

THE EAGLE

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SPEAKS

FEBRUARY 2011

www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

"OLD ABE"

Inside this Issue:

Calendar	3
Committee Members	8
Donations	9
Featured Artifact	5
Historic Markers	7
Marsh Bridge	7
Membership Form.....	4
Memories of a Snowmobiler	1
President's Letter.....	2
The Past Past Here	3
Volunteer Profile.....	8

Snowmobiler Arley Engel sports a vintage *Wheaton Knight Riders* sweatshirt.

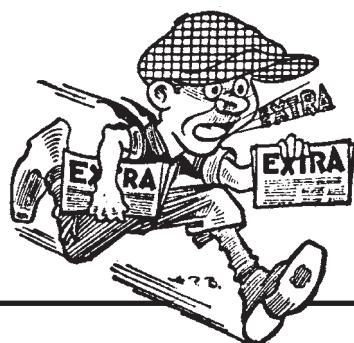


Memories of a Snowmobiler

BY ARLEY ENGEL

While sitting around today and wondering what to write about for this issue, all I had to do was listen to the sound of snowmobiles going by on the trail past our house. This brought back many memories of the days of yesteryear, and of the fun times our family had enjoying the sport of snowmobiling in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. It all started on the 24th of December, 1969 when June made arrangements with RCU to borrow enough money to buy a brand new snowmobile. It was an Arctic Cat Panther with a "399" Modified Kohler engine. The kids [Kevin, Terri] and I were in seventh heaven , as I had been looking at new sleds for quite some time. We all took turns driving and riding on it that night, and even invited brother Richard and his family to come join us. This is how we got started into snowmobiling.

When Friday night came around we had made arrangements to meet up with some of the neighbors including Leo and Jean Turner, John and Nancy Ward, Jim and Sally Reed,



**CCHS Semi Annual Membership Meeting,
Monday, February 21, 7 p.m.
Area History Center**

President's Progress Report and Hall of Fame Inductions

Sideshow presentation and artifacts from Wisconsin's largest independent wooden barrel maker, the Frank J. Hess and Sons Cooperage from Madison, WI.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



A Message From Your President



How about this winter! Lots of snow, temperatures below 0 and the Packers won the Super Bowl. Things are moving along at the History Center.

The Board of Directors at their January meeting elected three members to the Chippewa County Historical Society Hall of Fame. I'm happy to announce that Lalie Boos, Pat Ahneman and Don Bichner are the newest members of the Hall of Fame. They will be inducted at the Membership Meeting on February 21, 2011.

If you haven't taken a tour of the museum with Lalie or Pat you need to do that. Lalie and Pat have been docents at the museum for many years and have taken hundreds of people through the museum and shared lots of interesting stories about the history of Chippewa County and the artifacts housed in the museum.

Lalie Boos has volunteered faithfully since 1993. In addition to taking people on tour she answers the phone and keeps the History Center clean. I think her volunteer profile in the May 2008 "The Eagle Speaks" says it best. "Each Tuesday she comes prepared to keep the interior of the History museum as clean as her own home. She dusts, vacuums, scrubs floors, cleans restrooms and her dust rag scoots across every crevice as she chases those "dust bunnies" and "spider webs" that don't have a chance with Lalie's eagle eyes."

Pat Ahneman has been a volunteer since 1991. Besides taking people on tour her visits to antique shows and thrift sales has resulted in a number of books and artifacts now in our collection. Her artistic talents can be seen in the design of some of our exhibits and the painting of the wooden statue of an Indian on horseback that is in the Native American exhibit room.

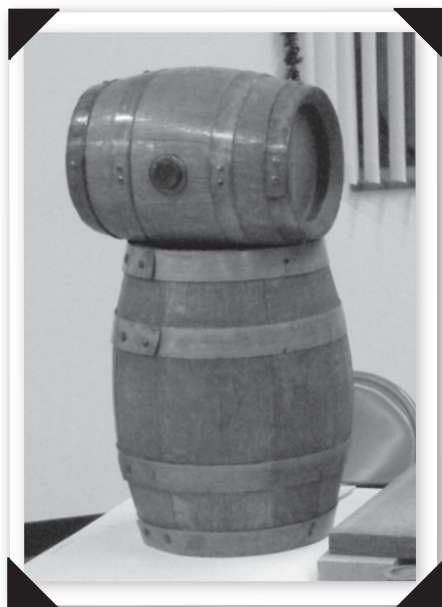
Don Bichner was on the Chippewa County Historical Board of Directors for many years. His carpentry skills are seen all over the History Center. He was involved in the restoration of the History Center and his many wooden signs and letters are seen throughout the building. He recently donated \$2,500 to the New Museum Fund.

Congratulations to three newest members of the Chippewa County Historical Society Hall of Fame.

The New Museum Fund now totals \$3,400 with Don Bichner's gift along with gifts from Mary and Dennis Brown and Cecelia Loken. When Don called me to tell me he wanted to make a donation to the New Museum Fund he suggested the following:

DON BICHNER CHALLENGES THE MEMBERS OF THE CHIPPEWA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO COLLECTIVELY MATCH HIS GIFT OF \$2,500 TO
THE NEW MUSEUM FUND.

Well that's enough for now. Don't forget the Membership meeting Monday February 21, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the History Center. Our guest speakers will be Jim and Gary Hess grandsons of the Frank Hess who founded Hess Cooperage located in Madison, Wisconsin that provided oak beer barrels from 1904 to 1966. We also will induct our new members into the Hall of Fame. *Dave*



Frank J. Hess and Sons Cooperage Presentation

Cousins, Jim & Gary Hess, grandsons of Frank J. Hess, will give a slideshow presentation and describe artifacts at the CCHS Semi-Annual Meeting February 21st. Their grandfather was born in Bohemia in 1870, learned the cooperage trade there and then immigrated to America at age 19. Frank and his four sons operated the Frank J. Hess and Sons Cooperage in Madison for 62 years, becoming Wisconsin's largest independent cooperage. They manufactured white oak barrels for many breweries in Wisconsin including a brewery in Chippewa Falls.



The Past Passed Here planning committee volunteers proudly display the event banner.

The Past Passed Here

BY JIM SCHUH

The Past Passed Here” Celebrating Chippewa County’s History will take place the week before Mother’s Day. The event began eight years ago in Allen Park, which is the actual site of Native American and French fur trade era camps. Later it was the location of the largest sawmill in the world under one roof, operated by the Chippewa Lumber & Boom Company. The events’ name, The Past Passed Here, was selected to celebrate and reflect the significance of this rendezvous and lumbering era site.

About 400 fourth grade students from Chippewa Fall’s parochial and public schools will participate in half-day, hands-on activities during school hours Wednesday – Friday. During these times the “camp” is closed to the public due to school rules. Teachers have commented that this excellent historic re-enactment reinforces the local history curriculum that the children study during their fourth grade school year.

The event will take place May 4th through May 8th. It will be open to the public on Thursday, (May 5th) and Friday, (May 6th), 3-6 p.m., Saturday, (May 7th) 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday, (May 8th) 9 a.m. - Noon, which is Mother’s Day. As usual there will be a \$3 admission fee or a \$10 family fee charged to help cover the costs of operations.

Adults and students alike will enjoy this step back in time, exploring authentic re-enactor camps, hearing live music and participating in camp hands-on activities including cat & mouse, canoe paddle races, hawk throwing and a sawing competition. Previously demonstrators have included blacksmiths, brain hide tanning, spinners and weapons exhibits. Food vendors have featured old-fashioned candy, fry bread, kettle corn, buffalo burgers, Olson’s Ice Cream, root beer floats and voyager stew. Merchants have a variety of items for sale including beeswax candles, reproduction antique clothing, leather, wrought iron, animal furs/skins, beads, jewelry and toys.

Community volunteers are needed and there are many ways that you can help: take orders in our food booth, man the admission gate, or assist visitors with making souvenirs.

We need financial sponsors to make this event a success and to make it possible to offer this educational, family oriented and tourism boosting event this year and into the future. The CCHS is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit educational corporation and donations are tax deductible. Sponsorship categories range from \$50 to \$1,000 and include admission passes. For sponsor recognition details, to contribute or to participate as a volunteer, contact event chairperson Mary Brown at 715-723-0619.

CALENDAR

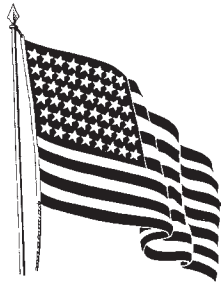
- February 15, Noon
Area History Center Birthday Lunch (No February CCHS Board Meeting)
- February 21, 7 p.m.
CCHS Semi-Annual Membership Meeting
- February 22, 1 p.m.
Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting Canceled
- March 15, 10:30 a.m.
Historic Marker Committee Meeting
- March 15, Noon
Area History Center Birthday Lunch
- March 22, 9:15 a.m.
CCHS Board Meeting
- March 22, 1 p.m.
Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting
- April 19, Noon
Area History Center Birthday Lunch
- April 26, 9:15 a.m.
CCHS Board Meeting
- April 26, 1 p.m.
Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting



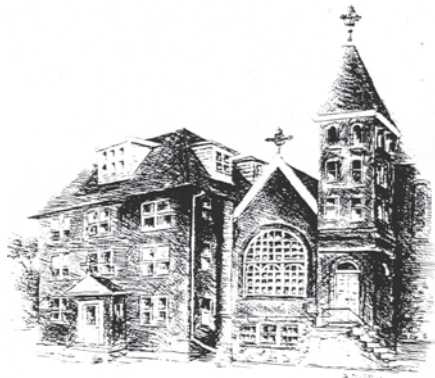
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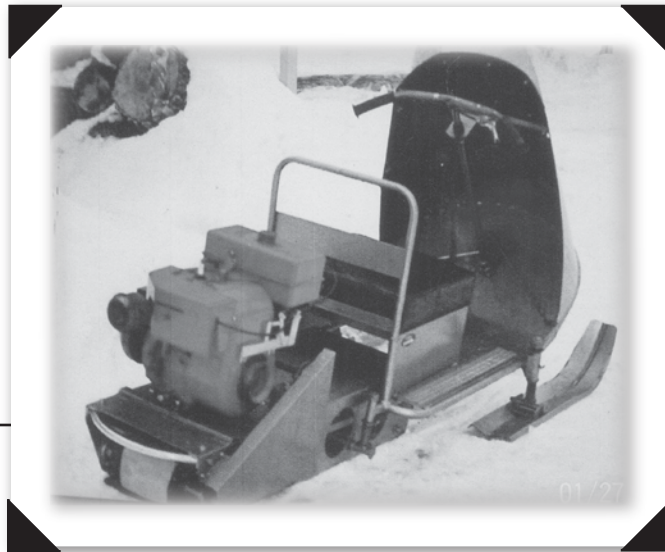
TELEPHONE:

Types of Memberships:

- Individual (1 Year) \$20
- Family (1 Year) \$25
- Contributing Member (1 Year)..... \$50
- Life Member (Individual)..... \$125
- Life (Couple) \$175
- Extra Donation

MAIL TO:

Chippewa County Historical
Society
123 Allen Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729



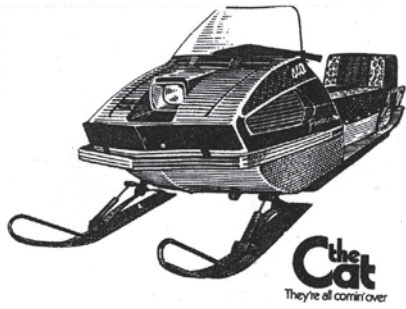
Memories of a Snowmobiler continued from cover

Jim and Shirley Bowe, George and Ida Blaeser, and Bernard and Bonnie Lynn to go for a ride to the local watering holes. At this time we all rode double, with the women usually riding in the rear and beating on our backs to get us to slow down. We met at the River Inn Tavern then headed to the White Owl Tavern. After a couple of “shortie” Old Style beers we decided to head up to The Hobble Inn Tavern. Believe it or not this was a big trip for the first night out, as the trails were poorly marked or not marked at all. At this time the only thing we had for trail marking were cardboard signs to which we added about 1 square inch of reflective tape so they would show up at night.

There was a lot of problems with spark plug fouling, drive belts tearing apart and suspension springs and idler wheels breaking or falling off. Those of us that had Arctic Cats or Polaris machines had problems with cleats breaking, it seems we all needed to own a heavy-duty pop rivet gun as the cleats were riveted on with 3/16 rivets. You had to check at least once a week to see how many cleats needed to be replaced. At this time before there were any trail groomers, all of the road crossings had high snow banks and ruts that would tend to try and tip you over at every road crossing. This was the cause of many broken windshields, or when you hit the dry blacktop of the road you would be stuck as your track was in snow and your skis on dry roadbed. We watched each other closely at these crossings so no one would get stuck as we worried about on coming traffic.

Realizing this was a big problem I decided there should be some type of device used to make these crossings safe. At first we carried scoop shovels to make a flat safe crossing, but then with heavy use, the trails got very rough. As an answer to this problem, I started pulling a bed spring behind my sled. This worked fairly well, but then we started noticing that the little 3 inch springs were falling off the bed frame and this was a no no, as these springs could end up in the farmers hay, not a good thing in a cows stomach. So back to the drawing board. I then made a frame work from two 2x4s—14 feet long and 4 feet wide with an “A” frame hitch on the front, then I went to the town shop and got three pieces of old grader blade and mounted them at an angle so as to throw the snow to the center of the trail, this worked well, especially after a fresh snow that was easy to move and packed making a smooth trail.

We ended up starting a small club of neighbors that year, we named ourselves “The Wheaton Whizzes.” As a club we invited more neighbors to join us, these folks include Robert and Eloise Goulet, Jerry and Barb Wucherpennig, Joddy and Eileen Reed, Jack and Caroline Bleske, Marvin and Rita Tanzer, Richard “Tiny” and Nancy Stelter, Lawrence Roberts, Art Taylor, Don and Shirley Webber, and Larry and Jayne Anderson. We even had a patch made up for our snow suits. We all wore one piece suits at this time with hoods, as helmets were not a popular item yet. Nancy Ward was in charge of our



Arley Engel shows log stamping hammers to kids at *The Past Passed Here*.



FEATURED ARTIFACT

Book of Logging Stamps

The logging industry is an important part of Chippewa Fall's early history. Before the logging companies floated their logs down river they used log marking hammers or stamp hammers to mark the ends of their logs. Each logging company had its own mark that established legal ownership. Thanks to Eugene Harm's generous donation we have a great collection of log marking hammers and now thanks to Raymond Noffke of Appleton we can identify which company used each of these hammers. Over time Mr. Noffke has compiled a very large book, which identifies the log marks used by logging companies in the Chippewa River Basin.

Last September, while attending the annual meeting of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Arley Engel had the good fortune to meet Mr. Noffke. Through this chance encounter a very generous Mr. Noffke has provided the Chippewa County Historical Society with a copy of his book. This is a valuable resource that will be used for many years to come.

club patch, and she did a nice job getting Old Style to help cover some of the cost. The 7 oz. shorties were the drink of the day. We had wiener roasts in Reed's woods a few times that first year. The next year we decided we should give our local land owners a gift at Christmas time to let them know we appreciated them letting us travel on their property. For our land owners who did not drink we gave them a box of Hershey bars and for the folks that we thought might enjoy a drink we gave them a ½ gallon jug of Mogan David wine. This seemed to be pleasing to all involved. About this time The Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs were getting organized. Our club then joined up with the Wheaton Knight Riders from the central and western edges of our township, in order to form a complete township in one group.

We then got involved with the Chippewa County Snowmobile Counsel and got acquainted with Mrs. Donald Woodruff, she was the county representative for the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs at the time. This led us to an acquaintance with "Doc" Tonnancour the trails director in Chippewa County. This also connected us with Tony Nunke who was very involved in getting the trails in the Chippewa County Forest. If you were involved in snowmobiling at this time you will remember many one way trails in the county forest. These were confusing at the time but they gave us a place to ride until other trails were developed through out the county. Some of our club members and I spent a lot of pleasant days with Tony marking and repairing trails in the county forest, Tony had helped survey the county and seemed to know where every trail went. "Doc T" was big on brushing in the county forest. Doc and his dad would mow every thing that they could with Ford tractors, and then ask for help cutting the over hanging brush to prevent doing damage to the groomers. The first hired groomers for the county trails were owned and operated by Jim Walters. Rene Ponick, Tom Nunke and Tom Felmlee. These guys did a great job, until it was decided that the Chippewa County Snowmobile Council would buy a Tucker Snowcat tractor and a Arrowhead Trail Groomer.

This is when the fun began, one groomer to do all the trails in Chippewa County. Vern Janisewski from Stanley, Charlie Morning from Eagleton, and Vern McIlquham from the Tilden area were the operators of this new unit. Doc being trail boss asked if I would help when repairs were needed and this was quite often. I hitched a ride with Charlie a few times and got into the rhythm of running this unit. I remember one day on the trail by the North farm on the Chippewa and Rusk County line we had to run along a fence line, and the snow was drifted about 4 feet deep but it was too soft to support the groomer with the drag trailing behind. After shoveling out the groomer for the second time I finely convinced Charlie to unhook and just run the Tucker through and pack the snow, when we went to the end of that field and then back on the same tracks, we again hooked to the drag and had no more problems grooming the packed trail. *That's all for now from Engel's Little House on the Wheaton Prairie.* 🐾

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STANLEY MERRILL and PHILLIPS RAILROAD

The Stanley, Merrill and Phillips Railroad was chartered to the Northwestern Lumber Co. in 1893. A 1902 reorganization of the lumber company resulted in the sale of the railroad to stockholders. The primary purpose of the railroad was to bring logs from the northwoods to Stanley to be processed into lumber but it also delivered mail and freight between Stanley and Vallee 37 miles to the north.

This marker is on the site of the depot and freight warehouse where the first passenger ticket was sold on May 1, 1903. Passenger service first took lumbermen back and forth to the logging camps. Farmers in the area used it for transportation to and from town and for delivery of supplies. In 1909, a gasoline "streetcar" was added to the rail system. The railroad was known for its excursions to point's north bringing passengers to parties, dances, hunting camps, and picnics. In 1913, the railroad had a total of 276 freight and passenger cars. The railroad came to an end in 1933 after passenger numbers declined from thousands in its booming years to just 33 in 1932. The S.M.&P Railroad was also affectionately called "Slow, Motion, and Poverty" and "Soup, Meat and Potatoes."



CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MARKER SIGN #13



THE MARSH RAINBOW ARCH BRIDGE

JIM SCHUH

The second Project Informational Meeting for the Spring Street Bridge Rehabilitation in the City of Chippewa Falls has been postponed twice. It was first scheduled for March 2010 and then planned for January 2011. There has been a

delay in reviewing the revised Alternative Analysis Report. Your support is still needed to save this historic landmark. It is the only remaining Marsh Rainbow Arch Bridge in Wisconsin. Please watch for a meeting notice in the local newspapers or check for the meeting date on the City News section of the City of Chippewa falls website at: <http://www.chippewafalls-wi.gov>

▲ The above graphic shows the updated information and photo for the CCHS Historic Marker replacement. The original plaque was installed in the 1970s and was located on Fourth Avenue in downtown Stanley on the site where the train departed for its daily journeys north. The plaque became deteriorated and was taken down about 10 years ago. Thank you to Mayor David Jankoski and his wife Patricia who have sponsored the replacement.

The Eagle Speaks is published quarterly by the Chippewa County Historical Society, a non-profit organization established to promote and stimulate historical interest in Chippewa County, Wisconsin.

Mail any comments or future articles to 123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. 715-723-4399.

Chippewa County Historical Society
123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI
Open on Tuesdays | 9am-4pm

Committees in syncl



Mary McKenna

Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

*** Collection & Artifacts:**

- * Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel, Lucyann LeCclair, Terri Stahr, Jeff Pritchard

Photography Sub Committee:

- *Lucyann LeCclair, Donna Bourget

*** Building & Grounds:**

- *Steve Rasmus

Space Utilization Sub Committee

- *Steve Rasmus

*** Education:**

- *Catherine Lea, Evalyn Frasch, Ann Gordon, Rosemary Broeren

Docent Subcommittee:

- Lalie Boos, Pat Ahneman

*** Exhibits:**

- * Arley Engel, Nancy Schuh, Lucyann LeCclair

Historic Markers Sub Committee:

- * Tom Larson, Jim Schuh, Arley Engel, Kurt Gaber

*** Finances:**

- *Skip August, Kathy Forsgren

*** Membership:**

- *Shirley Liedl, Mary McKenna

Telephone Subcommittee:

- *Mary McKenna

*** Publicity:**

- *Jim Schuh, Wayne Meyer

*** Newsletter:**

- Jim Schuh, author & editor
- Elly Rochester, layout & design
- Nancy Schuh, author & proofreader
- Column Authors: Arley Engel, Kathy Forsgren, Dave Gordon and Mary McKenna

* Chairperson

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE
NANCY SCHUH

Mary

Approximately eleven years ago, Mary attended a luncheon with a group of volunteers from the Historical Society. Recognizing that Mary was a woman of many talents, they asked if she would be interested in joining their ranks and as they say “the rest is history.” Mary has been on the Board of Directors since 2000, she served as Treasurer for five years and has been our Secretary since 2006. Normally Mary writes the Volunteer Profiles but this time the spotlight is on her.

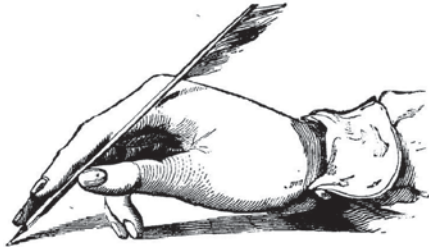
Mary was born in Milwaukee on December 16, 1939, the eldest of five girls. She attended three different grade schools and went on to graduate in 1957 from South Division High School. Mary’s first job was in the office of Cuneo Press as a typist and part-time switchboard operator. She was also a reporter for the company magazine, “Cuneo Topics.” Two years later she went to work for the Allen Bradley Co. as a typist in their Order Dept. During her five years there she also enjoyed writing for the “Gossip” magazine and being the Secretary of their “Girls Club.”

In 1964 Mary married “the boy next door.” They were married at St. Hyacinth’s Church with all the (church) bells and whistles. Her life then happily became one of homemaker and mother of four children: Kathryn, Ruth, Lori and Lloyd. In her spare time she dabbled in politics as a booth worker and publicity manager for a local candidate. She also ran for the office of Committeeman but lost to the incumbent. Politics continues to interest Mary and she frequently works on telephone campaigns.

In 1974 her family moved north to Jim Falls, and her dream to live in a small rural community became a reality. Her children joined the local 4-H Club and for 20 years Mary was a Project Leader. She also worked in the 4-H building at the Northern Wisconsin State Fair setting up the Arts & Crafts displays and assisting the judges. In 1980 Mary along with three other women began a volunteer run library in the Jim Falls Town Hall. They began with a collection of books donated by the Chippewa Falls Library along with donations from local residents and the Lions Club. The Library Volunteers hosted programs for the children in the summer including guest storytellers and entertainers. The Library is still in operation and continues to be run solely by volunteers.

During the 23 years that Mary lived in Jim Falls she ran a Family Day Care in her home. She watched as her own kids left one by one until she had a “empty nest.” For a short period of time she lived with a daughter in Kentucky but she missed her friends and the area she called HOME. Mary moved back to Chippewa Falls and quickly resumed her work as

Donations



CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2010-2012

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Donations in Memory of:

From:

Porter P. Popple	Arley & June Engel
Mrs. Wayne (Sirella) Meyer	History Center
Mrs. Wayne (Sirella) Meyer	Jim & Nancy Schuh
Warren Wermund.....	Jim & Nancy Schuh
James A. Gindt.....	Arley & June Engel
Robert Dirks.....	Mrs. Robert Dirks
Dave Rude.....	Arley & June Engel
Samuel E. Rineck	Arley & June Engel
Sam Rineck	David & Shirley Pressler

Other Donations:

Visitors	\$11.00
Raymond Noffke	25.00
Donald & Delores Bichner (New Museum Building Fund)	2500.00
Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Schafer	100.00
Nancy Sweet	50.00
David Jankoski	25.00

Lifetime Memberships: From:

Dave Zien	\$125.00
Frank Winans	125.00

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE *CONTINUED*

a volunteer. She first helped at Parkview School and then became a Tuesday regular at the History Center. She has also volunteered for the Chamber of Commerce, the Main Street Association, the Heyde Center and for her parish, St. Charles. She has been a member of the Institute of St. Joseph for over 20 years.

Two years ago another of Mary's dreams was fulfilled. After living in an apartment for 10 years, Mary bought a home on the West Hill. She can now have a garden and pets. Her cats Gus and Sammi are great companions. In addition to maintaining a home and spending time with her 18 grandchildren, Mary still makes time to volunteer, plant a garden, knit, read, dine out with friends, go to the movies and design her own greeting cards. All of us at the History Center can attest to Mary's skill at designing cards. Hallmark's loss is definitely our gain. Mary says that working with the other volunteers has enriched her life but even in a community filled with volunteers, Mary stands out. All of the volunteer work that she has done over the years has certainly enriched the Chippewa County Historical Society as well as our whole community. ♡

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- ✧ **Vice President**
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- ✧ Marge Hebring, 7361 203rd St.,
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