



McFarland Historical Society

5814 MAIN STREET, MCFARLAND, WISCONSIN 53558
PH: 608-838-3992 Issue No. 569 February 6, 2025
Edited by Dale Marsden



Historical Society Annual Meeting March 2 in the Municipal Building



The McFarland Historical Society invites you to their annual meeting on March 2, 2025, from 1 to 3 pm, in the Training Room at the McFarland Municipal Building at 5915 Milwaukee Street. We are very pleased to have Bill Quackenbush give a presentation on the history and culture of the Ho-Chunk Nation who called Wisconsin their home. One of their villages was located at what is now Babcock County Park along Lake Waubesa. Bill is a Ho-Chunk Deer Clan Tribal Member and serves as the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Cultural Resources Division Manager for the Ho-Chunk Nation. You will enjoy Bill's easy and engaging manner as he takes you back to the early 1800's and before when his people lived lightly on the land. He will also talk about more recent projects and concerns. For more information, contact Jane Licht at 608-234-2504 or email at licht.jane@gmail.com.



Volunteer of the Year



Life-long McFarland resident Tim Mitchell is our Volunteer of the Year. After 39 years, Tim retired from Wisconsin Power and Light and soon became the consummate volunteer. He helps family, neighbors and local organizations. Tim has been a Lion's Club member for many years where he enjoys building playgrounds and doing vision screening for young children. He cooks on his grill for the McFarland Lutheran Church "Holy Smokes" picnic supper and Vacation Bible School. Tim joined the McFarland Historical Society board of directors in 2004 and served about six years. When the museum needed a new furnace, Tim got his brother-in-law Kevin Macke to give advice and Tim helped with the installation. Tim maintained the building by cleaning gutters and doing various projects. When the Larson House was restored in 2014, Tim was recruited for the mowing crew and continues to serve by mowing and trimming once a month during the growing season. He aerates the lawn as needed and hauls away brush in his 1970 truck. Tim and his wife Jane help with the

Strawberry Shortcake fundraiser by hauling tables from the Lutheran Church to the Larson House lawn. Tim took over the job of changing furnace and humidifier filters annually. Tim can be counted on to haul Christmas trees from the basement and attic to the various rooms and put them back in January. He volunteered for the Early Days event, showing kids how a corn sheller works. Tim is a modest, likeable guy who has an engineer's mind and a generous spirit. **Come to the annual meeting on March 2 to help us honor Tim.**

Mother's Day Tea

Mothers, daughters, aunts, grandmothers and friends attended a unique Mother's Day Tea Party at the Larson House in May of 2024. (One young mother brought her sons and husband as they were also invited to partake!) Guests were encouraged to wear good clothing and fancy hats. They were served tea, coffee and sweet and savory treats using the best Larson House teacups, plates and glassware. Volunteers referred to the "Taking Time for Tea" cookbook, edited by Judy St. Clair, to prepare and donate the special treats. Historian Jane Licht talked about tea etiquette and explained the long history of teas and tea parties that stretched from China to England and its Commonwealth and across the ocean to the Americas. This year, the event is planned for May 10, from 1 to 3 pm. If you are interested in attending this year's event, contact Gail Aaroen at gtaaroen@hotmail.com



Sharon Page and her mother Jean Toth are ready for their Mother's Day Tea at the Larson House.



Jessica Schuster and her mother Susan Moore enjoyed the elegant offerings at their table.



Zach, Charlie, Liz and Andrew Loeber sit at their table in the parlor of the Larson House and enjoy their tea and treats.



Yummy homemade treats for the tea were donated by our historical society members..

Strawberry Shortcake Social

The Strawberry Shortcake Social is becoming a summertime institution in McFarland as many families look forward to the excellent dessert and fine entertainment each year. Marlene Richard and Deb Brennum led a group of seasoned volunteers as they set the date, signed up for shortcake baking, strawberry picking, ticket selling, and dishing up and serving the best strawberry shortcake in Dane County and beyond. Susan Owens designed and produced professional-looking posters, signs and banners to promote the event while Gail Aaroen



Renee Rodeck, Cheryl Salava, Rosalie Richardson and Marlene Richard served strawberry shortcake to many appreciative guests at the Larson House.

advertised on social media. Athletic director Paul Ackley brought a group of high school football players to set up tents, tables and arrange chairs. The Subterranean Jazz Project played jazz standards, blues and pop music. The next group was Blue Skies Saxophone Ensemble whose repertoire included a variety of jazz, classical, religious and popular selections. Cory and Shaun Bauhs, a local singer songwriter duo, rounded out the entertainment. They performed classics from Johnny Cash, Clearwater Revival and some of their own original songs. Other offerings were Larson House tours, outdoor games, flower garden scavenger hunts for children and sale tables filled with unique homemade items and plants. The Strawberry Shortcake Social Committee members are already planning for 2025, having commitments from entertainers that are promised to please. Put June 22 on

Rent the “Treasure of McFarland”



Kathy Sweeney sponsored a baby shower for her daughter at the Larson House last spring.

Did you know that the McFarland Historical Society rents out the Larson House? This restored Victorian home that sits at the four-way stop in the center of the village has been an attractive venue for a variety of events. The Larson House has hosted baby and bridal showers, graduation and retirement parties, family and class reunions, meetings for book clubs and church circles, neighborhood and holiday dinners and birthday celebrations for those from one to seventy. Folks at these small gatherings enjoyed using the lovely facilities inside and the colorful gardens and patio just outside the Larson House. Those wishing to rent can be creative and come up with their own ideas. For example, in March a group of friends are going to have a murder mystery dinner and will come to the house in character costumes. There are endless possibilities. Contact Gail Aaroen at 608-332-7089 or gtaaroen@hotmail.com with questions about renting.



This group of ladies had a fun bridal shower with a tea and fairy theme.

Early Days of McFarland

As part of the McFarland Community Festival, board members hosted a new family event titled “Early Days of McFarland.” They used the “Pioneer Days” event from the past as a model and embellished it to include more children and family activities including photos and information about McFarland’s First Peoples. McFarland resident and member of the Potawatomi Nation, Art Shegonee loaned his teepee poles and drum for the event. He also attended dressed in his elaborate regalia. Dawn Shegonee presented history regarding the recent “Land Acknowledgement” and “Call for Peace” events. Board members and other volunteers led corn-shelling, wool-spinning, lefse-making, apple-pressing, ice cream-making, butter-churning, log-cutting, and cornhusk doll-making activities that kept young and old engaged. Making “button buzzers” and creating corn cob/feather “darts” were also fun activities. The museum, Skare log cabin and early farming exhibit were all open for visitors.



Art Shegonee enjoyed telling Early Days visitors about his Potawatomi regalia.



Tim Mitchell and Dale Marsden showed up at 6 in the morning with a couple of staff from Channel 3 to promote the Early Days of McFarland event.

Wes Licht instructed two young girls on using a 2-person crosscut saw.



Sarah Rowe and Tim Kreft processed apples from Door Creek Orchard for youngsters making cider using the society’s old apple press.



More Early Days of McFarland



Kris Bell and Patty Crane helped a young visitor churn butter that was later spread on crackers for families to taste.



Tim Mitchell showed a couple of youngsters how he shells corn with the Society's old corn sheller.

Third Grade Tours and Special Visitor

The first week in October following our Early Days of McFarland event, we were busy with 3rd grade visitors from Waubesa Intermediate School (WIS). Seven classes of energetic children under the leadership of their teachers and accompanied by helpful parents and assistants toured the museum, Skare log cabin and the farm display in the annex. As always, they had interesting comments and questions for our guides – Gail Aaroen, Jane Mitchell, Rosalie Richardson, Cindy Clark, Rod Clark, Jane Licht, Betty Kalhagen and Wes Licht. Many of the classes got to meet and have their photo taken with Art Shegonee, McFarland resident and member of the Potawatomi Nation, who came dressed in his full regalia. This connection was arranged by Maral Forbes, Art's daughter, who is a Special Education Assistant at WIS. Art had donated the use of his teepee poles and drum and participated in the Early Days event on the Saturday prior to the tours. Teacher Libby Rowley coordinated the tour schedule for the 3rd grade.



Art Shegonee, in full regalia, joins Mrs. Atkins and her 3rd graders for a photo in front of his teepee poles by the museum.



Mrs. Wogsland's 3rd graders, with Educational Assistant Lisa Peterson, begin their museum tour with an introduction by Wes Licht.

Victorian Christmas

This December event is a fine family tradition for many years running. Late in November, a group of hardy society members gather at the Larson House to haul large red bags filled with Christmas trees down from the attic and up from the basement. They place these bags in the proper rooms and then proceed to set up the trees. The next day, another group comes to decorate the trees on the second floor followed by a third group that takes charge of the first-floor decorations. Karen Kuenzi lines up hosts for every Sunday afternoon in December and even more



Deb Brennum, Carol Torgeson and Alexa Law decorated the dining room at the Larson House in preparation for the Very Victorian Christmas.

volunteers for the village Winter Wonderland the first Saturday in December. DeAnn Larson calls upon piano players and a reader who uses the beloved book "Twas the Night Before Christmas" for the children. This year, in addition to other piano players, our first Saturday featured the Alsmo Ramblers II with Jim Alsmo and



Wes Licht and Ernie Thieding enjoyed singing at the Larson House during Christmas activities.

Ralph Kieffer on their fiddles and Betty Kalhagen on the piano. Larson House hosts reported many visitors every Sunday and especially on Saturday, December 7. Guests are encouraged to fill out a brief survey where they may indicate their favorite room. This past December, the master bedroom received the most votes with the dining room a close second.



Jim Alsmo, Betty Kalhagen and Ralph Kieffer provided wonderful music at one Sunday open house.



Weiya Zhou, Jane Licht and Emily Weil arranged the outdoor decorations at the Larson House.

Meet and Greet for Local Historical Societies

Representatives from 12 local historical societies gathered as special guests at the Larson House Museum on January 11, 2025. The visitors toured the Larson House and were very complimentary in their remarks about the fine restoration, appropriate furnishings and signage. Many of these society members also walked over to the McFarland Museum on Main Street and again appreciated the displays in the museum, the Skare log cabin and the early farming exhibit in the annex.



Jane Licht shared local history with members of other historical societies who met at the Larson House on January 11, 2025



Dale Marsden and Wes Licht guided Meet and Greet guests at the main museum, annex and log cabin.

This open house was organized by board members Gail Aaroen and Deb Brennum. They had devised a survey that members from these organizations completed prior to the event, revealing many similar



Members of Dane County historical societies were invited to learn about the Larson House and share similar organizational concerns.

challenges such as increasing community involvement, effective fundraising, and storage issues. There was much discussion between our board members and the other historical society members about their common concerns. This group of historians plans to continue meeting in the future to exchange ideas.

McFarland Historical Society Tee Shirts

The McFarland Historical Society is now offering tee shirts for sale featuring the Larson House and Skare Log Cabin. The shirts were featured at our Early Days exhibit during the McFarland Community Festival. Shirts will be available at the annual meeting and the museum open houses this summer. The shirts cost \$15 each.



Please renew by April 1st this year to stay on our rolls.

Your membership and donations support the McFarland Historical Society and keep the museums 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 2025. (If you are a **life time member** new donations are appreciated.)

- Individual \$ 15
- Family \$ 25
- Individual/Family life \$ 150
- Supporting \$ 250
- Business \$ 250
- Support for Larson house _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Name(s): _____

Street or P.O. Box _____

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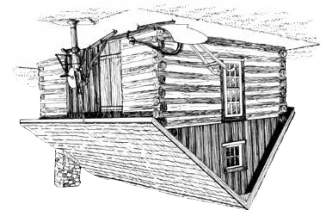
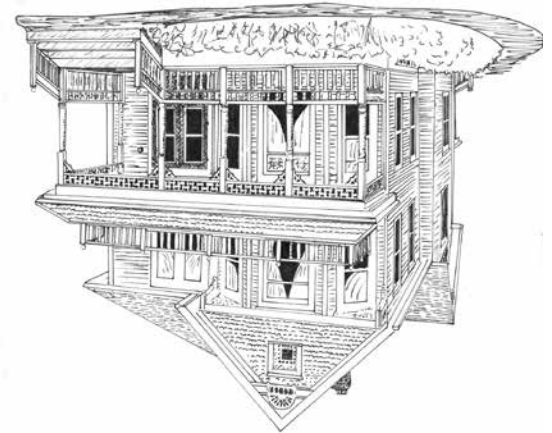
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Go to www.mcfarlandhistorical.org for a color copy of the newsletter, information and color photos on all McFarland Historical Society activities.



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