

# THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AUGUST 2009



"OLD ABE"

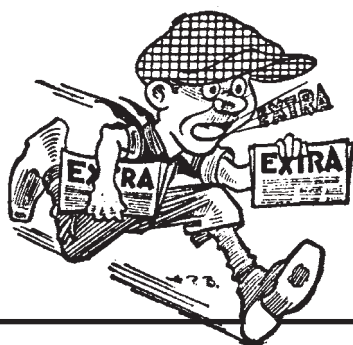
www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

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The Cushing Farm, owned by Peter LeMay, located in the Cadott area.



Mark your calendar  
and save this date . . .

### **CCHS Bi-Annual Membership Meeting Picnic Pot-luck**

Irvine Park Activities Building  
**Monday, Sept. 21, 2009**  
5:30 pm

## Three Elderly Gentleman Go for A Ride

ARLEY ENGEL

On June 10, 2009 I had a 10:30 appointment with an Indian, a Frenchmen, and myself being mostly German... a very unlikely crew. Our plan of attack was to tour around the Cobban area. I headed to Cornell to meet with Wayne Meyer, a member of our board, at the Chippewa County Historical Society. I arrived a few minutes early. After talking with Wayne's son for a few minutes Wayne arrived and gave me a quick tour of his business. They specialize in building Christmas garland for street decoration and a variety of different size wreaths plus many other wood products. It's time now to go meet with the Frenchman, Lee Blanchard. He is the grandson of Louis Blanchard. Louis was a popular storyteller from back in the lumbering era of the Chippewa Valley. He was also known to pull a few tricks on his friends and neighbors. We headed south on 27 to highway K, turned right on K going west. It wasn't long until we arrived at Lee's farm on the south side of the road. Lee was waiting for us out in the yard. After visiting a few minutes and asking questions of some of the buildings on the farm we headed west on K past Lee's gravel pits then took a right on a town road that led to his grandfathers "Homestead". He told us if we would have been a few weeks earlier we could have seen the old house, which had just been dismantled maybe 2 weeks before. This spot was very near the Chippewa River maybe only 250 feet from the bank. Leo told of many catfish being caught in that area. Upon leaving this place

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 

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# CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## 2007-2009

### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

#### OFFICERS

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✧ Arley Engel, 5294 90th St.,  
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Arley Engle took this close-up photo of hand hewn beams and dove-tail construction at the old Fisher School building

we headed south to the old Fisher School. Checking on old schools in Chippewa County is my project since I turned in my resignation as Vice President of the Historical Society. Many of them have been destroyed or have been put to other use. This one is not in the best shape, with all the windows and the floor already gone. We took a few pictures inside and out, even some close ups of the dove tail construction of the hand hewn beams, which were at least 12 inches square. The school sits on land owned by Peter LeMay. As we were walking back to the van, Peter's son stopped by to check on us and invited us down to the Cushing Farm that his Dad owns. The barn on this farm was built in 1912 for Mr. Cushing who was an Industrialist out of the Chicago area. As we arrived at the farm, I introduced myself to Peter LeMay as Arley R. Engel from the Little House on the Wheaton Prairie.

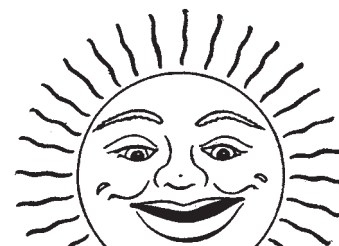
This took him a little by surprise, but it perked up the ears of three Amish men that were there giving him a bid on installing new shingles on the roof. This was a monster barn for the times. It is shaped in a T fashion with 24-foot sidewalls and probably 40 feet to the peak ends. This end contains the haymow and it even has living quarters in the east end, up stairs, under the haymow. At this time Leo told us that he was born in this barn. (My mother always use to say to us boys as we left the house, "Please shut the door. Were you born in the barn?")

This barn had two hay carrier tracks one going south, and the other going east; it is a very unique set up. Attached to the south of the hay area are two silos 14 feet wide by 30 feet tall inside the south end of the hay mow area. Beyond this is the milking area with a much lower roof of less than 15 feet. This area is 32 feet wide by 80 feet long. It held about 60 milk cows in individual stanchions. Most of the stanchions are removed with just room for the cows to get their heads through wooden slats to get at ground feed and hay. It has been converted to a loose housing area at this time.

After giving us a tour through this area Peter said as long as we have gone this far we should go up into the haymow, and who would have guessed there is a stairway that leads up into the haymow. The light switch in the stairway is one of the push button style. As we reached the top of the stairway Peter told us to pay special attention to the size of the support beams. This barn was built with fir timbers from out west—remember the mill in Chippewa Falls closed in 1911. The trusses in the sidewalls were a full 2 inch by 16 inch. They only come out about 4 feet from the sidewall, which made much more room in the mow area for piling the loose hay. This is the same style construction of the barn on our home farm that my grandfather had built in 1920. The interior silos could be seen in this area. There were a few spots that were missing boards that let in some natural light, which made for some impressive photos. We went back down from the haymow, and outside to the milk house. This building was built with tile blocks, and was in disrepair. With much of the mortar gone, the roof had many rotted boards with large holes, but the cement cooling tank was still in good shape with room to cool 20 milk cans. There was also a steel wash tank used to clean the milking utensils, plus a lot of miscellaneous items that have gathered over the years.

This is a very impressive farm site and it would be sad to see Mother Nature destroy it. At this time Wayne was getting a little nervous as his wife was going to have dinner ready for us at noon, and it was already 12:20, so we said our thanks to the Le May's and headed to

Lee Blanchard and Wayne Meyer visit the former Fisher School . . . the floor and windows are no longer in place.



## CALENDAR

the Meyer house in Cornell. We arrived at 12:30 and our dinner was ready. Sirella Meyer had cooked up a fine meal of spaghetti and meatballs, plus a noodle salad and coffee. A very tasty dinner, one of my favorites, I had seconds. We thanked Sirella for the great dinner and were back on tour about 1:15; Wayne suggested we head into Cornell to the museum at Stacker Park. The Cornell Stacker is said to be the last of its kind in the world. It was used to stack pulpwood for the Paper Mill on the south side of highway 64 across the road from the stacker. Wayne explained that the pulp wood chunks were transferred under the highway to the mill by a water flume.

We then toured the Native American display area, with many interesting displays inside the old powerhouse building, including paintings and artifacts from the early life of the Indians in the Cornell area. The most impressive item in this building is the Wigwam, constructed with willow poles tied together with root bindings and covered with hemlock bark. Inside Wayne explained how the Indian people lined the inside wall with another layer of hemlock bark with sphagnum moss placed in between as an insulator for winter warmth. He also showed us a wall of woven reeds for summer cooling, and a small fire pit in the center for cooking and heat when needed. There were many pelts of different animals that were used for clothing or for bartering with the white man for needed items.

We stopped in the main building on this site to visit with a schoolmate of mine from back in the 1940s, Irene Krostag. I had visited this museum before and had recalled knowing the family. Her mother Sarah was born in Wheaton as member of the Badman family, and was a sister to Mary Ann Kraft, a dear friend of our family. We left this site and traveled on 64 to 178 south to the Cobban Bridge, crossed over the bridge and turned right, when we arrived at the old cheese factory, we noticed the owners were doing some rebuilding, including a new roof, plus a new opening in the side wall for a garage door. It will be a nice looking building when completed. Next we headed on down the road to the Cobban Store.

This building has had some repair and looks good. We noticed an imprint on the front porch stating the build date was 1913, nice shape for a building this old. On down the road we traveled, across the bridge on K to the old hotel, which looks in nice shape, then across the road to the old blacksmith shop. We pulled into the driveway and out from the shop came a burly gentleman. Upon our introduction, we learned he was a Knitter from the Cadott area. After a little chit chat we looked over some of his antique machines and tools, then he invited us down to his camp area on the Chippewa River where there were more old machines and a well kept camp site, including some railroad signals. This was part of the old rail line that ran from Chippewa Falls to Jim Falls, on to Cobban, Cornell and Holcombe, then east to Arnold, Donald and Hannibal, with the line ending at Hughey.

It was starting to get late in the day and I wanted to see the school that Wayne had gone to as a child. This brought us back across the Cobban Bridge into the Town of Cleveland to the Golden Rule School. The school was a one-room brick building housing eight grades, with one teacher. There is a house next door but no one seemed to be around so we took some photos from the road not being able to get permission to go on the property. It was nearing 4:00 PM so we decided to call it a day. After dropping Lee at his farm, Wayne and I headed back to his shop at Cornell. *That's all for now from Engel's Little House On the Wheaton Prairie.*

### August 11, 1 p.m.

Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting

### August 18, 9:15 a.m.

CCHS Board Meeting

### August 25, 10:30 a.m.

Historic Marker Committee Meeting

### September 15, 9:15 a.m.

CCHS Board Meeting

### September 21, 5:30 p.m.

CCHS Bi-Annual Membership Meeting. Pot-luck, Irvine Park

### September 22, 1 p.m.

Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting

### October 9, 10

Wisconsin Historical Society Annual Conference, Wausau

### October 20, 9:15 a.m.

CCHS Board Meeting

### October 27, 1 p.m.

Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting

All meetings are at the Area History Center 123 Allen Street unless otherwise noted.

**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.

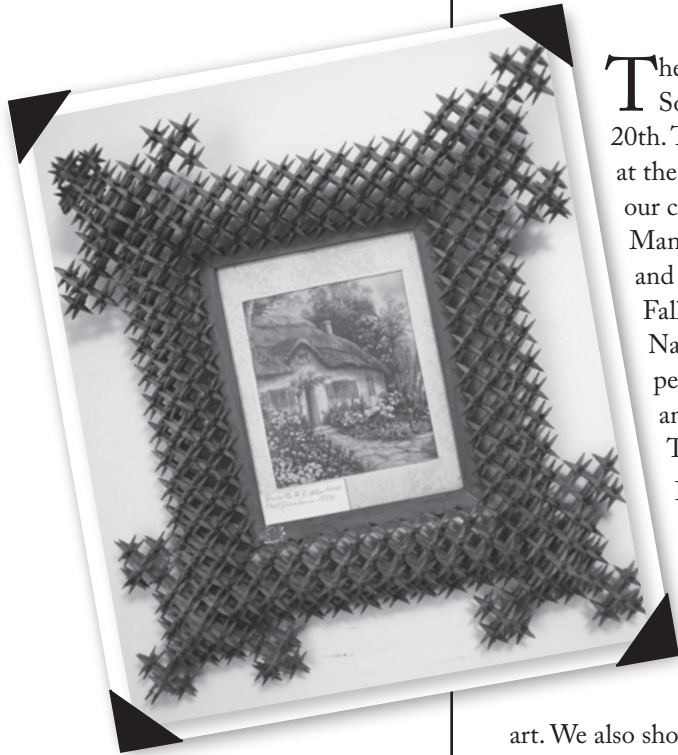
Mail any comments or future articles to 123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. 715-723-4399.

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



## FEATURED ARTIFACT

### A Message From Your President



“Crown of Thorns” Tramp Art Frame  
The hit of the CCHS Summer  
Solstice Exhibit!

The Chippewa County Historical Society participated in the Summer Solstice on Grand Art Faire at the Cook Rutledge Mansion on June 20th. The Valley Art Association asked us if we would like to have a booth at the Art Faire so we made some display units, selected some of the art in our collection and spent a beautiful Saturday in the Carriage House at the Mansion. We handed out lots of brochures, talked with a lot of people and even sold some books, posters and a 1907 framed print of Chippewa Falls. Thanks go to Mary McKenna, Pat Ahneman, Arley Engel, Jim and Nancy Schuh, Lalie Boos and Jeff Pritchard for spending time talking to people and answering questions at the booth. They all indicated they had an enjoyable time and met a lot of people who didn't know we existed. The board voted at our last meeting to participate again next year.

I was surprised as we put the exhibit together how much art there was to use. We had two oil paintings that came from Hiram Allen's house. The picture in the tramp art frame was the hit of the exhibit. In researching this exquisite frame I found out that, tramp art was started by hobos. Much of it used wood from cigar boxes that were carved and the pieces were notched and put together without glue.

Our particular frame is “crown of thorns” which is a form of tramp art. We also showed the large oil painting of early Chippewa by Mary Ann Roehling Happle that is in the Dorland Room. The Hugh Mandelert oil of the Red Cross Worker saving children from a three-headed beast was featured. The exhibit also included the large panoramic photograph of the fair, and photographs of the Irvine Railroad Yard Round House, the Civil War “Old Abe” flag & eagle bearers of the 8th Wisconsin Infantry and Northern Wisconsin State Fair Race Track Grandstand.

Activity is picking up at the History Center. Mary Brown and Clarence Rice are new volunteers who are making it possible to work on improving the records of our collection and changing some of our exhibits. The donation of a beautiful doll house made by Lorraine Pontuis and her husband has sparked the development of a new exhibit, which will focus on children's items. I'll keep you informed in future newsletters on this exhibit as it develops.

The other big news is a grant from Rutledge Charities has made it possible for us to replace a worn out computer and purchase three new computers for use by volunteers. This will allow us to continue to improve our collection records and reduce the need to handle photographs and other items when people come to the museum to use our historic information. This will greatly improve the preservation of our collection.

*Dave*



Arley Engel and Lalie Boos man the CCHS information and sales table at the Summer Solstice Art Fair in the the Cook Rutledge Mansion carriage house. In the foreground is an original painting by renowned, late, local artist Hugh Mandelert

## Yellowstone Trail Article Features Cadott

JIM SCHUH

The July/August 2009 issue of Wisconsin Trails Magazine travel section is titled “The Yellowstone Trail—Stop Along America’s First Transcontinental Highway.” Congratulations to Cadott for gaining statewide recognition! Excerpts of the article follow.

“Imagine embarking on a transcontinental drive where your only guideposts are stones, poles and buildings marked in yellow. That was the 3,600-mile Yellowstone Trail, established through the work of a grassroots association from 1912 to 1930. The route passed Yellowstone National Park, as well as 411 miles of Wisconsin – from Hudson south to Kenosha.” “The Wisconsin leg of the trail involves highways 12,53,29,13,10,110, 45,175, 32 and many lesser-used roads in 17 counties.” One community in each county was selected for the article. The paragraph about Cadott follows:

“Cadott – The intersection of highways 29 and 27 is a veritable history hub. Salute the courage and grit of war veterans at the flag-flying memorial, embracing all branches of military service. Don’t miss the Baker School Museum (a one-room schoolhouse built for \$25 in 1865) and a local history museum, where you can learn about Lansing Wilcox, the last surviving Wisconsin veteran of the Civil War.”

In the spring of 2006 we were one of the first counties in Wisconsin to mark the Yellowstone trail. The Chippewa County Historical Society purchased 76 Yellowstone Trail directional highway signs to mark the route across Chippewa County. Our Historic Marker Committee coordinated the process and purchase of the signs. The Chippewa Falls City Street Department and the Chippewa County Highway Department erected the signs. You may recall that to celebrate the new signs a “Sociability Run” was held with about a dozen vintage autos, circa 1940 and older. The group traveled from Cadott to Chippewa Falls to participate in an unveiling of the new Yellowstone Trail county historic marker erected next to the Arrow Building Center at 500 E. Park Avenue. 🍷



### Memories of Chippewa Falls Historic Presentations

A slideshow consisting of more than 80 historic photos that was created by Dave Gordon has been utilized for recent community presentations. Jim Schuh in his late 1800s costume complete with top hat made several presentations to 8th grade classes at the Middle School History Day held on May 15th. A similar presentation was given at the Chippewa Manor for their Father’s Day Pancake Breakfast on June 18th.

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Before a crowd of about two-dozen spectators and two TV news crews, CCHS President Dave Gordon unveils the Chippewa County Historical Society's 50th historic marker (left) and new Civil War era style monument identifying the cemetery (right).

Photo by CCHS Volunteer Jeff Prichard

Committees in sync!



## 50th Historic Marker Unveiled at Poor Farm Cemetery Rededication

JIM SCHUH UTILIZING WQOW-TV NEWS EXCERPTS

A restoration project at the Chippewa County Poor Farm Cemetery came to an official end on May 21, just prior to Memorial Day Weekend. More than 100 years ago, Chippewa County established a poor farm and next to that site was a cemetery where the county buried those who were mentally ill or penniless. Many buried there had no known family and were forgotten. That changed thanks to the efforts of the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) and the community. The CCHS coordinated the cemetery restoration project and work was completed on September 23, and 25, 2008. Everyone has described the project as a huge success.

Evelyn Shilts has lived in Chippewa Falls for most of her life. For more than 70 years, she's been searching for the gravesites of her infant twin sisters. With the cemetery restored, Evelyn quickly found her sisters' marker and closure. Shilts says, "I just found them last fall... they were born prematurely. One didn't get out of the hospital, and the other one came home for two weeks and she got pneumonia or something. I appreciate the way it was fixed up before I ever found it. I was so pleased when I found the grave and there was a nice stone on it." Like many families in the great depression, Evelyn's family was poor. So when her sisters died in the mid 1930s, the family was forced to bury them in the cemetery next to the poor farm in Chippewa Falls. As the years passed, the cemetery was neglected

CCHS President Dave Gordon, said, "These are 262 people who lived at the poor farm, probably had no means, and probably wouldn't have been known except for this cemetery. It was in quite bad shape. There were overgrown trees, a lot of the markers were buried in the ground. It just hadn't been maintained." That's when the Chippewa County Historical Society stepped in. Working solely on donations from the community, the cemetery underwent a large restoration project last fall. A rededication ceremony and a commemorative marker complete the project, reminding visitors this cemetery is more than just a place for eternal rest.

Several businesses and groups stepped forward to participate in this project. Chippewa County Historical Society with support from the Chippewa County Genealogical Society coordinated the project. The Chippewa Valley Correction & Treatment Facility provided a 15 man Community Work Crew. The property owner St. Joseph's Hospital provided a worker, heavy equipment and lunches for the work crew. The Wissota Health & Regional Vent Center donated topsoil and Mike Winscher from their maintenance department provided direction. Forest Hill Cemetery provided guidance on resetting headstones and lent use of hand tools. Harvey's Tree Care donated removal of a four-foot wide basswood tree stump. A Civil War era style monument identifying the cemetery was donated by Johnson Monument, LLC. ♣

### Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

#### ❖ Collection & Artifacts:

\* Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel, Lucyann LeCleir, Terri Stahr, Gail Willi, Jeff Prichard

#### Photography Sub Committee:

\*Lucyann LeCleir, 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 LeCleir

#### 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 Design: Elly Rochester

\* Chairperson



## LOCAL NEWS

### Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVE JANKOSKI, REPORTER

#### Veterans Programs Planned

The Stanley Area Historical Society continues to make good progress on the construction of its new building. The interior work is done except for the construction of the exhibits themselves. The only remaining exterior work is the brickwork around the entrance, which will hopefully be completed in the spring, if sufficient funds are received. To date \$122,975.61 has been expended on this building project. We need an estimated \$11,000 to complete the project.

The local quilt show hosted by our historical society on July 25-26, was a success. We are now getting ready for veteran's presentations, which will be held in August and September. On August 8, two women who served in WW II will have their stories told by their daughters. On August 22, ten veterans who served in Europe will be telling their story. On August 23, ten men who served in the Pacific will be speaking. On September 13, "Diz" Kronenberg, a retired teacher who lives in Eau Claire, and has authored three books on WW II will be our speaker. On September 19, there will be another group of men talking about their war experiences in Europe and on September 20, a group of men will be talking about their experiences in the Pacific. All presentations will begin at 1:15 p.m. with introductory material and a historical overview. The presenters will have the assistance of an overhead screen to assist with their presentations.

Veterans from throughout the area will be sharing their individual experiences



Pat Ahneman

### A VOLUNTEER PROFILE

MARY MCKENNA

# Pat

On a nice spring day in April of 1928, Pat Ahneman was born to parents, Chester and Gladys Severson. Ten days later it took a city snow plow to lead the family to their home in Eau Claire. Pat describes her childhood as happy in spite of living during the great depression. Her sister, Betty, was born a year and a half later, the same day the stock market crashed. Her parents were avid gardeners with a yard full of flowers, trees, rock gardens and a pond with water lilies, gold fish and toads. Her dad worked for Northern States Power Co.

While the world faced a crisis, her family experienced one of its own. Her sister, Patty, at age 8 and a local high school boy were among 50 cases of tetanus (lockjaw) in Eau Claire. They became "guinea pigs" for an experimental vaccine brought from Minnesota from an infected horse. These two young people were the only survivors of this deadly disease. During recovery, the Sacred Heart nuns used the Sister Kenny's method for polio patients to help her to walk again. Pat said she attended grade school at the "Bloody Ninth Ward," so named by the students because of the fights in the school yard. She graduated from high school in Eau Claire.

She worked at various jobs as a young adult: Demler's Greenhouse, Badger Theatre, Samuelson's Department store and the "Book Store." From the "Book Store" she left to marry her husband, Jack Ahneman, a construction worker. He worked on the Alma smokestacks, the Petenwell Dam in Necedah and Castlerock Dam near Wisconsin Dells. After living near these sites for his job, they moved back to Eau Claire, built a home and bought a farm where they raised quarter horses and at one time had 32 horses. While raising the horses, Pat and Jack were to meet Quarter Horse inspector, Mr. Underwood and nationally known horse trainer, Monte Foreman, who gave lessons here. They visited Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Burton who imported the Arabian stallion, ARAMUS, who was later bought by singer Wayne Newton, Las Vegas showman. The fine stallion appeared on the Johnny Carson show.

Jack Brainard, a nationally acclaimed trainer taught Jack roping (with goats). Pat talked to the hired hands and learned much as she observed everything around the farm. All this occurred while Pat and Jack were also raising four multi-talented children: Paul, Julie, Todd and Aemi. The family was involved in 4-H, dog and horse shows and stock car races.

While her husband was employed by Northern States Power as a lineman, he was electrocuted twice by 7,400 volts—surviving each time. He wasn't hospitalized but was treated by their family doctor who wrapped him in gauze and then Jack drove himself home—Negligence with a capital "N". Pat's father has survived electrocution working for NSP. Details of how it happened at the Madison Street sub-station are unknown.

The discipline of working hard on the farm and their early involvement in educational projects formed the character of the children of Pat and Jack Ahneman. She said they could be trusted at a very early age. Eldest son, Paul, now lives on a Montana reservation but also



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## LOCAL NEWS

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*Pat continued from page 8*

previously worked for Menard's as a carpenter and roped steers in Montana and adding to the excitement, drove stock cars and raced. Todd worked for the telephone company during the Cuban Crisis. His knowledge of Spanish was important to this job. He also did missionary work in Spain. After 25 years with the company it changed hands and he was laid off. Todd returned to Europe again but this time he was accompanied by his mother and they went to England, France and once again to Spain's Alhambra. Julie was adept in computers and timing being important, Cray Research was starting up. She now has a job in banking. Aemi also worked as a telephone operator and now works in a medical facility in Arkansas.

Pat describes her gretest pleasure was her art classes with famed local artist, Hugh Mandelert in 1971. His classes were filled with wonderful talented people. Hugh was a former New York fabric designer who made coloful patterns used in drapery, bedding and dress fabrics during the fabulous 60's. Once he moved to Chippewa Falls his artistry was mainly local scenes of herons in Duncan Creek, foxes, flowers and his remarkable trees and quaint neighborhood home and yards. Pat participated in the annual Spring Art shows and her love of horses is reflected in her talented artwork.

Sadly, her husband Jack, died in 1988 eleven days after their 40th wedding anniversary. Ever active Pat joined the History Center volunteer group in 1991—mopping floors for six years. In those years only 16 of the 49 rooms and were used for display. Today Pat is a docent and a great storyteller. Pat says she likes peace, nature, art, animals, books, antiques and history and still is inquisitive as to the who, what and why of most anything. 🐾

*Stanley continued from page 8*

and war related material. This will be another opportunity for attendees to honor our remaining veterans, as only 25 percent of WW II veterans are still alive. We invite attendance to these very interesting presentations.

### Cadott Area Historical Society

JEANINE MAREK, PRESIDENT

#### A New Third Building

The men have been busy putting the displays in order at the new third building. A lot of heavy items had to be moved from the second building to the third. That left us more needed space in the second building. Two committees are working to revamp the ketchen area and put up a new store and trading post display.

We held Heritage Days on May 6th & 7th in the new Pole Shed. We displayed an old sleigh, freight wagon, hose cart, 1937 fire truck, cistern, wooden butter churn and a beautiful refinished buggy. Bill Healy gave a presentation on the early French fur trading days beginning in the 1600's to the 1900's when the invention of the silk hat, as worn by Linclon, eliminated the need for beaver pelts for hats. Bill had many artifacts to see and touch. He came dressed as an authentic voyager. It was much enjoyed by the fourth, fifth and sixth grade students of Cadott.

In September we will begin working on our newsletter which comes out the first of January —another busy and productive year. 🐾

# Chippewa County Historical Society

AREA HISTORY CENTER

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# THE EAGLE SPEAKS



AUGUST 2009

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