

Museum Messenger

- May 16
MCHS Clean-up Day
- May 25
Office Closed
- June 26
Wagon Train Fundraiser
Dinner
- July 3
Office Closed
- July 12
Teddy Bear Picnic

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May/June 2009

Repairs Planned to Mark Caboose's 100th Birthday

As our Milwaukee Road caboose reaches the century mark this year, MCHS is putting together plans to keep it looking



good for quite a few more! Starting May 1, the historical society has started seeking bids to replace the worn siding on the east and west sides along with the cupola.

MCHS expects that the project will cost between \$4,000-\$5,000, based on

figures given during our MAP assessment in February.

If you are able to make a donation to this project, please consider doing so. This piece of history fits well with our current collection of railroad cars and is important to preserve. We hope to make it a great year for its 100th birthday!

Volunteers Needed for Special Projects!

The historical society is looking for volunteers to assist with projects all summer long!

MCHS will begin a collections inventory in order to place artifacts into our Past Perfect software. The idea of the inventory was brought up during our recent MAP (Museum Assessment Program) visit.

Besides the obvious advantage of knowing where every single item in our collection is, we also will find out if there are some items that are more suitable for other museums rather than our own. We may also find items that we did not know we had and can now be displayed!

We are looking for volunteers to assist with this project. Volunteers would assist with collecting information on artifacts.

This can include working in a team to record each item in all the buildings or going through accession records to determine the original owner of each artifact. The inventory will begin on June 1. On May 28 at 1 PM, interested volunteers will need to attend a training session to learn how the project will be carried out. We will be organizing everyone into "teams" of 2-3 people. So grab a friend or two and lend a helping hand!

Along with the inventory, we are looking for volunteers to staff our buildings during Fair

Week, August 11-16. We will operate in three shifts each day for each building. Also, we will need volunteers to assist with vehicle parking.

If you would like to help out, please contact the staff during regular hours.



President's Thoughts—



Barbara K. Lewis
President

Each time I set myself down to write this article for our Newsletter, I find myself wondering what I should put on the paper. Today as I was looking through a magazine I saw "The Way It Was" as the headline of an article. In that article were pictures of times past when farmers, work crews for the railroad, farm families, and women of the prairies were preparing for spring. Our Historical Society is continually preparing for some type of special event, setting up for a tour, repairing something, cleaning, painting, grounds upkeep, filing, completing forms for grants, and helping those who come to the office to search out their families past.

It is spring at our Historical Society and that means time for all who are interested in making sure

the Mower County Historical Society buildings and grounds are ready to welcome all who enter.

On **Saturday, May 16th** board members and their families and friends of MCHS will meet at the Historical Society with their grass clippers, trimmers, work gloves, shovels, rakes, trailers, pickups, saws, and what ever tool they think they will need to give MCHS a special "**Day of Caring**". I hope that anyone who reads this article might take some time to come to help give MCHS some special **Tender Loving Care**.

Come and spend as much time as you can share. We have gardens that need help, bushes that need trimming, buildings that need dusting, storage places that need cleaning. One of the best things of all in joining in on this TLC day is you make new

friends, see items on display that you have never noticed before, and have fun working together for a very special place in Mower County.

I remember as a little girl "The Way It Was" when neighbors would join together to help each other get fields ready to plant. I remember when mom would prepare a meal for extra men who would come to help at our farm. I remember when spring came and families would get together to do special things for our rural school and all the fun we all had working together.

Come join us on May 16th at The Mower County Historical Society and then you can say "I remember the way it was the day I helped out for the TLC Day."

2009 MCHS Board of Directors

Executive Board

Barbara Lewis	President
Stan Aldrich	Vice President
Cathy Roser	Secretary
Diana Stone	Treasurer

Directors

Don Chapek	DeWayne Habermann
Bill Lewis	Kathy Paine
Dave Spinler	Jeff Austin
Garry Ellingson	Miguel Garate
Josie Cummings	Don Konken
Paul Sween	

MCHS Staff

Dustin Heckman, Executive Director
Sue Doocy, Museum Assistant

Memorials

Daisy Grundy from Monica Lonergan
Ella Marie Lausen from Dorothea Guiney
Mary Hill from Harold & Kathy Paine
Marilyn Brandeland from Gene & Polly Jelinek

Donations

Colleen Weimer
Kathleen Sherman
Don & Leah Konken
Leon & Phyllis Jacobson
Dean Ulland
Mower County
Chris & Cathy Roser
Freeborn-Mower Operation Round Up

Director's Dispatch—

The pace is starting to pick up at the historical society as we prepare for another busy summer season!

Spring Bonnet Tea (photos in the next newsletter!), Clean-up Day, school tours, parades, and the Friendship Wagon Train dinner fundraiser. These are just the events for May and June! Check out the back page for information on upcoming events, like the GAR Hall being open during Meadowfest!

Speaking of the GAR Hall, did you know that ours is only one of two that remain in the state? This makes our building extra special to us and the community of Grand Meadow. If you've never seen this building,

which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, please stop by to check it out. It is definitely a Mower County jewel!

Also, if you have never attended one of our special events, why not try to make one or two this year? With everyone tightening their belts, consider taking a "stay-cation" this year rather than the big family trip! Check out our upcoming events on the back page and consider stopping by for some family fun!

I recently received the latest edition of *The History Channel Magazine*. From it I'd like to share a quote

from the editor, James M. Tarbox.

"As they are for home-town residents everywhere, the local attractions always are just 'there,' with seemingly plenty of time to stop in. Trips to distant attractions beckon, and we don't discount the road trip's enduring appeal. But somehow time to visit the local sites never seems to materialize, and its always in the wake of such disasters (last year's flooding in Iowa) that we finally learn what we've lost. So here's a plea to take advantage of your local historic sites, support them however you might—both volunteer help and financial aid are eagerly sought and gratefully accepted—and appreciate how truly fragile



Dustin B. Heckman
Executive Director
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our collective past is before it's too late."

This quote could never ring more true! I look forward to seeing as many of you as I can this summer at the historical society!

New & Renewed Members

Kenny's Oak Grill
Ulven's Ace Hardware
Akkerman Inc.
Patterson Seed LTD
Brian Klouse
Paul Huber
Windom Township
Udolpho Township
Harold & Kathy Paine
Lee Bonorden
Pete Werner
Dean Ulland
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Sargeant Township
Adams Township
Clayton Township
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Fox Electric Co.
Mower County Farm Bureau

Michael Helebrant
Patricia Stevens
Chad Gordon
Klouse Concrete Construction
Brian & Betty Beckstrand
Dave Young & Judy Gost
Tucker Tiling & Construction
Harvey & Alice Sathre
Pleasant Valley Township
Jean Legried
Racine Township
Red Rock Township
Dexter Township
Susan Horgen
Richard Jennings
Viking Glass & Lock
U.S. Bank
Bill & Bev Houston

Do you have Facebook?



Become a fan of MCHS on Facebook and get the latest updates on events! You can also check out events photos there! Don't forget to tell your friends about us!

**What's happening at the museum?
Check out our event photos!**



Students from Lyle High School on County Government Day—March 24



Austin & Pacelli High Schools checking out an exhibit in the Pioneer Building.



Southland High School rounded out the County Government Day tours. Here students are checking out displays in the Indian Building.



The Austin CVB brought a group from Lester Prairie on April 1.



Barb Lewis sprucing up the school for tour season. Writing on the chalkboard must have brought back a few memories for the former teacher. Thanks to Barb, Edna, & Colleen for cleaning the school!



Volunteers Bev Meyer and Barb Langan putting the newsletter together. Thanks to our newsletter crews for making the process easy!

County History in the Display —

Being here at the Mower County Historical Society is a continual learning experience. There is something to learn every day. Sometimes, it's just a little tidbit about a little glass object people used to use to wash out their eye. Or it is a story of how someone moved to Mower County and set up shop, becoming a prominent citizen of the community.

Dealing with history and artifacts is going to be an ongoing learning experience, with daily choices to be made. Choices like why we display the things we do, the way we do?

One of the first things I learned here is that it is not good for artifacts to be displayed year round, every day, and exposed to the elements of harsh lighting and uncontrolled temperatures. Like people, artifacts need to rest from time to time.

The second thing I learned was that people get bored with the same thing year after year. And, yet again, some people don't like change when they have a favorite display they like to see.

Third, less is better. Even when I go into the Pioneer Museum building, there is so much there, I can't remember all that I've seen. Smaller displays tell a better story. Like the display I saw over in Chippewa Falls Museum with a display on the history of aprons. The simple display of aprons told all the things aprons were used for, from drying a child's tears to collecting eggs from the hen house.

Next, is deciding if a 50-year-old object is displayed looking brand-new or the way it is. What is the story? It may take a little research. Some time to listen, to study, but the story is there. An example is of a desk with the varnish worn off where the book keeper brushed his forearms across the desk, where he spilled his jar of ink, accidentally while working late, or the spot where he threw a dart at a cartoon face when taking a break. (I made this up, but I listened to the "Tale of Two Counties" and there were strange things that happened in the area.)

There are questions to ask about each object. Who used this? Did they pass this object down through the

generations, who each in turn used it? Treasured it? Where do they fit in the telling of Mower County history? How do we tell the story? How did the object work, or how was it used?

Another example is of a farmer who worked with horses and equipment that may not have been ready to change when tractors became available, but their sons were. Do we want it to look like it came directly out of the factory or do we want it to look used, but well cared for? Like a farmer, who mended his equipment but could not afford to put on a new coat of paint every year.

Finally, for the objects and things that are not displayed, how to store them and where? Proper storage containers of acid free material and climate controlled areas are the best to protect each item while they rest for a season or two, but accessible when designing a new display or for those who wish to see it from time to time.

So much to learn, so much potential to share Mower County's history.



Sue Doocy
Museum Assistant
mchs@smig.net

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

1004 Locomotive DVD

City of Austin & Mower County Afghans

Variety of Books

Panoramic photos of Downtown Austin

Variety of photos, post cards and maps

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Hoversten, Johnson, Beckmann & Hovey
Medgaarden's Southwest Sales
Nystrom Signs
Mower County Farm Bureau
Mower County Framers Mutual Insurance
Daryl and Rae Ann Peterson
American Family Insurance—Jeff Austin
Smyth Companies Inc.
Harvey & Alice Sathre

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!**

Volunteer to help MCHS clean-up the museum grounds on Saturday, May 16. Work begins at 9:30 AM and will go until 4 PM. If you can be of any help, contact Dustin or Sue at the office by calling 437-6082. Projects will range from yard work, building cleaning, and other miscellaneous projects. Bring a friend and make a day of it!



MCHS Puts Temporary Hold on Collecting

The staff and board of the historical society have decided to put a temporary moratorium on collecting artifacts for the collection. At the current time we have reached well beyond our capacity for holding objects. The moratorium went into effect April 1.

There are two exceptions to this moratorium. The first is that we will continue to collect archival items and

photos. Archival items include manuscripts, records, diaries, and other items useful for research. Our second exception is for pieces that are extremely rare and would be valuable pieces of history for the historical society.

The moratorium will continue through the end of 2009. If you have a valuable item that you are considering donating, we ask that if you can, please hold it until the

moratorium is lifted. We hope that once the inventory is complete, we will better understand what items are currently housed at MCHS and certain items that we may be looking for.

We also hope that this will not discourage anyone from offering items to our organization. This process is in place so that we can ensure that we are being responsible stewards of our existing collection. Please watch for updates

later this year as to when the moratorium is lifted.

**Check out
Dustin's show on
Our Story TV**

[http://
www.ourstorymn.co
m/select_time.html](http://www.ourstorymn.com/select_time.html)



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Where the Present Meets the Past.

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HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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Upcoming Events

- May 16 MCHS Clean-up Day 9:30 AM start time
(see page 6 for more information)
- June 26 Wagon Train Dinner Fundraiser 5:30-7:00
- June 27 GAR Hall open in Grand Meadow 10 AM-1:30 PM
- June 28 GAR Hall opened by Grand Meadow Lions
- July 12 Teddy Bear Picnic

Watch for updates in the local papers!

**Check out your address label.
If it is highlighted, then your membership is due!**

Membership Levels Available

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

Sponsor Levels Available (includes a membership)

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Sponsorships need to be paid by May 31 for 2009-2010 campaigns!