

NEWSLETTER

LaGrange Area Historical Society

444 S. LaGrange Road – 708-482-4248
www.lagrangehistory.org

December, 2006



Come Celebrate at the Annual Christmas Open House & Bake Sale

The volunteers put the final touches on the Christmas decorations and the tree in the living room is surrounded by toys that were popular in the early 1900s through the 1950s. The Victorian tree in the dining room stands watch over a vintage doll collection. Throughout the house, old and new teddy bears peer out on a wonderful Christmas scene. Come and see for yourselves during our Open House & Bake Sale on Sunday, December 10th.

Our volunteers have also been very busy baking! So stop buy and pick up some holiday sweets!

The gift shop will also be open with many Christmas items as well as many antiques.

Santa will be there to visit with the children from 1:00 to 4:00. We will be looking for you.

Museum Hours

The museum is open on Wednesday morning from 9:30 a.m. until noon and the last Sunday of the month from 1:00p.m. to 4:00p.m. Stop in for a visit.

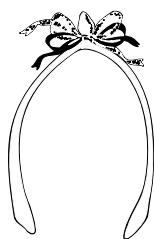
Visitors to the Museum

3rd graders from Kathy Hamilton's class at 7th Avenue School

Spring Rock Questers



Need a Christmas tree? Pick one up from the Y Men's Club. They begin selling trees in the YMCA parking lot on Friday, November 24th. They are open daily until 9:00 p.m.



Wish List

If you have any of the following items and would like to donate them, please call the society at 708-482-4248.

- Round folding tables
- Mannequins
- Office Max or Office Depot gift card

BAKERS WANTED!

We could use your help once again to make our bake sale a success. Please drop off all baked goods on Saturday, December 9th between the hours of 11:00 to 3:00. We thank you in advance for your participation!



Thank You Jim Eckwall!

Mr. James Eckwall, an area resident, has graciously accepted the Society's invitation to "adopt" our beautiful 1885 Kimball upright piano. He is a skilled piano technician who has taken over the family business which began in 1947 - our antique instrument will require his periodic loving care. Thanks Jim!

Recent Donations

Arthur Sprague – 2006 LTHS Tab, collection of 3 framed signs written in Japanese. They were taken by Mr. Sprague's father from the Japanese headquarters on the island of Guam when the American's retook the island during WWII.

Betty Walters – 1943 LTJC Tower

Jean Mavo – Oil painting of scene looking south from 47th and Brainard in 1915, painted by a relative of Mrs. Mavo

Jerry & Pat Doruska – Indiana Harbor Beltline R.R. lantern, Burlington Railroad train conductor's lapel pin, history of LaGrange Park's Talman and Thieles subdivision beginning in 1956

Evelyn Metcalfe – 1969 outfit worn by the donor to the Nixon-Agnew Inaugural Ball

Ken Knops – LaGrange advertising items, Chicago Opera memorabilia

Mary Rendleman – 1925 LTHS commencement program, and 3 LTHS yearbooks: 1925, 1926, 1928

Ted Gifford – framed 1911 dental ad, scrapbook detailing 3 month automobile trip through the American west in 1926, 1936 LTHS Tab, 1937 LTJC Tower, biography of Edna Gifford

Laurie A. Stewart – 1943 candy box from Dutch Mill Candy – 31 S. 5th Avenue (LaGrange Road)

Jim Docherty – Small vintage electric fan

Virginia Donoghue – 1930's white satin wedding gown and headpiece

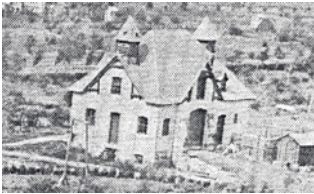
Pat Kozlowski – "Street Guide of LaGrange, LaGrange Park ..."

Corrections from last newsletter:

Brooks Fuller donated: memorabilia from LaGrange Kiwanis Club, LTHS, LaGrange Diamond Jubilee and LaGrange Centennial, WWII Civil defense helmet, men's wool jodhpurs

Betty Doig donated – 2 piece flowered Ironstone bowl and picture set and 9-piece white glazed crockery chamber set

From Carriage House to Car Palace *The Story of the Garage*



The La Grange Area is full of interesting outbuildings, both old and new. These buildings tell the story of our lives and our times. We are looking for photographers, artists, and researchers to help work on a special exhibit about "the garage." If you are interested, please contact Alex Severino.

Alex.severino@sbcglobal.net or 708.354.5034

OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY

On April 2, 1972, a letter written by Caroline Gifford, a member of the Village of La Grange Heritage and Architectural Commission and wife of prominent local dentist Edgar Gifford, was mailed to friends and civic-minded citizens. It proposed the organization of a La Grange Historical Society, "To preserve local heritage." The letter urged all interested in the creation of the then non-existent society to meet at the library on April 15th with Lee Burkey, Village of La Grange President and Joel Daly, Chairman of the Heritage and Architectural Commission and television anchorman.

At that first seminal meeting, the society was established. Caroline Gifford and Jeannine McLaughlin were named temporary chairpersons, and a number of committees were created. Lee Burkey agreed to be Attorney for the fledgling society.

On August 8, 1972, Edward J.F. Young was elected the first President of the all-volunteer La Grange Historical Society. At that time, due to the lack of a building, the society was meeting in The Congregational Church, among other venues.

By the time of the first annual meeting of March 27, 1973, the hard work of the members had resulted in a charter as a non-for-profit organization, application to the I.R.S. for tax-exempt status, the opening of a bank account, and the formation of several committees. One of these committees dealt with the La Grange Centennial, still seven years away but a testimony to the foresight of the organization.

Although much has changed in the ensuing years, such as the addition of "Area" to our formal name, the commitment and dedication of our membership, supporters and volunteers has remained consistent. It is this vibrant force that will sustain our organization for the next 35 years.

Tea With Your American Girl – November 18, 2006



118 visitors came to the museum to have tea and learn about the 1930's

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Dear Members and Friends,

Another year is coming to a close and we are reaching out for a community-wide appeal as we plan how to make ends meet in 2007.

In 2006, we were able to host several wonderful events, including an opportunity to bring your children for tea, to learn the art of rag rugging, and even being able to bring an antique to the museum to be evaluated by Kathleen Snyder. We were also able to provide our newest self-guided tour. We had many visitors and home researchers who came to check on historic information that is located in our LaGrange/LaGrange Park address files or who came for one of our Open Houses and to view our impressive historic exhibits.

However, like most old homes in the area, we have a list of needed repairs and necessary improvements including repairing the roof that was originally installed in 1986, driveway repairs, and heating and cooling repairs. As well as being able to heat the museum this winter with the rising gas prices while keeping everything properly insured with the insurance costs also on the rise.

As a self-funded organization we need your help to keep LaGrange and LaGrange Park's history alive and available for generations to come.

Please consider making a special year end donation to help move us forward. All donations are tax deductible. Checks can be made payable to the LaGrange Area Historical Society. If you have any questions, please call the Historical Society at 708-482-4248.

On behalf of the Board of Directors we wish you a Happy Holiday and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Please complete the attached form and return it in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Donation Amount _____

_____ I have a few volunteer hours a month that I would be able to donate. Call me.

President's Comment

Our previous newsletter introduced you to 13 year old Max Hoo, an eighth grade student at Park Junior High School, and his efforts to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America. Max approached the historical society this past spring and asked if there was a project he could undertake that would be of value to the entire community.

We told Max that our oral history project had come to a complete stop for lack of volunteers. Our primary goal was to interview those who lived during the depression era because they have a story to tell that should be part of our history. That very afternoon Max decided on his service project: to record the oral histories of those who lived during the Great Depression.

I learned that choosing his service project was just the beginning. Once we approved the project he had to speak to his Eagle Badge Coach and outline the precise procedures necessary to undertake the project. These included the training of other scouts, formulating a questionnaire, fundraising to cover any expenses, and coordinating schedules and transportation. Then the Scout Master of Troop 14 reviewed the plan again to make sure that all procedures were in compliance. After everyone signed off, Max then had to present his plan and the necessary signatures to his Eagle Mentor before he could even begin the interviews.

Finally, Max was ready to go. After speaking to a number of ministers and obtaining leads, he finalized the list of those to be interviewed. Armed with questions and cameras, Max and his volunteer scouts visited the participants and recorded their memories. The number of volunteers involved in this project totaled 38. The number of hours to complete the interviews totaled 200. The average age of the scouts who assisted Max was 13.

On September 27, Max Hoo, accompanied by his parents Marie and John and Eagle Mentor Horst Kniesel, attended the historical society's board meeting. With the assurance and poise of a 30 year old, he related the path he undertook to reach his goal and presented the society with an 85 page book titled "Memories of the Great Depression" as well as a companion video. At the time he had just turned 14.

I did not know that only two of one hundred scouts reach the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Boy Scouting. I did not know that it is quite rare for a fourteen year old to achieve this rank. I did not know that Max now has to appear before a Board of Review, who will ask him about his attitude toward scouting, his understanding of "duty to God and Country," and pertinent questions about his project. They will ascertain that he showed leadership versus doing the project by himself, and he will walk them through the project from beginning to end. The Board will judge his performance and the benefits gained by him and others.

Those are some of the things I did not know. What I do know is that Max Hoo will achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. I know that these interviews, now part of our historical record, would never have been conducted had Max not undertaken this project. I know that I have a new found appreciation for those who give and have given their time to scouting; the den mothers, the coaches, the leaders and the mentors - all those who have reached out to our youngest citizens.

I know that those who lived during the Depression use the words, perseverance, courage, self discipline, respect and self-reliance. I know that the aim of scouting is to teach those very same values. As I think back on it, perhaps it wasn't such a coincidence that the Boy Scouts undertook this project. They might have made the perfect choice, one generation speaking to another, with common values.

Lastly, I know that those who lived during the Depression had different experiences but share common remembrance: those who had a little something reached out to those who had almost nothing.

Yes, from 1929 to the present there have been great changes. We may have forgotten many of the lessons learned from the Great Depression, but some lessons we learned well: those who have a little something still give to those who have almost nothing. Thank goodness some things have remained the same.

Have a wonderful holiday, everyone.

-Jeannine McLaughlin

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LaGrange, IL 60525

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