

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 4, Issue 12: December, 2010

*“Minnesota City: A Past that we honor; a Present that we give meaning; a Future that we build together”*

## **Mark your calendars!**

**MCHA:** Note: No December monthly meeting—next meeting on January 8

**December 11:**  
Caroling & Horse-drawn wagon Rides;  
6:00 p.m.; First Baptist Church;  
140 Mill Street

**December 16:** Minn. City Community Readers: Geraldine Brooks' *March*;  
6:30 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community,  
115 Iowa Street

### **Go “Green”!**

If you receive this newsletter in paper form and would prefer to receive it electronically, please call 689-2440.

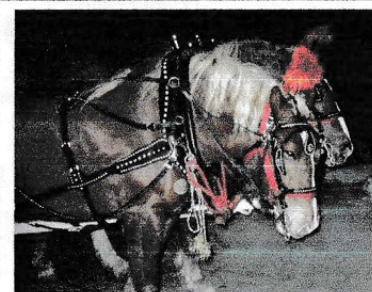
## **Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides, Readings and Caroling Combine for Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) Holiday Celebration on Saturday, December 11**

Because Bill Holm wrote at length about his mother's “gauds” in *Faces of Christmas*, it is easy to accept a fictionalized response to a letter from Martha Stewart where he speaks of “turning old and gold into gaud.”

Minnesota City Historical Association (MCHA) has again combined mostly fact and a little fiction, as in the Holm example, to invite attendees to reflect on their own mixes of the constants of the holiday season—friends, weather, music, food, credos, gifts. Program readers will relate anecdotes of first settlers in the area including Anna Ramsey, Minnesota's first governor's wife; Catherine Goddard, a Winona proprietor who prepared a feast of “coon and coon fat fried doughnuts” for Winona and Minnesota City men; sleigh rides in 1898 and 2009; recorded Christmas details of churches, communities and homes.

Following the readers presentation, Bryce and Edwin Maus will take riders around Minnesota City in a horse drawn wagon with caroling stops at a number of sites. Children who attend will again find gift bags of candy and toys under the tree.

The Historic First Baptist Church will be heated for the event; Persons who do not wish to wagon ride can remain at the church for caroling, visiting, and refreshments. The public is invited.



Maus family horses transport carolers in Minnesota City (2009)

## **Minnesota Community Readers Attend Commonweal Theatre Production of Little Women**

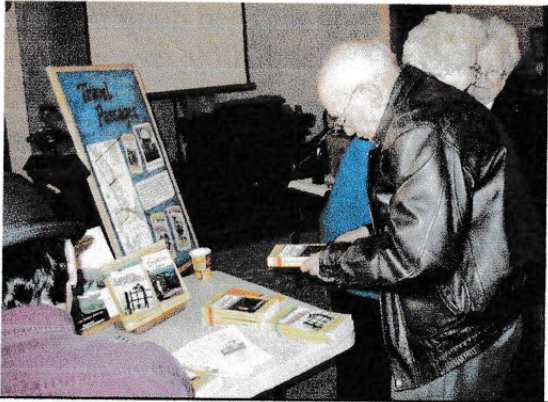
A trip to Commonweal Theatre in Lanesboro on November 21 was arranged by Lori Donehower for Minnesota City Community Readers and friends and family. The production was written by Commonweal staff who have faithfully reproduced the dialogue and settings of many scenes from the novel. Stef Dickens, Commonweal Resident Artist, found similarities between her own personality and that of Jo, the bookworm author. Conversation among Minnesota City Readers following the production reflected general appreciation for the outstanding ability of Commonweal Company members to interpret mannerisms, costumes, and emotions of characters. The Readers have selected *March* by Geraldine Brooks for discussion on December 16. *March* is Brooks' examination in the genre of historical fiction of the life of the Alcott father, who was away from the family during the setting of the *Little Women* story. The contrast with Alcott's portrayal is dramatic in some respects, particularly in the relationship of the father and mother. Persons interested in pursuing “the truth of the matter” might read the details of the life of Bronson Alcott whose failure to financially support his family did put Louisa May in the role of family financier through her friendship with notables including Ralph Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and others, and through publication of her stories. In the Commonweal production, the revengeful burning of the stories of Jo by her sister Amy is dramatic, paralleling the emotional drama of the death of Beth.



## Thank you

- to Jackie Denzer for three recent contributions to the Archives: a Sunday School Secretary's record book from 1934 when Mrs. John Denzer is listed as Supt., and student names include Buswell, Church, Pierce, Washburn, Denzer, Gardner, Reys, Kelley, Mastenbrook, Phillips, Fleming, and Gilchrist; a second class book when Mrs. Clyde Pierce is listed as teacher; a third book listing guests for a Special Service honoring Mrs. John Denzer at Minnesota City Baptist Church on September 1, 1957.
- to Riverway Learning Community for the use of their projection screen for the Klinkenberg slide show
- to Ben Koren, who continues to keep our web site in good repair, this month facilitating re-installment of the first web site page

## Book Signing Draws Interested and Appreciative Crowd on November 7



Dean Klinkenberg (foreground) autographs books as Howard Volkart peruses a copy of *The Driftless Area*. Jean Gardner and Gladys Volkart converse in the background.

The somewhat less than usual number of attendees who viewed the slideshow and heard the presentation of Dean Klinkenberg about his latest travelogue, *The Driftless Area*, could be explained by the changed date that put the afternoon concurrent with a Vikings game and deer hunting season. Those who were able to attend benefited from Klinkenberg's challenge to visit unfranchised restaurants, the out of the way spots and experiences that provide opportunities to examine the role of place in one's perspective about the many elements of travel.

In the book introduction Klinkenberg states "I have a touch of attitude when it comes to travel.

I am not a fan of chain stores, malls, mass consumption, or mass marketing. If all you want to do on vacation is lie on the beach, sip appletinis, and shop at Eddie Bauer...then this book may not be for you...Relax, slow down, hang out, talk to people. That's my prescription for enjoying travel anywhere, and it will be very rewarding along the Mississippi Valley." Klinkenberg answered questions, among them, about his interest in church architecture evidenced in his slide show and the role of place in contemporary life. He contributed a copy of the book to the Minnesota City Historical Association Archives; the section on Minnesota City includes history of the founding and description of the Association (MCHA) and the First Baptist Church.

**REMINDER: PLEASE INVITE FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO THE MCHA HOLIDAY CELEBRATION ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 AT 6:00p.m. AT THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (See page 1 for more details)**



### **MCHA extends sympathy to:**

-the family and friends of Marilyn Bambenek who died on November 22. Marilyn is the sister of Laurie Krause, director of Riverway Learning Community.

### **November newsletter addition —**

The November newsletter omitted the first name of Elanora Hattie Denzer in the expression of sympathy to the family and friends.

### **Rev. Edward E. Cunningham, OMI, Fifteen Year Pastor at St. Paul's, dies in Texas**

Father Edward Cunningham, the pastor of St. Paul's Catholic Parish in Minnesota City died in San Antonio, Texas on October 28. An Oblate of Mary priest, Cunningham, 77, was ordained and educated in Texas and in California; he was buried in San Antonio. He came to Minnesota City after assignments in Wabasha and Winona and served here for fifteen years. (The Courier, Nov. 2010.) He initiated the altar monument in St. Paul's Parish Cemetery. He enjoyed his opportunities in Minnesota City to hunt, fish, and target practice.

### **Buried in Oakland: John Sterner (1880-1936)**

John Sterner, 56, died in Santa Ana, California on December 24, after an illness of three months of heart trouble. Mr. Sterner was born in Witoka and had spent practically all his life in the Minnesota City vicinity as a farmer. In both 1920 and 1922, Sterner was the only individual from Minnesota City who was listed among purchasers of hunting licenses. He left Minnesota City in 1930 for California. The 1924 classified ads include a list of furniture and household goods including a Peninsular Range and Perfection Oil Stove, a heater, sewing machine, beds, bureaus, tables, chairs, dishes, clothing, etc. and also wagon plows and other articles. This sale of articles occurred shortly after the death of his wife, but several years before the move to California. Sterner's only survivor was a sister, Mrs. Ray Church, Minnesota City. His wife had died in 1923. Sterner's body was brought to Winona where a funeral service was held in the Breitlow funeral home, Rev. R. J. Potter, Pastor of McKinley Methodist officiating, and then was taken to Minnesota City for services, and burial followed in Oakland.



### **Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF) Recruiting for Additional Board Members**

GBDRF is continuing their recruiting drive for new board members until December 10. Any person who wishes to be involved in this progressive, proactive community group can contact a member of the nominating committee: Susan Althoff, 689-2281; La Vern Fritz, 689-2505; or Bryce Maus, Board Leader, 452-9689. Applications will be received until December 10. (See November newsletter)

### **Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund (GBDRF) Partners with Riverway Learning Community for Book Buying Fundraiser**

*The Book Shelf* in Winona, GBDRF and Riverway Learning Community recently cooperated to raise money for the charter school. GBDRF values use of Riverway Facilities for some of their public events and meetings. On November 20, a portion of in store sales was contributed to the fundraiser. Promoters remind people that Riverway is our local community public school.



## Ron Wenzel Featured in Minnesota State College Southeast Technical Connections Magazine

Persons routinely driving on Highway 61 south to Winona just beyond Minnesota City will have noticed the buildings with the many signs on the outside and may also have stopped at the very large sales at various times of the year. They will have recognized the uniqueness of the interests and resulting collecting of Ron Wenzel. Wenzel's accomplishments were recently featured in an article in *Connections*, November, 2010 authored by Cynthia Porter. Wenzel, a member of MCHA, discusses with Porter his love of collecting and especially his high regard for education, its influence on people and his support for those who seek to advantage themselves of opportunities.



Wenzel storage building on  
Highway 61

## Rivertown Gallery Antiques Open House in Minnesota City on Dec.11

If one views antique stores as another opportunity for preserving and distributing historical information, then Minnesota City has added such a venue with the opening of Rivertown Gallery, a family owned and operated Gallery at 7030 Hwy 61 W. in Minnesota City (south of Kwik Trip). Patty Vogel Harris manages the shop owned by her parents, Hank and Joan Vogel, experienced collectors. Among their collections are scientific items, western memorabilia, Tonka Toys, Furniture and other collections. The Vogels will hold an open house on December 11.

### Standing Invitations:

- to attend meetings of Minnesota City Community Readers. All individuals are invited whether or not they have read the monthly selection. The website ([www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org)) includes a brief review of each month's choice, usually posted by mid month.
- to attend regular meetings of MCHA. These are held at Riverway in cold weather months, generally October to May. Other meetings are held at 140 Mill Street. There is some correspondence between interesting meetings and the number of persons attending.
- to respond to newsletter content. Please send additions, corrections, suggestions, etc. to [mgogrady@embarqmail.com](mailto:mgogrady@embarqmail.com). **Writers of regular columns would be welcomed.** These might include monthly columns on area businesses, churches, schools, organizations.

Check Out The Website: [www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org)

Continue to check the website periodically. New information is constantly being added. Remind family and friends and former Minnesota City residents to check it out! Thank you to Susan Althoff, Marv O'Grady and David Eckert for keeping the website updated.

***Anyone who wishes to be a member of the Association is invited to send \$15.00 to  
MCHA, P.O. Box 21, Minnesota City, MN, 55959.***

***All monies will be used to support  
Association goals.***

***Separate or additional donations may also be sent to the above address.***