From the President’s Desk

In Thomas Friedman’s book “Thank You for Being Late” he describes how the event of releasing the iPhone in 2008 has contributed to the acceleration of changes in the world in terms of speed of information storage and usage and the effects it has had on the cultural landscape. So in the accelerating world is it important to preserve our history and artifacts? I believe YES, now even more than ever! Someone needs to preserve our society’s best things to show the future from whence we have come in such a hurry, lest we forget the journey. When second, third and sixth graders light up when they see the “strange” things we used to use to get our clothes clean or produce our butter, it makes our history come alive! This is what I hope to continue to do as the MAHS board changes leadership for 2018. As we transition to new positions some things will change, other things will not. But one constant that remains is that we will continue to need YOU to help by volunteering for projects big and small.

As I take over as president / vice-president with Leslie Anfinson, we will figure out who’s going to do many of the tasks that Tom has done for more than ten years. The accomplishments and work he has contributed to MAHS will leave a lasting legacy to this community. We thank him for the tireless work that he has done here at Milaca’s Museum. My goal is to keep up with the improvements to the building structure, collections, and to provide history and educational opportunities to Milaca area citizens.

In 2017 we have had one of our busiest years with visitors and activities since I have been on the board. Credit for that goes to board members’ hard work and coming up with new ways to get people involved! Thanks to all! Now on to the next phase of the life of the museum, wherever that leads us.

Thanks for the Leadership!

It would be impossible to list all of the contributions to MAHS made by outgoing president Tom Sauer and outgoing treasurer Lynn Kent. For many years, both have been deeply involved in the success of our organization. Fortunately, both continue their involvement. Tom has become treasurer, and will certainly continue to help with transition and some of the other innumerable tasks that always need doing. Lynn will be Vice Secretary-Treasurer, and we hope he will continue to be available as our go-to researcher on all things old Milaca. Nobody knows and writes about the early days like Lynn!

Thanks to Tom and Lynn for their dedication and generosity. The MAHS could not have prospered without them!
From Past President Tom Sauer

Thank you to all our members far and near whose support through funding (City, County, Townships donations), memberships, and donated labor, allowed us to make the improvements listed below become reality. Our excellent volunteer curators, officers, and volunteers put in 20-25,000 hours over the last 13 years. Thank you again.

Warmest regards,
Tom Sauer

- **Building Improvements**
  Exterior: building assessment by architect and engineer; tuck pointing; ramp replacement; replace 3 doors and 4 windows; install gutters, downspouts and splash pads; install signs, flags, pavers; landscaping.
  Interior: ceiling replacement in resource room and north storage room; install shelving throughout building; UV film on windows; rugs and curtains; paint, stain and seal woodwork and walls throughout; have security system installed; electrical service improvements; conversion of a rest room into storage; refinish maple floors; install tile floors in downstairs bathrooms.

- **Museum Services Improvements**
  Expand exhibit areas to include auditorium (2007); provide photo displays for City and local businesses; increase society memberships; digitize collections and financial records; update society by-laws and improve organizational records and forms; put in place phone, copiers, film reader, computers and printers, internet; index and correct 1986 Centennial books for distribution; contribute historical articles for *Mille Lacs County Times*; expand contacts with local schools and at county fair; improve organization and expand content of resources (files, maps, binders, brochures); obtained missing issues of *Times* on film; recognition plaques for significant donors and honorary members.

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Contact us!

**Milaca Area Historical Society**

Street address: 145 S. Central Ave.
Mailing address: PO Box 144
Milaca, MN 56353
Phone: 320-982-1212

Find us on Facebook
Email: museum@milaca.net
Website: milacamuseum.org

Jere Day, President, 983-3325, jlazyday@midco.net
Leslie Anfinson, Vice President, 983-3749, cairoleslie@gmail.com
Tom Sauer, Treasurer 982-6603, tysauer@milaca.net
Ann Johnson, Secretary, 983-6391, johnson.ann.louise@gmail.com
Lynn Kent, Vice Sec-Treas 983-3155, lynnkent@frontiernet.net
Karen Schlenker, Newsletter, Curator 983-3586,
jkarschlen@gmail.com
Next building project: a new front door!

A major donation from Ruth and John Boggs will make possible the replacement of the aluminum front door with one that will return the building to its original appearance.

Thank you, Ruth and John!

With the replacement of the overhead and passage doors in the garage area, we are now ready for the next project. We don’t know when the original front door was replaced with aluminum and glass, but we do know that this door is inadequate for keeping the weather out, and is a big step down in appearance from the original. We can now move forward with this improvement!

Sixth Grade Visits the Museum

The Milaca Area Historical Society eagerly seeks opportunities to connect with students. As you already know, museum volunteers have been taking a trunk show to the second grade classrooms at the Milaca Elementary School to increase students’ awareness of how things change. Second, third and seventh grade students also visit the museum each spring.

This fall we were happy to welcome Mr. Vedders’ sixth grade classes, who walked from the school on November 21. With temperatures hovering around freezing and wind gusts up to 37 m.p.h., five hardy groups honored our facility with their first visit as sixth graders. The task of these well-behaved, eager learners was to complete a set of scavenger hunt questions. With assistance from volunteers, most completed an assignment familiarizing them with Milaca’s earliest industries, those being lumbering and dairying. MAHS looks forward to their visit next year with expectations of refining the activity to enhance their understanding of our area’s part in Minnesota’s history.

Left: Ruth Boggs gives President Tom Sauer a $10,000 check from herself and husband John at the October MAHS meeting. Below: The city hall building (now Milaca Museum), probably in the early 1940s.
Historically Fun Times

The last half of 2017 has been a busy time for the Museum with special events, good conversations and companionship plus yummy food! Summer, especially August, found us busy with the Mille Lacs County Fair. Isle, Milaca and Princeton brought 1917 to life for more than 675 visitors to the Heritage Building. Along with the life-size image of local doughboy Harold Chapman, visitors viewed a collection of World War I military artifacts on loan from the Minnesota Military Museum, as well as local artifacts and photos expanding on the US's entry into the conflict. Food conservation, prohibition, Red Cross activities and a display about a 1917 re-survey of parts of the county broadened the exhibit’s scope.

On September 19, Yvonne Cory, the Apron Lady, helped the Museum celebrate its 10th year in the 1930’s WPA Building. Fifty guests heard about the histories of Yvonne’s aprons from the early 1800’s to the present, along with food preparation and recipes that matched the apron’s era. Coffee and cookies helped continue conversations about aprons and food.

Aprons on loan from local residents were displayed in the Museum from September through October. Their owners shared personal apron stories at the October 24th MAHS meeting. Among the aprons were Carrie Eberhardt Fanum’s Mille Lacs County Fair blue ribbon winning apron, and the apron Judy Sonnek wore at the Pillsbury National Bake Off contest - which she won with her chocolate macaroon recipe.

I don’t know which part of the Christmas Tree exhibit was more fun - the popcorn and cranberry stringing “bee” prior, or the event itself on December 2nd! The tree was beautifully decorated with treasured ornaments, including candle clips (which were NOT lit). A wide variety of antique and memorable toys surrounded the tree. The free event was held in tandem with the Chamber’s Tour of Homes. Cookies and bars added a festive touch and Jan Vetsch drew many of the 75 plus visitors into the research query what she was working on.

These events could not have happened without the help of Museum volunteers and friends. Many baked goodies for the events, others helped to organize the events, some helped carry and set up, and aprons, ornaments and toys were generously loaned - many thanks to the many who helped:


More pictures of these events are on the Museum’s webpage. If you would like to know more about the Museum and how you can get involved, come to our January 23rd kickoff meeting for 2018, at the Milaca City Hall beginning at 6:30 PM.

Thank You, Museum Volunteers

The Milaca Area Historical Society is operated by a great group of volunteers. November 7, 2017 the MAHS held a Thank You Coffee to say “Thank You” to this group that keeps the doors open and the Museum operating.

If you are considering volunteering to keep the Museum open during its open season, April through October, but have concerns or questions about the Museum and the expectations of being a volunteer, please come to an orientation (see the Calendar section on page 6). You can also come to the MAHS general meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month beginning January 23, 2018. The meetings are at Milaca City Hall beginning at 6:30 pm. Hope to see you there!
The Collection Grows in 2017

The year-end collections report once again finds me with many donations as yet unprocessed, but I’d like to make a case for the work that has been done.

- We have better records for the movement of objects from storage to this year’s temporary exhibits (county fair, Christmas), and a good record of the aprons lent for the fall apron exhibit. We also have better records of what is being used in our travelling history collection. It seems with all of these activities, we’re putting things together so fast that we often neglect keeping track, which winds up making more work down the road. There was a big effort to keep track this year!
- Where possible, we are keeping better records of the new items coming into the collection. It’s more time consuming, but I’ve found it rewarding to gather as much context as possible around each object. The time is well spent, as we improve our understanding of what we have and of the area’s history, but progress is slower.

As for this year’s new arrivals in the collection, they’ve been as interesting and as important as ever. Objects and family histories have added to the stories of local families: Westlings, Borgs, Paulsons, Keiths, Fermers and F.O. Johnson, Ivar and Alice Swanson Johnson, Robert O. Johnson, Adolph and Ella Johnson – it’s been a year of many Johnsons!

We received from County Extension many pictures and documents related to 4-H and homemakers’ clubs, then received from another donor the East Hayland Mother’s Club books. We got a collection of garments made at Milaca Mills, including the first and last items made there. Many scrapbooks came in, always a gift and a challenge. We received a beautiful history of Ella Dethloff Johnson’s family, and later received patches worn by employees of the DeLuxe Café, Ella and Adolph’s business. We now have some old ledger books as well – a county jail register, and abstract registers through the early 1910s. We also have the robe worn by Judge Leonard Paulson when he presided over court in the Milaca courthouse.

Another significant aspect of our collection’s importance to the community and the larger world is the ability we have to answer research queries. It’s hard to keep track of these queries – some are quite casual, but some satisfied researchers come back to us four or five times – but we had about three dozen in 2017 that made it onto a request form. Researchers contacted us from Norway, Oregon, Florida, all over – and from down the street as well. Some were simple obituary lookups, and some were stumpers that still have us scratching our heads. We learn from all of them.

All of these activities, from collections care to research assistance to exhibit development, provide a unique service to our community. Thanks to our members and friends for helping to keep all of this going!

230 items (objects, photos, documents, books) were accessioned in 2017, given by 38 donors, as well as two dozen “found” items, bringing our current collection total to 7620 items.
MAHS appreciates our business members of 2017

All-Aboard Travel/Travel Leaders  
Bemis Trucking Service  
Billings Service  
Blue Moon Saloon  
Sailor-Ethan Allen Law Office  
First National Bank of Milaca  
Fransen Decorating  
Harris Hardwoods  
Heggies Pizza  
Jims Mille Lacs Disposal  
Kulick Consulting  
Milaca Area Chamber of Commerce  
Milaca Depot Floral  
Mille Lacs County DAC  
Molacek Family Eyecare  
NAF Enterprises  
Peterson Johnson Funeral Home  
Rum River Realty  
Rum River Stucco  
Wade Demolition & Salvage

Calendar

**Volunteer orientation at the Milaca Museum.** Are you considering working at the Museum this season but unsure about the expectations? Please add February 24th to your calendar. Beginning at 9:30 on Saturday, February 24th*, there will be a Museum Orientation to answer your questions about how to open and close the Museum, what to do when guests visit, forms to hand out, etc. It is also an opportunity for you to give us feedback on how to improve procedures. If you can’t make the 24th, an April weekday evening meeting will be announced later this season. Look for more information on the Museum’s webpage. Museum members and friends are invited to all orientation meetings.

*If there is a snowstorm, the 24th Orientation will be cancelled.

**Family History Conference: Trace Your Roots**, Stearns History Museum, 235 – 33rd Ave, St. Cloud, Saturday, April 21, 2018, 8 am to 5 pm, $50 members, $60 non-members. For more information [www.stearns-museum.org/genealogy-workshop](http://www.stearns-museum.org/genealogy-workshop).

**Mille Lacs History Festival & Rendezvous.** The 26th anniversary Rendezvous will be June 22-24, 2018, at a new location (1 mile SE of Isle on Hwy 47, ½ mile E on Torchlight Road). For more info or to register send SASE to Mille Lacs Lake Historical Society History Fest, PO Box 42, Isle, MN 56342; email millelacs.vous@gmail.com; or call 763-757-4118.

**Vietnam Veterans Memorial Moving Wall**, Princeton fairgrounds July 4-6, 2018. Opening ceremony noon July 4; closing ceremony 4 p.m. July 6; events and displays throughout. For more information about the Wall and related volunteer opportunities, contact Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce PACC@sherbtel.net or call 763-389-1764.

Please be a MAHS Member!

Please consider joining or renewing your Milaca Area Historical Society membership in 2018. We have been preserving historical photos, items, and information for over 30 years. To make the process simple for you, there is a tear-off form below. **Please check the box □ preceding your desired membership category (see below). Then send your dues to our address below.**

We thank you for your interest in helping us achieve our goals of helping our members and our community discover and preserve the heritage of the Milaca area.

Leslie Anfinson
Vice-President/Membership Chair

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2018 Membership in the Milaca Area Historical Society

*Dues January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018*

Send to MAHS, PO Box 144, Milaca, MN 56353

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<th>MAHS membership categories</th>
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<td>Student/Senior</td>
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<tr>
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**Date ____________**

Enclosed is my check # _________

for 2018 membership dues $ __________

I’d like to add a donation $ __________

My total is $ __________

MAHS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit so your TOTAL is tax deductible

Name/s __________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________ city/state/zip __________

Phone: ____________________________ E mail: ____________________________

☐ Please mail me the MAHS Newsletter (paper format)

☐ Please email my newsletter

☐ I would like to receive email notice of monthly meetings
Join us for the first meeting of 2018
Tuesday, January 23
6:30 p.m.
Milaca City Council Chambers
255 First Street East