

Arlington Historical Society, Inc.

2008 REPORT



Photograph by Dennis Schultz

Fire Hall Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
September 5, 2008

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BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Arlington Historical Society board members for 2008 are Curt Boeder, Greg Goblirsch, Dwight Grabitske, Ramona Bade, Pauline Wiemann, and H. Michael Noack, DDS. Officers elected in 2008 were Boeder, President; Goblirsch, Treasurer; and Grabitske, Secretary. Wiemann represents the board on the Historic Structures Committee. Grabitske represents the board for the Arlington Greys Vintage Base Ball Team.



NON-BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Gail Nuessmeier has assembled several books containing obituaries taken from issues of the *Arlington Enterprise*. These books are kept in the AHS file cabinet at the Arlington Public Library and are available for use by the public.

Melba Meffert, Sheila Arneson, and Alfred Burdorf serve on the Historic Structures Committee, which was formed in 2006 to establish criteria for structures to be considered “historic” and to identify those structures in Arlington and vicinity which meet those criteria.

Kurt Menk was chosen as manager of the Arlington Greys Vintage Base Ball Team, sponsored by AHS.

FIRE HALL RESTORATION

The Arlington Fire Hall Façade Restoration Project was completed in July 2008 when the tower was reconstructed and the replica fireman statue placed on top of the tower. Work on the tower was not begun until after the Town and Country Days events in June.

The Fire Hall Façade Restoration Project was estimated to cost more than \$151,000, but thanks to the people of this community the total cost was approximately half that amount. Most of the labor was done by construction companies in Arlington. The only outside work was done by Les Jones Roofing which made the metal roof for the tower. In addition, Kreft Cabinets donated the labor for the construction of the large center door and the louvers on the tower.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the completion of the project was held on Friday, September 5, 2008, in front of the old fire hall (now police station). Approximately 100 people attended the ceremonies which were high-lighted by remarks by former Mayor David Czech and present Mayor James Kreft. CMC Construction, Travis Tuchtenhagen Construction, and Brian Leo attended the event. Fritz Busch from the New Ulm Journal covered the event and his story was picked up by the Associated Press and appeared in other newspapers; the *Mankato Free Press*, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and *La Crosse Tribune* were three of the newspapers that carried the AP item. WCCO Radio also picked up the report and mentioned the fire hall restoration in their morning report on Sunday, 7 September 2008. Bert Christensen from Les

Arlington restores old fire hall

The Associated Press

ARLINGTON — The Arlington Historic Restoration and Preservation Committee's long work finally paid off with the newly restored 118-year-old Arlington Fire Hall.

Mayor Dave Kreft says community pride enabled the

fire hall to define Arlington's Main Street landscape in 1890 and again today.

But it took a lot of work. In April 1999, the Arlington City Council approved a motion to create a five-year plan for the community and the preservation committee was later established.

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Jones Roofing came at the end of the ceremony and took detailed pictures of the tower roof. The president of the Sibley County Historical Society, Jerome Petersen, attended ceremony, as did three members from the Minnesota Historical Society State Historic Preservation Office, Susan Roth (National Register), Mark Buechel (Historical Architect), and David Grabitske (Outreach Services).

In a report entitled *First Impressions: A Program for Community Assessment & Improvement* done by a team from Cokato, Minnesota, the restored fire hall was considered “a point of interest” in the section on tourism. In the section dealing with historic buildings, one comment was “great police department downtown.” Also in that section was a comment that “much of Main Street appears to be older buildings that are well taken care of” and this comment could include the downtown area.

HISTORIC RESTORATION/PRESERVATION AWARD

Upon completion the Arlington Fire Hall Restoration Project was submitted to the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota for consideration in 2008. On 19 September 2008, the project received a **Restoration/Rehabilitation Award** at the 24th Annual Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Awards Ceremony at Carlton College in Northfield, Minnesota. President Curt Boeder, Treasurer Greg Goblirsch and Secretary Dwight Grabitske accepted the award. The award was presented to the city of Arlington and is now displayed in the City Council Chambers.



HISTORIC BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

The Historic Buildings Committee has been limited in its activities this year.

The first building chosen for study is the home owned by Lowell Panning. It has ties to two founders of the city Chris Klinkert and Theodore Streissguth. Other homes under consideration are the Mauers, Timms, Dr. Kahne, and buildings which house businesses. The homes and businesses previously identified have been photographed and families connected with them have been contacted for further information.

Other buildings and homes on Main Street added to the previous list are Main Street businesses and the homes of Adam Buck, H. J. Meffert, and Dr. M. E. Bushey.

ARLINGTON GREYS VINTAGE BASE BALL

AHS decided to sponsor a vintage base ball team, and in November 2007, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce gave the Arlington Greys Vintage Base Ball Team \$1,000 for equipment and uniforms. Kurt Menk was chosen to manage the vintage base ball team, and the team represented Arlington during the Vintage Base Ball Exhibition at the Washington County Fair Grounds on June 28 and 29, 2008, as part of the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Celebration. The Greys won three games and lost three at the Vintage Base Ball Exhibition. The Arlington Greys

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also hosted the St. Croix Base Ball Club at a home game played on August 10, 2008, winning that game. The final game of the season for the Arlington Greys was played at Belle Plaine on

27 September. The Greys finished the season with a respectable five wins and three losses in their first season.

Four ladies (Pat Grabitske, Ramona Bade, Joan Pinske & Kay Schumacher) volunteered their skills to make the shirts, and 17 shirts were made. Wendy Solomonson sewed the "A" emblem on the shirts. The team purchased a dozen vintage base balls and two 1860's era base ball bats, and Jim Kreft made additional bats for the team, using the purchased bats as a pattern. The team hats were purchased and arrived two days before the Vintage Base Ball Exhibition.

Plans for the Arlington Greys for 2009 are being made. A meeting of teams playing 1860's base ball in Minnesota was held at Shakopee on November 22. A copy of the report of that meeting is in the appendix. The Greys are committed to play in the exhibitions at Rochester (Olmstead County) and Stillwater in July 2009, and the team is planning to host a vintage base ball exhibition in 2009.

PUBLIC INTERACTION:

On March 3, 2008, the AHS Secretary presented a historic program to the Arlington Girl Scouts, led by Teresa Nelson. A copy of the report on this activity is on page 10 in the Appendix.

The AHS joined with the Arlington American Legion Post 250 and the Arlington VFW Post 6031 in honoring Arlington's first mayor and civil war veteran by purchasing a stone with Christ Klinkert's name for the Veterans' Memorial in Arlington. That stone is part of the 2008 addition to the Veterans' Memorial. Two members of AHS provided the funds for the AHS share of the memorial stone.



On 28 October 2008, the Secretary and Treasurer presented a program on the Fire Hall Restoration Project to the Sibley County Historical Society. The program, which began with a visual inspection of the façade of the old fire hall, presented the history of the project and included pictures of the work done on the old fire hall. A total of 14 people attended the presentation which was held at the Technical Center.

Two genealogy queries were received via e-mail and both were answered via e-mail during the year. Robert Guetschoff was seeking information on his great grandfather, Charles Guetschoff, who built the Arlington Pavilion. Ed Spannaus questioned the location of his great grandparents' graves; he was under the impression that both were buried in St. Paul's Lutheran Cemetery. His great grandmother is buried there, but his great grandfather is buried in the Arlington Public Cemetery. Both queries resulted in family histories being developed and added to the AHS collection.

The Arlington Historical Society has received a request for pictures from the Arlington Lions who want to add some historic pictures to the wall at the Arlington Community Center. The secretary has been working with Bev Breyer of the Lions on the selection of pictures. Two pictures have been scanned, and a better copy of a third picture is being sought.

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CONFERENCES & MEETINGS:

On Friday, 11 April 2008, the secretary attended the Minnesota Historical Society workshop in Harmony, Minnesota. The theme of the workshop was "Systems for Success" which focused on improving local historical society operations. A copy of the report to the AHS is printed on pages 11 and 12 in the Appendix.

President Curt Boeder, Betty Boeder, Dave & Dee Czech, representing AHS, attended the Sibley County Historical Society Annual Meeting on Sunday, 13 April 2008. A copy of that report is printed on page 13 in the Appendix.

The Secretary attended the Preserve Minnesota Conference at Carlton College in Northfield on 19 & 20 September 2008. A copy of that report is printed on pages 14 and 15 in the Appendix.

In connection with the Preserve Minnesota Conference, President Boeder and Treasurer Goblirsch, along with their wives and Secretary Grabitske, attended the 24th Annual Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Awards Ceremony.

The Secretary and the Arlington EDA administrator, Dennis Schultz, attended a Hometown Minnesota workshop in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota on 5 November 2008. A copy of that report is printed on pages 16 and 17 in the Appendix.

On 22 November 2008, the Secretary represented the Arlington Greys at a meeting of representatives of teams playing 1860's vintage base ball at Murphy's Landing in Shakopee, Minnesota. A copy of that report is on page 18 in the Appendix.

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY POLICIES:

At the December meeting of the Arlington Historical Society approved a written policy for requests for pictures in the AHS collection.

The Arlington Historical Society is writing a policy for loans of artifacts in the AHS collection and should have a written policy in place this spring.

ARLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT ENGINE

The 1941 Fire Engine which the Arlington Historical Society has held for the past several years was given to Jason Quast. AHS board members were concerned that the society could not properly care for the vehicle, and because AHS did not have a proper place to store the vehicle, it was decided to give the vehicle to someone who had an interest in fire department history and would care for it properly. Mr. Quast has agreed to make the vehicle available for Arlington parades and he will have signage for the Arlington Historical Society displayed on the vehicle. Mr. Quast is currently restoring the vehicle to its proper condition.

ARLINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY GOALS:

1. Computer, Museum Software, & Accessories:

AHS would like to raise sufficient funds to purchase a computer, the PastPerfect Museum Software for the computer, a printer, scanner, and backup hard-drive, so that all of the items in

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the AHS collection could be inventoried. The program, which is designed for historical society use, would also maintain all statistical records for AHS. The cost of a computer and the program is estimated to be about \$3,500. AHS is planning to apply for grants in 2009 for financial

assistance to purchase a computer, museum software, scanner, printer, and backup hard-drive. AHS has discussed the possibility of placing the computer in the library, so that the pictures stored on the computer would be available to the public.

2. Storage Space:

AHS purchased a locking file cabinet in 2008 for storing photographs and tax records. AHS now has three cabinets, one in the Arlington Public Library, which is used for storing genealogical information, and two in the AHS area of the Tech Center. Two of the AHS cabinets are nearly filled, and additional storage space will be needed shortly. As the photographs are cataloged, additional space will be necessary to facilitate easy access to the photographs.

In addition AHS has received a number of historic items that need to be stored in a secure area until they can be displayed properly. AHA has looked at a display cabinet which could possibly be used to display items, but AHS doesn't have the funds to purchase the cabinet nor does AHS have the space to place the cabinet. The historic items belonging to AHS are currently being stored in homes of board members.

3. Museum Building:

AHS would like to have a permanent location (museum building) where collected items could be securely stored and properly displayed. At present AHS has space in the Tech Center where two AHS filing cabinets are kept. AHS also has a locking display case in the Tech Center, but because a portion of the cabinet glass has been cut off, the case is not considered secure. The Tech Center is used by many others; therefore, items stored at the Tech Center that are not in the locking cabinet are not considered secured. AHS is considering purchasing a secure display cabinet which would be placed along the west wall in the Tech Center to show Arlington artifacts. However, AHS currently lacks the funds for the cabinet.

4. Mayoral Pictures:

AHS continues to search for pictures of early Arlington mayors (presidents of the Village Council). The society has a picture of the first mayor, Christ Klinkert, but the photograph is a very poor quality and cannot be enlarged. AHS is looking into having an artist re-make the picture. AHS has also approached the Sibley County Historical Society (SCHS) about reproducing a copy of the August Huckenpoehler picture, which SCHS has in its collection. AHS has sent a letter to the family of John M. Thompson requesting a photograph, but no response has been received, yet. AHS has learned recently that MHS has a photograph of A. C. Buck in its collection; AHS will approach MHS about obtaining a copy of the photograph.

5. Membership:

AHS is considering possible membership programs for 2009. It is thought that a membership program could produce additional revenue at minimal cost.

6. Arlington Fire Hall on the National Register

Now that the fire hall façade has been restored, the goal of AHS should be to have the building recognized as a historic structure and application should be made to the National Park Service, the administrator of the National Register. This requires the background research and

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collection of materials proving that the structure qualifies for recognition. Some of the preliminary work has been done; some of the historic material has been collected. However, there is still much to do before an application can be made. Susan Roth at the Minnesota Historical Society has already indicated her willingness to assist AHS in any way possible.

7. Arlington Historical Society page on the Arlington Web-Site

The city of Arlington web-site has room for a page featuring the Arlington Historical Society. In 2008, a page for the Arlington Greys Base Ball team was placed on the site. AHS should create a page to publicize AHS and to offer for sale the Arlington Sesquicentennial Book and post cards. Should AHS decide to offer memberships, it would be a good way to inform people about a membership.

8. Hose Cart Restoration

The Arlington Historical Society is looking into restoring the old hose cart in time for the Arlington Fire Department 125th anniversary celebration this summer. The Arlington Fire Department has been contacted and members have expressed interest in this project.

FIRE HALL DONATION TOTALS:

The following chart shows the number of gifts (donations) and amounts from 2001 to 2008 for the fire hall restoration project:

Year	# Gifts	Amount
2001	38	9,735.00
2002	44	10,460.00
2003	31	3,515.00
2004	43	4,960.00
2005	35	5,255.00
2006	5	1,230.00
2007	16	27,815.00
2008	16	3,245.00
TOTALS	228	66,215.00

The amounts shown are only donations and grants received by the Arlington Historical Society according to records of the AHS secretary. The amounts do not reflect income received through other sources such as book sales, post card sales, etc.

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2008 INCOME & EXPENSES

INCOME:

Donations	2,985.00
Grants – McLeod Cooperative Power Association	250.00
Book / Post Card Sales	44.00
Baseball Sales	12.00
Miscellaneous income	20.00
Interest	401.39
TOTAL	\$ 3,712.39

Transfer from Saving Account \$ 18,400.00

TOTAL INCOME **\$ 22,112.39**

EXPENSES:

Tower:	13,569.51
CMC Construction	6,410.00
Tuchtenhagen Construction	2,257.50
Haggenmiller Lumber	1,169.36
Les Jones Roofing	5,340.20
Paint for Louvers	54.95
Arlington Enterprise	137.50

Arlington Greys:	914.54
Greys BB – (Shirt fabric)	107.64
Greys BB – (Bats & Balls)	167.90
Greys BB – (Balls & Hats)	564.00
Greys BB – (<i>Itchin' to Stitch</i> – letter application)	75.00

Office:	236.65
Veterans Memorial Stone – Christ Klinkert	66.66
Locking Storage Cabinet	169.99

TOTAL **\$ 16,520.70**

Transfer to Saving Account \$ 6,330.00

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$ 22,850.70**

TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS (December 31, 2008)

Pass Book Savings	\$ 301.40
CD #818501 (10/02/09)	254.14
Checking Account	516.38
TOTAL	\$ 1,071.91

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DESIGNATED:

Total Designated:	1,106.29
Community Center Wall Pictures	\$ 758.83
Computer – PastPerfect Program	250.00
Arlington Greys Base Ball	97.46
Balance 1/01/2008.....	1,000.00
Income:	
Ball Sold	12.00
Expenses:	
Greys BB – (Shirt fabric)	107.64
Greys BB – (Bats & Balls)	167.90
Greys BB – (Balls & Hats)	564.00
Greys BB – (<i>Itchin' to Stitch</i> – letter application)	75.00

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE (December 31, 2008)

TOTAL **\$ -34.37**

FIRE HALL RESTORATION EXPENSES

Mankato Kasota Stone – stone	25,475.00
CMC Construction – materials & labor	17,370.93
Haggenmiller Lumber – doors, windows, arches, & materials	11,891.42
Brian Leo – consulting fee, fireman restoration & replica	8,770.00
Les Jones Roofing – labor, materials & hoist rental	6,986.00
Tuchtenhagen Construction – labor & materials	4,051.00
Quinn, Evans Architects – drawings & fees	2,500.00
Tim Dotseth – bricks	200.00
Curtis Boeder – frame & paint	164.44
Arlington Enterprise – donors list	137.50
City of Arlington – building permit	40.00
Thomes Brothers – supplies	30.05

RESTORATION EXPENSES DONATED:

Kreft Cabinets (Door)	2,136.00
Kreft Cabinets (Louvers)	1,150.00

RESTORATION DONATED LABOR & MATERIAL

Tom Pfarr Family	Brick
AAL Branch 115	Brick Cleaning
Tim Berger	Louver Painting
Betty Boeder	Painting door & windows

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Arlington Girl Scout Presentation
Monday 3 March 2008

“Arlington History in Pictures”

On Monday, 3 March 2008, the Arlington Historical Society Secretary, Dwight Grabitske presented a program to the Arlington Girl Scouts led by Teresa Nelson. Using pictures from the AHS collection, he showed the changes in Arlington Main Street buildings over the years.

Pictures of structures in Arlington were shown to the Girl Scouts who were given the opportunity to see if they could identify the buildings as they appear today. They discussed the changes they saw in the pictures and the things in the structures that were the same. They were led in discussions about the reasons for changes. They were also shown other pictures of enterprises that were no longer around because there was no longer a need for such businesses, such as the Arlington livery business, and they discussed the reasons why those businesses no longer existed.

The Girl Scouts exhibited an excited interest in the buildings, especially when they recognized features identifying buildings familiar to them. They participated in the discussions and appeared to enjoy the presentation.

Each of the Girl Scouts was given a copy of the *Sibley County Enterprise* reprint and each was given a post card from the Arlington Sesquicentennial showing Main & Third Streets in 1904 and in 2006. The pictures in these two items will serve as a reminder of the presentation.

It is hoped that the presentation, which lasted about 50 minutes, has stirred some interest in history, especially history of the community.

MHS Workshop at Harmony, Minnesota



The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) Workshop at Harmony, Minnesota was hosted by the Harmony Area Historical Society and held at the Harmony Tourist Information Center in Harmony on Friday 11 April 2008. The theme for the workshop was “Systems for Success,” which focused on improving local historical society operations. There were 32 registered for the workshop with a majority of the registrants coming from the Harmony area.

The opening remarks were by David Grabitske, the Manager of the Outreach Services of State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at the MHS. He spoke of learning trends in historical societies today focused on ways of self-improvement to better serve the public. One of the trends mentioned was called “Learning Platforms” which bring into the society local “experts” to present historic programs for the society. Another trend was “Learning by Doing” which involves societies putting on walking tours, cemetery tours, etc. in which participants receive a visual concept of history.

The first session I attended was the “*AASLH Self-Assessment Program*,” presented by David Grabitske. The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) is working on a program which would allow local history museums to grade themselves based on a national standard. This is not to compete with American Association of Museums (AAM), but the AASLH standards will be more focused on history museums, not museums in general. Six historic facilities in Minnesota are participating in the study to formulate these standards. The final report is due in September 2008, and revisions to be made over the winter months. The goal is to have these standards available to local history museums by June 2009. AASLH hopes to make this program as inexpensive as possible (less than \$150) to encourage a greater participation. The program is not mandatory, but it is designed to be a tool for improvement. More information on this AASLH program is available by contacting David Grabitske at MHS (651-259-3460 or david.grabitske@mnhs.org) or Cherie Cook at cook@aaslh.org.

The second session I attended was “*Checking Your Pulse: How to Track and Apply User Statistics*,” presented by Jim Mattson, MHS Historic Sites Division. The statistics and information gathered and used by museum management is considered the “hard evidence” of success; it is “information, not just numbers.” Those statistics are important for budgeting, staffing, planning events and programs and then evaluating the events and programs, obtaining support for programs (grants), and determining changes in the society’s programming.

To have a successful program for information management, an organization needs to establish a consistent method for collecting and recording the information. That method needs to be user friendly and at the same time pay close attention to detail; the process needs to be reviewed periodically. Once established, the collected material needs to be used.

The idea behind collecting and exhibiting the statistical information concerning a local historical society is to demonstrate the society’s value to the community in numbers that are understandable to the recipients. The society needs to have the statistical information readily available, so that the society can easily answer questions from the general public, media, grant providers, government agencies, etc. Items of high interest are budgets (both actual and proposed), attendance, memberships, contacts (letters, phone calls, e-mail, etc.), programs, and planned projects and exhibits. When reporting the statistics, it is best to use a narrative description and tables and graphs to illustrate their significance.

Looking specifically at some of the categories of information, Mr. Mattson noted that there should be a definition of “membership” and under “membership” the numbers should not just show a total number of members, but a breakdown showing “new members” and “renewed members.” Under “visitor information” he stated that, in addition to “who” visited “when,” information should be collected

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on the visitor's "connection" to the museum. This is a great time for a mini-survey to determine "why" the visitor has come to the museum.

Finally, Mr. Mattson spoke of using the statistics to evaluate the organization. Do the programs comply with the "mission" of the organization? What is their quality and impact? The answers are in the statistics.

During lunch, there was a presentation on the Sinkhole Educational Interpretive Site now under construction. The site shows how sinkholes are formed and the results of a sinkhole. The interpretive site is scheduled to open in June 2008. After lunch the historic tour went to several Amish farms where the workshop attendees were shown various items made in the Amish community. Because of the rain, the workshop attendees were unable to visit the sinkhole educational interpretive site.

The first afternoon session I attended was given by Dennis Meissner, from the MHS Collections Management Department, whose topic was *Cataloging Photos and Great Finding Aids*. "Given the high cost of preserving cultural assets, and the great demand for them, the only justification for preserving them is to provide access." Cataloging is the way to provide access. Mr. Meissner described different ways to catalog the assets and evaluated their accessibility for the user, going from "vertical files" which are inexpensive and one-dimensional being nothing more than a file cabinet, to a card catalog, which requires greater management depending upon the number of categories established for each asset, and to on-line data bases which are expensive and time-consuming to manage but are multi-dimensional and user friendly.

Mr. Meissner then described the system used at MHS for its on-line catalog. For access, MHS picked terms that researchers would be familiar with in describing the photographs and applied the terms consistently throughout the catalog. It is also important to keep a list of the terms.

Mr. Meissner mentioned specific cataloging systems, such as the one used by the Library of Congress, which has models for subject categories and can be found on-line. He also briefly mentioned the system used by the *Past Perfect* computer program.

The final session attended was given by Mark Buechel and David Mather from the MHS State Historic Preservation Office and entitled *Practical Log Building and Archaeology Workshops*. Mr. Buechel, the MHS Historical Architect, presented a program on how MHS could assist in putting on a Log Building Workshop and used materials from a workshop done at the Clearwater County Historical Society in 2006. David Mather, MHS National Register Archaeologist, related how MHS could assist in presenting archaeology programs in conjunction with local history programs.

In addition to those sessions described above, there was a session entitled *Digitalization Through Collaboration* which was about the Great River Network making collections available on-line. A session entitled *Strengthening Your Board* was about improving an organization's board. The other two sessions had monetary subjects, *Annual Fun with your Annual Fund* and *MHS Grants Workshop*.

All of the sessions I attended were extremely well done. The speakers had materials to assist in their presentations, and there was time for questions and answers after each session.

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Sibley County Historical Society Meeting

By Curt Boeder

Betty and I, along with Dave and Dee Czech, attended the annual meeting of the Sibley County Historical Society on Sunday, April 12th. The meeting was held at the old Community Building in Henderson.

Dinner of ham balls, turkey and all the trimmings was served to a capacity crowd of 104 people. Rommie Peterson, Sibley County Historical Society President, conducted a brief business meeting and then introduced the featured speaker, Paula M. Nelson, PhD, a graduate of Gibbon High School.

Paula Nelson has a PhD in history and is presently serving as the Chair of the Department of Social Services at the University of Wisconsin, Platteville. She has authored two books and is currently working on her third. The topic of her presentation was "Everyone Has a Story to Tell." During her presentation she showed slides of old South Dakota scenes along with photos of early settlers.

A special tour of the museum in Henderson followed the presentation.

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PRESERVE MINNESOTA CONFERENCE: MAIN STREET AND BEYOND

Northfield, Minnesota

Friday & Saturday, 19 & 20 September 2008

Nina Archabal, State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Minnesota Historical Society, opened the conference by welcoming those in attendance. Bonnie McDonald, Executive Director, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, also gave opening remarks, and Steve Edwins, AIA, SMSQ Architects and Northfield Heritage Commission, welcomed visitors to Northfield and spoke about Northfield preservation.

The Keynote Address was given by Kennedy Smith of the Community Land Use and Economics Group (CLUE) entitled "Saving Cities: The Role of Historic Places in a Successful Economy." She pointed out the events which drove retail business away from the downtown areas, citing, among other things, the GI Bill, shopping malls, the Interstate highway system, and the automobile industry. Afterwards, she showed various ways downtowns were adapting and luring clients back to the downtown areas. She also showed how preservation of existing buildings could be used to exemplify the historic character of the downtown by restoring the original appearance of the building and creating a new use for the structure. Her address was filled with examples drawn from her own successes.

There were two sets of concurrent sessions Friday afternoon. I attended the session entitled "Starting a Local Main Street Program," given by Kennedy Smith and Thom Guzman of the Iowa Downtown Development Center. Kennedy Smith began the session by showing the "why" for the downtown program. She pointed out that the building is already there; the investment was already made. The downtown most often is the civic center of the community; banks, the post office, and government buildings are downtown. She pointed out that every entity, business, organization, or individual, has a stake in the downtown and should be involved. Thom Guzman followed with the "Mechanics" of starting a Main Street Program. He began with some ground rules: Historic preservation could go hand in hand with commercial development and economic development. He pointed out that a healthy downtown stabilizes the tax base for the community; an empty storefront could cost a community as much as \$250,000 a year. Guzman went through the various steps for creating a Main Street Program, including the formation of a 501-C3 organization, such as a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), to facilitate the program. He showed that the process required time; it was not a quick-fix program. The process also required funding; a professional was needed to oversee the Main Street Program to make it function properly.

In the second session Friday afternoon, Thom Guzman provided information on how the Main Street Program functioned in Iowa, where the state funds the program to assist local communities. The Iowa program, which is administered by the Iowa Department of Economic Development, has existed for 23 years and now has more than 50 participants at various levels. Bonaparte, Iowa, with a population of 458, is the smallest community in the Main Street program and gained national attention when the town received the National Great American Main Street Award in 1996. The Iowa program assists with training people to administer the local plan and providing technical assistance, which includes an annual program review, to ensure that the community meets the standards of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Bonnie McDonald followed Guzman and spoke about the efforts underway to revive the Main Street Program in Minnesota. Milaca and Faribault were the first two "Main Street" cities in Minnesota in 1980, and in 1984, the State Planning Agency selected five more cities to be in the pilot program, Hopkins, Morris, Stillwater, Hastings and Fergus Falls. Between 1984 and 1989, self initiative programs began in five more communities, Waseca, New Prague, Winona, Buffalo, and Hutchinson. As funding

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decreased and interest in the program waned, Main Street programs disappeared in Minnesota. A program called "Hometown Minnesota" tried to revive the "Main Street" type programs, but never had the support to succeed. The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota has been selected to formulate a Main Street program for Minnesota. The Preservation Alliance is considering the various state programs now operating and is planning to have a program ready for submission to the Minnesota State Legislature by the 2009 session.

Friday evening was the 24th Annual Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Awards Ceremony. The Arlington Fire Engine House Restoration Project received an award for Restoration/Rehabilitation. Arlington Historical Society President Curtis Boeder, Treasurer Greg Goblirsch, and Secretary Dwight Grabitske accepted the award.

The first session Saturday morning was entitled "Simple Building Improvements for (Almost) No Money," by Joe Lawniczak, Design Specialist, Wisconsin Main Street Program. He presented a slide program showing changes made to buildings throughout Wisconsin. The dramatic changes to the buildings gave them a more pleasing appearance and allowed the buildings to fit into the scheme of the business districts. The change in appearance also brought about a change in attitude to those viewing the building and an increase in business to the owner.

The second session Saturday morning was entitled "From Eyesores to Assets: Rallying Your Community Around Preservation." Will Stark, Chair of the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, began with a talk entitled "Preserve, Protect, Promote!; A Minnesota Guide to Community Action." Stark illustrated the process local preservationists could take to preserve historic structures in their own community, and provided a handbook describing the step-by-step procedure for carrying out a preservation program. Christina Morris, Midwest Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, illustrated the process described by Stark relating the story of an attempt to save the historic area on Nicollet Island, only to lose in the end to powerful political factions. Connie Leis, Council Member from Litchfield, followed with her story of how her group using the same process described by Stark was successful in saving the Litchfield Opera House, which received an Advocacy Award from the Preservation Alliance on Friday evening.

The afternoon was spent on a walking tour of the historic Northfield business district. The tour visited the Carnegie Library in Northfield, which received a major expansion complimenting the original structure, and the tour toured the bank lobby which also received major modification maintaining the integrity of the original structure. The highlight of the tour was at the Northfield Historical Society where the story of the Northfield Bank Robbery was related.

The two-day historic preservation conference provides much information as well as avenues for additional information. The speakers were outstanding, and each of the speakers provided contact information opening the way for additional assistance in their fields of expertise. The conference was well organized and maintained the established schedule for the programs. It would be good for the Arlington Historical Society to encourage greater participation by members and other interested parties in the community.

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Hometown Minnesota Workshop

Assessing Your Downtown's Architectural Heritage and Sense of Place

Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

Welcome by Sleepy Eye Mayor **Jim Broich**

Troy Bonkowske, Region Nine RDC Main Street Program

Troy spoke about Downtown Revitalization, saying that his organization works from the local level (ground up approach, not top down) using the four point approach as defined by the Main Street® Program.

The Main Street® four points are:

1. **Organization** – Emphasizes effective downtown management, including developing work plans; recruiting and working with volunteers and board members; building public-private partnerships; and working with and achieving consensus among diverse groups.
2. **Promotion** – Focuses on developing and projecting a positive, unified image of the downtown area. Efforts to rekindle community excitement and involvement in the central business district can include image enhancement, innovative promotions and special events, and improved merchandising.
3. **Economic Restructuring** – Focuses on strengthening the downtown's existing economic assets, recruiting additional businesses, converting unused building space to housing or office use, and sharpening the competitiveness of the downtown area merchants.
4. **Design** – Emphasizes the visual attractiveness of the downtown area and adjacent community and the functional relationship of the downtown to surrounding areas. Issues include uniform design elements, building and façade renovations, historic renovation, better signage, more attractive displays, and improvement of public spaces.

Brian Ross, Hometown Minnesota, Inc.

Brian spoke about Hometown Minnesota as an outgrowth of the former Main Street® Program in Minnesota which ended when the funding stopped in 1995. Hometown Minnesota is a tax exempt nonprofit organization that works to assist small communities revitalize their downtown business districts.

Brian said that a town should treat the downtown business district as an “infrastructure.” It should re-use existing buildings and should foster sustainable development connected to downtown. Brian explained the services offered by Hometown Minnesota.

1. **Workshops** – Address specific topics and provides a forum for discussion; designed for project managers, economic development staff, and government officials.
2. **Consultants & Specialists** – Hometown Minnesota can provide referrals to specialists and introductions to other programs or organizations.
3. **Technical Services** – Assistance provided to fill gaps in a program allowing the program to continue or be completed.
4. **Assistance to Communities** – Hometown Minnesota can help with building organization capacity, creating a downtown framework, and provide design assistance.

Brian provided the web-site for Hometown Minnesota: www.hometown.mn.org

Brian said that a successful downtown: (1) makes use of older buildings, (2) has an economic density that relates to market size, (3) has organizations that support the downtown, and (4) fosters a sense of planning.

“A successful downtown reflects a successful community.”

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Robert Mack, McDonald & Mack Architects

Robert began by defining Restoration, Preservation, and Rehabilitation. Restoration is returning something to a pre-existing condition. Preservation is maintaining something in its present condition. Rehabilitation is changing something to meet a contemporary use.

He then provided the steps for “where to start” the project:

1. What do you have? – define the structure. Robert provided pictures of various types of architectural styles common in Minnesota.
2. Look at what might have been – was there a change in style?
3. Define the Project
4. Design the Project

Next he spoke about the approach to design and listed the following:

1. Respect the history of structure
2. Avoid a false sense of history. Don’t make it something it wasn’t
3. Allow for change, but do it in a respectful way
4. Think green

Robert pointed out that the Secretary of the Interior (National Park Service) has briefs on-line which can help with almost any restoration project. Robert Mack provided a handout with information about his firm. The handout also lists several web-sites where further information can be found.

Group discussions:

The final portion of the program was spent viewing pictures of structures from several communities and commenting on the various aspects of the structures. Representatives from each of the communities spoke about the structures or city blocks, and Robert Mack commented on things that could be done to improve some of the buildings.

Comments:

This workshop at Sleepy Eye provided a better understanding of Hometown Minnesota and its function, especially toward historic restoration and rehabilitation of rural communities in Minnesota. My preconceived notion was that it was just another Main Street® Program proved false; the focus of Hometown Minnesota is more toward rural communities. The workshop provided an opportunity to see what other communities are doing, as well as opportunities for networking on similar issues.

The workshop was well done. The speakers provided a great deal of information. The handout from Robert Mack has some great information sources. It would have been nice to also have handouts of the presentations given by Troy Bonkowske and Brian Ross. (The information presented by Ross is available in detail on the Hometown Minnesota web-site.)

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VINTAGE BASE BALL MEETING

Saturday 22 November 2008

Bob Tholkes of the Quicksteps Base Ball Club organized a meeting of representatives of Minnesota vintage base ball clubs held at Murphy's Landing in Shakopee on Saturday, 22 November 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss scheduling games for the various clubs for the summer of 2009. The clubs represented at the meeting were the Quicksteps, the St. Croix's, Rochester Roosters, Afton Red Socks, Northfield Silver Stars, and Arlington Greys.

There was an open discussion of scheduling matches for the coming year. Some of the clubs already had games scheduled or dates set for exhibitions or tournaments in 2009. Most of the clubs were looking at scheduling matches around planned exhibitions or tournaments.

The **Quicksteps** have their home games at Murphy's Landing and are committed to playing a number of matches there. The team is looking for teams to play in June and August 2009. The team is interested in scheduling home and home matches.

The **Roosters** will host their Rooster Classic on Saturday, 18 July. The team would like to host an eight-team event, playing on two fields, with each team playing three games that day. The Roosters also play a match with the Mankato Baltics, a team sponsored by the Blue Earth Historical Society, every summer.

The **St. Croix** Base Ball Club will host an exhibition during Lumberjack Days in Stillwater. The date for those games is Saturday, 25 July. Although the details have not been finalized, the team would like to have eight teams for that event. The team expressed interest in scheduling another match in Arlington in 2009.

The **Northfield Silver Stars** schedule the St. Croix Base Ball Club for Jesse James Days on the second Saturday in September. The Silver Stars are looking at possible matches held at area historic events next summer.

The **Afton Red Socks** had only their annual game with the Quicksteps at Murphy's Landing on their schedule for next year. The team, which likes to play on Sundays, wants to schedule games for 2009. The Red Socks also are interested in playing home and home contests in 2009.

The **Arlington Greys** have no matches scheduled for 2009, yet. The team will be meeting in January. The representative from the Greys gave a tentative affirmation to playing games in both the Rochester and Stillwater events in 2009. He also mentioned that the Greys would like to host a one-day event, but as yet have no date or place for the matches.

In a separate discussion with representatives from the Roosters the Greys representative said that the team would probably interested in a match the same weekend the Roosters came to play the Mankato Baltics. The decision on that would have to wait until the Roosters confirm their match with the Baltics.

The representatives discussed some of the rules and conventions of the game. Events such as the Sesquicentennial Exhibition last year are good opportunities for teams to standardize some of the playing rules. It appears that the Minnesota teams have the same rules; some of the eastern teams have adopted a few other rules or conventions not used in Minnesota.

The meeting of vintage base ball representatives began about 1:00 p.m. and lasted about two hours. While the focus of the meeting was on scheduling matches for 2009, there were many side discussions reliving past games and past events. From the conversations it appears that more and more vintage base ball teams are on the horizon as the game become more popular. Most of the teams expressed interest in playing about a dozen games during the season, but it appears that any team could fill an entire summer of ball, playing every weekend, if it wanted.