



NEWSLINES

May 2010

Women In History 2010

Special thanks to everyone who attended the Women In History banquet of 2010! We hosted the event at the Sauk Rapids Veterans of Foreign Wars and had a wonderful lunch of chicken/ham, potato, vegetable salad and rolls. We celebrated our 2010 honorees that are pictured below. Everyone spent a great afternoon listening to the biographies of the five women that were honored. Benton County Historical Society also debuted our Women In History PowerPoint that has all the past (60) Women In History pictured and put to music. It is amazing that we have so many women taking care of community!

Women In History honorees: Listed left to right in picture:

Chelsea Lesniak
Marjean Keehr
Nancy Anderson
Merlin Youso
Joan Neyssen



Looking for Class Reunion Information

BCHS has made it our mission to retain information for the future by preserving the past and the present. We recently were supplied with a couple of Class Reunion pictures from Foley (Class of 1952) **When going through the files we discovered that we could use a lot of information about class reunion events in our files!** If you are on the committee for class reunion events, or have pictures or lists/programs of class reunion events, please remember us and that we will retain it for the future!

As usual, we also could use donations of yearbooks for Foley, Sauk Rapids, Junior High, Middle School and Elementary Schools of the area. We take donations of past yearbooks also!

Women In History Honorees -Biographical Information

Marjean Keehr Women In History 2010

Marjean Keehr is one of our four Women In history honorees for the year 2010.

She was born in Sauk Rapids in a house that before the 2007 bridge project existed on the corner of Second Avenue and Second Street North. Born to August and Adeline Wippich, Marj has lived in Sauk Rapids for a great portion of her life and she began working in her parent's bakery when she was eleven years old and continued working there until graduating as Salutorian from the Sauk Rapids High School. After High School, she worked as a Secretary for the Superintendent of Schools, K. L. Halvorson, until her marriage to Lloyd Keehr.

Marj and Lloyd lived in Sauk Rapids for a time and in the next 10 years lived in Alexandria, Fargo, Fridley and then back to Sauk Rapids. Taking some time off from her career path, Marj was a homemaker during the years while raising her three children; Brenda, Terrie and Mark. They now have two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

As time went on and the children grew, Marj helped manage the family Laundromat until it was sold in 1976; she had worked as a census taker in 1990, and was an Administrative Assistant at May Printing Company for 10 years.

Marj has always been involved in the community, and continues to be. She was a member of the Altar Guild for twenty years and General Chairperson of the Centennial Celebration at Trinity Lutheran Church in Sauk Rapids. Her love of genealogy, history and records led to a very successful outcome to the celebration at the church including a lot of history that was brought together. Marj was also a Sauk Rapids Lioness for 20 years.

Marj has also been an instrumental piece in the volunteer system at Benton County Historical Society for many years. She has served on the Board of Directors at BCHS, has been involved in genealogy research for requests, and is always available for phone calls and emails that are made to her for information on Sauk Rapids. Marj is currently working on the task to complete a book that local historical Ed Sowa had started on historical events and items before he became ill.

Marj's experience growing up as a child and living in Sauk Rapids allows her the ability to fill in the "history gaps" for us at Benton County Historical Society. Her memories of businesses, locations and people are remarkable and we are fortunate that she participates as a member and a volunteer! Marj is a member of the St. Cloud Area Genealogists since 1987 and has done family and area history related work for the past thirty years with that organization too.

Chelsea Lesniak Junior Honoree 2010

Each year we contact the Foley or Sauk Rapids School Districts in Benton County to help our organization make contact with a deserving high school student for our Junior Honoree award.

For the year 2010 it was Foleys turn to be contacted for their recommendation. The Foley School District personnel nominated a student of their choice for the Junior Honoree award and their choice for this year's Benton County Historical Society Junior Honoree award is **Chelsea Lesniak!**

Chelsea Lesniak is the daughter of Jodie & Brian Lesniak. Chelsea is currently a Junior at the Foley High School. She has attained an "A" honor roll status throughout her high school academic career. She is a member of the National Honor Society and is involved in Math League. After her graduation, she expects to be moving forward into the medical field for her future career.

Chelsea's participation in the community include such activities as being a Junior Auxiliary member at the Hillman Legion, and also is volunteering to help with various church activities. She says that she is willing to help others when she can, but especially likes to help her grandparents.

When she is not attending school, completing her schoolwork, or volunteering her time, Chelsea is taking some time to read. She also likes to go camping over the summer vacation.

We at Benton County Historical Society would like to congratulate Chelsea for being involved in community, her excellence in her education, being involved with her family and wish her well as she plans to move forward in her education and career.

Museum Information:

Hours 10:00am-4 pm Monday thru Friday

Appointments are available for after hours- tours, visits and travel requests- Call 320-253-9614

Contact Information:

Phone: 320253-9614

Email: bchsmus@charterinternet.com

Web:

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mnbchsm

Nancy Anderson 2010 Women In history biographical information

A group of people from the Rice area nominated Nancy Anderson for the Women Making History honor! Nancy's committee of nominators wanted everyone to know what a unique person Nancy is because of her love for the community and her concern for the total community of Rice including, and especially the children. The information they submitted include a very LONG list of accomplishments and community involvement!

Nancy's life is all about family, community, actively participating and making a difference. Raising children, holding down a career and still finding the time to volunteer where ever the need arises.

Nancy has been involved in Girl Scouts and she worked with 6 girls for all 10 years and 3 of the 6 earned the Gold Award. In testament of Nancy's concerned style & grace, she wanted us to tell everyone that she considers all 6 girls the greatest winners!

She also organized and worked with Rice Campfire Boys & Girls. These two group areas of Girl Scouts and Campfire included her participation in Day Camps, Camping, Deep Portage and group projects that finished 500 plus projects for Valentines for Vets over the years. True to her giving nature, Nancy brought all the projects and made the lunch for the volunteers. She also taught them to participate in community with pop can recycling, floats for parades, craft nights, bird houses and placing flags on Vets graves with the kids the night before Memorial Day.

Nancy's remarkable talent for detail shows with this example of the Campfire girls programming. She had them make blue bird houses and there were 100 houses each spring and fall to open and close. Nancy kept a record of what was found in each bird house.

Rice Family Fun Days has had a leader in Nancy for close to 15 years attending meetings, setting-up, handling the position of Parade Chairperson, working the parade and clean-up the next day.

Nancy's passion of getting things done was displayed well with city projects & events. She served in public office as Rice Mayor and her leadership pushed forward to implement a completely automated water meter system, put into place a performance review system for city employees, held the first Christmas party for employees, recognized employees years of service to the city, instituted OSHA training, a compost sticker program and an acknowledging "Eagle Award" for students. She also has helped with trees planted around town; plants the city flower pots and waters them throughout the summer, and participates at all levels in the community Easter Egg Hunt. Nancy was instrumental in the Westside Park project fundraising, grant writing to DNR, securing the grant, and putting together labor crews for the assembly. The Lions built a shelter for the children and families, and then Nancy returns the help by helping them with the Lions Breakfast!

Rice American Legion Auxiliary has been enriched with Nancy's participation by educating about Flag Etiquette during American Education Week at Rice School; she sets-up and works at the Sons of American Legion breakfast; has held many offices, participates in the poppy drive and membership committee events.

A Band Mom who took care of uniforms for four years, a Band Boosters officer, one of the members of a group who got the Cadet marching band back on the streets and helped them acquire a band trailer. The Summer Library and after school programs will find her doing arts & crafts with the children.

She has volunteered for Tri County Humane Society at the walk-a thon event. She also is a member of Benton County Historical Society, volunteers for us at our Benton County Fair booth, and in the past has mentored the organization through the Initiative Foundations grant programming.

Her zest for life and her need for community involvement has earned her a Volunteer Service Award from the Sauk Rapid-Rice School, a Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding and Dedicated Service from the City of Rice, and the Regional Jefferson award for Channel 7 in Alexandria.

Women In History Biographical Information 2010

Merlin Youso– Women In History 2010 Honoree

Merlin Irene Youso was born February 6, 1917 to Louis and Victoria (Dziuk) Henry. Merlin was raised on a farm in Glendorado Township with two brothers; Harvey and Bill, and a sister; Delores. Growing up on the farm, she learned the skills of “growing things”; both agriculture and horticulture, and those were skills that would be always a part of her life. Merlin graduated from Foley High School in 1934. She married George Youso in January of 1937 at St. John’s Church in Foley.

Merlin was busy in many areas over the years- Family, Employment, Church, Community and Gardening.

A mother to seven children, Merlin has the pleasure and opportunity of sharing her life with her children, her grandchildren, her great-grandchildren and her great-great grandchildren! Merlin has been instrumental in keeping track of the family history and documenting it over the years, helping others in this area whenever she can. Five generations have passed; and Merlin still enjoys the great- great grand-baby’s coming to visit!

Merlin’s career life included working for the Foley Elementary School system for 25 years. One, of a trio of cooks that made lunches for thousands of children over the years, and she knew most of the children and their families. The children knew all three cooks too- no one could make a whipped peanut butter, honey and butter sandwich better than Merlin Youso, Gertie Brunn and Pauline Poster!

Merlin also enjoyed writing the “Locals” column for the Benton County News. This involved knowing and talking to the people of the area to stay current of all the Foley happenings. Merlin also worked for Abe’s Produce, Fischer’s Produce and Rexall Drug; all places where she could interact with the community and offer a listening ear.

Her community activities included being a 29-year member of the Foley Garden Club. You would find Merlin planting flowers around town; helping people with gardens; participating and winning awards for her flowers (especially roses) at the area flower shows. She belonged to the Minnesota Horticultural Society, belonged to the Foley Adventurous Homemakers Club, the Foley Nursing Club, St John’s Church and actively participated in all of them. Even after her retirement from the School System, she was involved with the Benton County Social Services Program providing clerical support for multiple years. She has been a member of the Benton County Historical Society as well.

Cecil Wade from Foley nominated Merlin Youso for today’s award and had this to add:

Merlin’s chief contributions to the community in which she lived have been made possible by her awareness of the need for all to be courageous, courteous, compassionate, to maintain a willingness to always give small and large tasks a little more time and effort than is required, to find peace by maintaining a sense of order in our lives and in our property.

To women younger than herself, Merlin’s demeanor and accomplishments offer hope that life in a small town, jobs which by their nature offer little chance for glory, having a history of less than perfect health, experiencing the early death of family members, living through periods of time influenced by large issues such as war & poverty, need not define the depth or the width of our lives.

Cecil then cited an example of Merlin’s gift to those who search for answers about how we might find rational answers in a life surrounded by irrational hardships and complications. Merlin’s’ description of her life while her husband, George, served as a medic in Europe, in World War II:

At home, on the farm owned by George’s parents, with her four small children, Merlin was engaged in fieldwork, housework, farm chores and of course, parenting. She recounts the physical and emotional stress of those years by stressing not the burdens placed upon her, but by acknowledging the kindness and generosity of her husband’s parents. Somehow, reminiscing of those years always end by her spoken appreciation of her in-laws saying “they were such good people.”

We, in turn, can only believe that Merlin is also one of the “Good People” who deserves our respect and affection.

Women In History Biographical Information 2010

Joan Neyssen Women In History 2010 Honoree

Joan Neyssen is married to Harold Neyssen and has three grown children. She and Harold are proud and happy to have four grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Joan was raised in St. Cloud and attended Lincoln School to the sixth grade, Central Junior High School seven to nine and graduated from Tech High School... School years were full of studies and activities. As a Camp Fire Girl she obtained the top rank of Torch Bearer and then had her own group of girls. Having a Camp Fire Group was like a dream job of being an elementary school teacher Joan participated in Chorus, Orchestra, Office Practice and more.

When Joan and Harold were married they lived on a farm. Growing up Joan visited her Grandma and Grandpas farm, but living on a farm was a new experience! Joan found it to be the place she wanted to be with a great environment to raise their children. A long with the work on the farm she found time to sing in Church Choir, teach Sunday school, be Sunday School Superintendent and do Vacation Bible School. Joan enjoyed directing the Christmas Program and the little ones always stole the show. She also helped with other church activities that were asked of her.

When her children were in school, she by chance interviewed for a job in the Benton County Treasurer's Office. She was hired. Joan would be working with the elected treasurer Helen M. Latterell. For Joan, it was a very interesting and demanding job and something brand new with a bit of politics.

After eleven years, Helen retired and Joan's co-workers encouraged her to run for the office. It was a big responsibility but Joan had a very good teacher in Helen Latterell and felt she had the qualifications to do the job. Now BIG POLITICS arrived and Joan had opposition for the position and needed to get out campaign, and still do her job. She won the first election; has run and won every four years since. Joan says thanks to the voters of Benton County in showing their confidence and support in the job she is performing...

In 1998 the Auditor/Treasurers Office was combined as an elective position. Joan ran for the office and won. Three years ago the License Plates tabs and DNR were added to the position. Joan brought the suggestion to the County Board when the Deputy Register retired. Foley would have lost the service. Folks seem to appreciate the new addition.

At this time she is still in that position and have found duties increasing and more rules and laws to be responsible for.

Joan has held many positions in her associations over the years. She has served on the Tax Advisory Committee (working on computer programs to calculate our complex Minnesota Taxes) for 25 years. She was President of the Treasurers Association in 1992, a Delegate to National Association of County Treasurers and Financial Officers, Delegate to Association of Minnesota Counties to name a few. In 1994 Joan was honored as Outstanding Treasurer of the Year

Joan is a current member of and involved with:

Foley Kiwanis, Foley American Legion Auxiliary, Auditor/Treasurer Association, Minnesota Association of County Officers, National Association of County Officers, Public Employee Pension Service Association, Delegate to Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative and Benton County historical Society. Joan is also a member of Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church

Joan enjoys her position as Auditor/Treasurer, working with the public and the affiliations with the local state and national officers. She has had the privilege to meet and form friendships that are lasting.

Memberships New & Renewed/Donations

Our apologies to **Elly VanDeist** for the last newsletter. Her membership was renewed and we omitted her name on the renewal list!

Inez Kronenberg

Ken & Gail Philippi

Granite Care Home

Robert Bullock

Charles & Nancy Anderson

Debbie Bruns– New Home Sewing Machine

Pauline Hoover- “Sick Call” box, Audubon Cards

Helen Bettendorf– Foleyan newspapers, telephone directory, State Bank of Foley deposit slips, phone operating instructions–

Lorane Walsh-Nursing uniform, cape, display case, wheelchair, nursing books

Mary Jo Wiatrowski– Satellite III Typewriter & Stand

Patricia Danaher-US Defense Savings Bond Book, Defense Stamp Album

Heather Juetten– DVD-R Cd-RW– Eunice Ranweiler Country school oral interview

Carl Chapp-High School Reunion, Diplomas, School letters, Atlas, Church books, Plat Books, Remembrance books, Church items-last rites home sets

Cliff Johnson-cash donation for storage for BCHS

Jerry Dirks– Church records (Large box), communion set, flags & stands, pulpit bible, communion tapestry

Lorraine Laamanen– Memorial Donation for Vera Polum

Kathy Fink– Sauk Rapids uniform (cheerleading)

Knowledge is of two kinds.

We know a subject

ourselves, or we know

where we can find

information on it.

Samuel Johnson

(1709-1784)

Benton County Fair Demonstrators- August 4-8th, 2010

I am still looking for people to do demonstrations at the Heritage Building at the Benton County Fair this year. If you have a skill or hobby that you would like to share with a demonstration at the Heritage Building, please let me know. We already have temporarily planned for felting, honey extraction, spinning, crocheting, chicken scratching and we would love to educate and teach people about more! Any wood carvers out there? Leather Workers? Are you a knitter, or do you do; embroidery, sewing, canning or food storage, butter making, lefse maker, candle maker, anything that you think that the public may be interested in learning about!

Call Mary at 253-9614 or email me at bchsmus@charterinternet.com



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Executive Director Corner

Some of you will notice that we do not have the Board Members Corner in this newsletter. With everyone's busy schedules, I did not have a "copy" to put in here, so we will pick it back up for the next newsletter!

That is what happens in Spring; things start moving forward after the long winter! Grass needs to be mowed, gardens need to be cleaned, taxes to file, put away the plows, the snow blowers, and the shovels. Sun is shining and life gets busier! Just ask a farmer, or anyone else who is in a business that requires good weather— you work with it.

It has been busier at the Museum; and with requests. The nicer weather has brought people from out of town already into see what we have to offer for their genealogy and family histories. The summer months should be even busier with people traveling to family reunions, & class reunions as people start to get together! It will be a pleasure to see a few more new faces and we are always excited to see our members! Just want to remind everyone that if you do attend, try to remember us too with the information! We are only as good at preserving as the community is in getting us the information! Till next time!

Mary Ostby

Kings Supper Club Employee Reunion

We have been informed that there will be a former *Kings Supper Club* employee reunion held at the Watab Town Hall on October 30, 2010. If you are a former employee, or know of someone who worked there, please tell them about this event. Any information, pictures, stories, memories or contact information for former employees is appreciated and can be referred to the party organizing this event: Craig Gondeck at #393-3120 or #492-6814

If you have
knowledge, let others
light their candles at
it...
Margaret Fuller
(1810-1850)

Benton County Historical Fundraiser— Raffle



**Take a chance on BCHS
and help us raise some
funding!**

We are holding this raffle as a fundraiser for the 2010 year! The drawing will be held August 17, 2010 at the Benton County Museum during the Board Meeting. Tickets are \$1.00 and we have some great prizes! Prizes include: 1. A home made afghan donated and made by Renee Kampa 2. \$100.00 cash donated by anonymous 3. Twins Tickets donated by Butch Bukowski 4. Rhubarb Leaf Birdbath donated by Wendy Wheeler 5. \$50.00 Savings Bond by BCHS 6. 2 Walking sticks donated by Stearns Community Service program 7. Coins Set donated by Mastino Coins 8. *The Children Remember Book* by Sharon Schulte donated by Terri Wollak and 9. Benton County Postcards Set donated by BCHS. If you would like tickets, you can find a Board Member, or get them at the Museum, or call, email or by mail and we can send them out!

BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM

P.O. Box 426
218 1st St. N.
Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

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E-mail: bchsmus@charterinternet.com
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Benton County Historical Society Board of Directors and Meeting Schedule

President: Ernie Wollak
Vice President:: Char Dhein
Treasurer: Renee Kampa
Secretary: Melissa Keller
Director: Butch "Earl" Bukowski
Director: Pat Gerchy
Director: Bud Lubbesmeier
Director: Randy Schafer
Director: Merle Stowe

Board Meetings— Meeting are held the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm

2010 Meeting Schedule:

(Tentative Schedule— may change due to weather of Board Decision)

May 18, 2010
June 15, 2010
July 20, 2010
August 17, 2010
September 21, 2010
October 19, 2010
November 16, 2010
December 21, 2010



PRESERVING THE PAST AND THE PRESENT FOR THE FUTURE....