



Old Sauk Trails

November/December 2011

Victorian Christmas Celebration December 10 *The Twelve Days of Christmas*

THE twelfth annual Victorian Christmas will be hosted by the Sauk County Historical Society on Saturday, December 10th from 12 – 7 p.m. Fresh Christmas trees, live music and holiday goodies will once again fill the Van Orden mansion at 531 Fourth Avenue in Baraboo. Each of the twelve Christmas trees in the mansion will be decorated as one of the “Twelve Days of Christmas”. The trees will be decorated by designers, businesses and volunteers, including Bekah Kate’s, Amber Moon, the Village Booksmith, DREAMS, Angela Brozak, Nijole Etwiler, Lindy Larsen, Bruce Ley, Mel Burgi, Mona Larsen, Diane Thomas and Dave Saloutos of Baraboo. This year Saloutos, who has created rooms portraying Christmas from the 1930s to the 1970s, will create an entire room devoted to Christmas during the 1950s including a “six geese-a-laying” tree trimmed with feathers and vintage ’50s ornaments.

Inside the mansion, guests will also enjoy holiday goodies at the bountiful dessert table. This year’s showcase centerpiece will be a gingerbread replica of the historic Abner L. Harris house in Reedsburg. The gingerbread house is being crafted by Society volunteers with the help of Susan Holding at the Little French Bakery. Live music will enhance the open house as area musicians perform a variety of Christmas music in various formats from choral

selections to string, brass and wind ensembles throughout the day. Outside, horse-drawn “jingle bell” rides will be given from 1-4 p.m.

The Victorian Christmas at the Sauk County Historical Society has become an annual tradition for many people in the area. The price for admission is \$5 for adults, children 12 and under admitted free, and admission for SCHS members \$3. Everyone is invited to this very special Sauk County holiday tradition.



The Twelve Days of Christmas will inspire the Christmas trees and the imagination at this year’s Victorian Christmas at the Van Orden Mansion.

Annual Meeting Held October 13

THE annual banquet and membership meeting of the Sauk County Historical Society was held on October 13th at the Rock Springs Community Center. Fifty members and guests attended the banquet which was followed by the annual business meeting. President Paul Wolter opened the meeting that included a pictorial year in review covering SCHS events and outreach. An election for board members was also held to fill the expiring three-year terms of Mona Larsen, Pam Krainik and Rob Nurre. The nominating committee nominated Pam Krainik, Mona Larsen and Becky Hovde as candidates and the slate was elected unanimously. The evening concluded with a lecture by Robert Moore of Verona about the CCC camp at Devil's Lake.

At the October SCHS board meeting which followed the annual meeting, officers elected were Paul Wolter, President; Natalie Bussan, Vice-President; Jim Weickgenant, Treasurer; and Bill Schuette, Secretary.



President's Report

By Paul Wolter

ONE piece of drywall on its own is not a terribly exciting item. It is basically two pieces of thick paper on either side of a core of hardened gypsum powder. Several hundred sheets of 5/8 inch thick drywall however, can be very exciting, especially when they come together to make a big difference. That's exactly what happened recently when two big trucks loaded with drywall showed up at the Sauk County History Center. Within a matter of two days several hundred pieces of drywall were cut and transformed into ceilings and walls, completely changing the upper two floors of the history center. Rooms have now taken shape. Of course with drywall going up this also means that mechanical systems including wiring, alarm systems, plumbing, data cabling, heating, cooling and ventilation have also been completed. Now, as the drywall is taped, finished and painted, thoughts turn to the next things to be done, including carpet, doors, trim, cabinetry, lighting and furnishings. All of this has been made possible by our generous members and supporters. As we approach Thanksgiving I am truly thankful for the support so many have given towards this project, meeting the recent challenge put forth by the Statzes. All together many individual gifts have come together to make one more exciting step happen. While there is still a ways to go, we have reached a major milestone and the Society can be proud of what has been done so far.

Year End Giving

AS the year 2011 comes to a close in just a few short weeks, please consider giving a year-end gift to the Sauk County Historical Society. While our fiscal year ends on August 31, donations are welcomed year-round and can be designated for special projects like the History Center renovations, maintenance of the Van Orden mansion or given towards general operations. Without the generous support of our members the SCHS would not be able to fulfill its mission to collect, preserve and share Sauk County history. The Society is supported by general memberships, bequests, donations, memorials and even gifts of stock.

Challenge Met!

Drywall installed at History Center

THE challenge grant put forth by Society members Dave and Denise Statz has been met and exceeded by the generous donations of other Society members. By the time this newsletter reaches you the Sauk County History Center will have been drywalled, textured and painted marking a major milestone in the renovation



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History Center donations since our last newsletter. Donation levels are cumulative – for a complete listing of donors please visit our website

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Forty people attended a Greenfield Town History Night in early October. The event was the second in a series of town history nights that the Society plans on conducting throughout the county. Town residents learn about the history of their town and are invited to share memories and items of interest.



A crowd of ninety people packed the Van Orden mansion for a presentation October 6 by Earl Wichern describing his 1939 bicycle trip to New York City with his friends Ken Harvey and Bob Schult. Wichern wrote a book about the experience titled, "Life in the Slow Track". He has formally gifted the publishing rights to the book to the Sauk County Historical Society. Earl was presented with a vintage 1939 World's Fair pennant, and the evening was rounded out with a musical presentation by Craig Bruesewitz who had written a song about the 1939 adventure.

New Board Member Welcomed

THE Sauk County Historical Society would like to welcome our newest board member, Becky Penberthy-Hovde. Becky is originally from the Dodgeville area. She noted that, "I grew up with history all around me and many older relatives to share their stories. I am presently the family historian and story keeper as well." Her day job is project assistant with the Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Program and her fun jobs are scrapbooking, history, reading and being grandma to 4 kids. Becky fell in love with the log church at the Pioneer Log Village near Reedsburg. She and her husband Jim were married in a church very similar near Dodgeville thirteen years ago. This led to a place on the board of directors at the Reedsburg Area Historical Society where she writes grants and does event planning for the Log Village. Becky said that, "The Village has become my 'spa' over this past year, and I always feel recharged when I am there, cleaning and planning and just enjoying the atmosphere and artifacts." She said that the next challenge at the Village is to raise funds to install running water and to bring the restrooms from the 1700s to the twenty-first century.

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Duckens Tombstone Dedicated

JOHN Duckens, a one-time slave from Kentucky, lived in Baraboo during the latter part of the 19th Century, where he died in 1894. His memory was honored recently with the replacement of the deteriorated gravestone that marks his final resting place in Walnut Hill Cemetery. Sauk County Historical Society President Paul Wolter welcomed 33 people to the ceremony and explained why the old, unreadable stone needed to be replaced. He noted that SCHS members saw that the marker was almost illegible during last summer's Cemetery Tour. A fund was started and sufficient funds were quickly gathered to replace the marker. Bill Harris, portraying John Duckens, spoke of the life and times of the former slave who had to sell his property near Mauston to exempt himself from the Civil War draft after being denied entrance into the Union Army because of his race. Harris then removed the shroud covering the new stone, as Wolter read John Duckens' obituary. Harris closed the ceremony by leading those present in a brief prayer.

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www.saukcountyhistory.org

100-year Old Barn gets New Home



THIS octagon barn, located in Honey Creek Township, is being dismantled and will soon find a new home in Texas. Owner Palma Walker sold the barn recently, and Craig Roost, a timber frame carpenter, has been deconstructing the building. The addition on the left was added in 1923 for hay storage. Found inscribed under one of the roof boards was the name, Ed Zick, who with his crew, built around 50 barns in the area. Earlier this fall, a videographer and producer for Public Broadcasting, was at the farm to document the history of the 85-foot wide barn and its owners. The program will be seen on PBS next summer. Until 1977 the barn was used for milk-

ing. Eighty-five percent of the barn will be salvaged, and shipped to Texas on flatbeds, to ultimately become an addition to a late 1700s Spanish American home. Roost, using mostly a crowbar and hammer, has been working on the barn since mid-September and the roof will be removed using a large crane sometime in November. It's fortunate that this one small part of Sauk County's history will live on and begin a new life, albeit, in another part of the country. Its ultimate fate could have been much worse. As milk producers consolidate, more and more old barns are being abandoned and crumbling to dust. This unique structure, fortunately, will not meet that ultimate fate.

Indian-Pioneer Day at Sauk Prairie

THE annual Indian-Pioneer Day was held at Sauk Prairie recently. Area fourth graders were conducted on tours of historic locations in the Sauk Prairie area, with re-enactors describing their part in the community's early history. Shown here, Jim and Bettie Reis describe Native American life and culture. Other historic presentations included topics on the Civil War, early printing, a Magic Lantern show, railroad history, blacksmithing, and a collection of privy (outhouse) related books and artifacts. Historic locations open for tours were the Prairie House, built in 1851, the old railway depot, the Tripp Museum, Bonham Theater, and the Sauk City and Prairie du Sac libraries.



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Own a Piece of Reedsburg History

THE Reedsburg Public Library is offering a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to purchase a piece of Reedsburg's historic past. For the first time ever, bound volumes of Reedsburg newspapers (1872-1987) will be available to purchase. These bound newspapers are duplicate copies of the Reedsburg Free Press, Reedsburg Times and Reedsburg Times Press and the library no longer has room to store them. The Friends of the Reedsburg Library Group decided to use them as a fundraiser rather than recycling the newspapers. Find out what happened the year you were born or on your anniversary. Antique paper and vintage ads are great for art and craft projects. Take a walk down memory lane—all reasons to invest in one of these rare volumes.

Newspaper volumes will be available Saturday, December 3rd from 9 am -1 pm in the Library's Community Room. The suggested donation per volume is \$25. Proceeds benefit the Library's Collection. For more information you can contact the library at 768-7323, visit the library online at www.reedsburglibrary.org or stop in at 370 Vine St. Reedsburg to see a sample volume.

We Care Program

The Sauk County Historical Society receives a percentage of all of the dollars spent by everyone who has SCHS designated on their Pierces Supermarket Reward Card. Pierces is having all their customers renew their cards so now is a good time to designate SCHS as the charity receiving your percentage. To do this, use the number 1092 as your charity when you fill out the enrollment.

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