

Museum News



ICHS 218-326-6431

VOLUME 51 ISSUE 1



Board member Peggy Hagen and Executive Director Lilah Crowe toured the Nashwauk Home and & Cabin Show on Saturday April 6th. They collected a lot of business cards and memorabilia for the ICHS collection and had a little bit of fun on the way!

Designer Purse



Supporting Forward Health Foundation

Spring Cleaning!

We designed a new recycling system in the back hallway. It looks clean and neat and everyone has asked, "How long is it going to last?" Funny! Everyone is proud of it and we hope we will work hard at keeping this area clean.



Back hallway entrance to the basement. We have a strap across to keep people from going down stairs.

Itasca County Historical Society is giving support to Forward Health Foundation for their Purse Bingo Event. After our successful Purse Bingo last fall, we were asked to put on another one in the spring. If you attended our purse bingo it involved a lot of volunteers, companies and donations. So when I met with April Jespersion and she asked to be the spring bingo for the Forward Health Foundation, it was a done deal! We are both doing purse bingo with same price, same location, and we will sell each others tickets!

So we invite you to come on out on Friday night of Mother's day weekend to the Cohasset Community Center for a great time with all of us and supporting a great non-profit. Just \$50.00 a ticket. Stop in at ICHS for your ticket. You might be a winner of a cool purse!!

Along Memory Trails
A History of DEER RIVER
Prepared and Written by Mrs. Gladys Erola
Published by the Western Itasca Review

About the Author

Mrs. Gladys Erola is a fifth grade teacher in the Deer River school system.

She was born in Pipestone, Minn., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Forsman. The family moved to Deer River in 1924. Mrs. Erola attended schools in Deer River and is a graduate of St. Cloud Teachers college.

After graduation from St. Cloud, Mrs. Erola returned to Deer River to pursue her profession, and has remained here since 1933 when she obtained her first teaching position.

She and her husband, Omar, have two sons, Roger and Raymond, both now students in the Deer River high school.

Furthering her studies as a history major, Mrs. Erola prepared the article as a part of her special course in Minnesota history.

The article ran as a weekly feature in the Western Itasca Review for 13 weeks. She consented to have it prepared into booklet form, since there was no other composite history of Deer River as a village itself on record.

Because of the interest in this article which appeared in the Deer River newspaper, it was agreed that her article be published by the Western Itasca Review for sale in booklet form to the general public.

Her history of Deer River and neighboring communities follows : Continued from the fall newsletter.....

Continued in the spring newsletter....

The fire bug was a short, big, heavy set fellow named Eddie Enske, who was finally caught red handed trying to set fire to a roof. He was convicted and went to Leaven-worth for a year and a day where he said he learned to make moonshine from some of his buddies there. There can be no doubt about the business he went into when he re-turned.

There was the time that Al Hill and Archie Halleck, (Old Silver) both real he-men, began to fight in Robinson's saloon. They weren't angry with one another, just wanted to see which was the better fighter. They finally moved out into the street where they fought giving it everything they had for forty minutes. Neither got the better of the other.

Voigt said, "I got into a jam once. I came into Deer River from a drive and had a pretty good check of eighty or ninety dollars. I walked into Fish Baker's saloon and cashed my check. Two men came up and bought me a drink which I didn't want. Then they asked me to go into a back they told me it wouldn't do any harm to go and look anyway. Like a fool, I went. There was a rou-lette wheel set up there and I was told to play. When I re-fused, they told me I wouldn't get out of

there until I did. Well, I threw five dollars on the table and when they bent over the table I dashed for the door which was locked. It was a thin door and I was young and scared. I rushed with all of my might and succeeded in breaking down the door. I ran out and headed for the railroad track thinking every second that they would catch up with me and even the score. Thank goodness I got away.

About a year later when I was working on the street with seventeen others, each day we'd take turns buying beer. This day it was my turn. I went into Fish Baker's saloon to get a ten quart pail full. All I had was fifty cents. I didn't know how much the beer would be. Baker said they'd never know me when I'd get back if I didn't pay for it. I said I'd get the money and come right back and pay for it. I went out and borrowed a quarter, paid for the beer and never went back into that saloon again.

Eli Loisel, Bill Coffron, Joe Collard, George Ruby and George Robinson were a few of the other saloon keepers. These saloons were never closed. They were open seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Big mirrors, long mahogany bars, kerosene lanterns, air-tight wood stoves and pianos were common sights in most all saloons. Beer was 5 cents per mug and whisky was 10 cents a shot. Customers were handed the shot glass and a bottle. They proceeded to fill the glass themselves. Occasionally they would circle the tops of the glass with their fingers, thus being able to pour in an extra inch or more whisky — depending on the thickness of their fingers.

The Itasca News of April 1898 had as for the tanglefoot drinkers — the first of the week the village was crowded with a class of men whose actions would have caused a Hottentot to blush for very shame. Not content with Tilling the air with obscenity and profanity, they apparently took delight in placing themselves on view to public gaze. The authorities should make an example of a few of these men.

"There came a day when disaster struck in the form of a fire which swept whiskey row off the map for the second time. No business was lost, however, for tents were quickly set up in the street to carry on the business until buildings could be rebuilt.

It was in the fall of 1898 that another enterprise was added to the business of

Story continues on Page 5

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

November 2023—March 2024

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP

Richard Lacher

SPONSOR \$500 +

Senja Morque

PRESERVATION \$100

Connie Daigle
Ted & Barbara James
Richard & Sharon
King
Juan Lazo
Elizabeth Shoberg
Frank King

Carol Steel the volunteer membership chair comes in a couple times a month to make up membership cards and send out the renewal letters.

Reserve your hour at the
Escape Room!
218-326-6431

“Murder Up Nort!”

SUPPORTING \$65

Beverly Johnson
Mike & Roberta
Truempler
Marvin Ott
Scott & Randi Carter

FAMILY \$40

Mike & Barb Shipka
Margaret Cone
Bernie Backes

BENDER’S SHOES & SPORTS

Duane & Anna Eells
Barbara Warrington
Bill & Pat Davis
Raymond & Linda
Embertson
Donald Gornowich
Cheryl Kalberg
William & Karla Block

Remember to tell your friends our Museum is FREE!

We just ask people to sign in on the guest book; it helps in gaining support when we go before the County Board and when applying for

INDIVIDUAL \$25

Carol Brandon
Larry Greiner
Randy Heikkila
Linda Hron
Molly MacGregor
Kay Mueller
Allen County Public
Library
Leo Trunt
Karen Noyce
Kenneth Olson
Susan Schmickle
Darwin Dalen
David Delawyer
Erin Roth
Carol Steele
Ruth Martin

You can help us save on postage by getting your newsletter emailed to you. Please send your email address to ichs@paulbunyan.net

ichs@paulbunyan.net
www.itascahistorical.org
www.itascaveteransproject.com
218-326-6431

As you do your tax and estate planning, please keep us in mind. ICHS is a 501(c)(3) and as such can accept charitable donations. An RMD from your retirement account can be made directly to us.

Members:

After Christmas was the tear down of Bigfoots backyard and then the creation of “Murder up Nort” escape room. Volunteer Ginny Frahm is the decorator and also the game master for the escape room. She comes into ICHS almost every-day. Our carpenter Scott Carter made the coffin for the final clue! We always incorporate history in the room, this year it was a murder that in 1928 actually occurred in Big Falls, but the murderer traveled to Bustitown and was finally caught there. Our artist Peggy made the Still, it also is part of the game. This is a difficult room, but lots of fun!

Spring cleaning is happening here! We redesigned our recycling area, cleaned the shelves, its been a long process, but soon will be done and then it’s back to re-organizing the preservation area in the lower level.

I was able to take a week off the end of January and traveled down to a cousins gathering in St. Petersburg Florida. Well, it was 31 degrees in Florida and 31

degrees in Grand Rapids for 2 of those days. While there I toured a car museum that has 27 original cars, so cool... also a Dale Chihuly new glass museum. It was incredible!

Our two web site are under new construction, it’s a long process, but will be ready soon.

Lilah



BOARD NEWS

Vice President

Jim Uzelac is applying for a Minnesota Power Grant to redo the lights on the outside of the building. We will be putting in LED and repainting the building signs. This grant has 4 guys that volunteer one hour and then the company gives us \$500. We try to get this one each year.

Board made decisions on a donation to ICHS, a beaver hat from a local cabin.

The hat will be on display in the millinery shop at North Pole Junction in December.

After the new furnace was purchased for the roof top, the building committee is only doing small projects until

Volunteer Hours

4th Quarter 2023

October 307.75,
November 359.5,
December 258.75

1st Quarter 2024

January 419.25
February 509.5
March 346

2024 COUNTIES : Itasca County

2024 CITIES: Grand Rapids

LaPrairie Bigfork Calumet Zemple Effie Marble Warba

2024 SUPPORTING TOWNSHIPS: Lone Pine Wirt Carpenter

Wabana Kinghurst Arbo Bowstring Feeley Blackberry Sago Harris
Splithand Bearville Wawina

Continued from page 2

the city. Mike Maguire established his dray line with Tom Maher as his driver. Tom tells the following story :

Beer was shipped here by train in iced cars in carload lots and stored in the warehouse which was refrigerated with seven or eight tons of ice piled in the center of the well insulated building. We would get one carload a month and delivered beer to all the saloons twice a day. Most of the beer was handled in *kegs*, four gallons of which was called a pony and cost \$1.00. Eight gallons was a quarter barrel costing \$2.00 and sixteen gallons, a half barrel cost-ing \$4.00. There was some bottled beer but most of it was on tap. Moose brand was the most popular beer in town, mainly 'because it was the ONLY beer at that time

We also hauled the whiskey from the depot to the sa-loons. Whiskey salesmen would come into town to pick up orders and it was shipped from Duluth by rail. We used fifth wheel wagons for hauling 'because they could 'be ma-neuvered easily in loading and unloading.

We hauled trunks across town for the salesmen or trav-ellers for 25c per trunk as well as lumber and other materials for stores and private citizens. Oh, those were rough days. In going my rounds I met and learned to know such characters as Mush-head Collins, Gold Tooth McCarty (a chimney sweep), Sore Eyed Johnson, Bulldog Regen, Old Silver, Winnipeg Blacky, Crosshaul Slim, Patty the Pig, Pig Eyed Kelly, Larry the Brute and Hungry Mike Sullivan. (It is said that from him they re-moved the longest tapeworm ever seen).

Then of course there were the girls: Box Car Nell, Three Fingered Maude and Dora the Mule."

Continued next fall.....

“A generation which ignores history has no past – and no future.” - Robert A. Heinlein



GRAND RAPIDS —Don Boese was a master at connecting the past to the present. His history books and courses at the former Itasca Community College, like *War and Propaganda*, were an extraordinary example of how the past can repeat itself. He shared many of those stories with KAXE listeners with his extensive contributions to the station's airwaves over the years. Don died Monday, March 25, at the age of 88. Don found a largely untold rich history in both the iron mining and paper making industries of Itasca County and wrote eight books including *John C. Greenway and the Opening of the Western-Mesabi* and *Papermakers: the Blandin Paper Company and Grand Rapids, Minnesota*. He wrote a local history column for the *Scenic Range News/Scenic Range News Forum* for 45 years. Don served on the Itasca County Historical Society Board of Directors for over 20 years and co-authored the book *Grand Rapids Companion 100 Years*. Don loved to talk history and helped with exhibits in the museum to tell the history stories correctly. Hobbies were important to Don; he was a life-long philatelist specializing in German Third Reich stamps and in the classic Cape of Good Hope triangles; vegetable gardening occupied his summers along with reading, bike riding and boating; he enjoyed cooking, particularly classical French dishes, and was a longtime member of the Grand Rapids Gourmet club. Don loved model trains and even had one room designated for his trains. He loved to travel with his children, including the Caribbean, Europe and throughout the United States.

Don retired in 2000 and his first leisure project was to read 50 19th century French novels. He enjoyed learning lamp work and the art of making glass beads. In 2009 he moved back to his hometown of St. Paul and liked living on the river at Upper Landing with a deck and front windows just a stones throw from the Mississippi.

Don authorized the Historical Society to print the *John C. Greenway and the Opening of the Western Mesabi* book and sell in the museum gift shop.

2024

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Itasca County Historical Society
 201 North Pokegama Avenue
 Grand Rapids, MN 55744
www.itscahistorical.org



Itasca County Historical Society Presents

“Murder Up Nort ” Escape Room



**Hello players, we
are on the lookout
for a murderer!**

**Can you follow
the clues and
solve the mystery
before your hour
is up?**



Itasca County Historical Society
 201 North Pokegama Avenue
 Grand Rapids, MN 55744
 218-326-64312
www.grescaperooms.com



Call 218-326-6431 to reserve your hour.
 Adults = \$22.00, 17 and under \$12.00
 Open daily 9 to 5 and Saturday 10-4.