

THE CHRONICLES

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 JANUARY 2009

103 W. JEFFERSON ST., P. O. BOX 969, OCONOMOWOC, WI 53066

Oconomowoc Area Historical Society & Museum

Quarterly Membership Meeting

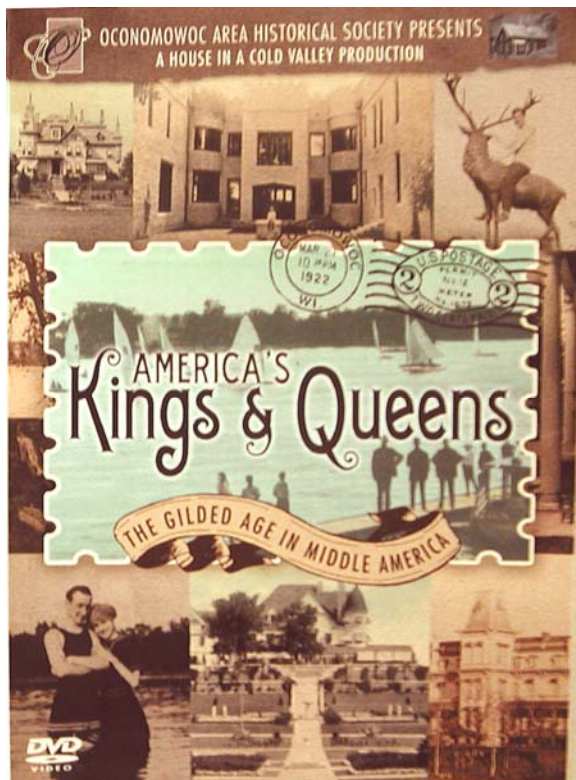
at Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital Conference Room

Saturday, January 31, 2009

9:30 am Coffee Hour; 10:00 am Membership Meeting; Program to follow

Postals of the Past

The January program will be a postcard tour of the Pine and Beaver Lake area hosted by Don Wiemer. Learn who these people were and what was their connection to the Milwaukee business community. Travel across Hwy. 83 to the east and view the resorts that made Beaver Lake famous as a resort area. There will also be a postal tour of the communities surrounding Pine and Beaver Lake. We will tour Stone Bank, Nashotah, Hartland and North Lake during the early 1900's. Many new postcards have been added since the original show in 2005. This one hour program will be interesting and fun. So be our guest on January 31, and hope to see you then.



America's Kings and Queens The Gilded Age in Middle America

by Terry Kaldhusdal

The DVD gives a historical perspective of a not so modest Oconomowoc community of great wealth from the late 1800's to early 1900's. Local personalities featured in the video include the Peck, Valentine, Kohl, Townsend, Pabst, Bullen, Armour, Dupee, Binzel and Beggs families. They were vacationing idle rich, entrepreneurs, and profiteers. It is an excellent must see video of early Oconomowoc.

This new 1 hour and 25 minute DVD is the **2009 fundraiser** for the museum. The donation requested for the DVD will be \$125.00. Additional DVD's can be purchased at the same time for \$75.00 each (limit 2).

Accolades from OAHS & M to Terry Kaldhusdal for another excellent production.



From the President

On December 5th, 2008 another chapter of Oconomowoc history was written when the new auditorium added to our high school held its first public performance of the "Christmas Carol", performed by our high school students.

Oconomowoc's history in the performing arts dates back to the Crystal Theater at the turn of the century, late 1890's to the early 1900's. This small theater was located in the now Herro, Chapman, & Herro law office, on Milwaukee Street.

Following the Crystal Theater, was the Coach House Theater which was started by Mrs. Patrick Valentine on the Valentine estate on Oconomowoc Lake. It was Mrs. Patrick Valentine who inspired Thoda Cocroft of Chicago and Mildred McDonald of Milwaukee to assemble professional casts and to plan a six week season. The old sleds, tallyhos, and automobiles were moved out of the stable and a stage 30 feet wide and 15 feet deep was constructed. The stables that housed the Armour stock were converted to dressing rooms, and the rooms upstairs in the stable were living quarters for the cast.

In the 1940's the new auditorium was constructed on the then high school, and used by the Port Players for many years, and has served our communities until the middle school was shut down this fall. The theater continues here in Oconomowoc, and who knows what the next chapter will bring.

Don Wiemer, President
Oconomowoc Area Historical Society and Museum

From the Administrator

In 2007 a great effort was made to rejuvenate the volunteer base at the museum. There was research and study through focus groups and past history to identify the needs of the Historical Society to further its mission. In 2008 several committees wrote policies to identify committee responsibilities, to write a comprehensive collections policy, to create a new logo and to refine the mission statement. All with the purpose of becoming more visible in the community and to promote our interest in education and outreach. We thank Terry Ladwig for leading these committees.

Considerable effort has been made to publicize our activities in the newspapers and through the community. Several exhibits have been placed in the windows of the downtown area as well as in the library. Thank you to all that participated. The society needs volunteers to lead us in publicity and marketing. If you have this talent and some time please join us!



Thank you Ruth Behling!

Thank you so much Ruth Behling for 30 years of service as our newsletter editor. Ruth was honored at our July quarterly meeting and presented with a gift certificate from Scharnell's Deli and Catering.

Hilton Neal was named "2008 Citizen of the Year" at a banquet to be sponsored by the Oconomowoc Area Chamber of Commerce on October 22.

Congratulations Hilton on this well deserved honor.

Audit Report

Donna Schlender from Accounting Services Unlimited recently completed an audit of the OAHS&M pro bono. We were congratulated on the excellent condition of our financial records, including our Form 990; our committee structure; and clear and concise job descriptions – all of which led her to rank the Society #1 among community organizations she has audited.

Nancy Lins, Administrator

2009 Board of Directors

Don Wiemer, *President*
Sue Bickler, *Vice President*
Ed Johnson, *Co-Treasurer*
Hilton Neal, *Co-Treasurer*
Margie Krauski, *Secretary*
Ralph Garcia, *Director*
Fran Durkin, *Director*
Mary Blaska, *Director*
John Easton, *Director*

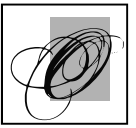
Shirley Hinds, *Director*
Barbara Hirsch, *Director*
Duane Hoffmann, *Director*
Donna Schlender, *Director*
Lois Luebke, *Director*
Bill Marris, *Director*
Kevin Passon, *Director*
Nancy Lins, *Director & Administrator*

Resignations

Terry Ladwig, Vice President, has submitted her resignation effective November 1, 2008. We thank Terry for her service on several committees, the logo and fundraiser to seed the endowment fund.

Chuck Herro has submitted his resignation from the board after many years of service. But you will not notice because he remains active in many areas of museum activities as you will note he is one of the "sources" in the new DVD.

Don Christianson has retired from the board as an appointed member from the Golden K. Kiwanis.



There's always something old and exciting in Exhibits!

Since the last Oconomowoc Area Historical Society and Museum newsletter was published, the museum's Exhibits Committee has both completed and begun preparations for a number of new and exciting exhibits. Regularly scheduled monthly meetings and several "work" meetings are on-going as we look forward to the museum's Spring '09 reopening.

We hope OAHS&M members have viewed the "**Call to Arms**" Exhibit and the **Draper Hall Exhibit**, both located on the south (back) wall.

Almost finished is the "Horse Exhibit" across from the Gazebo on the main floor. Historic bridles, reins, saddles and other equine paraphernalia are on the familiar horse itself and displayed behind on the "tack room" walls, along with appropriate illustrations and soon-to-be completed detailed history of the importance of the horse in all phases of past and present Midwest living.

Still in the planning are various artifacts from archery and bowling to sailing, skating, skiing and beyond which will be housed all along the west wall. Included will be specifics on Oconomowoc's connection to the Olympics. There will also be an exhibit on Chiropractic and the history of the procedure and the training needed to practice this ancient profession.

So, have we aroused your curiosity?

THING SPRING!

Shirley Hinds, Chair

Dorothy Smith Exhibit THANK YOU TO LEE HAYDEN

The Dorothy Smith watercolor exhibit located in the museum's gazebo was orchestrated by **Lee Hayden**, a board member of the Oconomowoc Art Festival, and it took a tremendous amount of time. Lee was given a written letter of appreciation, a one year Society membership and a "Doorways of Oconomowoc" poster. Thank you Lee.

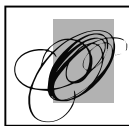


Have you seen "The Age of Grand Victorian Lake Hotels: Draper Hall Exhibit"; featuring artifacts from the Gifford Resort, Majestic Hotel, Springbank, Townsend House and the Woodlands



Can you find family or friends in the "Call to Arms" Exhibit?

While you shopped in Downtown Oconomowoc we hope you saw our window display of antique toys in a Christmas setting. The historical society has participated in activities with the downtown businesses in 2008 to help promote the business district which includes the museum and to give us more visibility. In January we had an 1890's suit jacket and hat on exhibit in Beverly Designs window. We thank the merchants for offering the opportunity to exhibit in the store windows.



The OAH&M Education Committee continues in its outreach efforts to local school groups.

Fourth Grade students have a whole new way to learn Oconomowoc history now.



The La Belle Cemetery Tour

As a new initiative, the fourth grade teachers at Summit Elementary School requested that the museum provide an afternoon student tour of La Belle Cemetery on May 13, 2008 with a focus on nine historical individuals important to the early history of our community. We were delighted to do so.

With the support of nine tour guides, we shared the lives of **Rockwell, Lorleberg and Scherffius, Sheldon, Small, Kohl, Notbohm, Valentine, Munger, and Wegener.**

Our nine guides helped the boys and girls make comparisons between the symbols found on old and new gravestones. Many of our guides shared with us how much they themselves learned about these nine significant people in our community's history as well as what they learned about La Belle Cemetery itself, a resting place filled with so much history. A number have indicated that if we do this tour again next year in the fall, they *definitely* want to be involved.

Group Tours



Three of our committee members provided tours of the museum for students from St. Paul's, St. Matthew's, and Greenland Elementary.

Museum tours were provided for a group of French foreign exchange students visiting Oconomowoc High School and a group of Red Hat Ladies.

Presentations were also provided at Shorehaven Towers and Lake Terrace Clubhouse.

We're Taking it on the Road... The Traveling Trunk Show

Our summer project has been the development of a "traveling trunk show" focusing on Irish, Norwegian, Welsh and German immigration in the lake country area.

This project is intended to supplement a unit of study with fourth graders in local public schools. Fourth grade is the grade with a primary focus on Wisconsin history and geography. Our hope is that the materials will be either borrowed by teachers for use in their classrooms or an Education Committee member could be invited to visit the classroom to share the lessons.

If any historical society members have pictures of family who emigrated (1840-1920) or stories that have been passed down, we would *welcome* a contact.

You can help in Community Outreach!

Our committee mission is to "research, develop and implement outreach programming." We will continue to work to meet that ambitious goal. We welcome interested individuals who would like to become involved with our projects. Participating in even one activity would certainly be encouraged. Contact Barb Hirsch (maggiemay0008@voyager.net – 966-2883) or Barb Elwood-Goetsch (barbeg@msn.com – 567-4256) for further information. We'd be delighted to share how you can become involved.

Barb Hirsch, *Education Committee Chairperson*

Thank you.

We want to take this opportunity to say "Thank you" to all those individuals who volunteer their time and talent to help with group tours. It's not always easy to deal with often close to seventy children in an enclosed space!! Our volunteer guides are just great, and we appreciate their willingness to share our community history with large groups of children. Special thanks to Marilyn Clark and Barb Elwood-Goetsch for their extraordinary generosity of time, energy and good humor.



A Branch of the Tree in Oconomowoc: Capt. Thomas L. Parker's Home on Oconomowoc Lake

November 6, 1874 - The Oconomowoc Local reported "Capt. Parker's residence on Oconomowoc Lake is 44 x 88 feet, 3 stories high, with a veranda extending the entire length. The inside work will be finished entirely by black walnut and white ash; outside will be veneered with brick. Cost estimated at \$30,000. No expense will be spared. The whole building will be heated by steam and lighted by gas."

May 19, 1875 - The Oconomowoc Local - "Capt. Thomas L. Parker's residence is well advanced and will soon be completed. The material is of brick and the building is constructed with mammoth bay windows on the south side, two floors high, while a most charming vestibule 9 x 22 surmounts to the entrance and reaches to the top of the structure. There are 30 different rooms and apartments, all of which are supplied with hot and cold water, and most elegantly finished in stucco and ornamental ceiling work. The culinary department is most admirably arranged and being sufficient for any modern hotel. Steam is generated in the basement for the entire building, from a 15 horsepower boiler and everything in connection with the edifice is constructed in similar provision. On the third floor are two water tanks, with a capacity of 100 barrels each. Those reservoirs are filled by steam power, and in turn, serve the purpose designed

through the various apartments of this building.

The grounds are perfectly superb and command the grandest scenes of our locality. Enormous shade trees are being extensively introduced; numerous out buildings are in the interesting nature instituted, they are fairly in a way of producing similar scenes with fairyland. The investment in real estate, buildings and improvements together with furniture, etc. It will easily comprise of \$150,000. When finished it will be the finest private residence in the state."

September 21, 1877 - "Col. Parker is adding intensive improvement in a way of an extensive greenhouse, estimated to cost several thousand dollars. The new greenhouse takes 5000 panes of glass."

In later articles in the Oconomowoc Local Capt. Parker was known for his raising beautiful flowers, tropical plants, strawberries and one January 15, took a box of tomatoes to his friends in Chicago from his greenhouse. His flowers were always generous gifts at weddings, anniversaries and funeral.

In the next issue I will write about their elegant 25th Wedding anniversary.

Marcy Skerpcia

The Local History Committee meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 10:00 am. We invite members to join us. The committee will begin work on the history of the performing arts in Oconomowoc, in particular, developing a window display at the new performing arts center for February. For more information contact Dorothy St. Thomas at 567-6355.

Winter is great time to get cozy and read!

Curl up with a cup of hot cocoa and a book of Oconomowoc's past and enjoy stories of pioneers and families. Current book list: *Illustrious Oconomowoc*, *Town of Oconomowoc*, *Questers Guide to Historic Oconomowoc*, *The Letters of Lavinia Rockwell*, *Frugal George*, and *The Story of the Founder of Oconomowoc*.

Books can be purchased at Ben Franklin, Beverly Designs, Books & Co., Homestead Lighting, Judy's Greetings of Love, Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital Gift shop, Oconomowoc Public Library, Tobins, and the museum. However, the *Town of Oconomowoc* book can only be purchased at the museum and there are only a dozen remaining. Call the museum at 569-0740 for information on purchasing or email oahs-m@sbcglobal.net.

Also available is the color copy of Oconomowoc Historical Timeline, Doorways of Oconomowoc Poster and two of Terry Kaldhusdal DVD's on the history of Oconomowoc. Prices range from \$1.00 - \$25.00. DVD prices are more and vary. Our Oconomowoc Oldies Songbook and CD is now \$30.00.



Collections

The archival committee recorded 260 new accessions in 2008. Recent items include items representing local Olympians competing in speed-skating and track. Claire Greene donated 59 vintage dolls and clothing.

Oconomowoc area family photos, artifacts and stories are desired.

Family artifacts from Oconomowoc Area – in every collection there is an abundance of one thing and few of another. We could use items that are pre-1950 more toys, games, sports items and sport uniforms, theater, entertainment/special event items, shoes, clothing and family photos. Items can be brought in during the winter on Tuesday and Thursday 10 am – 4 pm or call to arrange. Our policy is to select items from a donation that would enhance our collection and should we decline to keep an item it will be returned to the owner.

The museum also had the pleasure to host an intern, **Mai Vang**, an Archeology and Museum Studies graduate student from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

Mai set up and lead volunteers in an inventory of 400 records in the archival area and performed an assessment of photos in the museum collection.

We are still in the process of creating a complete inventory of the museum. Please think of us if you have some extra time. The volunteers enjoy the work, it is easy and it sure helps us! We only work 3 hours at the most. You can work one day or as many as you wish. Have a friend – bring them along!

Marjorie Day, Chair

Winter season – yes the museum is closed to open visitation but there is a lot of activity! We can use volunteers for exhibit construction, artifact recording, data entry, cleaning, scanning photos and documents, clipping news articles, creating photo albums and on and on. New Members consider joining our volunteer team. Give us a call at the museum, 569-0740, if you have a few hours to volunteer.

Docents & Greeters



Ernie and Phyllis Nicollette volunteer as docents.

Ernie and Phyllis have been docents for many years and were instrumental in development and construction of the museum exhibits in the mid 1990's. Ernie designed and with many volunteers constructed the Styrofoam and paper mache façade of the Wilkinson Clinic exhibit. His artistic talents were used in many other exhibits and areas through the years. Our dedicated docents are present whenever the museum is open to the public and for special programs. They have a wealth of knowledge that they are eager to share.

Our latest concept has been the Greeter. The greeter helps to fill in when we have a busy visiting day or when we need to support a single docent on a visiting day. There is always two or more volunteers on a day that the museum is open to the public.

Consider becoming a greeter.

All you need is a couple hours to volunteer once or twice a month, a welcoming personality, and a smile. Greeters are the first contact a visitor has with the museum. Volunteer with a friend or family member.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Archives / Collections	Marjorie Day
Education	Barb Hirsch
Exhibits	Shirley Hinds
Local History	Dorothy St. Thomas
Membership	Barb Elwood-Goetsch
Marketing & Publicity	Ralph Garcia
Nominating	TBD
Property & Maintenance	Hilton Neal

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Welcome New Members!

The following people have joined our society since the spring newsletter was published:

Jennifer Berger
Ralph & Paula Garcia
Sharon McGee
Fern Meyer
Don & Connie Moore
Jeaneane Tuttle

Our membership rolls show a total of 356 memberships with a breakdown of 143 single memberships, 106(213) couples' memberships, and 1 student membership. There are also 11 organization/business/municipality memberships, 40 free memberships and 32 delinquent memberships. All numbers are lower due to culling of the list in the manner decided upon at the September 8, 2008 meeting. The numbers are likely to decline further in some categories as the culling process continues.

2008-2009 Membership Dues

The society's fiscal year closed at the end of October and so our memberships for the new 2008-2009 year were due at the same time.

If you have not sent your dues in, there is a membership form on the last page of the newsletter; just fill it out and send it along with your check. We will be accepting dues on Saturday, January 31, at the quarterly meeting and *Postals of the Past* program at the Oconomowoc Hospital.

Birthdays and Special Days

Have you thought of giving a membership to the museum or to buy a book for that special day of celebration. This is a gift that will last the year and give hours of entertainment.

Barb Elwood-Goetsch, Chair

FINANCIAL COMMITTEE



From a budget standpoint, fiscal 2008 has turned out to be a good year. A year ago we budgeted for a net loss of \$12,725 primarily because we would be paying over \$6000 for the DVD production. We had received a grant from the Oconomowoc Area Foundation for this project, but the grant had been paid to us in a previous year. It was with a sense of relief that we ended up the year with a profit of \$3620, which was a very welcome situation.

From an accounting standpoint, the year had its pleasant surprises and disappointments. There were two main increases in receipts that bolstered our results. We had budgeted \$8000 in gifts but actually received \$17,850. The Roehl Foundation, a substantial contributor thru the years, gave us a gift of \$10,000. Also, Dick and Karen Bertrand made a gift of \$5,000. We really appreciate those gifts. In August former board member Terry Ladwig chaired a very successful Night at the Museum event, which netted \$10,290. This event was not a budgeted item, so the proceeds added to our bottom line. We have used the proceeds to set up an endowment fund, which we expect will grow over the years. In addition, the consulting fees we paid Nancy Lins, our administrator, were considerably under budget and interest earned was \$1200 more than budgeted.

On the disappointment side the net receipts from the ice cream social and the raffle were below budget. The main problem was that the venue for the ice cream social was at Fowler Park rather than at city beach because of construction work. We expect that receipts will increase in 2009 when we will return to city beach. The receipts from the annual fund campaign which featured the Oconomowoc songbook as an incentive were considerably below budget. There was little business support, which we hope to rectify in this year's campaign. Printing costs were well above budget because we had to reprint all of our stationery due to the name change and the new logo.

Without going into details about the 2009 budget, we have budgeted a zero sum budget, meaning that receipts and expenses balance out to zero. With your help and support from the business community and other sources, we expect to meet this budget.

Property and Maintenance

The Society was awarded an Oconomowoc Area Foundation grant of \$3,325 for a new asphalt driveway that was installed in October. The improved driveway will facilitate snow removal, increase aesthetics of the facility and permit us to move the dumpster to an unseen area behind the fence.

Hilton Neal, Chair



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OCONOMOWOC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 969, OCONOMOWOC, WI 53066

MUSEUM: 103 West Jefferson St.
262-569-0740 / oahs-m@sbcglobal.net
oconomowochistoricalociety.com

HOURS: Friday to Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 PM
Open early May through mid-December.
Other hours and tours by appointment only.

Dues for the fiscal year 2008-2009 were due November 1, 2008.
If you have a red dollar sign on your newsletter label, your membership is up for renewal.

OCONOMOWOC AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2008-2009 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

REGULAR
___ \$15 Individual
___ \$30 Couple

SENIOR
___ \$12 Individual
___ \$24 Couple

ORGANIZATIONAL
___ \$50 Non-voting
___ \$150 Voting

STUDENT
___ \$2 each

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____ New Membership Renewal

I am interested in helping in the following areas:

Please contact me with more information _____

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Entry | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction/Remodeling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum Docent | <input type="checkbox"/> Building Operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Mailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Long Range Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum Greeter | <input type="checkbox"/> Artifacts Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments Comm. | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local History Comm. | <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raising Comm. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Please make check payable to: **Oconomowoc Area Historical Society**
c/o Barbara Elwood-Goetsch, W808 Rockvale Rd., Oconomowoc, WI 53066

It is the mission of the Oconomowoc Area Historical Society and Museum to serve our many constituencies as a community resource and learning center, committed to historic preservation and research; and to inspire and encourage curiosity and passion for our historic treasures.