



McFarland Historical Society

5814 MAIN STREET, MCFARLAND, WISCONSIN 53558

PH: 608-838-3992 Issue No. 564 March 1, 2022

Edited by Dale Marsden



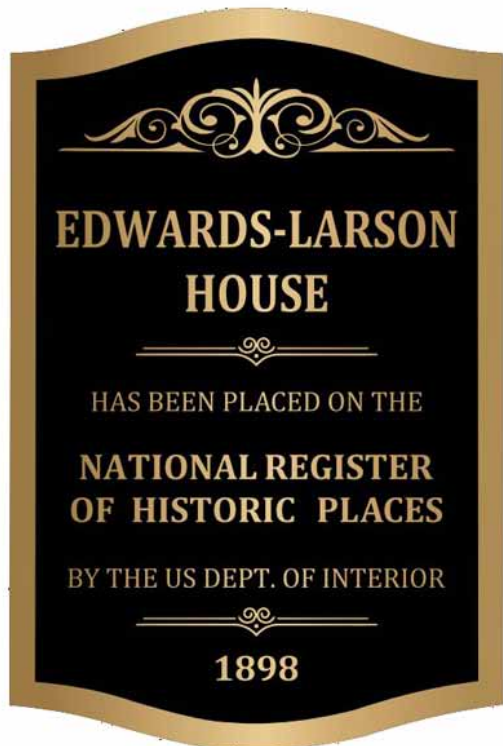
Historical Society Annual Meeting

We are pleased to announce that Kathy Krusiec will be honored as our volunteer of the year at the annual meeting of the McFarland Historical Society on Sunday, June 5th. Please note the change from our annual meeting that is normally held in March. We are hopeful that the community rooms at either the library or the municipal building will be open by then. If not, the meeting will be held on the lawn at the Larson House Museum. More about Kathy's numerous contributions to the Larson House Museum and specifics about the annual meeting will be sent out later.



Larson House Museum is Named to National Historic Register

by Jane Licht



The Larson House Museum at 6003 Exchange Street in McFarland has been named to the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1898, the Larson House is a Queen Anne style home operated by the McFarland Historical Society. The National Register is an official list of historic properties in America deemed worth of preservation. The program is run through the Wisconsin Historical Society at the state level and maintained by the National Park Service at the national level.

The Larson House Museum is open for visitors every Sunday from 1 to 4 pm from Memorial Day through September. It is also open Sundays in December where nearly every room is decorated with a themed Christmas tree and carols are played on the studio-sized grand piano. Fund raisers throughout the year maintain this house museum.

The Larson House was built by E.N. Edwards before it was purchased by Tollef Olson in 1900 and then by John O. Larson in 1911. Because it was owned and lived in by members of the Larson family for nearly 80 years, the structure has long been called the "Larson House." The building sat vacant for twenty years and was purchased by the McFarland Historical Society in 2012. Using funds

from generous private donors, it was restored by local contractors and over one hundred volunteers.

The Larson House features architectural characteristics of a Queen Anne style home, such as the steeply-pitched roof with gables on each side. It also has bay windows and decorative spandrels on the front and side porches. The interior retains very good integrity, having its original plan, features and finishes throughout. For over a century, it has been considered one of the best homes in McFarland. For more information, visit mcfarlandhistorical.org

Lawn Mowing at the Larson House for 2022

By Bill Mitchell

Everyone heading East on Farwell Street comes to the stop sign at Exchange Street. On that corner is the Larson House Museum. And hopefully, everyone notices the well-maintained house, flower gardens and neatly mowed lawn.

A group of five volunteers known as the “Larson House Lawn Mowing Brigade” mow the lawn each week. This group of individuals have been mowing the lawn since the Larson House was purchased by the McFarland Historical Society back in 2012. Current members of the mowing brigade include Tim Mitchell, Jerry Herbst, Mike Flaherty, Dale Ollhoff and Bill Mitchell.

One of the members of the group, Dale Ollhoff, is retiring from this volunteer mowing commitment after 2 years of dedicated service. With Dale’s retirement, a new member is needed to join the lawn mowing brigade and handle the 2nd Saturday of the month.

Each volunteer mows the lawn once per month based on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th Saturday weekend of the month between Thursday afternoon and Sunday morning during the mowing season - a time commitment of about 2 hours. Bill Mitchell handles the 5th Saturday weekend and is the first person to be called as a substitute mower if one of the volunteers is unable to mow on his designated Saturday weekend.

Some of our members haul their lawn mowing equipment to the Larson House. Other members drive their lawn tractor to the site. If you have a lawn tractor, here is your opportunity to take it out on a “lawn mowing” excursion. And then perhaps a stop at the McFarland House Café for a beverage!

If you are interested in becoming a member of the “Larson House Lawn Mowing Brigade”, please contact Bill Mitchell, at 608-838-8279, after 6:30 pm to discuss the mowing schedule and how you can help.



Tim Mitchell is mowing the lawn at the Larson House.

Murder Mystery at the Larson House

By Jane Licht



The guests: (standing) Al Schneider, Mark Finley, Dale Marsden, Kevin Page, and Wes Licht. Seated are Carol Pingel, Sue Vick Finley, JoAnn Marsden, Sharon Page, and Jane Licht.

Inventive costumes and drama abounded at the Larson House Museum last fall when the second Murder Mystery dinner party took place. Wigs worn by the ladies made them almost unrecognizable. Each person portrayed a unique character who were supposedly invited to “Champagne Charlie’s” lavish home. When they arrived, they soon discovered that poor Charlie had been murdered! But since the three-course meal was already prepared, they enjoyed the supper anyway while a dedicated detective interrogated them. It was tremendous fun and at the end of the event, no one correctly guessed the villain. Each couple contributed \$100 for this Larson House fundraiser and given the food, wine and entertainment, it was well worth the cost. A murder mystery was planned for New Year’s Eve but had to be cancelled because of rising Covid numbers. If you are interested in joining a murder mystery at the Larson House in the future, please let Jane know. Licht.jane@gmail.com or 608-838-8178.



The staff at Champagne Charlie’s dinner party: Brian Rodeck (butler), Marlene Richard (cook), Jane Mitchell (kitchen maid), Renee Rodeck (detective).

A Very Victorian Christmas at the Larson House

By Jane Licht

As part of the village-wide celebrations, the Larson House Museum was open for guests on December 4, 2021. Upon entering the Larson House, visitors were immediately impressed with the lighted garland trailing down the baluster on the staircase and the lovely “angel” tree in the entryway. They heard Christmas carols being played on the Larson House grand piano by our talented pianists. Volunteer hosts offered to give them tours or they could choose to browse through the house, read the histories on the walls and view the decorations in every room on their own. Many families with children attended. Some of these children enjoyed the “scavenger hunt” as they searched for certain artifacts throughout the house. Others listened to John Zweig read the book, “T’was the Night Before Christmas.” Many adults purchased beeswax candles set in pretty tea-cups and succulent plant arrangements. Everyone who tried them enjoyed the tasty homemade cookies and beverages. It is difficult to state exactly how many visitors attended since some slipped in and out without signing the guest book but the number was impressive as donations and sales totaled \$504.



John Zweig is reading to the children who are visiting the Larson House.

The open house extended to every Sunday afternoon in December. The comments on the surveys that visitors filled out were all very positive. Our guests especially enjoyed the historical tours given by the volunteer hosts. At the end of their tour, many visitors filled out a survey where they voted on their favorite room. The dining room garnered the most votes with the living room next and the child’s room just one

vote behind. Another \$450 in donations and sales was received during the Sundays in December.

All good things must come to an end and in January, a crew of women took down the decorations. Several men moved the trees to storage. The group decided to leave the impressive wedding gown display up through June of this year. Lead decorator Kathy Krusiec announced that this will be her last year of organizing the Very Victorian Christmas at the Larson House Museum. Thanks so much, Kathy, for your many years of spearheading this major event at the Larson House.

A Huge Thanks to These Volunteers



Judy St. Clair and Sue Vick Finley decorate the tree in the parlor.

Set up Christmas trees and moved tubs of decorations: Rod Clark, Don Peterson, Tim Mitchell, Mike Flaherty, Wes Licht

Decorated the trees and rooms: Kathy Krusiec, Peggy Anderson, Sara Krueger, Carol Torgeson, Rosalie Richardson, Sharon Joswiak, Marlene Richard, Judy St. Clair, Sue Vick Finley, Gail Aaroen, Thelma Allen, Karen Kuenzi, Carol Beck, Jane Licht, and Ambassadors from McFarland High School



L to R: Bisma Arif, Iqra Arif, Alexis-Rose Fischer and Molly Warner. Ambassadors from McFarland High School helped decorate trees and rooms.

(continued on the next page)

More Volunteers Needed for the Larson House Garden Committee

By Jane Licht

Perhaps you drove by the Larson House last summer and noticed the lovely flower gardens adorning the front, sides and rear of our house museum. A dedicated group of women headed by Gail Aaroen is responsible for planting annuals, dividing perennials, weeding and watering. Many of the plants are labeled and the public is always invited to stop and visit the gardens that include sun-loving and shade-dwelling native and exotic plant species. There are even benches to sit on as you enjoy the peaceful scenery.

Gail has assigned specific garden areas to each pair of women who share responsibility for that garden. She has also set up a watering schedule used throughout the summer. Her workforce includes Kathy Pease, Sue Vick Finley, Marlene Richard, DeAnn Larson, Margit Schiefelbein, Thelma Allan, Annette Kolek, Karen Kuenzi, Carol Beck and Renee Rodeck. The group also holds fundraisers to pay for plants, plant bulbs, mulch and other supplies.

Gail is always looking for more volunteers. The need is especially great when the Garden Committee members are gone on vacation a week or more during the summer months. Not only do the committee members spend time at the Larson House gardens but they also socialize and enjoy each other's company. Please let Gail know if you are willing to help with this worthwhile endeavor. Her email is gtaaroen@hotmail.com and her phone is 608-332-7089.



L to R: Margit Scheifelbein, Karen Kuenzi, Marlene Richard, Gail Aaroen, DeAnn Larson, Sue Vick Finley and Annette Kolek. Not pictured are Carol Beck, Thelma Allen and Renee Rodeck.

Thanks to volunteers (cont.)



Made beeswax candles using Ginny Dodson's teacups: Kathy Krusiec, Judy St. Clair, Dale Marsden

Created lovely gift baskets for sale: Kathy Krusiec, Judy St. Clair

Created succulent plant arrangements for sale: Wes Licht

Played the grand piano in the Larson House: Betty Kalhagen, DeAnn Larson, Terry Peterson, Glenda Phillips, Lori Stoneking, Rosalie Richardson

Baked cookies: Cheryl Ackley, Carol Beck, Thelma Allen, Gail Aaroen, Jane Licht, Sharon Joswiak

Hosted the Larson House and gave tours for visitors: Carol Torgeson, Carol Beck, Rosalie Richardson, Lee and Cheryl Ackley, Paula Niedenthal, Markus Brauer, Marlene Richard, Jane Licht

Took down the decorations: Kathy Krusiec, Carol Beck, Rosalie Richardson, Carol Torgeson, Marlene Richard, Cherrie Salava, Sylvia Krepski, Laura Boehlke, Thelma Allen, Carole Pingel, Barb Seth, Jane Licht

Put away the Christmas trees: Dale Marsden, Tim Mitchell, Wes Licht

Obituaries



Ginny Dodson, 77

Virginia Joseph Dodson passed away on Monday, August 9, at the age of 77. She was born in Buffalo, New York, on January 6, 1944, the first child of John Arthur Joseph, Jr. and Loraine Marie Fuhr.

In 1965, she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a B.A. in Zoology from Ohio Wesleyan. Ginny received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and attended Yale University where she met her future husband, Stanley Ivan Dodson. They were married on January 13, 1967, in Seattle where they attended the University of Washington. After receiving his doctorate, Stanley took a job at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Zoology Department. Ginny had also been working on her doctorate in zoology, finishing her dissertation in Wisconsin, and receiving her doctorate in 1971.

From 1970 to 1973, the Dodsons lived in Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, and then purchased an historic home in McFarland where they lived for twenty years. Their daughter Sarah was born on September 19, 1972. From 1974-1982 during the summers, Ginny and Stanley taught students and undertook research projects at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory outside of Crested Butte, Colorado.

Ginny worked as a lecturer in zoology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison until she graduated from MATC in 1986 with a degree in computer sciences. She became a computer programmer and trained other employees at American Family Insurance until her retirement in 2007.

Ginny's eclectic interests were many and varied. A lover of classical and baroque music, Ginny was a founding member of the Winds of Southern Wisconsin in the early 1980's and enjoyed playing every type of recorder. She was a certified leader in the Tai Chi Fundamentals, and was a long-time member of the Tai Chi Center of Madison. Ginny enjoyed birdwatching and relished participating in the Audubon Great Backyard Bird Count each year. Ginny was very active in McFarland Lutheran Church where she played hand bells, and served on the Care of Creation Committee and Elizabeth Circle.

Ginny joined the board of directors for the McFarland Historical Society in the 1980's and again

after retirement. Ginny was a very active promoter of the Larson House Museum where she worked on restoration projects, named the gardens for Stanley who died in 2009, and served as chair of the Garden Committee. Ginny moved to Skaalen Village in 2010 where she enjoyed playing bridge and mahjong, renewing friendships and creating new ones.



Tura Hoel Graber, 88

Tura Hoel Graber passed away on December 26, 2021, at Milestone Senior Living in Stoughton. She was born February 9, 1933, to Hartman and Marjorie (Hecker) Olson.

Tura grew up on the Olson family farm in the Town of Dunn near McFarland.

Tura graduated from Madison East High School in 1951 and married Richard Hoel in 1952. They settled on a portion of her parents' land, where she was a homemaker as their family grew to five children. She also was a licensed foster parent to dozens of babies and toddlers, an avid knitter and scrapbook maker, and earned her "pin money" by decorating wedding and specialty cakes for many years. She was a nurse at heart - from her childhood years tending farm animals, through the rest of her years rescuing orphaned wildlife and caring for her backyard-farm menagerie. Fittingly, Tura returned to school in the early 1970s to earn her R.N. Associate Degree from Madison Area Technical College. She worked at Skaalen Nursing Home for several years. During that time, she married Everett "Andy" Anderson, especially enjoying their leisure time camping and road tripping. Later, Tura provided respite care for infants and children with medical needs throughout the Dane County and Dodgeville areas. She married Richard Graber in 1983 and lived in Mineral Point until his farming-accident death in 1985.

Tura was a McFarland Historical Society board member and very interested in family and local history. She wrote interesting articles about the community. Tura donated the funds to name the master bedroom in the Larson House Museum in honor of her great-grandfather, Tollef Olson and her father, Hartman Olson who were very active in the Town of Dunn and McFarland area. Tura also donated many artifacts to the McFarland Historical Society

Obits (cont.)



Louis "Gene" Allen, 89

Louis "Gene" Allen of Madison, passed away on Monday, June 14th, 2021. Louis, known to most as "Gene" was born in Beloit, Wisconsin, in 1932. His parents, Lou and Helen Allen, eventually moved to Madison.

As a child, he began to enjoy playing with the newly-created stuffed animals named after Theodore Roosevelt, the "Teddy" bear. This started a life-long love that led to a broad collection including rare specimens featured at the McFarland library exhibit. He graduated from West High School in 1949. During the Korean War, Gene joined the Navy in 1951 where he spent some time as a SONAR man aboard a submarine.

In 1954, Gene married Fern Rosio and together they had five children. While living in Brown Deer, he received a degree from the Milwaukee School of Engineering and worked for AC Spark Plug. After his schooling, Gene became a skilled corrosion engineer and worked in his father's business managing municipal water works. In 1969, he relocated his family to McFarland where he launched his own consulting firm, Earth Engineering, and was highly respected in his field for decades. He worked well into his 70's.

Among Gene's many interests, he was an amateur lepidopterist. He built a fine butterfly collection and collaborated with his friend, Jim Ebner, who produced videos about butterflies on Milwaukee Public TV. Gene loved a variety of music including jazz, polka and the marches of John Phillip Sousa. He became a very talented tuba player. He played with popular bands, including Ray Dorshner's "Rainbow Valley Dutchmen", "Mississippi Valley Dutchmen" and Charlie Mear's jazz band. Over the years he performed in a number of recordings and in 2013, he was inducted into Wisconsin's "Polka Hall of Fame."

Gene had a remarkable memory and could speak in detail about a wide range of topics. He kept his family, colleagues, and fellow musicians entertained with amusing stories. Gene was an enthusiastic member of the McFarland Historical Society and loaned some of his historical artifacts for a WWI display in the lobby.



Ed Minihan, 78

Edmond P. "Ed" Minihan died August 5, 2021. Ed was born on December 21, 1943, to Edmond and Thelma (Glaser) Minihan in Port Orchard, Washington, and raised in Hillsdale, Michigan.

Ed married the love of his life, Susan Babich, a registered nurse, on June 25, 1965. Ed and Sue began married life in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and moved to the beautiful Town of Dunn in 1972. For 55 years they shared a full and rich life of love, family, friendship, community, land and nature preservation, cooking, travel, social activism and service to others. Ed was a true "Renaissance Man," who acquired profound knowledge and proficiency in many different fields, always with a zeal for serving others and making his community and the world a better place. He served in the U.S. Navy as a seaman from 1964 to 1966. He served as a firefighter for the city of Ann Arbor from 1965 to 1970, while earning his Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology in 1970 and Master of Arts in sociology with a minor in business in 1972 from Eastern Michigan University. Ed became a Town of Dunn Supervisor in 1977. In 1979, Ed was elected as the chairman of the Town of Dunn and provided inspiration and vision for the town for the next 42 years until his death. With development encroaching all around, Ed and town residents stood firm to preserve the rural integrity of the town using land use planning and the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.

Ed used his medical sociology and business expertise to create innovative managed health care delivery systems and primary health care clinics in public and private sectors. Ed was a private pilot and loved flying with Sue to lovely destinations for many vacations. He was a skilled blacksmith, creating gifts of iron for his many friends. He was an accomplished builder and donated many hours to Habitat for Humanity. Ed was a five-star chef and with Sue, created delicious and beautiful meals and celebrations for family and friends. In his retirement, he volunteered as "Chef Ed" every week at Agrace Hospice. Ed loved to travel all over the country and world with Sue. They were both passionate about justice and equality in the world and were very involved in local politics. Ed and Sue were long-time members of the McFarland Historical Society. Ed used his skills as a mason to repair the stone work for the cellar doors at the Larson House Museum.

Obits (cont.)



Jim Harried, 82

Hjalmer A. “Jim” Harried, of McFarland, passed away on Sunday, Aug. 29, 2021, after a courageous three-month battle with metastatic brain cancer. He was born on Sept. 5, 1938, in Stoughton, Wis., the son of

Truman and Vera (Flatten) Harried. Jim graduated from Stoughton High School in 1957 and attended MATC. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve and with the Wisconsin National Guard 32nd Division. Jim was united in marriage to Loraine Platt on Nov. 1, 1958.

Jim worked at the University of Wisconsin Extension Printing Dept. for 37 years. Jim served on the Board of Directors for UW Employees Credit Union while working at the University. After retiring, he started his own lawn care business from 1997-2013. He served as an EMT on the McFarland EMS for 15 years. Jim was a member of Hope Lutheran Church since 1965 where he served as an usher for 55 years. He was also Sunday School Superintendent and Property Chair on the Hope church council. Jim was a member and was president of Hope Cottage Grove Cemetery Association. He was a member of the McFarland Historical Society and served on the volunteer lawn mowing crew at the Larson House for five years. Jim and his wife Loraine made a generous donation to name the parlor in the Larson House for their son Michael Harried who passed away in 2012.

Jim enjoyed spending his time with family and working outdoors, maintaining his yard, garden and two ponds. He spent time on woodworking projects and loved helping family members with projects of many kinds. Jim is survived by his wife, Loraine; sons, Mark (Marcia) Harried, Eric (Tanisha) Harried and David Harried; daughter, Cheryl (Jay) Wilson; granddaughters, grandsons, and great-grandchildren.



Students are listening to Cindy share stories about Lake Waubesa activities.

Masks and Third Grade Tours

by Wes Licht

After a year with only virtual tours, Waubesa third-grade classes once again visited our museum in-person complete with masks. All went well with curious students showing high interest in the various displays and asking good questions to keep our guides on their toes. Scheduled guides with masks included Carol Beck, Cindy Clark, Rod Clark, Dale Marsden, Jane Licht, Rosalie Richardson, Gini Nichols and Wes Licht.



Wes is greeting a class and asking the students questions about the window display.

Organized by teacher Libby Rowley, all the third-graders were beginning their study of communities and were keen observers and listeners as they moved about the exhibits in our museum. All the students wore large-print name tags that benefitted the guides when dealing with questions. A hands-on demonstration in the log cabin generated many puzzled looks when a long old flat board with rounded edges was placed across the backs of two chairs. It was a very unique ironing board for the heavy antique “cordless” iron getting “hot” on the wood stove. Each student got to examine a teasel seed head that was used by pioneers to sprinkle tiny drops of water on the item before being ironed. They also observed the worn depression at one end of the board where the iron had always been placed when not in use. Perhaps the most fun in the log cabin was when the students quietly climbed the stairs so not to awaken the older “sleeping” children (two mannikins sharing a rope bed) in the loft. Then they had to find and determine the color of the long underwear. It was hanging over the rocker and it was red.

Mrs. Rowley, Ms. Case, Ms. Griffin, Mrs. McKernan, Ms. Everson and Ms. Kaiser are the third grade teachers who had classes on the Walking Field Trip. Unfortunately, the classes of students from Mr. Joyce and Ms. Lown were rained out and had to settle for a virtual tour that had been made in 2020.

Please renew your membership this year to stay on our rolls.

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 area residents 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 2022. (If you are a **life time member** new donations are appreciated.)

(Select one membership option)

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

Amount Enclosed: _____

Name(s): _____

Street or P.O. Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Ph: _____ Email _____

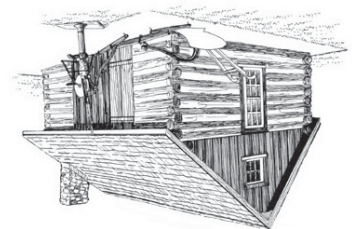
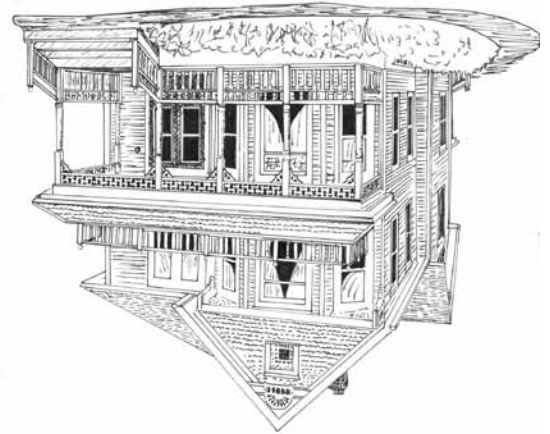
Check here if you would like to receive the newsletter by email in the future.

Make your check payable to:
McFarland Historical Society

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

Go to www.mcfarlandhistorical.org for a color copy of the newsletter, information and color photos on all McFarland Historical Society activities. Photos are by Jane Licht & Sue Vick-Finley.

Address Here



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

Forever
 Stamp here