



Orion P. Howe statue unveiled in Veterans Memorial Plaza. See back cover.

Holiday Open House see page 4
New Museum Supervisor see page 11

December 2006

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society



President's Letter

by Harry E. Came

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The very best news which I can relay to our membership is that we have a new full-time Museum Supervisor. Adam "Ty" Rohrer started on October 3rd and has really been working hard to learn his new job and all about Waukegan. There was a total of about 25 applicants for the job and Sara Griffin, Claudia Petrusky, and I pored over the resumes until we had narrowed down the field to 8 people. These eight were interviewed and we selected a final three that we decided would be great for the job. Out of these three we decided that Ty was our number one choice and he was offered the position.

Ty is from Lincoln, Illinois, and graduated from the University of Illinois with a BA in History and Anthropology and an MA in History to be awarded in the spring. The Museum Committee has been working with him on several work days in order to get the work room cleared and ready for our new push to update our computer files and work on our collections management. We will be looking to bring in volunteers to work in the work room under Ty's supervision. If you would like to volunteer please call 847.336.1859.

With Ty's arrival we have been able to increase the number of hours the Museum will be open. The

Haines will open from 10:00am-4:00pm on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday but can also be open by appointment at other times. The Raymond Library is open on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10:30am until 2:00pm.

Sara Griffin and I were so pleased to give a private tour of the Museum and the photographic exhibit to Dr. and Mrs. Julius Wineberg. The Winebergs drove out from their home in Chicago to tour the Haines and see the exhibit of the photographs that he had taken back in the 1970s. Dr. Wineberg practiced medicine in Waukegan for many years, but one of his great loves was photography. He took beautiful architectural views of many of Waukegan's most interesting buildings. Dr. and Mrs. Wineberg were kind enough, on their visit, to donate three more images to our collection.

Our September program was a great success with a program on hats provided by Ms. Kirstin Synnestvedt. She told stories of hats while singing and playing the piano.

We look forward to seeing you at the Holiday Open House on December 10 and wish you all the very best for the season and for the New Year.

WHS Board

Officers

President
Harry E. Came
Vice President
Gretta Dieck
Treasurer
William Tyre
Secretary
Ellen Frew

Directors

Betsy Alleman
Sara Griffin
Margaret Martin
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Holiday Open House



The Haines Museum will be welcoming everyone to the Annual Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 10, from 2:00pm until 4:00pm. The home will be decorated for Christmas with a huge tree in the South Parlor, garlands on the staircases, and the dining room set for a sumptuous Christmas feast. Every year the Open House brings our guests an early feel for the holiday season through the decorations, the wonderful coming together of friends, and the beautiful music being played.

This year we are fortunate to have Jane Hager playing the flute and the hammered dulcimer while our guests look at the Society's special collections of dolls and toys specially displayed for the season.

Ongoing Exhibits

The exhibit "A Visit to the Millinery Shop" will still be on display at the Haines Museum through the winter, so we hope you will stop by and look at some of the Society's large collection of hats from the past 100 years as well as some loaned by other historical societies. There is also a small display of items from the American Legion and Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). The Historical Society is the repository of many of the artifacts and records of these two Waukegan veteran's organizations.

Treasures from Our Collection

Our next big exhibit at the Haines Museum involves the entire spectrum of the Society's collections. If you have not been to the Museum in a few years, you will be surprised at the quality and extent of the furnishings of the period rooms of the Haines. The parlors, bedrooms, dining room, and kitchen have all been decorated and furnished to the period of the 1870s. There are many items, donated by thoughtful members and friends, on display throughout the Museum which add to the authenticity of the displays. Unfortunately our limited exhibit space keeps much of our collection stored away from public view. For this exhibit we are throwing open the doors to the storerooms and bringing out wonderful treasures from the collection which have not been on display for years.

Some of the planned exhibits, which will be shown throughout the Museum, are items which were actually manufactured in Waukegan, souvenirs of Waukegan, and just plain beautiful items which have been kindly donated and which we would like to share with our visitors. This will be one of the most interesting exhibits we have ever prepared for the Museum, and I am sure it will be entertaining and educational. The Museum Committee is already bringing out items which have not been shared with our members and guests in years.

Historically Speaking

Jack Benny & Waukegan

by Ed Link



Waukegan has found many ways to honor its native son. Jack Benny Center for the Arts at 39 Jack Benny Drive in Bowen Park and the statue at Genesee and Clayton are two examples. The last standing home of his boyhood (518 Clayton Street) recently was designated a Waukegan landmark. And, of course, there is Jack Benny Middle School (originally Jack Benny Junior High School, JBJHS), believed to be the only school of its type in the United States named for a comedian.

Throughout his lifetime Jack found many ways to remember and honor Waukegan as well. The most frequent way was through many references on his radio and television shows. Mayor

Mancel Talcott appeared twice on the radio with Jack. Stories, mostly fictitious, of Jack's boyhood in Waukegan were regular segments of the programs. Prior to the premiere of "Man About Town" in 1939, the radio show was nationally broadcast from the stage of the Genesee Theatre. An October 1961 television program was aired from JBJHS.

He also made many trips back to his hometown for other reasons. One reason, naturally, was family while his father lived. He also visited friends in a casual manner without headlines. Headlines were plentiful when he visited for Jack Benny Days in 1937 or took part in the 1959 Centennial celebration.

His generosity to the area must also be noted. His 1957 Levi Memorial Hospital Benefit, the 1964 concert for Temple Am Echod, another concert for the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and a 1974 con-

cert with the Waukegan Symphony all were contributions of time, talent and celebrity which meant significant financial rewards for the designated recipients.

He also contributed in less spectacular ways. A 1944 news article announced his annual \$250 donation to the Waukegan-North Chicago Community Chest and intimated that it had been going on for some years. While in town for the JBJHS dedication, he offered a \$39 bank account for each child born locally during a 24 hour period. Ten kids collected.

Maybe the best illustration of the symbiosis between Jack and his hometown was during the recent Genesee Theatre showing of 1940s "Buck Benny Rides Again." At both references to Waukegan, the audience cheered. Whether they were cheering the man or the town is a needless distinction.



Recent Acquisitions

Linda and Pat Carry

Children's art easel

Dorothe W Dorband

Waukegan centennial banner, wooden nickels, Belles pin

Harold Callahan

"Memoirs of Lewis Douglas Clarke" and OMC shirt

Bette Ann Grube

Hand painted Globe lamp and annual

Bernice Colony

Illinois history books, historical plates, and photographs

Julius Wineberg

Three original artworks of Waukegan

Mona Costa

Rug loom

Fred Fortney

Christmas tree candle holders

Betsy Alleman

"Anchor of Liberty" and Charcoal House shot glass

Newspaper clippings, photos

Richard Bairstow

Spats, newspaper clippings, photos, pamphlets, key to the City

Jill Martin

Centennial official program

Barbara Stone

Photos of 414 N. Sheridan Road

JoEllen Domalski

1936 photograph

Joanne Kelsey

Curtain stretcher

Jennifer Cribb

Johnson Motors book, yearbooks

Elizabeth Conrad

Mathon's menu

John Bairstow

"History of Waukegan Fire Dept"

Walter Sivertson

"The Purple and Gold" sheet music

Marie Corzine

City Directories, photos

Richard Mellen

Haines plate, stock certificate, centennial tie

Margaret Martin

Video of Academy Theater fire

Fenton Henniger

Lake County maps and poster

Dorothy Beddenhagen

1974 Jack Benny Program, drawings from Johnson Motors

Roman Miller

School directories, calendars, account books

Ruth Knabel

1922-23 Waukegan Sun

Steve Rosswurm

Photocopies of "Silent Snow" and "Frog Island Reunion," 1941 Waukegan & North Chicago Community Chest

William Tyre

Postcards, advertisements, Bradbury book, City Directory, Blatchford Cow Meal memorabilia, EJ&E papers, 1923 calendar, Sheridan Rd home sketch, ticket for Benny Hometown Film Festival, 303 Douglas house file

Gary Lee Abbott

Hat, drawing of American Steel & Wire, newspaper and photos

Betty & Al Bujan

Abstract

David Cox

Postcards

Barbara Dunakin

Genesee Theatre memorabilia

Ethel Golwitzer Flesher

Photos, postcards, pamphlets, Girl Scout materials, Masonic materials

Barbara & George Frank

Sugar sack, Tongs from American Steel & Wire, coffee can

Susie Schreiber

Photos of Waukegan and North Chicago

Richard Fulton

Fulton family genealogy

Caroline Palbicki

Paintings by Betty Hagenauer

Ed Link

Waukegan Parks reference

Jean Schrieber

Photographs

Carol Williams

CNW RR Map

Don Taylor

Postcards

Rose Bhatt

Yearbooks

Dorothy Anderson

Yearbook

Thank you for your recent donations to our Museum and Library collections.



Children's art easel

Recent Acquisitions

Purchased Items

Photo of Bowen Park Country Club Pool
“Public domain sales in Lake County”
Photo of Joe’s Service Station
1919 Navy Relief Program
Postcard of Karcher Hotel lobby
South School photo, Minnie Werden—teacher
Aerial image of Waukegan from space
Durkin and Durkin charge plate
“Waukegan Polka” sheet music

Thank You!

New Members

Thomas & Ann Carlson
Richard Mellen
Dave Rasche
Sally Zeit

New Patrons

Waukegan Fire Department
Brad West

New Life Members

Earl Murray
Scott and Roxanne Swanson
James Peter Young
Robert and JoAn Sabonjian

Donations

Dr. Dawn Abt-Perkins, Linking Learning
Communités, Lake Forest College
Richard Mellen
Waukegan Community Players

New Museum Supervisor

Adam “Ty” Rohrer

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the membership of the Waukegan Historical Society. I am not a native of Waukegan but rather I am from the City of Lincoln, Illinois.

I graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign in 2003 with a Bachelor of Arts in both History and Anthropology. The focus of my undergraduate studies was United States History and Latin American History. I will be receiving my Master of Arts degree in History, with an emphasis in Public History, from the University of Illinois at Springfield in the spring.

I completed an internship at the Illinois State Military Museum in Springfield and also worked for over two years as the Museum Assistant for the Springfield Art Association and Edwards Place Historic Home.

I hope to be able to bring in fresh ideas and to also build upon the already successful programs established by the Waukegan Historical Society and the Haines Museum. My first objective, as the Museum Supervisor, is to increase the efficiency of the day to day activities of the Museum, inventory and organize the collections, build and strengthen the Society and Museum volunteer base, and learn the rich history of Waukegan.

Museums and history have always been a passion of mine and I am both honored and excited to be a part of the Waukegan Historical Society and the Haines Museum. I look forward to working with the membership and the Board, the Waukegan Park District, and the City of Waukegan in advancing the mission of the Society.

Please feel free to contact me at anytime about ideas you may have for future programs and events that will make the Society more beneficial to you and the community.



Collections Cameo

Dining Room Sideboard

By Harry E. Came

The dining room of the Haines Museum is the last room to have been furnished in the style of the 1870s. The Waukegan Park District had installed the dark green velvet draperies and the beautiful period wallpaper a number of years ago. The reproduction chandelier had been designed and built specially for the room and had been installed several years ago, but the room was still bare of furniture until one Sunday afternoon when I received a telephone call that there was an estate sale on North Avenue. It was the last day of the sale, and the caller said there were deals to be had so I rushed over to see what was left. The person handling the sale said he would give me a great deal on the huge Empire sideboard that was left with no bids. I told him I was not at all interested because it needed quite a bit of work and I had no room in my antique shop for the huge piece. He mentioned, in passing, that it had originally come from the old Haines farmhouse in Bowen Park. Well, that certainly got my attention.

Upon further discussion I was told that the estate sale was being held for the Mulligan family who had been caretakers of the Haines house. I bought the sideboard for the Society and we had it restored and put in the only place in the dining room where it would fit. After many years and several different locations, the beautiful piece was right back where it had started. At the same sale there was a partial set of Wedgwood china from the early part of the 20th century. This china was used in the Haines house during the Bowen Country Club days, and I bought it for the Society at the same time. It is now stored in the sideboard, probably right where it had been almost 100 years ago.

The empire sideboard was probably made during the third quarter of the 19th century and has

magnificent flame mahogany veneers and beautiful carvings. It is a handsome piece and in a style which has never really gone out of favor. Originally, Empire pieces were produced in this country from about 1815 until about 1840, but revivals of the style have been produced ever since. Even sleigh beds which are of that period seem to be the rage again. The drawer faces on the piece had been drilled and had reproduction brass pulls installed. In order to restore its original form, all the veneer on the drawer fronts was replaced.

The next time you are in the Haines, stop and take a look at the sideboard in the dining room and think about the journey it has made and how it is right back where it belongs. In the next issue of the newsletter I will tell stories about how we obtained other pieces in the dining room.



WHS Calendar

December 2006

Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 10
2:00pm-4:00pm
Haines Museum

Haines Museum Hours:
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
10am-4pm

Additional times by appointment.

Area Events

Please call to confirm dates and times.

McHenry County Historical Society (815.923.2267)
December 2. Holiday Open House, 1-4. Marching Off-Left Behind:
The Civil War Experience. Aluminum Christmas Trees.

Historical Society of Fort Hill Country (847.566.7743)
December 2, Open house, tours, photos with Santa 11-3.

Libertyville/Mundelein Historical Society
December 2 and 3, 9 and 10, 16. Christmas Open House 12-4.

Fox Lake/Grant Township Area Historical Society
December 3. Holiday social with refreshments.

Warren Township Historical Society (847.263.9540)
December 9. Holiday Open House, 1-4.
January 2. Treasures from the Attic. Bring objects to share.

Grayslake Historical Society (847.223-7663)
December 10. Open house with Santa, 1:30-3:30.
January 14. Open House. Remembering the Forties, 1:30-3:30.

Highland Park Historical Society (847.432.7090)
January 21. High Tea with Bertha Palmer. 1-3, fee and reservations.

Join Us!

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____
PHONE _____
EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

Senior (age 60+) & Student	\$7.00
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Patron, Organization	\$50.00
Life, Individual	\$100.00
Life, Couple	\$150.00
My additional gift	\$ _____

Make checks payable to
Waukegan Historical Society.

VOLUNTEER

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Contact Us

Waukegan Historical Society

1917 N. Sheridan Road
Waukegan, IL 60087
847-336-1859
info@waukeganhistorical.org

John L. Raymond Research Library

1911 N. Sheridan Road
Librarian: Beverly Millard
847-360-4772
library@waukeganhistorical.org

Haines House Museum

1917 N. Sheridan Road
847-336-1859
museum@waukeganhistorical.org
Call or check the web site for hours of operation.

Visit our website for more information
about events, exhibits, and our
extensive library.

www.waukeganhistorical.org



1917 N. Sheridan Rd, Waukegan, IL 60087

PROGRAM

Holiday

Open House

Sunday,

December 10

2pm-4pm

See page 4.

From the cover: Orion Howe

On November 11, 2006, at 11:11am, a diminutive statue of one of Waukegan's most famous citizens was unveiled at Veterans Memorial Plaza. Orion Perseus Howe was awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery during the Battle of Vicksburg in 1863. At 14, he was the youngest recipient in history. An article on the Howe family appeared in the June 2006 newsletter (available at waukeganhistorical.org).

