

Museum Messenger

January/February 2009

• January 23-25

HyVee Fundraiser Days

MCHS HyVee Fundraiser Days—January 23-25, 2009

The Mower County Historical Society and HyVee are pairing up to help raise money for the historical society! Between January 23-25, take the inserted blue ticket into the Austin HyVee store and have 5% of your purchase those days go directly to MCHS! This is a great fundraising opportunity for MCHS. Even better, it will

not cost MCHS anything for the fundraiser! This is a pure profit opportunity for our organization. Please take the blue ticket to your Austin HyVee store between those days. Every little bit helps! Also, if you would like to go more than one day or know of someone who would like to help, stop by the office and pick

up additional blue tickets! Let's get MCHS off on the right foot for 2009 by making this a successful fundraising opportunity!!

Inside this issue:

President's Thoughts 2

Membership News, Donations, & Artifact Donations 2-3

From the Desk of the Director 3

MCHS Event Photos 4

The English Corner with Edna 5

Front Porch Reminiscence with Sue 7

2009 Membership Information 8

Christmas in the County is a record breaker!

This year marked the 4th annual Christmas in the County event. It was by far our most successful event ever! MCHS raised over \$1900 through this event and it was much appreciated! One change that was made this year was starting the bake sale on Friday night. It proved to be a wonderful move! With over 80 bakers donating their baked goods for the sale, it contributed greatly to our success. One baker even tested out a new recipe just for us! At closing time on Saturday evening, there was only one and

a half trays of cookies left along with about 2 dozen candy bags! The event also sparked a few thrifty customers who came to bid on our silent auction. We had a total of 24 auction items that brought in a great deal of money for us. Items ranged from hat and mittens to a dog treat basket to Christmas wreaths. All of these items went over exceptionally well. This year we also raffled off a bear tree. The raffle proved to be a great success as well. Of course, our Christmas in the County event would not be complete without a sleigh or wagon ride! We had four teams turn out for the event. The owners of the teams were Don Konken, Jeff Witt & Diana Stone, Gordy Hjelman, and Dwight & Vicki Smith.



Steve Viotor helping out this little one with pulling the whistle on the train!

It was a joy for all to get a chance to ride along in the snow with family members. MCHS has always used our Christmas in the County as a fun-filled, family event. The 2008 event proved to be just that with around 400 people coming to enjoy the nice weather with family and friends. Thank you to all who made this a special day!

Volunteers Sharon Ellingson, Mary Renchin, and Josie Cummings helping out at the bake sale.



President's Thoughts—



**Barbara K. Lewis
President**

This will be my final President Thoughts article. I have been on the board for three years. In those years I have been the acting director, secretary and President for two years. In this time I have worked with three directors who have all brought their own special interests and expertise to the position. It continues to amaze me to hear from individuals in our community say, "Where is the Historical Society located?" I really try to keep my cool and respond with a positive response. I do think that those who have found us through our events which have become annual, and visiting our center during the open doors at fair time, are becoming our voice throughout the county. We need to continue to spread the word about our exceptional facility.

As I look back on the past three years there are some very special times that will bring heart warming thoughts about the Historical Society. One of those times was our first time of being involved with the United Way Day of Caring. We had a fantastic group of 15 people

from the Blandin Foundation training group, who came with shovels, rakes, trimmers, work gloves and ENTHUSIASM and spent the entire day helping the staff and board members, clean, wash windows, remove old shrubbery, trim bushes, clean out the top of the Headquarters building of water soaked magazines and papers, move artifacts from that upstairs down into the display area. The Board members, staff and this team did an amazing job of giving the Historical Society grounds and buildings some very well deserved TLC. Flowers and plants were moved and planted in the many containers by the buildings. Trees were trimmed; brush and weeds were moved out. Many workers went home that day with blisters and sore backs.

The special events that have become annual include the Spring Bonnet Tea, the Fourth of July Parade units, The Teddy Bear Picnic, The Fall Harvest, and finally the Christmas In the County have grown to be great assets to the Society, not only because they help to raise funds for the Society but, because they

have helped people become aware of what a special place we have and that these grounds, buildings, and artifacts are treasures of the MOWER COUNTY RESIDENTS. During these events I have been fortunate to work along side many volunteers. These people have become friends that I meet and look forward to seeing.

We now have a very special time in November, our Annual Meeting Dinner which now has an attendance of 45-60 people. I remember my first annual meeting in the Administration building which had an attendance of the board members and 4 other members.

This Society is a place where staff members Edna, Sue, and now Dustin, present and past Executive Board members come together for one cause and in the words of former President Frank Bridges, "to do what is in the best interest for the Mower County Historical Society."

I look forward to serving three more years on the Board and working with all of my new friends at all our special events.

2009 MCHS Board of Directors

Barbara Lewis
Cathy Roser
Kathryn Paine
Stan Aldrich
Dave Spinler
Garry Ellingson
Jeff Austin
Paul Sween

Bill Lewis
Don Chapek
DeWayne Habermann
Don Konken
Diana Stone
Miguel Garate
Josie Cummings

MCHS Staff

Dustin Heckman, Director
Edna Hill, Museum Assistant
Sue Doocy, Museum Assistant

Memorials

Betty Lewis from her 500 Card Club

Deceased Members

Kenneth Mudra

Donations

Chuck Wilson
Ivan & Mary Witt
Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation
Bryan & Carol Green
Frank & Carol Bridges
Austin Area Foundation
Hormel Foundation
Leon & Phyllis Jacobson
Scott Felten
Custodio Semunoll
Beverly Smith

From the desk of the Director—

Let me begin my article by saying that I hope all of you had a happy and wonderful holiday season! I know here at the historical society, we had an amazing holiday season. In December, we held our 4th annual Christmas in the County event. This was by far our most successful Christmas in the County ever! We raised over \$1900 through this event! Thank you to all of the wonderful volunteers and businesses who helped make this event a huge success! I would also like to welcome three new board members whom were elected at our Annual Meeting in November. They are Paul Sween, Don Konken, and Josie Cummings. Welcome aboard! Also, Barb Lewis was reelected to her second term and we are glad she agreed to stay on! Sadly, we said goodbye to board members Ben Christians and Jack Thill. I would like to thank

both Ben and Jack for their service over the years. We will miss you both!

We are now turning our attention to our MAP visit in February. A little over a year and a half ago, MCHS applied for a grant to have an evaluator visit our site and give an assessment of our historical society. This visit is extremely important to us! It will give our staff and Board of Directors a chance to get an outside view of our organization and find ways to improve your historical society to better serve the public. When I was at the Martin County Historical Society, I went through such an evaluation. It is great to have larger organizations offer programs that help the smaller ones become better organizations. It will take a few months to get the report back from the evaluator but we

should know by the end of the summer how we stand.

I would like to also make a personal plea to all our members. As everyone is well aware, the economy is not doing well. As of yet, MCHS has not felt the crunch from it, but we expect to in the coming months. Forecasters are saying that by mid-year 2009, nonprofits will begin to feel the crunch. In order for us to keep going along in the coming months, we are going to be depending on donations and memberships more than ever! Membership renewal letters were sent out in December. If you haven't renewed for 2009, I urge you to do so. If it is within your respective means, please consider upgrading your membership to a higher level. Every little bit helps! Also, to our life and pioneer members, please consider becoming annual members. Annual



Dustin B. Heckman
Executive Director

memberships give us a little extra boost each year by increasing the revenue we can expect from year to year. If you would like to learn more about membership levels, please feel free to call me anytime. Remember, all donations and memberships are **TAX DEDUCTIBLE!** As I said before, every little bit can go a long way!

New & Renewed Members

Lynn & Kristine Allas
Austin Main Street Project
Anne Jelinek
Russell Freund
Cynthia Witzigman
Betty Armstrong
Don Chapek
Donald Lagas
DeWayne Habermann
Don Bertilson
Gayle & LaVonne Bergstrom
Glenn & Shirley Tapp
Glen Davis
Arnold & Linda Felton
Frank Gerlach
Jeff Witt & Diana Stone
Don & Leah Konken
Russell & Cheryl Potter
Nevada Township
Norman & Shirley Bergman
Damel Corporation Inc.
Donna Pauley
Valeria Maloney
Donald & Sharon Merten
Carol Volstad
Sherwood & Marilyn Vereide
Edna Hill
David Ebertz
Norman Sween
Kathleen Stanton
Leon & Phyllis Jacobson

John & Elaine Wagner
Joan Coffman
Marty & Laura Helle
Robert & Colleen Weimer
Laverne & Jane Felten
Charles & Maureen Steenblock
Cynthia Scott
Richard Riles
Margaret Madson
Don Richardson
Ron & Janice Smalley
Ben & Gladys Christians
Mark Wolterman
Joyce Halver
John & Virginia Locher
David Hillier
Edwin Koppen
Miguel Garate
Paul & Susan Sween
Bryan & Carol Green
Mark & Sandra Ashley
LaVonne Griffin
Elaine Mentel
Jay Lutz & Kelly Rush
Bruce & Reilly Loesch
Terry & Sue Doocy
Virginia Bissen
David Schlichting
Janet Gaughran
Joyce Peterson
Marilyn Noel

Charlotte Braaten
Inman & Lois Hesla
Jeff & Kathy Helle
Chris & Cathy Roser
Gaylord Hinderaker
Richard & Colette Chaffee
Marjorie Mudra
D. Jeanne Winslow
Richard & Kay Smaby
Beverly Smith

Artifact Donations

Dick Pacholl
Elaine Stockdale
Elaine Bicking
Donna Robbins
Ben Bednar
Rosalee Storvick
Tom Forstner
Beverly Meyer
Mary Frances Jones
Dorothy Owens
Erwin Schmidt
Virgil Stone
Sister Bernadine Jax

More photos from Christmas in the County!



Santa making a new friend!



Gordy and his beautiful ponies!

Family fun! A grandfather and granddaughter making a Christmas countdown chain together.



Photos from our Annual Meeting—November 6, 2008



Ben Christians accepting an award for his service on the Board of Directors.

Musical entertainment was provided by the group 2nd Edition.



Members enjoying some time together before the meeting starts.



Edna accepting her Leadership Award from President Barb Lewis. Way to go, Edna!



The English Corner with Edna—



Edna Hill
Museum Assistant

Hello and Happy New Year. I do hope your Christmas was a good one for you and your family. I spent the 25th with son number one in Hayward and his family, with five girls, a son and his wife and baby girl (my great granddaughter). Needless to say it was a fun filled day. The 26th, with son number two, his wife and his three (Jenny & brothers.)

Traditionally, 26th Dec. for me is called Boxing Day. No not the fisty cuffs of boxing. Let me explain. Go back in time when there was the big manor houses and usually the house staff would be hired from the local villagers, maids and suchlike, would be live-in-staff, perhaps going home for ½ a day once a month. For the holiday season the – Big house – would be filled with guests, which needless to say staff worked non-stop preparing for the holidays, no Christmas day for them. So the 26th was usually for the staff, after a big

breakfast house guest often would go out on a days hunt and with no lunch to have to prepare, the staff could enjoy their day with a festive lunch in the staff hall and a chance for them to open their Christmas boxes. Hence, Boxing Day. Also, often a time to visit. Also in England it's the start of the pantomime season, another English tradition. I miss this one.

With today's economy I think maybe a lot of people didn't have such good times. Let's hope 2009 will be a better year.

God bless you all and a healthy New Year.

The following was found in the 1921 newspaper: *Austin Daily Herald*

A Dollar Bill

Crinkle, Crinkle little Bill
Goodness Gracious are you ill?

Are you loosing all your power
You get weaker by the hour.
"Now, that prices are so high
I'm so tired that I could die
Just circulate all day
No one dares put me away.
When the evening board is set
with the fruits of father's sweat.
My small voice is hushed and still
I am in the butcher's till.
And no matter where I go
People disregard me so
I don't seem to count for much.
'Mongst the profiteers and such"
Bill! Take heart, your luck may
change,
I'll admit the times are strange
Though you're weak "I love you
still"

Need bird or squirrel corn?

We have some left for \$3 a bag.

Want some colored corn?

**We have some of that too! 50 cents per ear
or \$1 for 3 ears!**

Memorial or Gift Donation

I'm happy to enclose a gift to be used by MCHS to carry forward the objectives of the society, namely to discover, collect, preserve, and disseminate knowledge about the history of Mower County and to relate it to the history of the State of Minnesota.

I've enclosed a \$_____ memorial in abiding memory of _____.

My name_____

Family Address_____

Address_____

City/State/Zip_____

City/State/Zip_____

_____ Check here if you do not wish to have your name printed in the Museum Messenger with this gift.

Mail Donation to: Mower County Historical Society, 1303 6th Avenue SW, Austin, MN 55912

Shopping at MCHS

Austin 150th Anniversary Pictorial

Variety of Books

1004 Locomotive DVD

Panoramic photos of Downtown Austin

City of Austin & Mower County Afghans

Variety of photos, post cards and maps

2008—2009 Keep the Doors Open Sponsors

Platinum Level Sponsors

Clayton Township
Millie Moeller
Wagner Construction Company

Gold Level Sponsors

Nevada Township
Hormel Foods
Tradexpos
Stacy Bennett, Efremov, Russia
Udolpho Township
Austin Township
Lansing Township
Barbara K. Lewis

Silver Level Sponsors

Windom Township
Racine Township
David Spinler Construction Inc.
Red Rock Township
Dexter Township
Bill and Sharon Lewis
Akkerman, Inc.
Witt Fabrication
Adams Township
Super Fresh Produce/Garden Center
Johnson Floral
Lou's Forever Framing
Home Federal Savings Bank



Here is a new microfilm reader/printer that we purchased with a grant from the Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation! Now you can view microfilm and print it also straight from the machine!

Bronze Sponsors

Twin Towers Craft Room
Viking Glass and Lock
Fox Electric Company
Austin Newspapers Inc.
Farmers State Bank of Elkton
Mower Co. Vehicle Registration
Anderson Memorials
Baudler, Baudler, Maus & Blahnik
Ulven's Ace Hardware
Kenny's Oak Grill
Sergeant Township
Lloyd & Ramona Swenson
C.O. Brown Agency
First Farmers & Merchants, Brownsdale
Hoversten, Johnson, Beckmann & Hovey
Medgaardens Southwest Sales
Pleasant Valley Township
Nystrom Signs
Mower County Farm Bureau
Mower County Framers Mutual Insurance
Daryl and Rae Ann Peterson
American Family Insurance—Jeff Austin
Smythe Companies Inc.



Above you will see a new laptop that we purchased with a grant from the Austin Area Foundation. A big thank you goes to both groups for helping us get new technology to work with!

Front Porch Reminiscence with Sue—

It began to look a lot like Christmas when MCHS board members strung Christmas lights around the museum buildings, and Steve Vietor and the Vo Tech Electrical Class lit the inside of the church and the 1004 engine.

Super Fresh and Johnson Floral decorated Christmas trees in museum buildings.

Dept. of Corrections Bill Klingerman and crew, and the Mower County Highway Department cleared snow away from around MCHS buildings, sidewalks, street and parking areas in preparation for MCHS fundraiser Christmas in the County.

Christmas in the County was a time to imagine when going to town was an event, visit friends and family, stock up on staples and pick-up the mail. Like earlier generations going to the train station, our visitors rode on horse or

mule-drawn wagons and bobsled, sleigh bells ringing, singing Christmas Carols along with the drivers, Don Konken, Jeff Witt, Dwight Smith and Gordy Hjelman.

People of all ages boarded the decorated passenger car, cold as it must have been in days gone by until loaded with passengers and the doors closed to maintain some of the warmth gathered by people and their wraps.

Children's faces lit up as they pulled the cords and heard the clanging of the bell or the whistle blow on the 1004 engine. Steve Veitor and Jim Tischer were the engineers for the day, helping the children. We are thankful for the loan of the Mower County Highway Department's air compressor to operate the whistle.

Yes, when people see the train, their eyes light up like a kid who just saw

Santa Claus wink at them before disappearing into the chimney. Speaking of Santa, he was there! Did you see him? Children shared hugs and Christmas wishes, and they were all very good this year.

Christmas carols song by Kris Allas lulled our visitors into the Christmas spirit as they warmed up with a cup of cider, chili and hot dogs. Children were able to take a bit of Christmas home by decorating sugar cookies, making pinecone bird feeders, Christmas chains and glittering snowflakes. Every sweet tooth in the county could have satisfied their cravings with their choice of baked goods, cookies, candy, pop corn balls and little krispee rice bears, lefse, rosettes and so much more to satisfy their hunger thanks to the talented 80-plus bakers and servers.

There were door prizes and a



Sue Doocy
Museum Assistant

chance to win a charming Beary Christmas tree created by the talented Barb Lewis, along with bidding at the silent auction of a variety of Christmas wreath and gift items.

Christmas in the County was a big event for us this year. It takes a community of hardworking friends and volunteers to prepare and put on an enjoyable and successful event. Thank you every one, bakers, decorators, donors, friends and helpers for all your hard work.

2008—2009 Ag Building Sponsors

Hodgeman Drainage Claremont	Absolut Energy	Northern Country Coop	Mower County Dairy Association
Albert Lea Seed House	Don Chapek Shady Lane Farms	Dave's JD's	Freeborn Mower Cooperative Services
Mower/Fillmore County Soybean Growers	Klouse Concrete Construction	M&H Tent Rentals	Pioneer Sales Representatives
Hanson Tire Service Inc. of LeRoy	POET	Tucker Tiling	Patterson Seed LTD
Prinsco	ThermoKing	SoyMor	Witt Fabrication
PUT	YOUR	NAME	HERE

Where the Present Meets the Past.

**MOWER COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

1303 6th Avenue SW
Austin, MN 55912

Phone: 507-437-6082

Fax: 507-437-6082

E-mail: mchs@smig.net

www2.smig.net/mchistory/index



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Austin, Minnesota
Permit No. 150

**HyVee Fundraiser
Days for MCHS**

**Friday, January 23
Saturday, January 24
Sunday, January 25**

**Don't forget your
blue ticket!**



**Thank you
everyone for
your support in
2008!**

2009 Memberships are due!

Membership Levels Available

Individual \$15 Family \$25 Business \$50

Sponsor Levels Available (includes a membership)

Ag Building Sponsor \$250
Keep the Doors Open Bronze \$100-\$249.99
Keep the Doors Open Silver \$250-\$499.99
Keep the Doors Open Gold \$500-\$749.99
Keep the Doors Open Diamond \$750-\$999.99
Keep the Doors Open Platinum \$1,000 & UP

Contact Dustin to discuss sponsorship incentives & opportunities!