody, St. Francis. Morgan Robinson, St. Francis was the lucky winner of a \$50 EE Savings Bond.

WHEN THINGS WERE RUN BY STEAM

The era of steam engines was recalled when a steam train complete with passenger cars of bygone times pulled into St. Francis. About 1400 people rode the train from Chicago to Milwaukee for a day of sightseeing. Two trips were made -- one each on September 22nd and 23rd. The trips were sponsored by the 20th Century Railroad Club, an excursion tour from Chicago.

The train stopped on the tracks between the Kinnickinnic-Denton Avenue and Kinnickinnic-Norwich Avenue intersections. Hundreds of local residents took advantage of the opportunity to see the vintage train. Rides at \$1 each were given when the train traveled to the switching station at Kinnickinnic and Oklahoma Avenues and back to St. Francis. The Fire Department provided water for the train.

Many of the persons who rode the train from Chicago disembarked at St. Francis to take bus tours or self-guided tours of the Milwaukee area. Refreshments and information about the area were available at St. Francis Municipal Park. The St. Francis Jaycee and Jaycettes, along with the Lions Club and Scout groups helped the Historical Society coordinate events at the park. We thank everyone who had a part in making the weekend a success.

NEW SEASON FOR OLD WORLD

For a variety of reasons, our annual trip to Old World Wisconsin had to be cancelled. However, we tentatively plan to visit the site in the spring. On past tours we have seen old time preparations for the winter months. In the spring we would probably see the preparations for a new growing season and other activities of that season. More information later.

AGE DOES COUNT

Colleen Schultz, 483-8669 is head of the Society's Landmarks Committee. Please call her if you feel your house is old enough to be considered a landmark. Perhaps your home dates back to the Town of Lake when Whitnall Avenue was a stagecoach route. The committee plans to identify and catalog old houses and commercial buildings.

THIS HISTORY IS STILL GROWING

There is a white ash tree at 3704 S. Kinnickinnic Avenue which has the distinction of being the largest on record for this species in Wisconsin. The tree is on Anita Zielinski's property.

The tree has a circumference of 12 feet, six inches with a crown spread of 77 feet. Recognition of it's size was given by the Department of Natural Resources. The white ash is about 238 years old, which means it was a living seedling in 1746.

LITTLE HOUSE ON THE AVENUE

The house on the northeast corner of the intersection of Kinnickinnic and Norwich Avenue has been offered to the Society by the Wisconsin Electric Power Company. However, the house would have to be moved to an undetermined site. The last day of occupancy for the family living there is May 31, 1985. The Society's board is considering the acquisition of the house. The abstract for the house will be studied to determine how old it is.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In August, 1985 our Society has been given the task of hosting the convention for the Wisconsin Council of Local History's Metropolitan Region. This task represents a real challenge for our Society. How we meet this challenge depends on you.

In the next few months we will be dividing up the responsibilities and establishing subcommittees. I would appreciate a call from anyone wishing to assist in putting this convention together. If you are asked to give a helping hand please give strong consideration to saying yes. Properly done with sufficient help this will be a very rewarding experience and a challenge we can all proudly meet.

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin will again offer the "Community Historian-in-Residence" program for 1985. If you are interested in local history if you would like to develop a research project on some aspect of local history - If you are interested to learn the fine art of research and writing this project could be for you. Sponsored by the office of Local History and funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this project is intended to help non-professional historians learn the conceptual, research, and writing skills that are needed to produce sound and understanding local histories. Grant funds will enable ten individuals from around the state to live in Madison for two weeks, (usually in July). During these two weeks they will attend classes, seminars, and conduct research on their chosen project regarding some aspects of their communities past. Seminar faculty members include Mid-Western University professors and staff members from the state Historical Society. The ten individuals chosen will be selected by a screening of their applications. There is no cost to the successful applicant. If you are interested and wish to submit an application, I would be happy to assist in any way.

I am particularly pleased to report of the activity in our newly formed Historical sites and land marks committee. Your help in identifying our historically significant buildings is requested. Any information regarding our older, or special styled structures will be of help in this project. Our first goal is to identify and list these buildings. A later phase will be to

research and learn as much as we can about them. Thanks colleen and Jim, keep up the good work!

Three additional projects have been recently concluded and I wish to thank the chairpersons - First the St. Francis Days booth was again very successful and my special thanks to John Heidenreich and Ed Wagner for all their efforts in our behalf. Second, the Arts & Crafts show, chaired by Diane Johnson was a high success both in terms of money raised (even though it's not really a fund raiser) and the people we drew. Thanks Diane and finally - our Annual Fund raising raffle was the largest it's ever been with over 875 tickets sold. Thanks to Bob Schwingle our chairman but also my very special thanks to Mrs. Francis Neubauer who's hand made quilt was again the most prized award.

We wish to welcome our newest member, Daniel and Denise Splan.

I'm looking forward to seeing most of you at our November meeting - Our program should be very interesting - we'll again have coffee and snacks.