

NEWSLETTER

LaGrange Area Historical Society

444 S. LaGrange Road – 708-482-4248

www.lagrangehistory.org

March, 2009



Dear Members,

This is the first of our newly formatted newsletters. It was time for an update, and the new format will reduce our printing costs. Many of you are receiving this by email, and we will continue to spread the news electronically. I might slip up now and then, but we will do our best.

I try to acknowledge every membership renewal with a handwritten note as I believe it is important for me to personally thank you in writing. However, in an attempt to reduce expenses, I may acknowledge your membership renewal by email, thereby saving the cost of regular postage.

On Saturday, December 13, fourteen wonderful people entered the back door of the museum and presented us with a splendid array of baked goods. Many who arrived were members, some were Cub Scouts, some were friends. The baked goods were sold the next day at our Christmas Open House, and the proceeds from both the bake sale and gift shop totaled \$550. To all those who baked and all those who attended: we thank you.

December was also the month that many of you responded to our year-end appeal. The response was overwhelming. As I opened the envelopes, I often had to look twice at the amount you donated, even reaching for my glasses just to make certain. I am thankful and amazed by your generosity. The contribution from one friend was accompanied by this note: "We believe history is an important part of people's lives. It helps explain traditions, provides a sense of shared community and provides roots." These sentiments bring me to my final comment.

We were the beneficiaries of a grant from the American Association of Museums. We knew the time had come to re-evaluate our operations and programs and needed assistance from a professional who could provide us with the necessary guidance. The report is now in our hands. Our task is daunting. Work begins at our February board meeting. Please wish us luck. If you have the time and interest and would like to participate in the process, we could use your help.

Jeannine McLaughlin, President

NEW EXHIBIT

In keeping with the country's emphasis on celebrating the 200th anniversary of Abraham



Lincoln's birth, we have assembled our Civil War memorabilia, copies of many pictures of Abraham Lincoln, his various residences, and a wonderful PowerPoint presentation about Lincoln's life. Our Civil War memorabilia include Civil War Treasury Notes issued by Confederate States, an actual cannonball, four lady's gowns from the 1860's, a Vicksburg Newspaper which was printed on the back of a piece of wall paper because newsprint was not available due to the union blockade of the city. Other items include: an assortment of Civil War bullets, Captain

George O. Pratt's diary of his Civil War experiences, original photos of several LaGrange G.A.R. Veterans, the G.A.R. Banner which hung at their meetings, and the Civil War Powder Horn. This exhibit can be visited for the next few months.

RECENT DONATIONS

John Deeming – 8"x10" black and white photograph of a show given by first graders at Ogden School in 1935-1936

William & Peggy Titus – 1940's photograph of a large group of women (possibly the LaGrange Woman's Club), Booklet: LaGrange Woman's Club – A Short Story

Eamon Rago – 3 picture postcards – St. Joseph's Academy, St. Francis Xavier Church 1944, First Methodist church 1940's, Burlington Railroad memorabilia

George Burditt – LaGrange Diamond Jubilee Booklet

Correction: In our last newsletter we reported the acquisition of a book by a LaGrange author: The Spy With a Clean Face written and donated by Russell R. Miller. We incorrectly indicated that it was children's book. It is not. It is an adult book – We are sorry, Mr. Miller.

NEW MEMBERS:

The Historical Society would like to welcome the following new member:

Susan Matthews

RECENT VISITORS

21 boys from Cub Scout Pack 33

Tiger Scouts from Pack 14

Can you identify this home?

This photograph is of an unidentified we have in our collection. If you think you know its location please give us a call at 708-482-4248.



Little Bit of History

News Items from 1911....Dr. Lesemen strongly advocated the elevation of the Burlington tracks through La Grange. He declared that every mother was uneasy when a child had to cross the tracks and he believed it is a duty of the men of La Grange to take up the matter and see that the people of the village, especially the children, are safeguarded by having the tracks elevated.

News Item from 1924....Postmaster says it is hard to make mail deliveries where houses are not numbered and remarked" that while nearly everyone in La Grange and La Grange Park cooperated and placed house number where none had been, there were quite a few who did not comply.

It does not seem that any reasonable patron will object to putting on a number...therefore please find out what your number should be and put one on your residence."

News Item from 1925..... Forty arrests of speeders over the holidays caused the La Grange police to declare the speeding war on. They once more stated that "...the speed limit in the business section is ten miles per hour: in the residence section it is fifteen miles per hour" and warn all motorists that the state and village speed laws are going to be enforced in La Grange.

“The Big Easels - We are La Grange Masterpieces”

The La Grange Area Historical Society has been designated by the La Grange Business Association as one of the two major charities that will benefit from the proceeds of this year's home town event. No, you won't be seeing brightly decorated animals or painted Adirondack chairs, this year. Rather you will see the LGBA's latest promotional event: “The Big Easels - We are La Grange.” How very appropriate, since this June the Village of La Grange will celebrate its 130th birthday.

The “Big Easels” will be placed throughout the village prior to the Pet Parade and will be auctioned at the end of the summer. Three of our members and resident artists have each offered to paint an easel on our behalf. Carol Norling, Gerry Zemla and Kathy Coons will be working once again in the kitchen of our museum. How do we begin to thank them!

Annual Meeting: 1:00 p.m.
Sunday, March 15 at the Museum

Each year at our annual meeting, the events and activities of the past year are summarized and officers are elected. Six years ago Bob Milne joined our board.

While serving as the Village Clerk of La Grange, Bob found time to volunteer at the Constance Morris House, his church, the Rotary Club, the Garden Club. In addition to serving on the board, Bob was chair of the building and grounds committee. Bob has received numerous awards, among them were the Citizen of the Year Award from Congressman William Lipinski and the Sheriff's Medal of Honor for Spirit of Volunteerism.

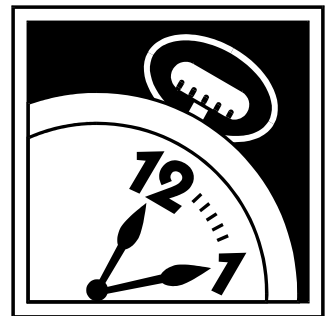
Bob leaves our board after serving two terms; and while we have no award to present to him, Bob does leave with our deepest gratitude and our best wishes. While it is difficult to replace Bob Milne, the nominating committee has reported that Beth Siegel and Kate Rymsza have agreed to join the board as directors. Karen Lynch and Ed Thoele will remain for another term. Ellie Carroll will serve as Vice President and Lee Bence will continue as treasurer. Your presence and your comments are most welcome.

ATTENTION SCOUT LEADERS!

Let us help your scouts achieve badges in history and community service. Call us at 708.482.4248 to set up an appointment.

DO YOU HAVE AN HOUR OR TWO A MONTH TO SPARE?

We are looking for a few volunteers to help for just a few hours a month. If you are interested in serving the community give Karen Lynch a call at 708.482.8318 or drop her an email at dllynch@sbcglobal.net



Christmas Open House



Santa and his elf were busy in the living room with all the children while volunteers, Mary Nelson and Jodie Bannister helped in the kitchen selling baked goods and gift items. Rudolph made himself comfortable while studying his route for Christmas Eve.



LaGrange Area Historical Society
444 S. LaGrange Road
LaGrange, Il 60525

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