



McFarland Historical Society

5814 MAIN STREET, MCFARLAND, WISCONSIN 53558

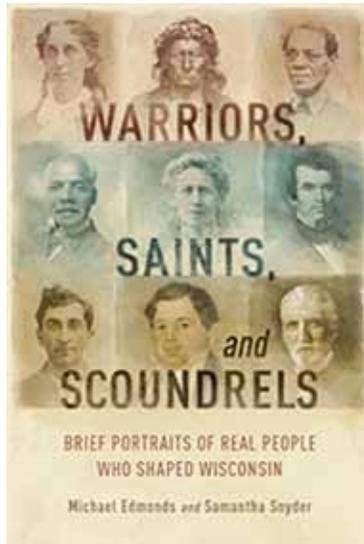
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For a color version, go online: <http://www.mcfarlandhistorical.org>

Michael Edmonds is Guest Speaker at the Annual Meeting Sunday March 4, 1 - 3:30 P.M. at the Municipal Center

We are very pleased that Michael Edmonds will be our guest speaker at the annual meeting. He will present “Warriors, Saints and Scoundrels: Brief Portraits of Real People Who Shaped Wisconsin,” on Sunday, March 4, from 1 to 3:30pm at the McFarland Municipal Building. Michael Edmonds is the Director of Programs and Outreach at the Wisconsin Historical Society and has

written several books on various aspects of Wisconsin history. He is a 1976 graduate of Harvard and has taught part time at the UW-Madison since 1986. In this talk at our meeting, he will tell us about



people who helped shape our state, and why the Wisconsin Historical Society wanted to publish a book full of short sketches of obscure eccentrics. We invite you to attend the McFarland Historical Society annual meeting to experience Michael Edmond’s fascinating presentation. You will also see a video about our “Volunteer of the Year,” and about progress on the log cabin and row boat restorations. This year we will play a special video about the history and restoration of the Larson House that you will not want to miss because you may be in it! There will also be special treats including Wisconsin wines to sample.



Volunteer of the Year!

If you stop by the Larson House on a summer morning, you are likely to find Thelma Allen pulling weeds or watering a flowerbed. As a member of the Larson House Garden Committee, she helped design, plant, and maintain the profusion of flowers that bloom all summer long. Thelma is well known for her hospitality,



and many work sessions have ended next door in her yard having tea at Thelma’s picnic table. She volunteered for many phases of the restoration of the Larson House, from the initial cleaning out, through wallpaper removal, woodwork cleaning, removing old paint from porch spandrels, and final clean up efforts. Thelma assists with our special fund-raisers, including the Strawberry Shortcake Lawn Party, and the Chocolate Fest. She is a docent at the Larson House and participates in spring and fall housecleaning, as well as decorating the Larson House for our Victorian Christmas. When she is not volunteering for the McFarland Historical Society, Thelma enjoys quilting and working on her gourd art. A talented artist, Thelma exhibits her beautifully decorated gourds at various local art shows. Congratulations, Thelma, on this well-deserved honor as Volunteer of the Year!

Museum Tour Exchange

Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society joined with us on an exchange tour of our museums. Five of our Board members, Jane, Dale, Ginny, Bud and Wes, had a nice tour of the Nathaniel Dean House, a big restored farm house in Monona. Then seven members of the Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society visited the Larson House Museum for a tour. All were very impressed and at the end of the tour refreshments were served in the Larson house kitchen. A good time was had by all.



Wes conferring with the Historic Blooming Grove Historical Society curator, Ann Waidelich, at the farm house dining room table.



A large bed dominates the master bedroom. It is thought to have been designed by Charles Eastlake in the late 1800's.

McFarland Music of Years Past



The window display of the McFarland Historical Museum is a show case for the early music makers of this community. The Norwegians and other nationalities that settled here loved their music.

Very early records show that William McFarland ordered a melodian shipped here by rail in 1863. Years later he had the first cylinder record player in the area. He proudly brought it to school to demonstrate its sounds to the kids, hauling it back and forth in a wheelbarrow.

Reverend Realf Brandt, the Lutheran minister, started the first community band about 1900 and McFarland's grandsons Roy and Milo were early members of the band, both playing the clarinet. In more recent times, Roy played the button accordion and was a member of the Antiques.

Many of the Norwegian settlers brought their violins with them and fiddle music was part of many, many house parties in the early 1900's. Henry Everson and Herald Smedal were outstanding fiddle players, both using an ornately designed hardanger fiddle. Smedal even played his instrument during his successful campaign for sheriff of Dane County.

Ray Alsmo was a farmer fiddler just north of McFarland who played at house parties. Every one of his children played an instrument. The youngest six kids formed a band, the Alsmo Ramblers, which entertained various audiences just for the joy of it.

Walter Landerud was another farmer and musician south of McFarland who promoted fiddle music by founding a group that became the Southern Wisconsin Old Time Fiddlers Association. Their popularity was well earned and they just ended 35 years of playing together at various events in December 2017. They took pride in making music fun.

Stop by the museum's window exhibit and take a few moments to learn more about McFarland's early musicians and the instruments they played. If you have photos, artifacts and other information to add to our rich history of early music, please contact a member of the McFarland Historical Society Board of Directors.

Other Activities at the Larson House

Just as the Larson House Planning Committee had hoped, the Larson House Museum is becoming a destination and a location for community activities. On December 6th, the McFarland Chamber of Commerce held its monthly coffee at the Larson House. The annual Larson House Volunteer Reception was held December 7th from 6 to 8 pm with many people attending and enjoying themselves. Mary Ace scheduled her sorority luncheon at the McFarland House and then the Red Hat ladies came to the Larson House for tours that Terri Bouffiou and Jane Licht provided.



A group of Red Hat Ladies had tours and luncheon at the Larson House Museum.

Nancy Walsh-Boeder had her book club come for treats and discussion to the Larson House on December 11. On December 12th, the Elizabeth Circle from McFarland Lutheran Church reserved the Larson House in the afternoon. On Sunday, December 17 from 10 am until 1 pm, Sarah



Sarah Rowe's book club had tours, a luncheon and discussion at the Larson House Museum.

Rowe's book club had a tour, brunch, and book discussion. And on December 29th there was a private dinner party for four couples who rented the facility in the evening. The Larson House is available for rent for small groups. Many more can be accommodated in the summer when the backyard patio and lawn can be used.



Some of the ladies on the Chocolate Fest Committee hold up a poster advertising the Fest.

Happy Hour Hop Through History

Come join us on Sunday, February 25th from 1-4pm at the historic Larson House in McFarland for a history happy hour (or two)!

Meet new friends and old at Dane County's first "Happy Hour Hop Through History" for members of local historical societies!

The Larson House Museum is located at 6003 Exchange Street, McFarland, WI 53558.

The Dane County Historical Society will be organizing these events throughout the year for a chance to see new places, network, and socialize! RSVP's and donations are welcome, but not required. This is an event for ages 21+.

This event is co-sponsored by the McFarland Historical Society and the Dane County Historical Society.



Skare Log Cabin Repairs Begun

For the early Midwestern settlers, log cabin maintenance and repair was a routine activity. Every year, logs, windows, doors and roofs had to be inspected for frost, water or other damage, and repaired as needed. Each fall, weatherproofing had to be renewed to keep out wind, rain and snow so the family could stay warm and dry inside during the long, cold winters.

Unfortunately, the McFarland Historical Society's 157-year-old Skare Log Cabin has not received this amount of yearly TLC. In 2017, the MHS Board decided to begin a cabin-repair project to address a variety of problems that had begun to appear. In recent years, log deterioration-including insect damage and dry rot as well as cracking- had become a serious problem in several areas. In addition, the daubing between the logs had cracked and pulled away from the logs in many places, trapping moisture between logs and increasing the likelihood of more deterioration. Carpenter ants were at work in several places, and bats have been living in the cabin's attic. A multi-stage workplan was begun during the summer.

First, to deal with the bats, board member Wes Licht volunteered to locate and close off all the bat entry points into the cabin. He was successful in closing all the access points and the bats did begin using the bat houses he had set up on the gables.

Second, board member Ginny Dodson contacted the local Wil-Kil pest control office for an estimate of the cost to treat the cabin for the carpenter ant problem. Since the historical society allowed him to use this as a training opportunity for his staff, Wil-Kil provided the treatment at no charge in August.



Wil-Kil staff spraying the log cabin. They also treated the interior of the cabin.

Third, to address the more serious problems of log deterioration, the Board invited Mark Buechel, Senior Preservation Architect in the Historic Preservation Office of the State Historical Society to meet with the Board to

inspect the cabin and offer his assessment of what needed to be done.

Fourth, after this session in October, the Board set up a volunteer work group to repair or replace the worst areas of deterioration before winter. Wes Licht, Dale Marsden, Bob Kolek, Rod Clark, Don Peterson, Jane Licht and Dick Kohl had six work sessions to get as much done as possible while the weather was good.



Don Peterson, Bob Kolek, Rod Clark, Wes Licht and Dale Marsden working on the log cabin on a nice November day.

Over the course of four weeks the group was able to remove loose concrete daubing between logs and insect-damaged wood. "Liquid wood" was then painted on to all deteriorated areas to stabilize the wood fibers and prevent



Rod Clark and Dale Marsden apply epoxy wood filler to gaps in the logs.

further damage. Where possible substitute wood was inserted to fill spaces between logs before applying epoxy wood filler to fill cracks and reform damaged portions of logs.

This work is planned to continue in late spring or early summer, hopefully finishing before next winter.

Rebuilding the Rowboat

This last spring, after the completion of the new addition to our museum, our double-pointed rowboat was moved to its new home. A “cradle” of sorts was designed and built to properly support it. The cradle’s solid frame moves easily on rollers and affords good access. Those of you who visited the museum this summer were able to see this unique watercraft.



The rowboat was moved into the new addition last May. L to R- Wes Licht, Ken Brost, Joe Larson, Dale Marsden, Rod Clark and Bob Kolek.

In November, a study and planning session for restoration of the rowboat was held. An interested boat crew, headed by Tim Kreft, developed an outline of sequential tasks and priorities. They noted the boat’s unique structure and signs of former repair, perhaps a century old, which included the replacement of several of the planks forming its walls.



Wes Licht, Mark Bilhorn, and Dale Marsden work on the stem design for the rowboat.

In January the physical restoration work on our double-pointed rowboat began in earnest. Replacing badly deteriorated stems at both ends of the boat to which the planking was attached was the number one priority. The old stems gave us a general pattern and the final fitting required lots of custom handwork. Using waterproof glue and replacing 120 nails per end firmed up the shape of our boat.

Some of the boat crew pose after planking was attached to



the new stem. L to R—Bob Kolek, Rod Clark, Dale Marsden, Wes Licht and Lee Ackley. Photo by Sue Vick Finley.

Removing the four old worn oarlocks was another big step. The new oarlocks were carved out of mahogany like the originals by master woodworker Lee Ackley. Attaching them has to wait until the stressed mahogany gunnels are firmed up.

Another important task was to restore the keel. The narrow metal strip protecting the wooden keel had been broken and replaced in a couple places. Old wood filler was removed and new screws and new screws and glue again were applied to tighten up the keel. We are awaiting shipment of a new metal piece to fit the entire length of our 15½-foot craft.

Quite a few of the ribs supporting the planting have rotten, split or broken areas. Replacing these parts is currently the biggest challenge and very time consuming and very time consuming. There are very few straight lines on this rowboat, ribs included.

Working on the double-pointed rowboat in our new addition with bright lights and controlled heating has been a wonderful luxury. Boat laborers have included Lee Akley, Dale Marsden, Rod Clark, Bob Kolec, Don Peterson, Dick Kohl, Wes Licht, Joe Larson. Mark Finley and Mark Bilhorn.

A Very Victorian Christmas at the Larson House Museum

This is the fourth year the Larson House has been decorated for Christmas with Kathy Krusiec again leading the charge. A group of strong gentlemen had visited the Larson House earlier to move Christmas trees from the basement and attic into the various rooms. Helping Kathy decorate were Peggy Anderson, Annette Koleck, Mary Pat Lytle, Marlene Richard, Cathie Richards, Barb Voelker, Sue Vick Finley, Judy St. Clair, Rosali Richardson, Carole Pingel, Margit Schiefelbein, Carol Beck, Sharon Quale, Jane Licht, and Sharon Yildiz and her friend Kevin Page who later became her fiancé! There were well over 100 visitors for Christmas in the Village on December 2nd and there was also very good attendance for the Sunday afternoons in December.



Isaac Boyd played piano for our Very Victorian Christmas at the Larson House Museum.



McFarland area people sang carols at the Larson House Museum.

Thanks to all who hosted and gave tours at these events. Our piano players were Isaac Boyd, John Wendling, DeAnn Larson and Jo Thomley. The very creative ladies who made gift baskets and mugs for sale were Kathy Krusiec, Judy St. Clair, Sherry Blanchar and Vicki Holten.



One of many gift baskets sold during the Christmas openings.



Thanks also to the gentlemen who moved the Christmas trees back to the basement and the attic where they will be stored until next season.

Chocolate Fest

The Chocolate Fest held last October featured excellent chocolate and music. Over sixty people donated their special chocolate desserts. A talented group of eight McFarland High School students played their stringed instruments during the evening. Quinn Leonard set up his sound system at the Curling Club for the evening.



Young musicians from McFarland High School provided delightful music at the Chocolate Fest.

Village president Brad Czebotar, County Executive Joe Parisi and School Superintendent Andrew Briddell were celebrity hosts who made our guests feel welcomed. A group of very energetic Ambassadors from the high school helped plate food and clean up afterwards. Special thanks to Don and Denise Peterson, Jackie and Bruce Voight, and Roald and Cynthia Peterson for donating the champagne. Glenn Nielsen, Al Schneider, Evan Richards, and Tom Bouffiou served the champagne and wine. Sue Vick Finley was our official photographer. Many local businesses contributed gift certificates for the silent auction. Nearly \$3000 was raised after expenses. Committee members were: Carole Pingel, Carol Torgeson, Ginny Dodson, Jackie Utter, Cathie Richards, Betty Krisher, Bonnie Thomas, Margit Schiefelbein, Terri Bouffiou, and Jane Licht. A huge thanks to all who baked and attended the fest to support the Larson House Museum.



Ambassadors from the high school pose with their set-up.

National Historic Register



The MHS Board of Directors voted to apply for the National Historic Register for the Larson House Museum. Jane Licht began working on the lengthy National Historic Register application. She sent a draft application to Peggy Veregin, who is the Wisconsin Historical Society National Historic Register coordinator. Peggy promised to review it and make suggestions. The National Historic Register program is housed within the U.S. Parks Service and their personnel who review the applications rely heavily on the recommendations of local National Historic Register coordinators. Jane is hopeful that Peggy Veregin will provide the guidance needed so that we will have a successful application. Being on the National Historic Register would put us in a stronger position when applying for grants.

Obituary

Kevin Kesterson, 64, April 29, 1953 - May 31, 2017.

Kevin attended high school in Brown Deer and McFarland. He studied business administration and accounting at UW-Eau Claire. Kevin worked as an office automation analyst for the State Department of industry, Labor and Human Relations and later in software support and computer security for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation until he retired. Kevin had a long history of public service, serving on the McFarland Board of Trustees, representing the Village of McFarland and the Town of Dunn on the Dane County Board of Supervisors, and as the County Board Chair for Dane County from 1998 until 2005. A long-time resident of McFarland, Kevin and partner Tim Zinkgraf often volunteered to sell food and beverages at the McFarland Museum on Memorial Day. Kevin spent a significant amount of his time every week volunteering for Agrace Hospice Center and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Dane County Humane Society. He was an avid and knowledgeable collector of antiques and served on the Acquisitions Committee for the Larson House Museum. Kevin would often search for specific artifacts for the Larson House, purchase them and then donate them to the McFarland Historical Society.

Have you renewed your membership this year?

Your membership and donations help 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. Many volunteer their 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 2018.

(Select one membership option)

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

Amount Enclosed: _____

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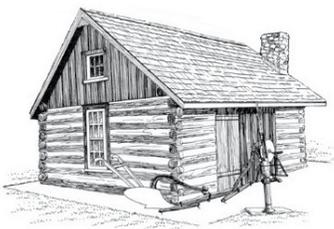
Check here if you would like to receive the newsletter by email in the future.

Make your check payable to:
McFarland Historical Society

Mail check to:

McFarland Historical Society
P.O. Box 94
McFarland, WI 53558-0094

Go to www.mcfarlandhistorical.org for information and color photos on all McFarland Historical Society activities. Photos are by Sue Vick Finley, Jane Licht and Dale Marsden
We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting.



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Society
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McFarland, Wis
53558



Iris Othro showed groups of young students around the museum.

Third Grade Tours

Seven classes of third grade students toured the museum, the Skare log cabin and the farm annex displays. Wes and Jane Licht, Iris Othro, Ginny Dodson, Gini Nichols, Dale Marsden and others were tour guides for the students through the first week of October.