

THE EAGLE

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SPEAKS

NOVEMBER 2011

www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

"OLD ABE"

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Arley Engel's 1950 Chevrolet



The Area History Center will be closed for the holidays on Tuesday, December 20 and Tuesday, December 27.

Dream Cars of the 1950s

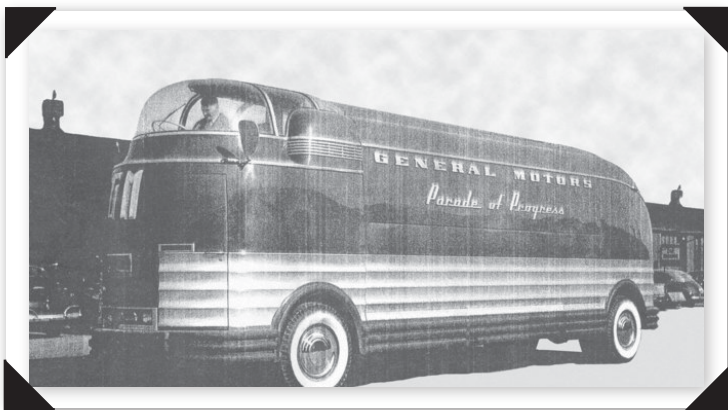
BY ARLEY ENGEL

In the fall of 1954 my neighbors Chuck Anderson, Leonard Benish, and I all got jobs at Belle City Malleable Iron Company at Racine, Wisconsin. Due to the fact that we were recently out of High School, none of us had a reliable car, to make it to Racine so we hooked up with Raymond "RED" Johnson for a ride to the big city. I think I was the youngest not quite 19 yet. I had signed up with three different branches of the service but none of them were interested in a young man with a two fingers and part of my thumb missing.

We all got settled in at Bell City Malleable Iron, then the next day we found an upstairs apartment with cooking facilities in the basement. We were about 3 blocks from where we worked. We all adjusted to the big city life quite well. Come the weekend we either went to the fishing piers or the pool hall. None of us were really good at either fishing or pool. After a couple of weeks I had a down payment for a 1950 Chevrolet convertible. We used it to run around and chase the local skirts, but we must have been lonely for the hometown girls, as we headed back to Chippewa Falls every other weekend. Of course we brought our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

GM
Futurliner



CALENDAR

November 15

CCHS Board Meeting, 9:15 a.m.

November 15

Area History Center Birthday
Lunch, Noon

December 6

Chippewa Falls History Coalition
Meeting, 1 p.m.

December 13

CCHS Board Meeting, 9:15 a.m.

December 13

Area History Center Birthday
Lunch, Noon

December 20

Area History Center Closed for
Christmas Holiday

December 27

Area History Center Closed for
New Years Holiday

January 17, 2012

- CCHS Board Meeting, 9:15 a.m.
- Historic Marker Committee Meeting, 10:30 am
- Area History Center Birthday Lunch, Noon
- The Past Passed Here Meeting, 1:30 pm

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

Dream Cars continued from cover

laundry home for our mothers to do for us. If I did not say it “Thanks Mom for doing all my dirty work.”

Back to “The Dream Cars.” On one of the weekends that we stayed in Racine, we had read about something called the GM Parade of Progress show. This was to be a big deal and it was to be held in Milwaukee. It was a free show, plus it had futuristic new cars. Something a young man just had to see. The show was scheduled to start on September 8th at Juneau Park. So that weekend Chuck, Leonard, and I went to see the Parade of Progress. This show was massive with 12 of the restyled Futurliner’s on display. These things were massive for the time. They had dual wheels front and rear with white side wall tires. Very fancy for a young milk can hauler to see.

I have looked up the specks, they were 33 feet long, 8 feet wide, with a 248 inch wheel-base. The engines were 302 GMC truck with a 4-speed Hydramatic coupled to a 3-speed power take off transmission, with a 2-speed manual gear box at the rear end making for a choice of up to 24 speeds forward. These units are 11 feet 4 inches high and they had a 90 gallon gas tank. It kind of reminded me of a truck that I hauled milk with for Ed Wikan. We called it the Connorsville Express. It having a 3-cylinder GM diesel engine with a 5-speed manual transmission and a three speed browning transmission making for 15 speeds forward, a unique milk truck that held 104 cans on the floor, plus many more on the upper decks.

The Parade of Progress contained 26 exhibits for us to enjoy. It took 44 vehicles to move the show from place to place, including 10 tractor trailers, 4 trucks, 18 passenger cars plus the 12 Futurliners. This combination was sometimes called a scientific circus. The best selling point was that it was free. Some of the displays were Power for the Air Age, Power Steering, All American Soap Box Derby, Automatic Transmissions, Miracles of Heat and Cold, World of Science, High Compression, Opportunity for Youth, Energy and Man, Power for the Nation’s Lifelines and Versatile Metal Powder.

These display’s brought plenty of wonderment to our minds. The Futurliners had 16-foot side panels that folded up and out to make a stage and a roof, making a great spot for the lecturers to stand and tell of the products on display. The roof extended 6 or 8 feet above the top with lights that lit the surrounding area, plus they had their own public address system. Some of the stories that former Paraders tell of leaving the hotel at 6 am and going to the show grounds in coveralls to wax the floors, then take a stick with a nail on the end to pick up papers around the grounds. It is said that over 30 universities had graduates that worked with the Paraders, doing everything from setting up all the displays upon arrival, then, dressing to become the uniformed lecturers on the exhibits. At the conclusion of the 2-4 day visit they had to tear down pack up and head to the next town.

They had their own Detroit Diesel Generator to supply the power for all the displays, in fact it was one of the displays. There was a stage show presented in the Aerodome. This was a tent type building 158 feet long by 80 feet wide made with aluminum girders



1960 Corvair



FEATURED ARTIFACT

which after being set up, a tent type structure was pulled up under the frame work and secured to it. This structure was 28 feet tall inside. Interior lights were then added with a large movie screen on the stage end. Sounds like a lot of work.

These 12 Futurliners were only used from May 12, 1953 until the closing of the shows on July 17, 1956 when they returned to Detroit, Michigan. The Futurliners were eventually sold or given away.

Some of the Dream cars that were on display included the 1955 Chevrolet Nomad Wagon, and Bel Air Convertible, Buick Wildcat III, Pontiac Strato-Star, Oldsmobile 88 Delta, and the GMC L'Universelle Truck.

I picked up some information on the new Chevrolet V-8 and it must have made an impression on me as I later purchased a 1955 Bel Air Sport Coupe, which had been a demonstrator model from Coffin & Schaff Chevrolet in Augusta. Other than my own dream car the only other one that I later was really impressed with and had a chance to ride in was Al Bean's 1957 Chevrolet Corvette with a removable hardtop, this was a very speedy model, but its ride left much to be desired.

I was employed at Ideal Chevrolet in 1958. In late September of 1959 the new 1960 Corvairs like in the above photo arrived by railcars. As I remember there were 7 cars per railcar. The outside temperature was around 80 degrees. Floyd Metzenbauer, Don Douglas and I were recruited to remove the Corvairs from the rail car which was located at the freight depot on River Street. Not knowing what to expect we took the company wrecker and a 5-ton floor jack to the site. After opening the center doors of the rail car we found the center car was chained to the floor. We carefully detached it from the chains. We cautiously maneuvered the car around with the floor jack until it got into a position where we could start it up and back it out onto the ramp of the freight depot.

It was our first experience with the operation of the new Corvair, quite an exciting time. Things went down hill from this point. The temperature got hotter, as the inside of the rail car had no air circulation. The depot agent told us we could not open the doors on the opposite side. Our next step was to figure how to operate the chain hoists that were attached to sections of the floor of the rail car that allowed the Corvairs to be raised to a 90 degree angle, thus making room for the other six vehicles by nearly standing them on end. This did not work out well with carbureted Corvairs. We had trouble getting the next 2 started after getting them lowered to the floor. I think Floyd took a dislike to them at this time. We had gone to the freight depot after our noon lunch and we did not finish removing the last car until after 6 o'clock that evening.

It was hot and very tedious work, they all had to be let down by a hand crank located in the wall of rail car. As short as the Corvairs were, we still had to maneuver them around with the floor jack, being extra careful as there are only a few areas under the car that we were allowed to use the jack on. We did not want to have to do body work on these brand new cars! *That's all for now from Engel's Little House on the Wheaton Prairie.* 🍷

Books and Bottles

Marv and Teri Stahr Opsahl, owners of the Picket Fence, donated over 50 books mostly related to either local or Wisconsin History. These books include the following titles: The Landlooker by William Steuber, The Lumberjack Frontier by Walker D. Wyman, The Voyageur by Grace Lee Nute and The Making of Wisconsin by Smith and Callahan. This last book was actually published by The Eau Claire Book and Stationery Company in Eau Claire. They also donated several copies of St. Anthony's Parish of Drywood 1886-1986 and Little Drywood School District #2 Cadott Wisconsin 1892-1992, with the intent that we sell them to earn money for the Historical Society. Marv and Teri had intended to close their business but instead have reopened it, under new management (Marge Hebbing), beginning November 2nd. Stop in and check out their new look and their new selection of antiques along with other surprises.

When Rob Mattison from Community Television was filming at the Historical Society he noticed that one of our displays featured beer bottles from a brewery that will go unmentioned. Rob asked why we weren't using bottles from Leinenkugel's and we explained we certainly would've preferred to display their bottles but that they were a pretty precious commodity around here and no one had ever donated any to us. Well it wasn't long before Rob came back to the Historical Society. This time instead of cameras he brought five of those precious, antique Leinenkugel bottles. Rob donated them to us in honor of his father, Darrel "Matt" Mattison. 🍷



Marge Hebring



A Message From Your President

Hall of Fame Members

2009

DOLORES BEAUDETTE
EUGENE HARM
WINIFRED GLASS JENSEN
JOE JOAS
MARV NAUMAN
BETTY PLOMBON

2010

JIM SCHUMACHER
LUCYANN LECLEIR
ARLEY ENGEL

2011

LALIE BOOS
PAT AHNEMAN
DON BICHNER

*Send your nominations for the
Hall of Fame to Dave Gordon at the
Chippewa County Historical Society
123 Allen Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729*

How about those Packers? They have now won eight games in a row. Fall colors are about done and the temperatures are colder so the holidays must be just around the corner. Things are moving along at the History Center.

We held our semi-annual membership meeting and potluck at Irvine Park in September. Marge Hebring, a board member, gave an interesting presentation on her Cadott Ancestors. Elections were held and the following people were elected:

- Officers - Jim Schuh - Vice President (2013), Mary McKenna – Secretary (2013)
- Directors - Jim Campbell (2012), Steve Rasmus (2014), Skip August (2014), Arley Engel (2014)

The Chippewa County Historical Society along with three other members of the Chippewa History Coalition and The Past Passed Here have gone together to purchase ads on the back cover of the Chippewa County 2012 Activities & Attractions Guide.

Thanks to Jim & Nancy Schuh, Skip August, Arley Engel and Jeff Pritchard we had a great display at the Fairgrounds during October Fest. The new model of the sawmill and the new pictures of the interior of the mill were featured along with artifacts of lumbering era. The Society also had a display at the Solstice on Grand Art Faire. This is a great opportunity to talk to people about the Society and our goal to save the rich history of our area.

I had the opportunity to attend two interesting meetings; First was the 25th anniversary of the Cadott Historical Society luncheon. I had the opportunity to tell folks what we have been up to and I participated in a discussion on how to involve younger folks in our historical societies. The second was the “The Past in Perspective” Conference in Stevens Point. I attended a very informative seminar “Quality Exhibits for the Small Museum”.

The Board of Directors established the Hall of Fame several years ago. Annually in the November newsletter the membership are given an opportunity to nominate people for induction into the Hall of Fame. The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to recognize the members, officers and directors who have made significant contribution the Chippewa County Historical Society.

Qualifications include but are not limited to:

- Served as an officer or director for at least one full term
- Contributed major artifacts, books or manuscripts to the Society’s collection
- Donated a significant amount of volunteer time to the Society and/or its collection.
- Made a large monetary donation to advance the Society’s mission
- Had a significant impact on the Society.

Please submit your nominations by December 31, 2011.

Looking for something to spice up your life. Volunteering at the History Center is just what you need. I look forward to seeing you any Tuesday at the History Center. *Dave*



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Spring Brook Footbridge in Irvine Park

Community volunteer, Don Bichner, stands on the replica of an early 1900s bridge that he wanted constructed as a part of a Nature Trail project in Irvine Park. Don also headed the coordination of the trail, which features about 50 species of trees that are native to Wisconsin. Other bridge project volunteers include Byron Bobb, Rich Erickson, Bill Kroll, Paul Nicolai, Leith Sault, Jr. and Dick Turner. The new bridge is behind the Irvine Park Hollow picnic pavilion parking lot that is located across the driveway from the civil war cannons displayed in Irvine Park. The bridge, which took a year to complete, also connects the lower park to the steps leading to Flag Hill. Funding for project supplies came from the Parks Department with a reduced price for treated lumber from Northern Crossarm Co., Inc. Pictured below is the CCHS newest Historic Marker. 🍂

Photo by Jim Schuh

Committees in sync!



Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

❖ Collection & Artifacts:

* Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel,
Lucyann LeCleur, Terri Stahr,

Photography Sub Committee:

*Lucyann LeCleur, Donna Bourget,
Jeff Pritchard

❖ Building & Grounds:

*Steve Rasmus

Space Utilization Sub Committee

*Steve Rasmus

❖ Education:

*Catherine Lea, Evalyn Frasch,
Ann Gordon, Rosemary Broeren,
Marge Hebbing

Docent Subcommittee:

Lalie Boos, Pat Ahneman

❖ Exhibits:

* Arley Engel, Nancy Schuh,
Lucyann LeCleur

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

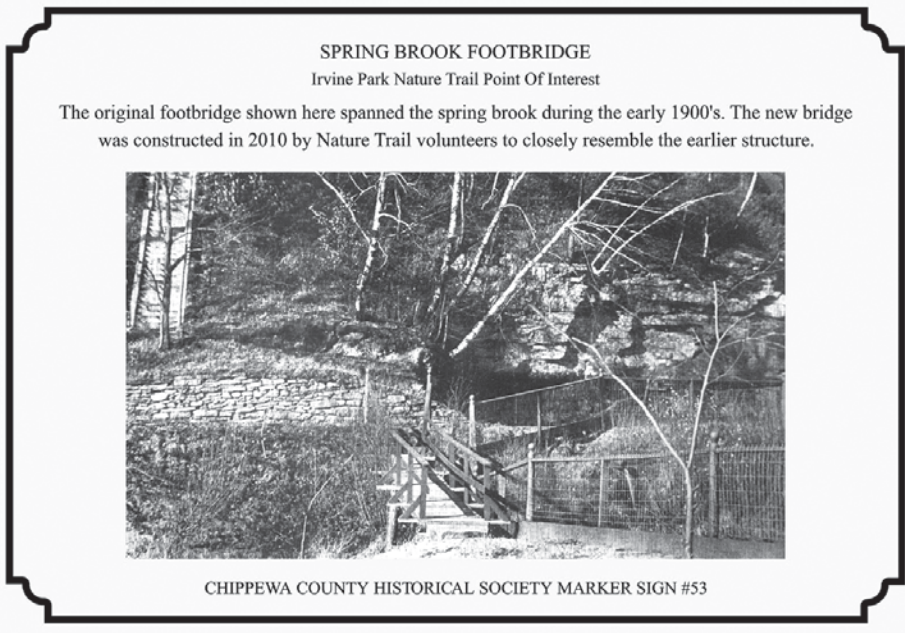
❖ Publicity:

*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



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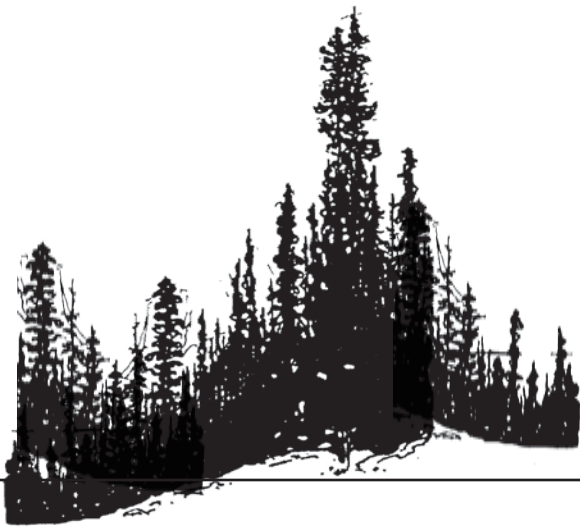
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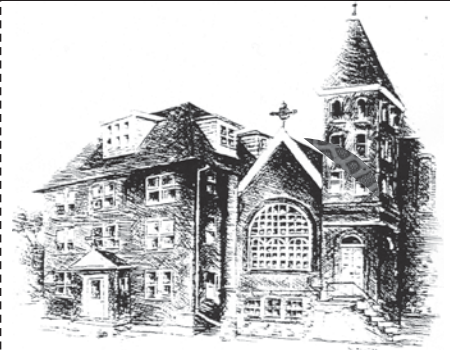
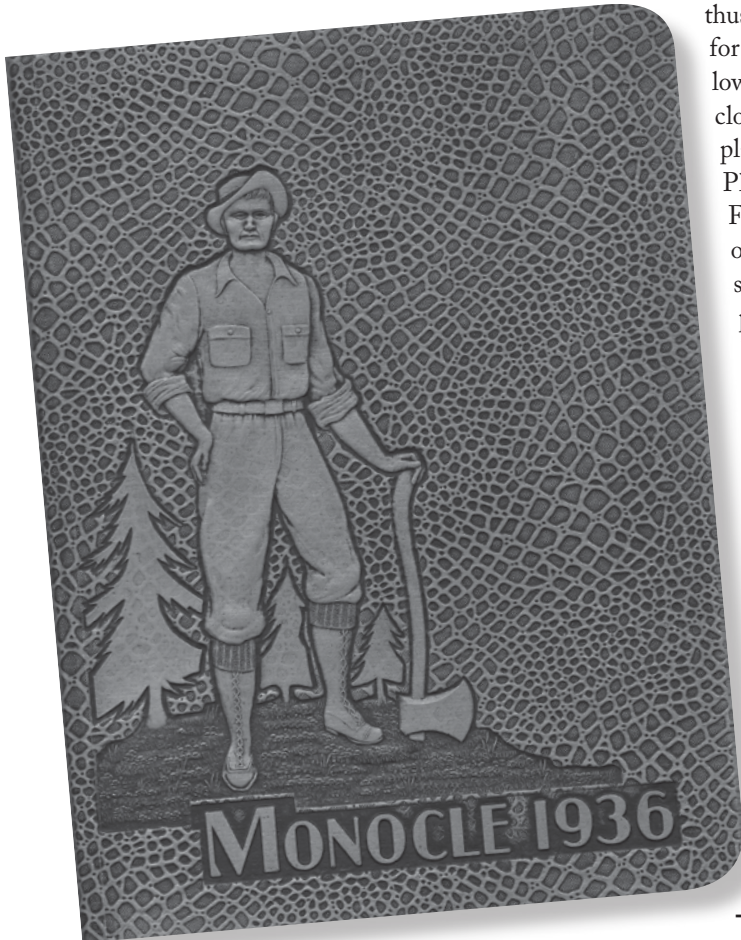
Celebrating Our Anniversaries

BY NANCY SCHUH

Chippewa Falls is 175 years old this year. In 1936 (75 years ago) My Dad was a freshman at the Chippewa Falls Senior High School. Jim and I were looking at his yearbook (the Monocle) and realized it was different from other yearbooks because 1936 was the hundredth anniversary of the founding of our city and to acknowledge this Centennial they included photos from Chippewa Falls' past. The caption for a photo of the Old Mill points out that the Mill, for three quarters of a century, served as the very core of the city. Established first in 1836 by Jean Brunet it was in operation for 75 years.

1936 was also significant because it was the first year that the High School played their home football games at night. The Monocle said that five of the Cardinal's contests were played under the newly installed lights. These lights were placed so that they illuminated

the entire field of play, thus making it possible for the spectators to follow the game as closely as if it were played in the daytime. Playing the games on Friday night instead of on Saturday afternoon served a twofold purpose. It enabled businessmen whose time was taken on Saturdays to attend the games and also drew the sport fans who either attended college games or listened to them over the radio on Saturday afternoons. The plan proved very successful from both an attendance and a financial standpoint.



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COUNTY NEWS

Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVE JANKOSKI, REPORTER

The Stanley Area Historical Society completed another successful year, attracting over 1,000 visitors. We again staffed the museum from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays in June, July and August and Sundays during September. We are most proud to report that all the volunteers showed up for their scheduled times. We only had one special program this year, and those attending found that presentation very informative. Bob Seidl, a Stanley-Boyd High School teacher, discussed his great grandfather's participation in the Civil War. We again hosted a number of individual Class Reunions and also had visitors during the Annual Stanley-Boyd All-School Reunion.

The most exciting news is that in October we purchased the property located directly south of our museum. This property has been vacant and in disrepair for more than a year. Gratefully the owner accepted our offer, a benefactor contributed the entire purchase price and has challenged our membership to raise the \$6,000 that it will take to raze the house and remove all the trees/bushes from the property. We have no immediate plans for the property other than perhaps planting it with prairie flowers and grass. Also in October we had the Landscaping Class from Stanley Boyd High School do considerable landscaping work around the north museum building. In late 2010, we had done some water proofing of the walls in the lower level of that building and had to remove some old shrubbery in order to accomplish the project. We now have some nice balance to the entire front of the museum and it looks great.

Our winter volunteers have returned and are already working on various projects. We want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. ❁



Jeff Pritchard

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE

MARY MCKENNA

Jeff Pritchard

This issue's volunteer is one of our younger members who became actively involved about four years ago. Jeff is a Kenosha native born in 1968. He is the son of Margaret and John Pritchard and has an older brother, Wayne. His family moved to Chippewa Falls in 1972 and he attended schools in the Chippewa area: Stillson grade school, Chippewa Falls Middle School and Chippewa Falls Senior High school.

Looking back, Jeff remembers his first job working as a stock boy at Gordy's IGA in Chippewa Falls. As a senior in high school he was a member of the Russian Club and part of the first group to travel to the Soviet Union for two weeks. The highlight of that tour was visiting the Winter Palace in Leningrad where the Russian Revolution had first started in 1917. Due to his traveling on a train from Moscow to Leningrad, he missed his own high school graduation. This trip took place four months after the nuclear power plant accident at Chernobyl.

Jeff's volunteer activities at the Area History Center include photographing the artifacts, helping with the collections records and he is a docent. He frequently helps some of us in the office with computer problems as well as giving a hand wherever needed. Many of Jeff's other tasks at the center require a strong back. He's a member of the planning committee for the Historical Society's historical re-enactment, "The Past Passed Here" event held every spring. He does lots of the heavy work, setting up tents and exhibits and works in the History Centers tent sharing lumbering era facts and explaining things to visitors and hundreds of fourth grade inquisitive students who come each year asking endless questions. Jeff has also helped with the "sawing competition". You can count on him to fill in wherever help is needed.

In addition to his involvement with the History Center, Jeff is an active volunteer throughout the community. He assists at the Salvation Army in electronics, has put in countless hours helping with the "Renaissance Faire", has been an actor and puppeteer for the "Village of Terror", worked for the Main Street Association for over ten years, volunteers in various capacities at the Hyde Center, and every year he's a worker at Ocktoberfest held at the Northern Wisconsin State Fair grounds.

When time permits, his hobby is photography—especially capturing photos of downtown Chippewa Falls and its historic buildings. He became involved in the History Center when he happened to stop by to inquire about "The Past Passed Here" which was formerly coordinated by the Main Street Association.

Jeff is one hard-working individual who most time WALKS to and from his apartment to each volunteer location, accumulating many miles on foot. He is a valuable asset to our organization and we appreciate his willingness to photograph the artifacts and for giving great informational tours. Thank you Jeff! ❁

CHIPPEWA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2012-2014

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

✧ **President**

Dave Gordon, 6854 182nd St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-2647 (2013)

✧ **Vice President**

Jim Schuh, 5432 178th St.,
Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (2014)

✧ **Recording Secretary &
Corresponding Secretary**

Mary McKenna, 217 W. Elm St.,
Chippewa Falls 720-9635 (2013)

✧ **Treasurer**

Kathryn Forsgren, 18498 122nd Ave.,
Jim Falls 382-5511 (2012)

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✧ Lucyann LeCleir, 201 S. Rural St.,
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✧ Skip August, 18416 54th Ave,
Chippewa Falls 723-8493 (2014)

✧ Steve Rasmus, 936 N. Bridge St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-4339 (2014)

✧ Wayne Meyer, 622 S. 8th St.,
Cornell 239-6239 (2012)

✧ Nancy Schuh, 5432 178th St.,
Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (2012)

✧ Teri Stahr, 7493 County Hwy K,
Chippewa Falls 723-9007 (2013)

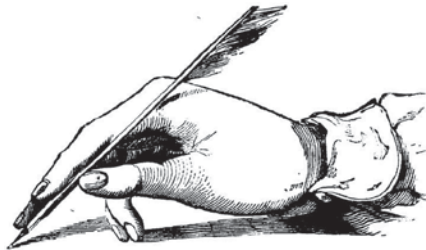
✧ Arley Engel, 5294 90th St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-5124 (2014)

✧ Rosemary Kilbridge, 18294 75th Ave.,
Chippewa Falls 723-3995 (2012)

✧ Marge Hebbring, 7361 203rd St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-5278 (2013)

✧ Jim Campbell, 110 Chippewa St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-5495 (2012)

Donations

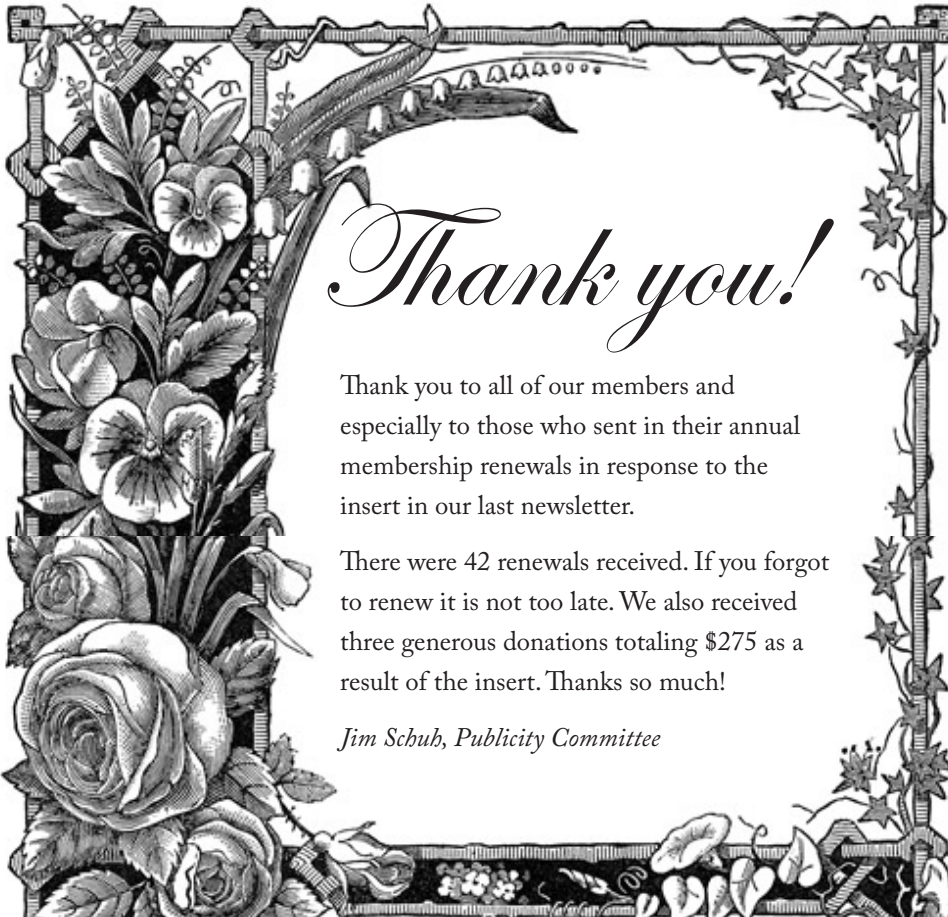


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Donald E. Werner	Arley & June Engel

Other Donations:

Visitors	\$281.36
Xcel Energy.....	200.00
Rotary The Past Passed Here.....	100.00
Extra Donations	345.00
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Thank you!

Thank you to all of our members and especially to those who sent in their annual membership renewals in response to the insert in our last newsletter.

There were 42 renewals received. If you forgot to renew it is not too late. We also received three generous donations totaling \$275 as a result of the insert. Thanks so much!

Jim Schuh, Publicity Committee

Chippewa County Historical Society

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