

St. Francis Historical Society
Newsletter
Winter 1988

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

New Officers Elected At Annual Meeting

Kathy Schwingle was re-elected president of our Society during the annual meeting held Jan. 25 at the Community Center. Other officers include Adele Lenz, vice president; Mildred Schimelfenyg, secretary; and, Margaret Symkowski, treasurer.

Christopher Barney was elected to the Society's board of directors. Ron Tessmer and Diane Johnston were re-elected to three-year terms on the board.

The annual meeting was preceeded by a potluck supper. The Harmonikittens of Unity Lutheran Church Senior Center provided the entertainment following the business meeting.

Putting Our House In Order



Many-- 225, in fact-- of the items in our collection of things of historical interest have been catalogued, thanks to Laura Staats and her committee of volunteers. If you would like to help with the cataloging, give Laura a call at 481-9849.

All of the collection is stored in the Society's rooms at Thompson School.



Pictures of Lakeside Available To Us

According to board member Chris Barney, a spokesman for the Wisconsin Electric Power Company told him the company has a complete file of photographs of the Lakeside Power Plant. The file is available to our Society if the Society is interested in reproducing any or all of the photos. Member Bob Schwingle has volunteered to pursue the project.

Consider Becoming Involved

General membership meetings of our Society feature short business meetings, followed by informative programs. In 1988, the meetings will be held on the last Monday of April, June and October. The precise dates of the meetings are always well publicized.

Also, the Society's board of directors meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in our rooms on the second level of Thompson School. People interested in the Society are always welcome to attend the meetings. That would also be a good time to take a look at the Society's collection.

Numbers Retired To Arizona

The letter reprinted below was sent to Chris Barney, our new board member, after the writer, Roger Alswager, saw Chris's article about the Lakeside Power Plant in the Dec. 17, 1987 Neighbors section of The Milwaukee Journal.

“

Dear Mr. Barney,

just (sic) wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed your story about Lakeside Power Plant in the Dec. 17th paper. Also by the enclosed picture I want you to know that the wrecking ball did not get the address numbers which hung on Lakeside for many, many years. They are still looking west into the sunset as they did, only now they are on my barn in the back yard here in Mesa, Az. Kind of put them into retirement like most of the people that live out here. My father put in 36 years with the Elect. Co. up until 1949 when he passed away. He had a very good job there and many times would take me with him and let me stand on balcony overlooking the generator floor. I was only 15 but will never forget the sound of those fine tuned machines putting out all that power. One day he called me at home and told me to take the bus and he would meet me with the trolley (sic). That was during one of those bad storms that can come up on the lake. Any way he wanted me to see it close up. But the point is he let me run that trolley over to the plant and back to the bus stop. Now for a kid my age that was pretty big stuff. Another little story I will never forget and also it would never be allowed today happened in 1943 during the war. My cousin came home on leave before going over seas and brought along with him his army rifle to show his folks close up. Well any way, my Dad wanted to shoot it so we all jumped in the car and took it down to Lakeside and took turns shooting it out into the basin in the lake. Don't believe one could do that today even without a war going on. By the way, the rifle went to war and stayed but my cousin came home. One more little story I would like to tell you about Lakeside happened one night after a football game in Cudahy. Couple of us kids got into the bad habit of borrowing our parents car without permission. We would drive around after the game and pick up girls and then go to the drive in for ice cream. Well let me tell you that 1941 black Buick sure went a long way. Especially when you think back in those days kids rode bicycles to high school and knew what a bicycle rack was. Any way after picking up these girls we drove past Lakeside where my Dad was working right at that time and I proudly announced, thats (sic) where my Dad works. Thats (sic) when it hit the fan because the girl sitting next to me sez (sic), so does my Dad. Turned out he was a welder there. She told him, he told Dad and Dad told me. That was the end of the Buick. Good thing we still had a 1939 Plymouth to fall back on. My Dad told me lots of stories and showed me where they happened. Like the woman who was in the wrong place and almost lost both legs. She was one of the

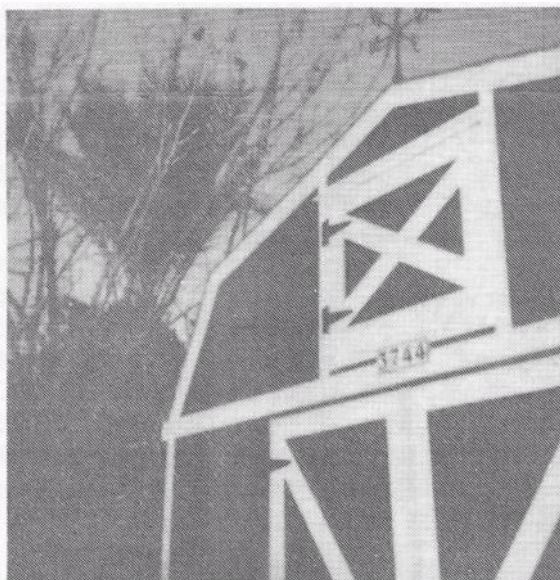
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'first women to be hired as war workers. The guy that tried to commit suicide by crawling into one of the furnaces. Didn't make it in but the heat did the trick any way. He showed me the burnt marks in the cement from shoe nails where a man had a steel file in his back pocket while doing work around high voltage and that stuff can jump a long way. Well any way in 1948 Boys Tech even got a job for me at Lakeside but when Dad found out he put a stop to it and as he put it, as long as he had a position there, if I did bad or good people would talk. Good thing for that, I would be out of a job now. Went to the telephone Co. and then to Allen Bradley where I put in 20 years. So you see at the age of 58, when I sit in the back yard with my beer, looking at those numbers and a couple of bricks from that old building it brings to mind a lot of memories of a Father who walked under those numbers so many times and who at the age of only 60 was taken away. Won't take up any more of your time. It was fun just to recollect some of the things I remember about Lakeside Power Plant.

Sincerely,
Roger C. Alswager

P.S. Also have some of the pictures taken from the air of the very start of construction about 1915 or so. . . .

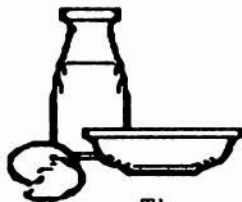
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Original Lakeside address numbers now adorn a backyard storage barn in Mesa, Ariz.

It's Collection Time Again

Annual membership dues in our Society are payable at this time of the year. The renewal fee of \$5 for family membership or \$4 for single membership may be mailed to the St. Francis Historical Society, c/o Ron Tessmer, 2517 E. Norwich Ave., St. Francis 53207.



A Taste Of History

Article By Tom McKay
Local History Coordinator

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

The molasses cookies tasted delicious. Debbie Kmetz, my colleague across the hall at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, brought them in the other day as a surprise treat. It turns out that molasses cookies had been a favorite of Debbie's grandfather, and our conversation over coffee drifted gradually into family traditions and family history.

The tastes and smells from a family picnic or grandma's kitchen represent links with the past every bit as valid as names on a family tree or photographs in a family album. . . Like many family traditions, recipes may have been handed down by word-of-mouth for years. In an age when families scatter to all edges of the country and all corners of the globe, the chain of word-of-mouth tradition is too often broken. Capture traditional family recipes in notebooks or on recipe cards before they are lost.

Debbie emphasized the value of copying a family recipe exactly as it is told or given to you. This preserves a family recipe and the family members' way of expressing things. If Aunt Margaret says to add a "smidgen," write down "smidgen." Where necessary annotate the recipe to explain that in this case a smidgen equals one teaspoon. Making these annotations in parentheses or in a different color ink will indicate that they are not the original words of the family member who offered the recipe. Grandma's recipe may call for ingredients that are hard to find or infrequently used, but recording and using the exact ingredients are important to maintaining the traditional dish. If the recipe calls for lard, don't substitute margarine. . . Try to make a recipe you are recording with the family member who gives it to you. Even if your great-grandmother is too old to knead the dough, bake the bread under her supervision. You will get the recipe right, and you will probably also receive a wealth of family stories with it. Those stories about the time the Christmas cake stuck in the pan or how much Uncle Jim liked this dish belong on the bottom or back of the recipe card. Recording them with the recipe will enrich the pleasure that making a traditional family recipe brings.

Family recipes will grow in importance to future generations, but they need our help now. The recipe card for Grandma's chicken and noodles should record Grandma's full name and where she got the recipe. Don't forget that Grandpa may have a family recipe for pickled fish. That belongs in your family recipe box even if you hate pickled fish. Keeping family recipes together also helps preserve them. You can make a second copy of a recipe to file under "bread" or "soup" or "casseroles" if you also want to refer to it there. Finally, share the recipe you preserve with others in the family. By sharing, traditions can live on in more hands.

The smell of bread baking or the taste of a traditional boiled dinner can remind us of our connections to generations past and draw to mind our own memories of other times. Recording those family recipes helps memory become history.

Catching Up With Some Old News

The Arts and Craft Fair sponsored by our Society in November was a success-- at least in terms of the funds it raised for the Society's coffers. The net profit for the Society was \$760, of which \$379 came from the sale of refreshments and \$93 from a raffle of donated items.

Our 11th annual A & C Fair will be held Nov. 6, 1988 at the Community Center.

During the general membership meeting last October, Leone Morbeck of Bay View displayed about 30 of her music boxes. Her extensive collection of 138 music boxes includes antique, seasonal and unusual boxes.

Workshops Planned By State Society

(Reprinted from "The Local History Bulletin") The State Historical Society of Wisconsin will sponsor local history workshops in February, March and April. This year's topics are Researching & Writing Local History, Nominating Properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and Local History Exhibits. For information on dates and locations, contact Tom McKay, Office of Local History, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, (608) 262-2316.



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