

THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 2010

www.chippewacountyhistoricalsociety.org



"OLD ABE"

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View of the Peshtigo Company sawmill including the old wooden dam in the foreground. There are logs in the water on the left. 1890 ca.
Wisconsin Historical Society, Image ID. 78879.



**The Area History Center
will be closed
for the holidays on
Tuesday, December 21 and
Tuesday, December 28.**

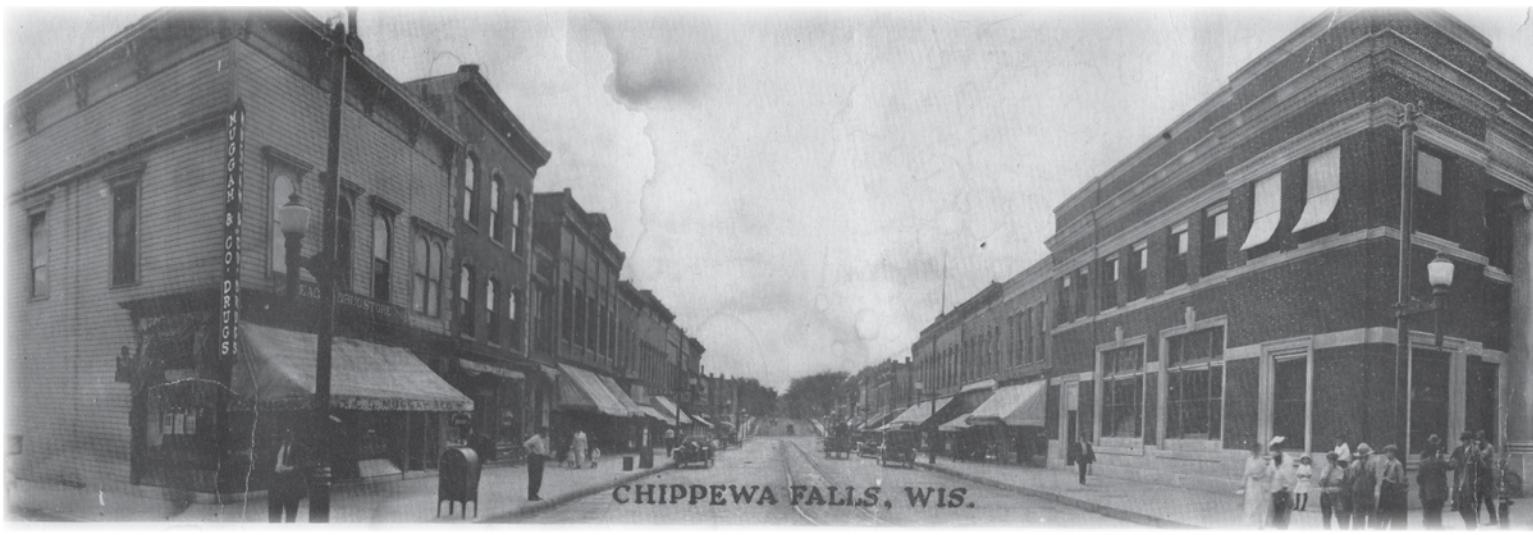
A Trip with Joe

BY ARLEY ENGEL

The 35th Annual Conference and Meeting of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin was September 23–25 at Green Bay, Wisconsin. After talking with Joe Joas a couple of times it was not hard to convince him that he should join Norm Ford and myself on the trip to Green Bay. We picked Joe up at 7:50 a.m. on Thursday the 25th and headed to Abbotsford for a hearty breakfast. It was a rainy day in fact we never shut the wipers off all the way to Green Bay. With the help of GPS and some area maps Norm had taken off the computer we had no trouble finding the Sierra Hotel.

We transferred our bags to the room on the third floor, then took a few minutes to acquaint ourselves with the layout of this grand place and essentials like the breakfast and beverage area. This is an 8 story unit with many conference areas. There were many things on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



FEATURED ARTIFACT

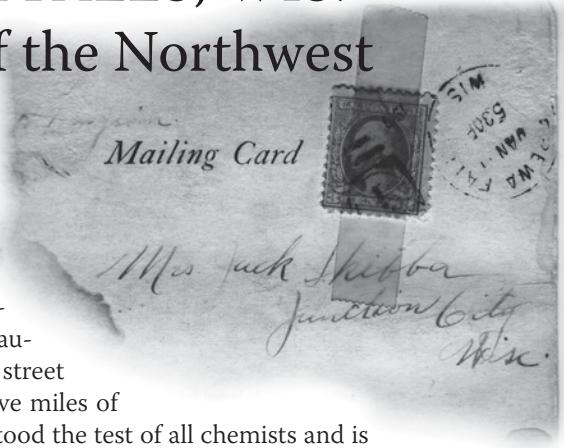
Panorama Mailing Card

Thanks to Chuck Norseng, the Society has a new artifact. "The Niagra of the Northwest" narrative is the description of Chippewa Falls from the back of the above Mailing Card. The Mailing Card is 6x18 inches circa 1907-10 panorama of downtown Chippewa Falls looking north along Bridge Street. A notation reads "Roll instead of fold for mailing". It has a 3 cent George Washington stamp and is post marked Chippewa Falls, January, 5:30 p. The card is to Mrs. Jack Ikkibber, Junction City, Wisc. The message is "To let you know we are all home and well." It is signed "From Kay".

*To let you know
we are all home
and well.
from
Kay.*

CHIPPEWA FALLS, WIS. The Niagra of the Northwest

A city of twelve thousand population. The county seat of the greatest agricultural county in Wisconsin; transportation facilities equal to any city in the country; three main line roads the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha; Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, and Sainte Marie; street car and interurban service; thirty-five miles of water mains; the water supply has stood the test of all chemists and is conceded to be the purist natural water known in modern chemistry. It is the second city in the state in the manufacture of shoes having five large shoe factories; it is the home of the famous Hannegan Steady Stream Pump, the newest most unique and serviceable pump made; numerous other factories among them being sugar, glove, tobacco, cigar, machines, wood, cement, brick, flour, paper box, canning, beer, hides, bottling, broom, woolen and candy. Sixteen miles of sewerage; ten miles of paved streets; one and one-half miles of ornamental street lighting the most beautiful White Way in the Northwest, and the best lighted city in Wisconsin; not a vacant mercantile building or dwelling in the city; cheapest gas of any city of its size in the state; two daily and three weekly newspapers; fourteen churches; twelve grade and two high schools, enrollment of about two thousand. McDonell Memorial High School donated to Notre Dame Parish by the late Sir Alexander B. McDonnell; Hannah M. Rutledge Home for the Aged built and endowed by the late Edward Rutledge; Rutledge Charities endowed by the late Edward Rutledge for deserving poor in the city and vicinity. Only city of its size in the United States having an Associate Charities operating under such favorable conditions; St. Joseph's Hospital, conducted by the Sister of St. Francis, conceded to be the best hospital in Northern Wisconsin; Irvine Park, the most beautiful of all natural parks in the country consists of 280 acres, and was presented to the city by Mr. Wm. Irvine; Three banks, aggregate capital \$280,000, surplus \$135,000; deposits \$3,000,000; within a radius of one hundred miles an unlimited supply of hard woods of all varieties for manufacturing purposes. It is the garden spot of the Northwest from a homeseeker's standpoint, and added to all these we have a Hydro-Electric Plant on the Chippewa River where a sixty-foot dam holds back the lordly Chippewa, a power house with a capacity of 60,000 horsepower from which we can furnish you with electric power cheaper than any place in the United States with one exception, that is Niagara Falls; two and one-half hours from the Twin Cities; three hours from Twin Ports and six hours from Chicago. *





Sokup's Market

Joseph Sokup opened Sokup's Market in Downtown Chippewa Falls around 1891 on the northwest corner of Bay and Willow Streets. He built the current grocery store at 624 N. Bridge Street in 1894. The market is one of the oldest family owned businesses in the city and is one of the few remaining small grocery stores in the Chippewa Valley.

Joseph's son, Peter, was born in the residence located above the grocery. As a boy he hitched up the horses to the wagon, drove to area homes to pick up their grocery lists, went back to the grocery to fill the orders and then delivered the groceries back to their customers.

Peter left for service in World War I in 1918 with the 73rd Engineers. He took over management of the family business upon his return in 1921. On December 1, 1963, Peter's son John took over the business and operated it with his wife Angie until 1995, when he sold the business to their son Peter. John like his father and grandfather, continued to work at the market after handing over the reigns to the next generation.

Current owner, Peter Sokup, said, "We still do home deliveries on weekdays." A full line of groceries is carried at the corner market, but the specialty items are meat and produce. The full service meat department offers fresh ground meat, special cuts of meat and homemade sausages. Smoked hams are a holiday favorite. The market has served families for generations. It is not un-common to see visitors from more than a hundred miles away packing coolers full of meat for their ride home.

Peter Sokup, the fourth generation operator of Sokup's Market, had the opportunity in 2003 to restore the storefront after the driver of a car lost control and struck the building, causing major damage. The "new" exterior was designed to more closely resemble the original façade. This location has been known as "Sokup's Corner" for more than 115 years.

Thank you to Joe Joas for sponsoring Sokup's Market, our 51st historic marker ☺



Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

* Collection & Artifacts:

* Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel, Lucyann LeCleir, Terri Stahr, Jeff Pritchard

Photography Sub Committee:

* Lucyann LeCleir, Donna Bourget

* Building & Grounds:

* Steve Rasmus

Space Utilization Sub Committee

* Steve Rasmus

* Education:

* Catherine Lea, Evalyn Frasch, Ann Gordon, Rosemary Broeren

Docent Subcommittee:

Lalie Boos, Pat Ahneman

* Exhibits:

* Arley Engel, Nancy Schuh, Lucyann LeCleir

Historic Markers Sub Committee:

* Tom Larson, Jim Schuh, Arley Engel, Kurt Gaber

* Finances:

* Skip August, Kathy Forsgren

* Membership:

* Shirley Liedl, Mary McKenna

Telephone Subcommittee:

* Mary McKenna

* Publicity:

* Jim Schuh, Wayne Meyer
Newsletter Design: Elly Rochester

* Chairperson



COUNTY NEWS

Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVE JANKOSKI, REPORTER

We are already settling into our winter work routine now that the museum has been closed for the season. On most Tuesday mornings and afternoons you can find volunteers working at the museum.

We closed our museum for the season on Sunday, September 26. We had a busy fall as we hosted the Class of 1960 who were in town celebrating their 50th Anniversary. They were followed by the All School Reunion, which visited the museum on Saturday, October 2. In addition, we have enjoyed visits from a group of Cub Scouts and 60 Red Hat Ladies. We are always open to groups visiting. Call 715-644-5880 to make arrangements.

Since our last report we have very good news to report and that is that our new addition opened July 10 has been completely paid for. We retired our debt in early October. Total construction cost was \$136,000, which was approximately \$14,000 less than originally projected.

We have already begun our next major construction project and that is the removal of soil around a major portion of the 1906 school building and repairing the stone walls and plastering them and finally installing a vapor barrier. We are also putting in drain tile. Finally, we are replacing some sidewalk and building a decorative block wall to contain the soil that is being back filled against the building foundation. After the outside work is completed, we will be moving inside to do a small remodeling project in our 2001-2002 addition. We have decided to enlarge one of our office areas by some reconfiguration of walls. The enlarged office will provide more counter space for computers and wall areas for storage cabinets.

Thank you to those who continue to support our efforts. All of your assistance is appreciated and valued. ☺



Antique washing machines at the Peshtigo Fire Museum.

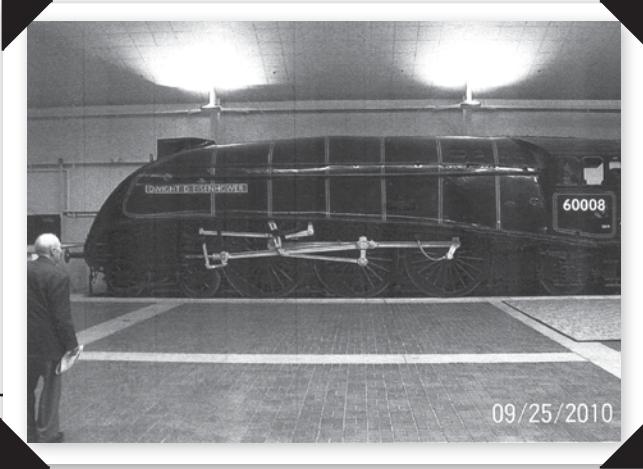
A Trip with Joe

schedule, we did attend a board meeting and introduced Joe as one of the oldest attending members. As he says, he is in his 97th year. We then proceeded to a good meal followed by a speaker on the tales of Paul Bunyan, then back to our room.

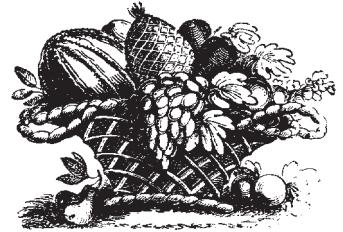
Joe rose early Friday morning to beat us youngsters to the bath room, and was dressed and ready for breakfast before 7 o'clock. We ate, then boarded the tour bus and headed to Heritage Hill State Park Museum. A lecture on 'The State of Wisconsin Forests' by Paul DeLong was followed by a tour of Heritage Hill Museum. This property was formally part of the land owned by the Green Bay Reformatory and was sold to the DNR when highway 172 divided the property. Our next tour left at noon as we headed towards Peshtigo. We had a rolling auction on the bus of collectable history items. We had a smorgasbord lunch at restaurant south of Peshtigo, where we had a lecture on the 1978 Monster Fire at Minong by Bill Mathias a former school superintendent in the Minong area. Then on to the fire museum at Peshtigo, The museum is an old church building moved into the area after the "Great Peshtigo Fire" as only 2 structures survived the fire which happened on October 8, 1871, the same day as the Great Chicago Fire.

Peshtigo, a booming town of 1700 people, was wiped out of existence in the greatest forest fire disaster in American history. The tornado of fire claimed at least 800 lives in the Peshtigo area. Many of the victims are buried in the cemetery next to the church, with 350 unidentified men, women, and children buried in a mass grave on a north lot in the cemetery. As many as 75 were found in a boarding house on the east side of the river, they were burned beyond recognition. A story is told that some of the parents actually cut the throats of their children rather than let them suffer from death by fire. People had gathered in the river as the fire came into town. A painting in the north end of the church displays family's in the water some with their hair on fire, others putting there head and all in the river to escape the heat. This museum has many items of interest to an old collector like me, including a display of antique washing machines some that I have never seen before. They had a couple displays of Thompson Boats that were built in Peshtigo—Harry Eystad of Chippewa Falls had a Thompson boat in the 1960's.

Another thing that caught my eye was a commercial "Kraut Kutter," it being the only one I have ever seen. There were at least 4 hours of time needed to enjoy the complete display area of the old church museum but due to lack of time we only got to spend less than 2 hours at the site, then we headed to the Peshtigo River in town and were shown some of the log cribs and boating area, as the river had been lowered for repairs on the dam. The Peshtigo Wooden Ware plant was located on the north side of the river, this plant owned the boarding house where the 75 individuals had gone to escape the fire. Back on the bus and heading south on Highway 41 to Green Bay, we again did a rolling auction and purchased more collectables. Our next stop was the Black and Tan Restaurant, an older building with an



Joe Joas checks out the Dwight D. Eisenhower at the Peshtigo Railroad Museum.



elevator that went to the 7th floor then we took the stair to the 8th floor where we received lunch. Norm got ahead of Joe and I followed him closely at the rear to make sure there was no problem with the stairway. It was quite a task for our servers carrying full meals for 37 people up that narrow stairway. After lunch we tried to continue the auction but it was very confusing as we were scattered in three different rooms. After about 10 items we gave up and headed back to our hotel.

Saturday morning was easy for us as the meeting was at our hotel and not until 9 am. We had two speakers: first, Fred Brechler on the Marathon Fire Tower and second, Fred Beseler on The De Havilland Mosquito, an English bomber equipped with 2 Packard V-12 engines. The wings and fuselage were built out of plywood from northern Wisconsin. These planes could fly at speeds over 300 miles per hour. We also had a former Wisconsin resident now living in Colorado, Frank Hitz do a presentation on sawmills of Wisconsin. He had a listing of the mills by counties with Marathon having the most with 84, Eau Claire County was second with 83, and Chippewa County a little farther down the line at 73 mills. We had a light lunch and it was time to head home, but wait . . . we had driven all this way and had not visited Wisconsin's largest Railroad Museum so with a little coaxing Norm and I convinced Joe that it was a must see. It is a very large display with five or six complete engines and coal cars inside a heated building, plus a theater and many other static displays, we spent another two hours here and it was well worth it. Joe was happy we went. *That's all for now from Engel's Little House on the Wheaton Prairie* ☺

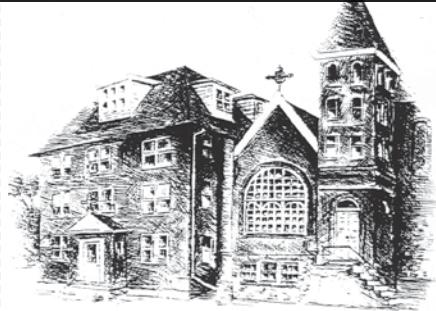
MARSH RAINBOW ARCH BRIDGE UPDATE

JIM SCHUH

Our last four newsletters have included information about the Marsh Rainbow Arch Bridge. This historic structure is located on Spring Street in Downtown Chippewa Falls and it is the only bridge remaining in Wisconsin that was built in this architectural style which was popular in the early 1900's. The City of Chippewa Falls has hired an engineering firm to conduct research and make recommendations for the future of this historic bridge. One possible outcome has been listed as removal. The City's website currently lists the following message:

Spring Street Rainbow Bridge Public Information Meetings and Project Schedule: The Alternative Analysis Report has been prepared by Ayres Associates and is currently under review by all necessary reviewing agencies. Once all reviews have been completed and comments have been incorporated into the document, the report will be posted on the city website for public review and the intermediate public information meeting (originally scheduled for March 2010) will be scheduled shortly thereafter. ☺

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- Life Member (Individual)..... \$125
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A Message From Your President

The leaves have come and gone so it must be time for the Eagle Speaks. The Semi Annual Membership Meeting and potluck took place September 20th at Irvine Park. Lucy LeCleir made the potluck a big success as usual even after cataract surgery the week before. The annual election was held and the following officers were elected: President-Dave Gordon; Treasurer-Kathy Forsgren; Director-Lucyann LeCleir; and Director-Teri Stahr

For some time there have been two vacancies on the Board of Directors. After the Membership Meeting Marge Hebbring came up to me and said she would like to become involved in the Historical Society. It turns out Marge is a grant writer and Teri Stahr suggested Marge would be a good candidate for the Board of Directors. I am pleased to fill one of these vacancies by appointing Marge to the Board. I also met with Rosemary Kilbridge the end of October and asked her if she would consider being on the Board. Rosemary has been on the Board in the past and agreed to fill the other vacancy. I'm happy to report to you the Society now has a full Board of Directors.

Two years ago we established the Chippewa County Historical Society Hall of Fame. Last year we inducted Arley Engle, Lucy LeCleir and James Schumacher into the Hall of Fame. This is the annual call to the Society Membership to nominate people for induction into the Hall of Fame. Please submit your nominations in writing by December 31, 2010.

The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to recognize the members, officers and directors who have made a significant contribution to the Chippewa County Historical Society. Annually in the November newsletter the membership will be given an opportunity to nominate people for induction into the Hall of Fame. The Board of Directors each January will determine if any members of the society should be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Except for the initial class of inductees the maximum number of inductees shall be three each year.

Qualifications include but are not limited to:

- Served as an officer or director for at least one full term.
- Contributed major artifacts, books or manuscripts to the Society's collection.
- Donated a significant amount of volunteer time to the Society and/or its collection.
- Made a large monetary donation to advance the Society's mission.
- Had a significant impact on the Society.

Hall of Fame living inductees will be notified of their election and presented with a certificate at the February Membership meeting. If possible families of deceased inductees will be notified of their relatives election. A display of inductees will be maintained in the History Center.

Lots going on in Chippewa Falls these days. Next issue look for news of a major change in our Museum and hopefully information about a new museum in Chippewa Falls. So tune in to the next issue of the Eagle Speaks. Hope to see you at the History Center soon. *Dave*

Dave Gordon, Teri Stahr, Lucyann LeCleir, and Kathy Forsgren

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2010-2012 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

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* Vice President

Jim Schuh, 5432 178th St., Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (11)

* Recording Secretary & Corresponding Secretary

Mary McKenna, 217 W. Elm St., Chippewa Falls (08) 720-9635

* Treasurer

Kathryn Forsgren, 18498 122nd Ave., Jim Falls (08) 382-5511

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* Skip August, 18416 54th Ave, Chippewa Falls 723-8493 (11)

* Steve Rasmus, 936 N. Bridge St. Chippewa Falls 723-4339 (11)

* Wayne Meyer, 622 S. 8th St., Cornell 239-6239 (12)

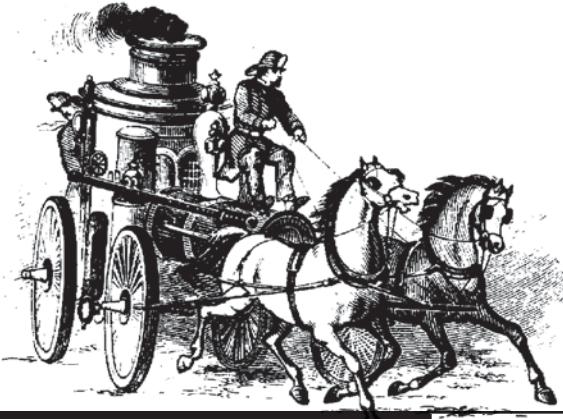
* Nancy Schuh, 5432 178th St., Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (12)

* Teri Stahr, 7493 County Hwy K Chippewa Falls 723-9007 (10)

* Arley Engel, 5294 90th St., Chippewa Falls (11) 723-5124

* Rosemary Kilbridge

* Marge Hebbring



Tom Larson

CALENDAR

November 16, 9:15 a.m.
CCHS Board Meeting

November 16, Noon
Area History Center Birthday
Lunch

November 23, 1 p.m.
Chippewa Falls History Coalition
Meeting

December 14, 9:15 a.m.
CCHS Board Meeting

December 21
Area History Center Closed for
Christmas Holiday

December 22, 1 p.m.
Chippewa Falls History Coalition
Meeting Canceled

December 28
Area History Center Closed for
New Years Holiday

January 18, 9:15 a.m.
CCHS Board Meeting

January 18, 10:30 a.m.
Historic Marker Committee
Meeting

January 18, Noon
Area History Center Birthday
Lunch

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE

MARY MCKENNA

Tom

We proudly announce this issues' Volunteer Profile, Tom Larson, who has served our community for many years. Tom is a native of Chippewa Falls, graduating in 1973 from Chippewa Falls Senior High School and later from CVTC with an associate degree in Fire Science.

Tom is one of three sons of Ted and Kathryn Larson. He began his working experience at the Vaudreuil Oil Conoco gas station & car wash on lower Bridge Street. He was a rookie firefighter and his future wife, Laura, was working across the street from him at the Synder Drug Store when they met. They married September 17, 1983 at Zion United Methodist Church. Tom and Laura have three children: Holly, Mitchell and Brett. His family has traveled to Yellowstone National Park, Washington D.C., Canada and St. Louis. He has coached Chippewa Youth Baseball and Youth Soccer teams.

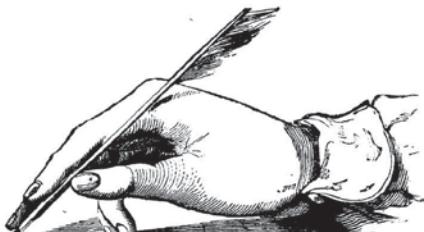
His present community involvement establishes him as one of "our finest", Fire Chief of the City of Chippewa Falls; a position he has held for 8.5 years while working for the department for 35 years. While Tom is presently a member of the Historical Marker Committee, he has a long history with the Historical Society. He first became involved with the History Center as a friend of a past president, Robert Barnier. He helped re-locate the History Center from the old First National Bank Building to its present location. He was even the editor of "The Eagle Speaks" in the early 1990's. In more recent years he helped establish the CCHS Historical Marker Committee and to rebuild the Marker signs, and has plans to create a CD showing all of them with information for historical preservation. He made a great slide-show presentation at a membership meeting last year of all the Markers.

His long-range goals for the History Center include working with other area organizations to move and establish a new larger and easier accessible building in Chippewa Falls for all residents and the many visitors that come to our city to view and appreciate the extra-ordinary history of our area.

The word, "extra-ordinary" definitely applies to Tom for all he has done for our community and the Historical Society. We feel privileged to know him and have his generous service and applaud his efforts and offer him our sincere thanks. ☺

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The Eagle Speaks is published quarterly by the Chippewa County Historical Society, a non-profit organization established to promote and stimulate historical interest in Chippewa County, Wisconsin.

Mail any comments or future articles to 123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. 715-723-4399.

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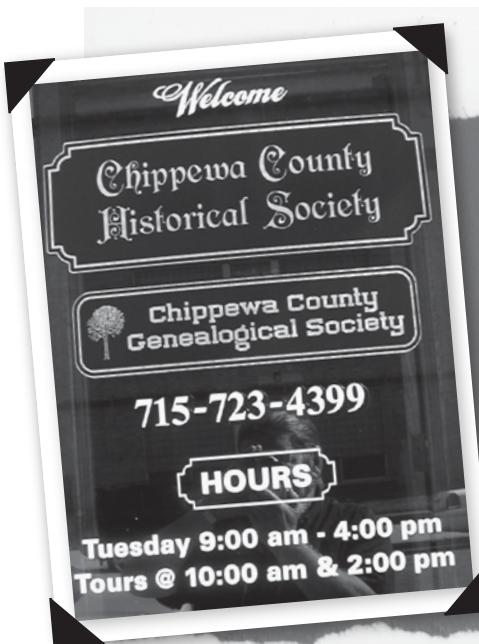
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Former Skogmo Café Building to be Saved

JIM SCHUH

A few years ago Don Baker bought the building at 109 N. Bridge Street and removed the first and second story floor joists with plans to develop a tall space for a map store. He wanted to project scenes of the sky on the ceiling. This development was unsuccessful and the building was left in very poor condition leading to the possibility that it would be torn down. Eric Pulver, owner of Eric's Diamonds and Fine Jewelry, has won awards for successfully restoring the building next door, at 111 N. Bridge Street, recently purchased the building. He is working on plans to restore the building and has sought assistance from the Chippewa County Historical Society to locate old photos of the storefront. He hopes to utilize the Main Street Reinvestment Loan Program and Historic Preservation Tax Credits for the project. Eric said "I want to keep the downtown storefronts retail. I look forward to opening a business that will compliment my existing business." Decades ago the Skogmo Café was a very popular eating establishment with a banquet hall on the second floor. The building was also the site of a historic event. On March 24, 1960, during his presidential campaign, Senator John F. Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline greeted a large crowd at Skogmo's Café. ☙



Thank You!

Thank you to Kurt Gaber, owner of Gaber Signs, for donating our new front door sign. The layout including logos, phone number and hours open has given our location a very professional appearance. In addition the gold leaf lettering adds a classy and historic element to compliment the historic building.

Chippewa County Historical Society

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