

MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 3, Issue 4: April, 2009

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

Mark your calendars!

APRIL

April 16:

Minnesota City Community Readers discuss Willa Cathers *“Death Comes for the Archbishop”*; 6:30 p.m.; Riverway Learning Community

MAY

May 16:

MINNESOTA CITY DAY; Details will appear in this newsletter and the May newsletter. Watch for press releases as well.

Go “Green”!

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

Groups Begin Planning for May 16 Minnesota City Day: Archives Dedication , Flood Impact DVD Screening, Baseball Field Dedication, Food Offerings Among Highlights.

All area residents are reminded to set aside May 16 for themselves, family and friends to celebrate at Minnesota City Day. At the March 10 and April 2 meetings at Riverway Learning Community, organizations began to coordinate for the annual celebration of Minnesota City Day which occurs on the third Saturday in May. Groups represented at these meetings included Minnesota City Historical Association, St. Paul’s Parish, Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund, Riverway Learning Community, First Baptist Ladies Aid, City Council, Youth Baseball, and the Fire Department as well as interested community persons. Minnesota City Historical Association will dedicate the two renovated rooms in the rear of the historic Mill Street First Baptist Church for their archival storage. Activities at 140 Mill Street will include acknowledgement of donors, new displays, and will feature women who have participated in the history of the church. Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund will present their DVD on the historical impact of the 2007 flood, and Pamela McNeil will release a CD containing her vocal composition for the flood commemoration. The sesquicentennial historical quilt constructed by St. Paul’s quilters will be moved to St. Paul’s for the occasion (from the archives



Sign commemorating founding of Minnesota City in 1852 at the entrance to the city on “Old Highway 61”

where it has been most recently displayed) and quilt squares for a second quilt will be solicited. The video developed for St. Paul’s fifty year celebration will be run for continuous viewing in the church hall. Youth Baseball activities will include dedication of the field and a possible scrimmage (dependent on conditions), a food fundraiser and possible celebrity appearances. Newsletter readers are encouraged to watch local papers for details as they are finalized and for special fliers that will be distributed by some groups through hand delivery, surface mail, email, etc.

MCHA Purchases Storage Building to House Materials

With monies from a Winona Foundation Grant previously awarded to MCHA, and with the approval of the First Baptist Ladies Aid of Minnesota City, MCHA purchased a ten by twelve foot storage building which will be located at the rear of the historic First Baptist Church. Materials to be placed there immediately include some maintenance materials that will be removed from the second small storage room at the rear of the church. This space, which currently holds a trove of historical volumes, will then be refurbished for better access of space and materials.

MCHA extends sympathy to:

Lavern Fritz and family and the many friends of Jaye Fritz. For many, her death feels like the loss of a family member of their own—she was involved in significant ways in their lives. We will not attempt to restate or better state the tributes so many have related in the local and area media and in the many conversations about her. Jaye was “on the job” on March 10, the day and night before she died, working at the Rollingstone Township Hall, covering elections and meetings. Although more shocked by news of the death because they had just been with her, many were grateful for those last hours. With Susan Althoff, Gen O’Grady, and Nancy Beach, Jaye had organized Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund following the 2007 flood; she had worked constantly furthering its goals of relief for area flood victims since that time. At the First Redeemer funeral service for Jaye, I sat in the row in back of the Hmong persons who were part of her extended family, in front of Stockton Valley cousins of my own, on one side next to Harry Streuz who had worked with her in Thrivent activities, on the other side, next to a Stockton resident who knew her from her work there both with the flood and the church and as a neighbor. I read the card of a simple floral arrangement from an individual who remembered her from Scouts. The minister’s homily was laudatory of Jaye, but like myself, I think most persons at the service needed no explanation that Jaye had helped our understandings of community—its challenges and blessings—become more complete. I was pleased that Jaye was interred in Oakland Cemetery. (Gen O’Grady)

From MCHA : Thank You to:

Don O’Neil for the gift of three yearbooks from Winona Senior High School. These were given to Don by Gerald Cisewski.

Rollingstone Township Board of Supervisors for \$300.00 awarded at its annual meeting on March 10 to MCHA for its general fund.

Jean Gardner and Dorothy Brom for a Mill Street photo that includes the meat market next to the First Baptist Church. This building site became the Tschumper home, the Hall home, and is now the Ferden home.

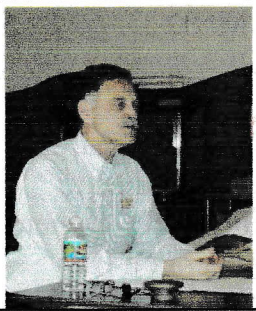
Marianne Mastenbrook for donation of archival cartons for some of our materials and for a copy of an extensive section of the 1883 History of Winona County. This material contains great details of early settlement of the Minnesota City and Rollingstone Colony.

We are looking for perhaps a dozen old magazines that were mailed to individuals with Minnesota City addresses. We hope to store these for observation in the “indoor outhouse” of the archives’ rooms. Please bring these to an MCHA meeting, a Community Reader’s meeting, or phone 689-4103 or 689-2440. An old calendar (no pinups, please!) and old Sears or Montgomery Wards catalogs would be authentic for the environment.

Ray Denzer Celebrates 90th Birthday

Family and friends of Ray Denzer gathered at First Baptist Church in Winona on Sunday, March 22, to celebrate the 90th birthday of Ray Denzer. Ray and Lola, who now live in Winona, raised their family of eight children (one son Raymond is deceased) on land north of Minnesota City, a short distance from the land where Ray grew up with his own brothers and sister. All the Denzer children—LaRay, Laurel, Aloha, Nancy, Robert, DeAnne and Dallas-- were present for the birthday, as were many other extended family members. After twenty plus years of work at Standard Lumber Company, Ray had continued to work at his own sawmill on Highway 61 north of Minnesota City until the mill was purchased by Ray and Lola’s son, Dallas and his wife Corinne. Congratulations, Ray, and thank you for many years of time and energy that has affected family and friends.

Robert "Bob" Bambenek Entertains MCHA Members and Area Persons With Land and Lumber Issues



Bob Bambenek, Winona County Recorder, presents an MCHA program on March 15 at Riverway Learning Community in Minnesota City

There were some questions Bob said he will continue to explore, but for the most part, he had the answers for all the questions asked, and provided much information that was new and interesting for attendees at his presentation for the Minnesota City Historical Association on Sunday, March 15 at Riverway Learning Community. Seldom has so much information about so many land connected issues been offered and ingested in one session. Persons who had taken their abstracts to the recorder's office in advance were pleased to find material from them used in the handouts distributed by Bob. Tracing individual land tract's history as well as area parcels, the role of government, of entrepreneurs, of homesteaders, of women, the changing landscape of Minnesota City area, and the history of landmarks were all topics Bambenek examined with the audience. Following the presentation, Bambenek mailed the Association a complete listing for Rollingstone

Township of bearing trees on the 1853 territorial survey and indicated that he will be willing to review the listing and legal descriptions sometime in the future. Refreshments were provided by Riverway Learning Community.



A Witness/Bearing Tree marker revealing emblems emblazoned on the tree.

SMU Honors Anderson Street Resident, Jane Anderson

Among those honored at the 75th anniversary of the De LaSalle Christian Brothers' affiliation with St. Mary's University at its Founder Day's Ceremony in February was Jane Malin Anderson who lives at 149 Anderson Street in Minnesota City. Anderson was named the Distinguished Lasallian Educator. She has been on the faculty since 1995 and now is the dean of the School of Education. According to the Winona Daily News, "she was recognized for her efforts to engage and support the San Miguel Schools in Chicago (a Christian Brother's Mission school, part of a nationwide network of schools dedicated to teaching underserved populations of urban and rural school children) and Minneapolis and her career-long commitment to understand and advance the cause of literacy education." Persons in the Winona area with awareness of Anderson have probably heard of her long history of promotion of the ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet) approach in teaching reading. This approach originated in British schools in the early 1960s and then spread to USA and Australia. It was designed to make it easier for English speaking children to learn to read English. Anderson has said "... ITA has been the organizing principle of my professional life as I search for the answer to dyslexia in children. All of the theories and controversies that have existed in the field of reading in general, and reading disabilities in particular, were resolved when I came to understand how the initial teaching alphabet can be used to unlock the code of writing language and give struggling readers the power over their own literacy learning." Congratulations, Jane Anderson, on this significant award!

Newsletter Plans to Add Writers and Features

Newsletter readers are invited to submit material for publication and to submit corrections of material we have published. The newsletter is printed each month by the first Tuesday after the first Monday of the month which is the date of the City Council meeting; publications should be emailed or communicated to mgograde@wildblue.net approximately one week in advance of printing date. When we begin to work at the Historic First Baptist Church following the dedication in May, we will invite individuals to submit material for the paper. Some readers may wish to become writers for various "columns"—archival materials, book reviews, biographies and others.

Planned Highway Improvements Include Minnesota City Area Roads: Asphalt Plant Borders Highway 61

“Finally!” according to many area residents, local news sources are reporting several MNDOT projects in the area that will benefit local drivers. Roads which have been called “ugly”, “long neglected”, “dangerous” and some of the worst in Minnesota will now be the focus of several construction projects. Winona Daily News reports that by 2011, much of Winona County’s share of I-90 and Highway 61 will be rebuilt or resurfaced. Work on several of these projects is planned to begin in May. Bituminous mill and overlay will be the product of the blacktopping unit at the corner of U.S. Highway 61 and Hwy 248 at Minnesota City. A total of 24 miles of improvement on Hwy 61 northbound from Hwy 14 to Hwy 42 in Kellogg and Hwy 61 southbound from Hwy 14 to Hwy 248 are planned. On land bordering Highway 61 at Minnesota City, owned by Kohner Realty, the sights and smells of asphalt production will fill the air as they did in the seventies and nineties for a short period of time. According to the Winona Post, several residents who met with Winona County Planning Commissioners admitted that all they wanted to see were improvements to Highway 61’s poor condition and these would be well worth the slight inconvenience the temporary plant might impose. Unless additional work is contracted by Knife River Corporation (asphalt producers), the use of the area should end in June. Knife River personnel have ameliorated resident concerns about pollution of Garvin Brook and also concerns about noise and odors.

In the News:

For her stop in Minnesota City, Cathy Wurzer, host of the Twin Cities Public Television’s *Tales of the Road: Highway 61*, **Walt Kelly** was a resource for information on the Oaks Nightclub, now the Minnesota Machining Company. Walt is the son of former nightclub developer/owners Chef Walt and Charlotte Kelly.

The Mardi Gras in New Orleans again hosted the Winona Steam Calliope, one of only seven like instruments in the U.S. The calliope is under the auspices of the Winona Steam Calliope Assn.

Ed Maus maintains it and supervises transportation and parade preparations. According to the Winona Post (March 8) Maus is a piano tuner as well as a steamboiler engineer. He and his crew of volunteer ‘roadies’ move the two wagons, the International pickup and the ’26 Dodge by semitrailer and flatbed to such events.

Brian Campbell developed a “green” version of a temporary roll-up boardwalk built with deck boards recycled from the flood debris. It was published in the January ’09 *Fine Building Magazine*.

Winona County Planning Office offers pamphlet on “The Benefits of Flood Insurance Versus Disaster Assistance”

Winona County Planning Office is offering to interested persons pamphlets published by the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA. “The web site, www.FloodSmart.gov, has useful tools to help the landowner, including a *One-Step Flood Risk Profile*.” Homeowners are asked to enter their address information. They will receive some general knowledge information about flood risk in their area, an estimate in flood premiums and some suggestions for area insurance agents. Interested persons can call Brenda Rausch, Winona County Planning Office at 457-6544.

Anyone who wishes to be a member of the Association is invited to send \$15.00 to
MCHA, P.O. Box 41, 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.