



# McFarland Historical Society

5814 MAIN STREET MCFARLAND, WISCONSIN 53558 PH: 608-838-3992  
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## Memorial Day Bake Sale at the Museum

Our traditional bake sale will start at 10:00 A.M. on Memorial Day. Donated homemade pies, breads, cakes and cookies will be offered for sale. This sale provides the society with much needed cash to pay for gas and electric utilities for the museum. The museum is open for touring from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. and then every Sunday, thereafter, from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. through September.

Donations to the bake sale are gratefully accepted! Baked goods should be delivered to the museum on Sunday, May 27, 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. and on Monday morning May 28, 8:00 -10:00 A.M.

The Memorial Day Parade, sponsored by the American Legion, starts out at noon from the Catholic church, travels south on Main Street and turns right down Farwell Street ending at the American Legion Hall.

Check out the new McFarland agriculture display at the museum and enjoy the parade and festivities with friends and family.

Thank you! Dale Marsden , President

## Dear Friends of the McFarland Historical Society,

From bake sales, to constructing displays, to documenting oral histories, to entering data on the computer, to docenting and hosting, and organizing, and on and on through the many tasks that are required to keep a museum going, you responded with a will! 29 of you said that you want to be our Friends, and we are pleased to welcome you!

Already, Wes Licht, has Friends busy helping with displays relating to this year's theme, Farms of Long Ago. We also have new Friends helping to collect oral histories from people who have lived on area farms.

Others of you will be contacted soon by board members who have volunteered to head up various tasks. As the need comes up you will be introduced to tasks you volunteered to help with. We hope to get you involved as soon as possible.

Following are the Board members and their areas of responsibility:

- Ginni Nichols - enter data on the computer
- Dale Marsden - organize storage, clean and preserve, electrical, special events,
- Virginia Dodson - special Events, bake sales,
- Wes Licht - construction, displays, docents, organise annual members tour, sort and identify.
- Christi Mykytyn - website, scrapbook/photo
- Crystal Lokken - document oral histories
- David Houghton - publicity
- Ken Brost - Sunday hosts
- Earl Anderson - outdoor maintenance

Many hands will make the work not only light, but fun! Not only will you be a friend of the museum but you will also make friends with those who share your interests. Your involvement will help you become even better acquainted with the many facets of our museum.

Thank you, Friends! \_\_\_\_\_

## Electronic Cataloging by Gini Nichols

The McFarland Historical Society is hoping to begin electronic cataloging of its artifacts, pictures, and printed materials. The Dane County Historical Society uses a program called Past Perfect to catalog their inventory. McFarland Historical Society hopes Past Perfect can help detail all our local holdings. Past Perfect is completely keyword searchable. Pictures and descriptions of objects can be linked. Reports can be printed based on the fields used in Past Perfect. Past Perfect also has a media package available for video and audio components. The McFarland Historical Society hopes to be working with other Historical Societies within Dane County to begin using this software in the near future.

## Obituary

We will miss **David Scheid**, a life member, who died while on vacation this winter. He leaves behind his wife and family who are very active in the village and and supportive members of the historical society.

## **Cub Scouts Visit the Museum** by David Houghton

On Sunday February 4 this past winter, members of Den 7 of Pack 53 spent the afternoon learning about McFarland's early settlers and their ancestors while touring the McFarland Historical Society. The Scouts were led on a guided tour by Historical Society Board Member David Houghton. Houghton provided the scouts with insight into many pieces in the Society's collection. The boys enjoyed learning about the Skare/Anderson family and hearing about how the family lived in the log cabin. On the cold February day, the boys got a taste of what it was like to winter in the cabin. The boys especially enjoyed the farming implements and the toy display. Attending the tour were Tiger Scouts: Alex Kvalheim, Ben Ruggles, Roy Stube and Carter Kreft along with some parents and other siblings. Cub leaders Tim Kreft and Ed Stube initiated the idea for this visit.

## **Pioneer Day** by Christi Mykytyn

On September 23, 2006, Pioneer Day was celebrated at the museum in conjunction with the Family Fun Festival. After the parade numerous volunteers demonstrated old world crafts and pastimes. In the museum, guests were welcomed with fresh churned butter by David Houghton, which tasted wonderful on the traditional lefse being made by Crystal Lokken and Christi Mykytyn. Around the corner Ken Dresang showed us the art of Rosemaling. Outside in the lovely sunshine Bob Bolle pressed apples for cider while Earl Anderson had an extensive display of antique toys and games of long ago. Celia Lamper-Linden spun wool and Dale Marsden showed us the tasks involved with beekeeping. Andy and Pat Anderson shared their intricate woodcarvings while Al Hund and the Olde Time Fiddlers provided the music for the afternoon. Under the shade of the trees behind the museum Ed Minihan hammered hot metal to demonstrate Blacksmithing. The festivities were topped off with horse and carriage rides provided by Wes and Jane Licht. The good weather continued through the afternoon and all had a good time.

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*Place  
Stamp  
here*

## **Collecting Oral Histories** by Crystal Lokken

Imagine milking cows by hand twice a day, butchering pigs, chickens and ducks, churning butter, planting 16 acres of tobacco behind a pair of horses, making meals for 12-15 workers at a time during threshing, or filling silos. These are just a few of the farm memories recalled and shared with some members of the McFarland Historical Society Board.

When the theme chosen for the Museum this year was Farming of Long Ago, we decided to interview people in the area who had grown up on farms or had lived on area farms all of their lives. Even as we did so, we realized the value of collecting oral histories on any subject, and we acknowledged that we had lost the valuable history of elders who had lived around here as recently as ten years ago and are no longer with us.

Because we hadn't had any instruction in gathering such histories we decided to jump in with both feet. It's not hard when old friends like Richard and Barbara Sperle are being interviewed! They were gracious and hospitable as they welcomed us into their home. Richard has a memory for details that reaches way back to the time when his father, Oscar, and his grandfather, Hans, farmed the same land! The stories were endless! We came away from that first interview with much enthusiasm.

Using some of the first questions and elaborating on them, we made up a questionnaire, "Remembering the Good Old Days on the Farm". We asked questions about crops, livestock, machinery, chores, planting and harvesting, windmills, food production, leisure time, and more. We interviewed Dori Sigglekow Matson, Betty Egener McConnell, Lorraine Halvorson Norby, Hattie Halvorson Simpson, Pat Edwards

Rossmann and Tura Hoel Graber about their local farms. We interviewed Dick and Connie Reiter because their family business, the McFarland Dairy, was closely related to early farm life. We also sent the questionnaire to people who live out of the area. Margaret Alsmo Ellestad Stolen returned a very complete report on her childhood on the Alsmo farm. A McFarland Historical Society board member, Earl Anderson went way beyond the questionnaire! He compiled a history of the farm he has lived on since he was born, complete with many interesting pictures.

The original intent of our interviews was to gather information about area farms in order to create the year's displays about dairying and tobacco raising. The information we have received from our farm families has been extremely interesting and they have been willing, enthusiastic and organized about sharing their memories. Now the plan is to compile these histories into a booklet to share with all who are interested in farm life in the area around McFarland.

People involved in local history have come to realize that the collecting of oral histories has value equal to the collecting of historical artifacts. It has become a science. On our part, we made up a simple process of collecting these oral histories by asking questions, taking notes and then transcribing them. That seemed to work very well for this project.

If any of our readers have farm experiences to share you

may request a questionnaire from Wes Licht at 838-7818 or Crystal Lokken at 838-7892.

## **New Board Members**

### **Crystal Lokken**

Even before she moved to McFarland from Berkeley, ECA last July, Crystal was invited to be a member of the Historical Society Board. Crystal grew up in McFarland in the same house she now lives in. She follows in the footsteps of her mother, Dorothy Helmke, who was active in the Society.

Crystal taught art for 28 years in the Berkeley Public schools. Now retired, she is a watercolorist and member of a consortium of artists in the San Francisco Bay Area who have Nordic roots. She also enjoys the study of Viking history and has traveled often to Norway and islands in the North Atlantic.

Genealogy is another area of interest. She has traced the roots of all four of her grandparents. On her maternal grandmother's side, she is connected with the Norwegian king's line.

Crystal considers herself an "expert" in McFarland history of the 1930s and '40s!

### **Ginny Dodson**

Ginny was born in Buffalo, New York, and has lived in Wisconsin since 1970. Her husband Stanley is a professor at the University of Wisconsin. Her daughter Sarah currently lives in Hartford, Connecticut. For 20 years the Dodsons lived in the village of McFarland, about two blocks from the Historical Society. They currently live in the town of Cottage Grove. Ginny recently retired from American Family Insurance, where she developed classes for employees and agents.

Besides playing with her two grandchildren, Kate, and Henry, ages 4 and 2, Ginny also enjoys practicing and teaching T'ai Chi. In addition, she has a strong interest in early music and renaissance period instruments, and has played in a recorder group for many years. Ginny has a strong interest in learning more about our local history and sharing it with others, and she is excited about her new term on the board.

### **Mary Dahlstrom**

Mary Dahlstrom has been a McFarland resident for many years. She is a retired loan officer from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA). Prior to her work at WHEDA, she worked in the State Capitol for the Legislative Council, a service agency of the Legislature. Mary is passionate about preserving "the past" for future generations and jumped at the chance to serve on the Museum board.

## The Annual Meeting by Mary Dahlstrom

The McFarland Historical Society 2007 Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, March 18, 2007, in the E. D. Locke Public Library. Dr. Louis Armentano, a member of the Dairy Science Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was the featured speaker. He led us through the history of the state by way of its industry, beginning with the French fur trade. He continued through the lead mining in early 1800s, the Black Hawk War in 1892, and the wheat boom from 1850-1895. Dairying and the formation of the Wisconsin Dairyman's Association occurred in 1872. Dr. Armentano talked about some of the leaders in the dairy industry and their accomplishments, including W.D. Hoard, publisher of the first dairy magazine Hoard's Dairyman and who later became Governor. Hiram Smith, was the first farmer regent of the University, William Henry, the first dean of the UW College of Agriculture and Harry Russell, bacteriologist, the dean of the Ag college. Russell was instrumental in improving pasteurization and the eradication of bovine tuberculosis, while Stephen Babcock developed the Babcock test to measure the fat content of milk.

Although Wisconsin is now behind California in the production of milk, it continues to export more of its milk out of state and has a rapidly growing organic dairy industry. However, in 2004 Wisconsin was number one in production of cranberries, snap beans, mink pelts, and cheese and whey.



Board president, Dale Marsden, presents Ann Stajich with a plaque for over 25 years of service on the McFarland Historical Society board.

Prior to the program, President Dale Marsden and Secretary Tim Mitchell handled the usual business of the society. Dale reviewed the highlights of 2006 and recognized Ann Stajich and Carol Abernathy for their service on the Board. Virginia Dodson, Crystal Lokken and Mary Dahlstrom were presented as new board members, joining Dale Marsden, Earl Anderson, Mary Horton, David Houghton, Wes Licht, Tim Mitchell, Christi Mykytyn and Gini Nichols.

Board member Gini Nichols displayed a sign to be placed outside the Historical Society's "Adelaide A. Adams" room in the E. C. Locke Library. The plaque contains a photo and a short biography of Ms. Adams.

Board member David Houghton held up a new plaque to honor those members who have committed to a "Life Membership" with the society. The plaque will hang in the Adelaide A. Adams Room in the library during the winter, and will be moved to the Museum for the summer season.

Board member Wes Licht talked about the society's 2007 theme of local farming, concentrating on the activities, people, places and things associated with farming in and around McFarland. He called attention to the display of dairy equipment for everyone to view and noted that the board is looking for other artifacts and old photos for our annual display at the Museum.

Board member Crystal Lokken reported on the good response to the "Friends of the McFarland Museum" volunteer group, which now numbers 36. She also took this opportunity to thank the volunteers for all the work they have done for the museum and society.

Dick and Connie Reiter, shown with Wes Licht, used to run the dairy in McFarland. They are checking a display of old milking equipment.



Back row: Dr. Armentano, Tim Mitchell, David Houghton, Earl Anderson, Dale Marsden, and Wes Licht. Front row: Crystal Lokken, Christi Mykytyn, Gini Nichols, Mary Dahlstrom.