



McFarland Historical Society

5814 MAIN STREET, MCFARLAND, WISCONSIN 53558

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For a color version, go online: <http://www.mcfarlandhistorical.org>

2014 Annual Meeting of the McFarland Historical Society March 9 at 1 PM at the Library



Our McFarland Historical Society Turns 50!

Be sure to come to the Annual Meeting for the celebration of our 50th Anniversary on March 9 at 1 PM at the Library. It was fifty years ago that the McFarland Historical Society received its charter. Some special surprises are in store for you!

Perhaps you can add your thoughts about the following milestones:

In 1964, the McFarland Historical Society received its state charter.

In 1969, holdings greatly increased with a gift of artifacts from the Albert Skare estate.

In 1972, the Society completed a museum building on a lot donated by McFarland State Bank.

In 1974, Albert Skare's log cabin, the one his father built when homesteading land east of the Village, was taken down and reassembled behind the museum.

In 1994, the Society received the Reuben Gold Thwaites Trophy for distinguished service to the Village of McFarland through its exhibits, programs and projects that depict the community's past.

In 2012, the Society purchased the Larson House and began restoration work to create a house museum.

Rock with Shirley

At the annual meeting of the McFarland Historical Society on March 9 at the E. D. Locke McFarland Public Library, Shirley Baumann will be our guest speaker and present "Rocking through History." Shirley is an expert antiques appraiser, auctioneer, dealer, speaker and writer. She has made multiple appearances on Wisconsin Public Radio and appeared on American Pickers, the History Channel's most popular TV show. Her presentation will focus on the history and influence of the rocking chair in American culture and promises to be fun and entertaining. Folks coming to the presentation are invited to bring one special antique rocking chair or a photograph of the chair for Shirley's comments.

This presentation will immediately follow the short business portion of the meeting for the society members starting at 1 PM in the Community Room of the library. Light refreshments will be served.



Transformation in McFarland

by Jane Licht

After more than twenty years, the lights are on in the Larson House. This spring, flowers will be blooming, a beautiful “Celebration” maple tree will unfurl its leaves and a lush herb garden will be growing. What was a shabby shell of its former grandeur is alive again, thanks to the people of McFarland, Wisconsin, and beyond.

You will remember that on February 1, 2012, the McFarland Historical Society purchased the neglected and crumbling Larson House with ambitious plans for restoring this 1898 Queen Ann style Victorian home. The Board of Directors took this step with eyes wide open as to the challenges facing them.

The Larson House Planning Committee developed a restoration and use plan that was approved by the Village Landmark Commission. The planning committee met with various experts to gain their advice, and worked closely with the Village administrator and building inspector all during the course of the reconstruction. Special attention was paid to the foundation, which was deemed satisfactory. The house was basically sound and interior damage was relatively minimal because a new roof had been installed. This and the fact that very little remodeling had been done over the years made the house desirable for creating a house museum.

Residents of the Village watched the progress with great interest since they take pride in keeping up their own homes and were not pleased to see such a fine structure go to ruin. The planning committee wished to make an impact with the funds available and so when it was determined that the siding should be replaced, the north side of the home that was most visible to the public was restored first. Cedar siding was milled and fluted to resemble the original boards. The side porch was rebuilt using the original design and original porch columns, spandrels and balusters that had been stripped and repaired.



The front porch was also rebuilt using the original porch columns and balusters. The rooms received new old-fashioned plaster and modern paint. The original picture rail molding was cleaned, painted and attached to the walls where they are used once again to hang frames.

Grateful thanks are in order for all those who named rooms in the Larson House. The children of Crystal Lokken and McFarland State Bank deserve credit for getting the momentum going. They were followed by the families of the five daughters of Obed and Mabel Larson, the family of Mike Harried, Ginny Dodson, Tura Olson Graber, the families of Ann and Howard Davis, Dale and JoAnn Marsden, and Pat and Will Rossman who teamed up with Wes and Jane Licht. Grateful thanks are also in order to the many residents who “Bought a Board” for the Larson House – totaling more than \$20,000. Their investments have created a type of ownership akin to loving stewardship.

Sincere appreciation also goes to our skilled contractors, mostly local, who invested their finest workmanship in the Larson House. They also donated time and materials and suggested cost-saving measures. Their names will be listed on the wall in the entryway.

All the furnishings were either donated (thanks to our generous artifacts donors) or taken from storage in the museum. These artifacts complement the 1920's theme when electricity first came to McFarland and owner John Larson converted his gas light fixtures to electric. The original chandeliers are glowing once again and the house has new life and a new purpose – the celebration of local history. The grand opening is set for May 24 and 25 from 1 to 4 PM.

For more information, go to: www.mcfarlandhistorical.org

At left, a photo taken in 2011 before the Society took ownership. At right, a photo of the Larson House taken in October of 2013. Great progress has been made.



NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR HONORING LOVED ONES AT THE LARSON HOUSE

by Jane Licht

Now that the “Buy a Board” campaign is over and all the rooms except one have been sold, there is a new opportunity for donors that provide levels of giving in between Buy-a- Board and Room Naming. There are four levels of donations: bronze (\$200 to \$499), silver (\$500 to \$999), gold (\$1000 to \$2999) and platinum (\$3000 and up). The donor names and honorees will all be listed and placed in lovely 16 by 20 inch frames of the appropriate color (bronze, silver, gold, and platinum).

Bronze: Donor and honoree names, a photo and a phrase such as “loving mother”

Silver: Donor and honoree names, a photo and 50 words describing the honoree

Gold: Donor and honoree names, a photo and 100 words describing the honoree

Platinum: Donor and honoree names, a photo and 250 words describing the honoree

All of these frames will be hung on the walls of the upstairs hallway, providing a lovely space for viewing. If you would like to make a donation at one of these levels, please contact Jane Licht (608-838-8178 or licht.jane@gmail.com) regarding the “Memorial Plaques” at the Larson House Museum.

Bronze level memorial entry:

**In memory of
Sharon L. Thieding D. 2011.
Beloved wife of Ernie Thieding**



Below: Lee Ackley attaching a railing to the back stair.



VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED AT THE LARSON HOUSE

As of this writing, the Larson House Museum is about 85% completed. Work is on going for the upstairs hallway, the back stairway and in the basement. If you would like to help with painting, staining and cleaning inside the house, please contact Jane Licht at 608-838-8178 or licht.jane@gmail.com. When spring comes, the Garden and Landscape Committee will appreciate help as they plan and plant the gardens. If you wish to help with garden and landscape work, contact Ginny Dodson at 608-579-1028 or ginnydodson@charter.net.



Above: Dawn Bolstad putting finishing touches on the wall in the upstairs hallway. Below:Thelma Allen scraping lose paint from the back stairway to prepare for plastering.



Fall Visitors

by Wes Licht

The McFarland Historical Museum was humming with activity the 2nd week in October with eight classes of third graders from Waubesa Intermediate School visiting. Their introduction to the museum started in the lobby with the recognition of the 50th anniversary of the McFarland High School and the display of early schools. Many of the students took interest in the historical photos of the many one-room schools and the large model of Hillside School (also called Daley or Dyreson School) but they had mixed reactions about attending one. They found the old Spartan logo images for the high school quite unusual, especially the early one with whiskers, bearing a resemblance to Popeye. Of course, the mannequin wearing the large costume of Sparty, the Spartan mascot, with his very large head and helmet got some very interesting looks.

Then the classes divided into smaller groups and began exploration of the main museum, the log cabin and the annex. Highlights of each display in the museum were shared by the guides and provoked a variety of student comments and questions. The log cabin exhibit remained a popular favorite of the youngsters. They were intrigued with the small bed with rope springs, the vintage ironing board, old irons, wooden bowls and the mysterious loft where the children slept.

After the cabin the kids were off to the annex where this round of third grade classes was the first to visit



Waubesa School third graders were introduced to "Sparty," the McFarland High School mascot, during tours of the museum.

the new Early Farming exhibit. Some strange items were on display and it was pointed out that every farm activity was powered by horses, oxen or humans. Some kids even tried testing their muscles on the hand crank machines. Without tractors and powerful equipment to do all the field preparation and harvesting, it looked like tons of hard work to many children.

Thanks to all the students, their teachers Mrs. Dahl, Mrs. Hisgen, Mr. Scharf, Miss Case, Mrs. Beam, Mrs. Eckel, Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Ackley and their assistants for visiting us. Museum tour guides were Ginny Dodson, Jane Licht, Wes Licht, Dale Marsden, Gini Nichols and Meg Nielson.

The museum opens on Memorial Day with a parade, popcorn, bake sale, hot dogs, ice cream and carriage rides.



Board Members and Volunteers Needed

by Dale Marsden

The museum is open on Memorial Day for viewing the new exhibits and the log cabin. Wonderful baked items provided by many society bakers will be on sale. Volunteers are needed to help with the many responsibilities at the museum and the Larson House. Board members are needed to keep organizational business running smoothly. The museum is then open Sundays 1 to 4 P.M. from June thru September and by appointment. Contact Dale Marsden at: 838-3992 or email at bluebee@madtown.net for more information. Also visit our website at: <http://www.mcfarlandhistorical.org>.

2013 Chocolate Fest a Success

by Meg Nielsen

McFarland Historical Society's Fourth Annual Chocolate Fest was deemed a big success again this year. Held Nov. 2 at the Madison Curling Club, the Chocolate Fest drew more than 200 people and raised over \$7,000 for the maintenance and restoration of the McFarland Historical Society's Larson House Museum. Matching funds from Thrivent Financial brought the final total amount to more than \$9,000.

Featured chocolatier Robert Strohmayer from Chocolaterie Stam of Middleton delighted guests with a variety of bonbons, tasty gelato and amazing pairings of chocolate wafers with Wisconsin cheeses. In addition, 47 McFarland-area bakers brought decadent desserts. Those who attended the event feasted on chocolate, enjoyed live music, basked in candlelight ambience, and sipped champagne or wine. More than 70 items from local businesses



were available in the Silent Auction. Rob Schroedl won the raffle – a week at Vicki Holten's timeshare in Las Vegas, plus \$200.

Last year's Chocolate Fest Planning Committee included Sherry Blanchar, Ginny Dodson, Vicki Holten, Jane Licht, Chris Olson, Judy St. Clair, Jackie Utter, and Meg Nielsen. The group, including two new members, Linda Hanson and Kathy Krusic, began meeting in February to plan the 2014 Chocolate Fest, which will be held on Sat., Nov. 8. If you are interested in helping to plan the event or if you'd like to bring your favorite chocolate dessert to share with the guests, please contact Meg Nielsen at 838-8274 or churchladymeg@hotmail.com.

A Display that Rocks!

by Wes Licht

For the last two months, a fine display of old rocking chairs has been on exhibit in the window of the McFarland Historical Museum. Featured are an early primitive hand-carved rocker, a Boston rocker, a wicker rocker, a press back rocker, a platform rocker and a glider. The title of this display in December, "Rockin' Around

the Christmas Tree," was inspired by the popular 1958 song, written by Johnny Marks and recorded by Brenda Lee when she was just 13.

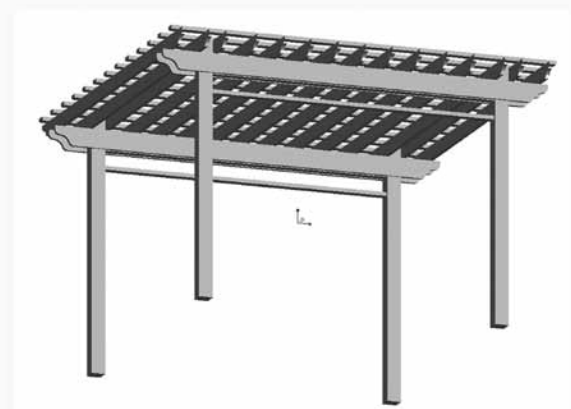


While the display has been slightly modified since the holidays have passed, the special rocking chairs with their history still invite you to come and see them before they go their separate ways back to other exhibits in the museum, log cabin and the Larson House Museum. Of course, some of them may also take part in the Annual Meeting with Shirley Baumann presenting (see article Rock with Shirley). One such rocking chair is a child's rocker with rosemaking done by Stoughton's most famous rosemaler Per Lysne.

A Pergola for the Garden

by Dale Marsden

Tyler Bexson, a Life Scout in Troop 53 in McFarland, has volunteered to do a project for the garden at the Larson House for his Eagle Scout Project. He has designed plans to build a pergola in the backyard of the Larson House. Construction is planned for May, but he will begin gathering materials in the next couple of months. To help finance this project he is asking for donations and there will be a Culvers night from 4 to 8 P.M. on Wednesday, May 7th.



Larson House Snapshots



Detail from the mural in the front room.



Walkers in the Memorial Day Parade: Dale Marsden, Carol Naze, Ginny Dodson, Barbara Voelker, Jane Licht, and Ken Brost. Accompanied by Julia Ackley and Lauren Boehnen in front.



Jeff Havey works on plumbing in the upstairs bath. Below, Dale Marsden hangs a photo of the John Larson family.



Sanding a new spindle to replace a rotted one for the front porch. Below: A Christmas party at the Larson House.



Member Obituaries

Otte, Rosemary (Kilgore), age 78

Rosemary Otte passed away on Sept. 25, 2013, in Woodbury, MN. She was born at the Navajo Indian Hospital in Fort Defiance, AZ in 1934. Rosemary was a child of the Great Depression and World War II. Ingenuity and determination were Rosemary's hallmarks. Her many interests included education, current events, genealogy, DAR, Girl Scouts, sewing and quilting for charity, and promoting opportunities. She married Roger Otte, whom she met in graduate school at UW-Madison. She lived in McFarland for 43 years before relocating to Woodbury, MN, in 2003. She was an active member of the McFarland Historical Society. Rosemary is survived by her sister, Martha Kilgore Riddle; daughters, Sharon Otte and Rachael (Paul) Davis; and grandchildren, Cole and Grant Davis.

Skare, Donald, age 79

Donald Skare passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2013, at his home. He was born on May 7, 1934, the son of Raymond and Goulde (Andersen) Skare. Don graduated from Madison East High School and was selected to attend Badger Boys State. In 1954 he enlisted in the US Army and was in the Occupation Forces in Germany. Don is survived by his children, Mark Skare and Michelle McLeod; his grandchildren, Mariana, Dana and Brent (Stephanie Gould) Skare, Kelsey Bernt, Bridget Skare, Amanda (Josh) Pederson, and Abbie and Molly McLeod; great-grandchildren, Chloe and Frankie Skare, Dominic and Aubrie Berndt, and Lilianna and Wyatt Pederson; and his brother, Dean. He was preceded in death by his parents and special friend, Joy Reisinger.

Faulkner, Nolan, age 83

Nolan Faulkner passed away of cancer and kidney failure on Aug. 14, 2013. He was born in Richland County on Jan. 11, 1930, to Goldie and Lee Oliver Faulkner. On Jan. 31, 1953, he married Betty McAfee of Richland Center. Nolan was in the Navy from 1948 to 1950. He worked at Ohmeda for 35 years as a manufacturing engineer. Nolan is survived by his daughters, Mitzi (Craig) Lovell, Melodie (Mike) Lea and Monica (Paul) Stapelmann; and his sister Luella Drake; He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty; his daughter, Veronica; brother, Beauford Falkner; and sister, Iona Sharp.

Simmons, Nellie, age 85

Nellie "Nickie" Simmons passed away on Friday, Aug. 2, 2013. She was born on July 15, 1928, in Beloit, the daughter of Victor and Freda Briggs. Nellie was united in marriage to Roy Simmons on June 28, 1946, and they enjoyed 57 years together before his death on Dec. 8, 2003. She was a member of McFarland Lutheran Church. Nellie is survived by her three children, Roy III (Mary) of Madison, Patrick of Columbus and Gay (Heather) of McFarland; three grandchildren, Roy IV, Janelle and Audra; sister, Arvesta Pennewell of Beloit; and brother, Donald Briggs of Tampa.

Allen, Fern Louise (Rosio), age 79

Fern Louise Allen (nee Rosio) passed away on Jan. 2, 2013, at Agrace HospiceCare in Fitchburg. Fern was born in Crandon on May 16, 1933, the daughter of the late Louis and Mildred (Knoke) Rosio. She was united in Marriage to Louis E. "Gene" Allen on March 20, 1954, in Crandon, WI. The couple moved to McFarland in 1970 where their five children attended school. In 1982, Fern established "Earth Designs Floral Shoppe" and was active in community affairs, helping to found the McFarland Public Library. Fern was honored as "Citizen of the Year" in 2009.

Fifty Years Ago is Exhibit Theme

by Wes Licht

Recognizing 50 years of events for the McFarland Historical Society since its founding in 1964 is cause for celebration. Many things of significance happened that year on the local, state, national and world levels and we are noting events of interest in 1964 as our theme for the exhibit in our museum lobby. To name a few, President Johnson deals with the War on Poverty, the War in Vietnam and Civil Rights. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., received the Nobel Peace Prize, the World Trade Center is started and the spacecraft Ranger sends back to earth the first close up pictures of the moon. Barry Goldwater challenged Lyndon Johnson for the November elections and in entertainment, we were introduced to "Hello Dolly," "Mary Poppins," and of course, the Beatles. What things of significance (or not) happened here in McFarland, Dane County and Wisconsin? Please help us if you have any scrapbook material dating back to 1964 to help tell the story of those early days to the under 50 younger generation or to bring back fond memories to those of us beyond the half century mark. Contact Wes Licht at 838-8178 or email jlicht@sprynet.com.

Have you renewed your membership this year?

Your donation helps to support the McFarland Historical Society and keeps the museum operating. If you would like to volunteer, let us know. We also have board positions open if you are interested in becoming more active in the Society. We are all volunteering our time and energy to make this a successful organization.

I want to support local history as a member of the McFarland Historical Society. Please enroll me as a new or renewal member for 2014.

(Select one membership option)

Individual	\$ 15
Family	\$ 25
Individual/Family life	\$ 150
Supporting	\$ 250
Business	\$ 250

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Check here if you would like to receive the newsletter by email in the future.

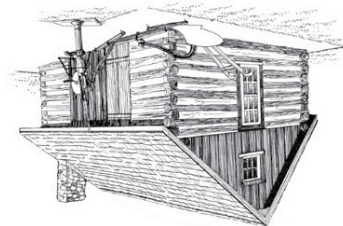
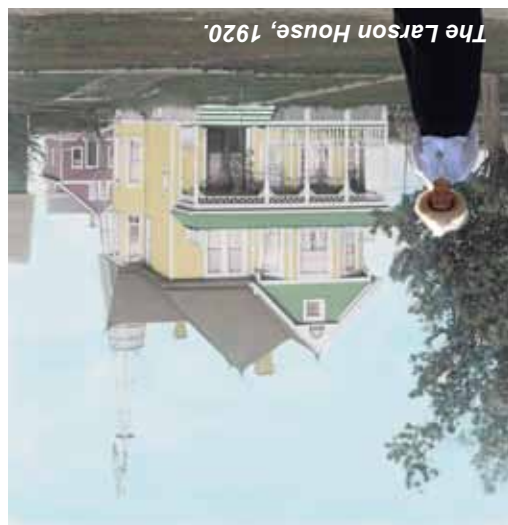
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Go to www.mcfarlandhistorical.org for information and color photos on all McFarland Historical Society activities. We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting.

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