

THE CHRONICLES

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 1 January 2016

103 W. JEFFERSON ST., OCONOMOWOC WI 53066

Quarterly Membership Meeting of the Oconomowoc Area Historical Society
Program to be held at the Museum, 103 W. Jefferson Street

Saturday January 30, 2016

9:30 am Coffee & Conversation; 10:00 am Membership Meeting
With a special program to follow on



A Farm Winter

By Jerry Apps



Bestselling author, Jerry Apps, recalls winters growing up on a farm in central Wisconsin during the Great Depression and through World War II -- from warm family and holiday memories to the cold "thrill" of winter chores and ice fishing. This video presentation may be one of a series that will be scheduled in the future. Jerry Apps has written many books and produced videos featuring Wisconsin.

Thank you!

To all who responded positively to our Annual Donation Campaign. Your financial support is heartwarming and allows us to comfortably continue with our activities. We have also received special gifts from donors through their foundations or personal accounts. Reminder: We have a Legacy opportunity, also. We would be pleased to work with your family attorney or provide any assistance needed with the arranging of a Legacy Gift. For more information, please call Nancy at the office (262) 569-0740.

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ADMINISTRATOR

We are already off to a good start for the next season! In the planning is the celebration of our 25th year here at 103 W. Jefferson St. It is difficult to realize that the years have gone by so fast, and yet, looking at all that has been accomplished by a vast number of dedicated volunteers and staff, it makes sense.

In 2015, and especially by including November and October, we have had a stellar year! Our highest count of visitors ever! Thanks to all who have supported us. That can never be said enough, and we want you to know how much we appreciate everything people have done to make the Oconomowoc Area Historical Society and its museum a success!

Enjoy your winter season, and we will see you in the spring with new ideas, activities, and exhibits.

Nancy Lins, Museum Administrator

VISITORS FROM OFFENBURG, GERMANY

On Tuesday, October 20, 2015, twenty-seven high school students and two teachers from the Schiller Gymnasium in Offenburg, Germany spent part of the morning at the Oconomowoc Historical Society Museum. Oconomowoc High School and Schiller Gymnasium have been part of the German American Partnership Program since 1993. The program is sponsored by the German Foreign Office and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The exchange between the two schools takes place every other year. Offenburg is a city of 59,000 people located in southwestern Germany near the French border and surrounded by vineyards.

When in Germany, Oconomowoc students stay with Offenburg families, and when visiting in the United States, the German students stay with Oconomowoc families. This year's European students spent about two weeks in Oconomowoc after spending three exciting days in New York City. While here, they participated in high school life, went on day trips to places such as Madison and Green Bay, and were also involved in the volunteer project October Kinderfest which was held on Halloween afternoon along with the downtown's businesses' trick-or-treating. While here at the museum, they had fun comparing and contrasting German place names and those Wisconsin place names with German heritage. Who would ever have known that there is actually a Schnappsville, Wisconsin! The visitors also learned about Oconomowoc's early history and how that history compares to Germany's history. After a guided tour of the museum and a short Powerpoint Program highlighting "things to see" on a walking tour around Fowler Lake, they ate their packed lunches on the front steps before "taking that walk in Oconomowoc" and meeting the city's mayor. Our Education Committee thoroughly enjoyed the time spent with the German students. What a wonderful opportunity this program is for our high school students and their counterparts from Germany.



Jolayne Lindberg, Volunteer

YOUNG & OLDER – OLD & NEW



With the help of our wonderful volunteers, our museum welcomed numbers of student groups throughout 2015. We'd like to share the "stories" of two of them so that our Historical Society members have a better sense of just what we do when a museum field trip is requested by a teacher or scout leader.

Andrea Neumann's 4-year-old Kindergarten Class from St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran School visited the museum on September 14th. Her class has made the museum an early-in-the-school-year trip since 2011. The teacher asked us to design the experience focusing on the concepts of "OLD and NEW." For children this young, plans centered on hands-on activities, such as *gently* cranking our Victrola to listen to music, or making believe they're talking to a friend on our candlestick telephone, or dialing mom using a rotary phone (seems as if it weren't that long ago for many of us!). In our kitchen station, boys and girls learned what it would be like without electricity. An ice box and wood stove certainly made an impression on these young learners. In another activity, we asked children to compare and contrast objects -- twelve OLD artifacts with their NEW counterparts (e.g., a tennis shoe with an 1895 button shoe, an old Royal typewriter with a computer, a charcoal iron with an electric one). We gave each child the NEW article and challenged the little kindergartener to see if he or she could find the OLD artifact that matched. At the end of their visit, the children enjoyed playing the old game of "Drop the Handkerchief" outside the museum.



Planning for 4-year-olds concentrates on creating activities which cause them to be a physical part of their learning. Getting ready for a visit from high school teenagers is a bit different! Nick Schueller, an OHS Social Studies teacher, has partnered with some of our museum volunteers for the last three years in providing a museum/classroom experience to groups of the school's sophomores. This involves a visual tour of the museum so that all students can become familiar with our displays and exhibits. Based on interests and curiosity, sophomores are asked to then identify a topic about some aspect of Oconomowoc's history which they would like to research. The various topics are then shared with museum volunteers,

who get into "high gear" searching available material to support the various student-selected topics, and those students involved return to the museum for a second session to work through what has been provided. This year, a number of sophomores, after identifying their area of historical interest, used the Wisconsin 101 Project format -- a statewide, collaborative, public history project sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison in partnership with the Wisconsin Historical Society. This year, a member of the Project Board, as well as a UW-Madison graduate student, stopped to visit and observe, and there were also a number of community resource people invited who kindly provided additional ideas and support for the different identified topic areas. Depending on the quality of the final product, students could submit their work for potential inclusion on the Project website. How fortunate were our own OHS students to be exposed to this particular educational experience and perhaps even have their finished efforts published! (For additional information on this state initiative, google Wisconsin 101 Project.)

Here we have two different groups of learners, ages apart. Even though our museum is not one geared for school-age youngsters, our volunteers take what we have available, and, using our "teacher" skills, provide worthwhile learning activities to support classroom expectations.

We encourage anyone interested in being a student group volunteer, even if it's only one time a year, to contact Nancy Lins, Museum Coordinator (262-569-0740). Someone will then contact you to share what we do and to answer any questions you may have.

Barb Hirsch, Volunteer

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Beginning with this issue of the “*O Chronicles*,” it is our wish to make our Oconomowoc Area Historical Society members aware of one of the many services given by a group of volunteers throughout 2015 – that of providing both classes of school children and local scout troops enjoyable and educational museum experiences, as well as also securing a speaker when needed for adult community organizations. These activities have gone on since 2007, and over the years since then we’ve certainly seen an increase in the number of groups from Oconomowoc and surrounding areas who request a planned activity. We’re delighted to share the variety of young and old who have come through our doors this past year:

January 12	Lake Terrace Apartments “La Belle Cemetery”
February 24	OHS Sophomores (2 classes) History Research Project Session 1
February 25	OHS Sophomores History Research Project Session 2
March 10	Tiger Scouts Greenland Elementary School
March 18	OHS Sophomores History Research Project Session 3
March 19	OHS Sophomores History Research Project Session 4
March 23	OHS Special Education Class Session 1
March 25	Tiger Scouts Pack 99 St. Jerome Parish School
March 25	OHS Special Education Class Session 2
April 14	OHS Special Education Class Session 3
April 1	Good Shepherd United Methodist Church General Tour
April 7	Park Lawn Elementary School's ½ Grade 3 AM & ½ Grade 3 PM
April 22	OHS World Dictator Role Play Interviews
April 2	OHS Special Education Class Session 4
May 12	St. Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran School's Grade 5
May 19	Meadow View Elementary School's ½ Grade 3
May 20	Meadow View Elementary School's ½ Grade 3
May 21	Prader-Wille Homes of Oconomowoc General Tour
May 22	Shorehaven's Lutheran Homes of Oconomowoc General Tour
May 27	Summit Elementary School's ½ Grade 4
June 3	Summit Elementary School's ½ Grade 4
June 10	Three Pillars (Dousman) General Tour
August 20	Introduction to Oconomowoc's history for new staff at Nature Hill Intermediate School
September 14	St. Matthew’s Evangelical Lutheran School's 4-year old Kindergarten Class for “Old and New” Program
September 23	Dr. Martin Luther Church's Senior Luncheon “La Belle Cemetery”
October 6	OHS Sophomores (1 class) History Research Project Session 1
October 15	OHS Sophomores History Research Project Session 2
October 20	High School students from Offenbach, Germany
November 5	OHS Sophomores History Research Project Session 3
November 11	Girl Scout Troop #6212 of Greenland Elementary School
December 1	American Heritage Girls of St. Jerome Catholic School

(page 4 continued)

We would not be able to provide these kinds of services to both children and adults without the unfailing support of so many museum volunteers who are called upon to help when the groups, sometimes as many as 50 participants, are scheduled at one time. If anyone is interested in volunteering when there is a need, please contact the office at the museum (569-0740) and leave a message. Everything is planned in advance for our helpers, based on the interests and needs of the attending group. The volunteer's role is to enjoy sharing our museum with children and adult visitors.

Barb Hirsch, Volunteer

ARTIFACTS DONATED

- ◆ Mail Boat Lanterns. These two lanterns were placed on top of the mail boat, one red and one blue.
- ◆ Richard Gilbert -- vintage medical camera for use in surgery complete with parts, case, and instruction booklet
- ◆ Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacott gifted her new hard-cover book, "The Missing Kennedy" by Elizabeth Koehler-Pentacott, and personally signed
- ◆ Esther Newman – Collection of historical papers, articles and a great collection of the “Stokely” newsletters and reports, and “Heritage of Ixonia Sesquicentennial booklet, 1976.

Thank you all who donated to enhance our collection. It makes specific exhibits and the museum, itself, more interesting!

Programs & Research Secretary, Barbara Eigenberger, linked into several webinars to learn about caring, marking, and storing collections. On December 8th, Barb was invited to speak to the National Honor's Society to encourage students to consider volunteering for the Historical Society. She gave examples of several ways students could volunteer, such as becoming a greeter, participating in special events, assisting with decorating for holidays and events, constructing exhibits, helping with computer input, and filing research documents. In her short time at the museum Barbara III has been a great asset through her work, bright personality, interest in history, and in bringing a younger group of people joining the Oconomowoc Area Historical Society. Barbara has two girls that have volunteered several times at the museum. Rory, shown in this newsletter, loves the model trains, and Abby, shown in an earlier newsletter at the Waukesha History Fair. Let's all of us join in Barb III's successful efforts to increase our OAHS&M's youth membership! These young people are a joy to work with and bring such energy and fresh ideas to our volunteer force.

EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

That this committee has not been meeting on its usual once-a-month schedule in November and December doesn't mean that there has been no thought given to planning for the museum's opening come May 2016. Members have been asked to come up with various ideas on how to use what space is now available for new and different exhibits, to plan better use of the space already taken, and to eventually discuss with the OAHS&M's Executive Committee some possible major area changes to the space on the museum's main floor. It is hoped we will also be able to finish the planned “former old store-fronts display” in the converted back storage room as the committee's concept of the extension of “The Streets of Olde Oconomowoc” continues. NASA isn't alone in its space concerns!

Shirley Hinds, Committee Chair

AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS



What do you think this artifact is? That was the first question asked of the American Heritage Girls when they visited the museum on December 1, 2015. Two of the answers coming from those twenty-one girls and five siblings in the group were a fly swatter or an egg beater. The girls were all quite amazed when they discovered it was an old-fashioned rug beater! Through a demonstration, the girls learned about rag rugs and about the cleaning of carpets. A rug beater would have been a common piece of equipment in many homes even into the middle of the 20th Century. Then the girls were off to visit “stations” in the museum. They were able to sit in old-fashioned school desks and to learn about ink wells, old-time books, our nursery rhyme murals, and our early 1800s Broadwood piano, made in England with its special wooden shelves. They also found out about Victorian hair wreaths, bracelets, brooches, and watch fobs and heard the story of the life of a woman who lived in Summit and made a beautiful hair wreath in 1865 in memory of one of her family members. Another artifact that particularly interested the girls was a sampler that was made by a young girl named Harriot when she was 12 years old. Harriot was born in England in 1806 and never came to America. A lively discussion followed, however, concerning how the sampler made it to our museum. At another station, the girls discovered the early ways by which families entertained themselves in the evenings. They learned about records, the Victrola Talking Machine, early radios, stereoscopes, and stereo cards. At the final station, it was the many items found in an old-fashioned kitchen and how the delivery of pounds of ice placed in the icebox kept food, hopefully, from spoiling which fascinated them. At the end of the evening, the now-well-museum-educated young ladies demonstrated their knowledge and observation skills by participating in a visual scavenger hunt. It was amazing what their museum tour had taught them! Before leaving, though, a few enjoyable minutes had to be spent, of course, bringing them out of the past by watching our modern-day electrified model railroad cars crisscross across the layout’s tracks. We’ll never know, to be sure, who had more fun that December 1st evening -- the girls or the volunteers!



MODEL RAILROAD EVENTS



Rory Eigenberger, volunteer operator

The museum’s Model Railroad Committee held a successful Open House on November 21st. Although it was the city’s first day of measurable snow, there were 50 to 60 visitors viewing the now-famous layout, and for many, it was the first time any had ever seen the museum. The committee also had an exhibit at the Oconomowoc Library in the month of December in connection with the 30th Anniversary of The Polar Express book and movie. A similar event will be a one-day program at the Delafield Library on January 30th. In both of these special occasions, there was/will be good mention of the museum and an invitation to visit when we re-open again in May, 2016. Our model railroad exhibit continues to enlarge and progress, and now trains also operate on the new section, referred as the Northern Division. “All Aboard”!

MUSEUM HOURS

Museum visiting season is now closed until May 5, 2016. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 10 am – 4 pm. Please feel free to come in to talk, donate items, or bring a friend or relative in for a brief visit. Tours may be scheduled by appointment and for parties of 8 or more. Please plan well in advance with several dates in mind. We try to accommodate your preferred time; schedules and volunteer availability may require a different date.

Brownie Girl Scouts Troop 6212



Twenty-two Brownie Girl Scouts from Troop 6212 of Greenland Elementary School visited the museum on Wednesday, November 11, 2015. The third graders learned about the purpose of our museum, what artifacts are, and a little bit about Oconomowoc's history. The scouts were divided into groups and moved between four stations as museum volunteers shared with the girls all about going to a one-room school, an early 1800s piano manufactured in England and brought to Wisconsin in the 1850s, early forms of entertainment such as the Victrola and the stereoscope, an assortment of Victorian items made with human hair, an early kitchen, ice delivery, a dental office, a barber-shop, a newspaper office, how to operate a switchboard, and the development of the telephone over the years. After finishing the stations, the girls demonstrated how much they had learned and observed by participating in a visual scavenger hunt. At the end of the visit, the scouts enjoyed viewing our model railroad. They left the museum having gained a lot of new (old) information but eager to learn more! Hopefully, Brownie Troop 6312 will be back at 103 West Jefferson Street someday soon!

Jolayne Lindberg, Volunteer

Happy New Year!

Thank you, thank you to all who have sent in your 2016 membership dues! The blue registration form sent in the last newsletter must have caught your attention, so we'll try it again this quarter for those who may have overlooked sending in their membership dues. We really do hope you'll choose to join us once again in our efforts to preserve Oconomowoc's history. If there is a membership renewal form tucked into this newsletter you'll know that your "dues are due", if not, you are good for another year.

Within the last three months the following members have joined our society:

Jessica Bugni

Dominic Stewart

Kieran Stewart

Molly Reynen

Patricia Counsell Mesarich

Nanette Counsell Wilke

Susan Counsell VanDenBerg

Jessica Brockway

Welcome to you all! We look forward to working with you in our society's activities. We are always in need of new people willing to invest time and energy in our organization, so don't hesitate to talk up our organization to friends and family.

Our membership rolls for December, 2015 show a total of 181 memberships with a breakdown of 76 single memberships, and 49 (98)couples' memberships, along with 7 student memberships. There are also 3 organization/business/municipality memberships and 27 free memberships.

Birthdays and Special Days Have you thought of giving a Historical Society membership or purchasing one of our historical books or DVDs for that special day of celebration? All would be great gifts that would last the entire year and give hours of entertainment.

Barb Elwood-Goetsch, Membership Chair



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OCONOMOWOC HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 969, OCONOMOWOC, WI 53066

MUSEUM: 103 W Jefferson Street

(262)569-0740 / oahsm@att.net

Office Open Tues. & Thurs 10 - 4 pm.

Museum Visiting May - December

Call for other hours & Tours by appointment

Web: oconomowochistoricalsociety.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM

(New or Renewal-Due November 1st)

OCONOMOWOC HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Please make check payable to: OAHS&M Atten: Membership P.O. Box 969 Oconomowoc, WI 53066

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