

Le Sueur County Historical Society

Annual Report

April 16, 2024

Written and Edited by Dr. Ruth Collins, Secretary LCHS

Annual Report 2023

Annual Meeting held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 6:00 pm, at the Fairgrounds.

Summary / Update. Schmidt Foundation Grant awarded. Elected LCHS Board member are as follows: Bill Stangler -President, Dean Pettis- Vice President, Bonnie Reak-Treasurer, Ruth Collins-Secretary, Ron Greenwald-Board member. Each member will serve a two-year term on the LCHS Board.

May 2023

- A. School District #75 – Cleaning up; Elementary School fieldtrip and tour. Bette Traxler was a great presenter. Pencils were a hit, Thanks to Paul M. Reporter, Carson Hughes was present. The Le Center Public Schools was present.
- B. Pre-construction meeting at Elysian worksite, Tuesday, May 9, 2023, 9:30 AM.
- C. A contact was made to North American Security, to explore next steps during construction. Contractors will be working outside of the building and the alarm should not be affected.
- D. Sign for Legacy Grant Signage for the Grantors/grantee acknowledgements for project was discussed and is being arranged for display.
- E. Ottawa Historians Annual Meeting, May 10th at 7 pm, Ottawa Town Hall. Doug Ohman is speaking in Ottawa, Saturday, July 8th, 2023. 3 pm, Ottawa Town Hall. The fee is \$500.00 Dean asked for LCHS to help with this fee. Motion to support the Ottawa Historians by offering 50% of the fee was approved.
- F. Le Sueur County Fair, August 2023 - start planning. No site in the commercial building. The Log Cabin and the School house will be open.

G. **Genealogy Center** – Sally O. – report/update on Gen. Center activity.

Gen. Center opened on May 12, and closes September 16, 2023.

The hours are 1-4 pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

June 2023

Ottawa Town Hall - Regular Monthly Meeting

39120 Old Ottawa Road

- A. MNHS Small Grant – Final report completion for the ScanPro, microfilm reader /printer, machine technology updates by July, 2023.
- B. Le Sueur County Fair – refurbishing of the fair buildings. Start setting up sign-up sheets online for volunteers for the schoolhouse and the log cabin. July 15, 10 AM: Cleanup day for the LCHS at the log cabin
- C. Discussions begin for Executive Director – Someone to manage the LCHS.
 - 1. A committee was formed to develop a job description.
- D. Ottawa Stone Church Cleaning – Thank you to the Volunteers: Kathleen & Dick Peterson, Chuck Olson, Bonnie Reak, and Brandon, Deanna, & Ruth Collins.
- E. Dinsmore email – Ottawa Stone Church Bell, inspect and grease. Done every 2 years; does it include pivot points, “restoration services” \$270.
- F. Technology: begin discussions about a copier. Technology-Large copier. Receiving bids.

July 2023

- A. 5 PM work session- LCHS Facility Application and Rental Contract for the Ottawa Stone Church. Presented to and approved by Le Sueur County Attorney, Brent Christian. Process and Next steps for Rental form discussed.
- B. MNHS Elysian School Grant /Construction – mortar testing, soffit fittings still in process.
 - **Xcel Energy* shut off power Friday, June 30th to the Museum, Log cabin and two sheds for safety during construction.
 - **The water source* needed resourcing and additional costs. Spicket put in from lower level SE Corner and to the west of the stairs. (first week of July).

- C. Shed removal – in the vacant lot west of the museum. Report from Ron Greenwald, the DNR & Fire Dept. certified that the criteria were not met for obtaining the burn permit on this site.
- D. Corncrib that collapsed on LCHS Campus – removal. Completed by Dr. Ruth Collins, David Harriman, and Ron and Ethan Greenwald. Ron G. will spread grass seed in the corncrib area.
- E. Fourth of July event at LCHS Gen Center: Summary-
 - 1. John Eggers sold and signed books;
 - 2. LCHS opened 1 shed – Louis Hruska Building for observers;
 - 3. Lawn was mowed/R Greenwald, Thank you for this on the 4th of July.
 - 4. 6 LCHS Board members were present on this day to volunteer.
 - 5. 47-50 guests signed in.
 - 6. Reporter, Carson Hughes interviewed the VP and Sec.
 - 7. Sally Olson demonstrated the new Scan Pro.
 - 8. David Harriman and Sally Olson - Thank you for volunteering on the 4th of July.
- F. Storage buildings on Elysian campus- repair roof of green shed and post on that building. Maybe ask membership for donations to help cover the cost.
- G. Volunteers asking for work: Accession records/in discussion on mitigating mildew. Elysian Museum shut down for construction.

August 2023

- A. BEHLEN SHED - Tree fell on shed 17 years ago. Originally was fixed by a person still living in the area. Today, parts are around to find in the aftermarket price range for a repair.
A temporary fix -Metal sheets from work, RichB/PM. The fabrication shop has 4x10 sheets. Pillars may be needed for the weight from heavy snow. Rich and Ron will measure it, go up and temporarily fix it/patch it. GET ON THE LIST FOR NEXT YEAR 2024- John Jewison.
- B. Vacant lot building west of the Museum: Suggestion – RGreenwald clean it up with his son and chunk it out. Phase 1- Building down; Phase 2- Grind out the trees and mulch and put that on the bank to hold the soil. RG will submit a bid sheet. Developing the plans.

- c. Le Sueur County Fair - August 17-20, 2023. Sign- Up Genius. Log Cabin and School house are cleaned and ready for the Fair visitors.
 - D. Hruska Donation – Aug. 4, Bonnie, Don, Carolyn Roessler & Ruth picked up from Mr. & Mrs. David Hruska and brought to Gen. Center. Items included: Tapes from early interviews regarding the cultural and native history of the Waterville area, slides from early LCHS: Jim & Dorothy Hruska presentations. Bonnie brought a new shelf for the Hruska Donation to keep it together. It is in the Gen Center lower level.
 - E. Website for LCHS is up and running: updating Facebook and GiveMN./website for LCHS.
 - F. Newsletter: next edition; List Membership Levels Available: Museum history.
- September 2023**
- A. Guest – Jerry Tiede: Update – The Green Giant Signs located in Le Sueur in a maintenance building are safe. Former Employees want the signs displayed. Fundraising: Grant writing, networking with former Green Giant employees, Seneca Foods, and B & G Foods, Printing companies. Friend to gauge metal and determine what is needed to stand them upright. Include a Historical Landmark with a story.
 - B. Museum Conditions #1 update – mortar testing has been sent and updated mortar testing mixtures, per the request of the MNHS Grantor for approval.
 - C. Le Sueur County Fair - August 17-20, 2023. Thank You to the Volunteers, from the LCHS Membership and Le Center Community.
 - Log Cabin – 312 Visitors
 - School District #75 – 237 Visitors
 - D. Accession records - Aug. 9 – Moved Accession Records file cabinets and Index Card Files from 2nd floor of the Museum to the Entrance of the Gen Center.
 - E. The Genealogy Center is closed for season on 9-16-23.
 - F. GiveMN.org – Target this year is Elysian Roof. Left open is Ottawa Church and Cleveland roof. Updates from R. Bennett.

G. Schoolhouse, Dist. #75 Signage, Oval Plaque/picture. Cost for Bronze 3-500 dollars

October 2023

- A. Legacy Sign completed – Greg & Bonnie Harriman, display of Grantors/MNHS Legacy Sign next to Genealogy Center sign, with their volunteer work on the Legacy sign. Board recommendation to gift a Family LCHS Membership to the Greg and Bonnie Harriman Family.
- B. Executive Director –job description and posting are completed. Need to consider the budget. Is LCHS ready fiscally? Firming up hours and need to raise money to pay for position. President – Recommendation to table this position. Motion to approve the job description was Approved.
- C. Curator – is there a grant for this position. Person to help sort through the collection and the museum artifacts possible.
- D. Collection Committee Approved.
- E. Lake Area Historians, Elysian, MN haven't met for four years. They voted to disband and let go of the 501-c.3 and give a donation of \$1,788.35 to the LCHS. Three checks were divided almost equally. Museum Restoration=\$600.00; Genealogy Center=\$600.00 and Art Fund= \$588.35.
- F. Database system for collections: Waseca suggested contacting Jon Zimprich to work with the LCHS on creating a database for accessions, and museum artifacts. He has made this database for the Waseca Historical Society and helps them with their technology. Paul is willing to help, reach out to Jon Zimprich and begin the conversation.

November 2023

- A. Executive Director – possible partner & funding source with Sibley County. Discussion about their request to share an ED. The chair reflected that it didn't seem like a good fit with the LCHS.
- B. Technology Committee – For a new copier LCHS is looking at proposals with collaboration from the County. Rental or lease; LCHS can get a MN State bid price due to receiving large grant.

- C. The Genealogy Center maintenance was done by R.Greenwald, Furnace filter and AC.

December 2023

- A. Guest - Jeff Neisen, discussing the copier and technology set-up at the Genealogy Center.
- B. MNHS Roof grant – shingles are done; the fascia and the gutters are being worked on during the warmer days. There was a bell tower rot in the structure that was worse than expected underneath the floor and the peak of bell tower.
- C. Executive Director – funding source. Chair: Pass on this.
- D. Curator – Bryce Stenzel contacting MNHS. Next step: talked to Shelley Harrison, Blue Earth County Historical Society, Mankato. A visit was set up.
- E. GiveMN.org – “Give to the Max” is Nov. 16, 2023. ~ R. Bennett update. Few donations. \$167.00 donated. Thank you to the donors and Rich B.
- F. Storage situation-need for room: Brown Printing Building~~not a go. Update-Pallet storage. Still seeking storage possibilities.
 - Container storage; Volk Transfer/Hwy 14 (Pallet is 48X40).
 - Mangan’s Bakery in Le Center is empty and owned by the Newspaper.
 - two sheds on the Elysian property/stuffed full.
- G. 2024 Le Sueur County Visitors Guide; Ottawa Church Open Sundays June-August, 4th of July Open House at Elysian site. And Gen Center Open same as last year.

January 2024

- A. Executive Director –LCHS developed a finance committee to being working LCHS goals and Ed position: Finance Committee: Paul M., Dean P., Bonnie R., Bryce S., Dr. Ruth C., and Bob Burgess.
- B. Membership Renewal Letters – Meet on Friday, Feb. 2nd to stuff envelopes.
- C. Annual Meeting Committee – List Committee Members
Location - the 4-H building reserved for April 16th.
Committee for Nominations: Volunteers to take care of the Ballots.

D. Schoolhouse, Dist. #75 Signage, Larger plaque. Bronze plaque. 18 X 24, for \$1200.00. Approved with a note to clear it with Margaret Traxler.

February 2024

- A. Guests- Wayne & Helen Zuelch, Barns. Friends of Minnesota Group.
- B. MNHS Elysian School Grant /Construction – Bond Inquiry. It is almost done.
- C. Storage needed for Museum contents. Possibilities in Le Center, MN and in Elysian, MN. Both are being investigated.
- D. Annual Meeting, List Committee Members: Dean P., Dr. Ruth C., Ron G.
Guest Speaker – Al Batt, talks on Birds and humorous Speaking.
- E. Finance Committee list of LCHS Board priorities - Board members will take the list home and rank in order and bring it back in March.
- F. Genealogy Center, Opening date? April 19th & 20th. Fridays and Saturdays, 1-4 pm. Closing Sept. 14, 2024. There are 4 volunteers for the 2024 season so far.
 - 1. **ADA Ramp for accessibility, Paul M. emailed to industrial arts programs at TCU and WEM for Industrial Arts projects/volunteers. Just need the plans and materials. Paul M. and Ron G. will work together on it.
 - 2. ** Volunteer Sally O. caught up on Obituaries.
- G. Collections/Donations Committee- Bryce S. and Dean P. Dean met with a new person for donations; Military uniform, child's outfit and spinning wheel. An Accession record was filled out.
- H. Website: Update. Add Museum updates. Continuous interactive website needs updating and good first impressions.
- I. Technology Committee - Copier is on order (3-4 weeks) working with Midco paperwork, and electrician.
- J. Newsletter – Next Newsletter is due March. Newsletter to look at for March Meeting and send out immediately to get information for Annual meeting.

March 2024

- A. MNHS Elysian School Grant /Construction – request to meet to go through the punch list for project completion.
- B. Tour of Museum with Shelley Harrison, BE County. Uniforms are mildewed, & need to mitigate, put in a freezer to kill it. Don't put it with something else to

prevent spreading it. Stay the course. Impressed with the Gen Center. Shelley offered to give a tour of Blue Earth County Museum.

- C. Nominations Committee meeting: March 26th @ 6pm. Le Center.
- D. LCHS received the 2024 appropriation of \$50,000.00 from the County. Thank you.
- E. Genealogy Center - -Ramp access – ask Membership for donations to support this project. Garrett Schmahl will draw ramp specs for the ramp to the Gen Center. No Charge.
- F. Technology Committee –Copier is set up, but it is not networked yet. Paper for the copier is purchased.
- G. Data base – suggestions are as follows:
Collective access, Past Perfect, Excel is do-able but not manageable.
Collective Access CollectiveAccess@mnhistoryalliance.org inexpensive, customizable Sandbox demo. Suggested to keep this database in-house to manage the costs and keep it lower.
- H. The Schedule for Genealogy Center on Facebook.

April 2024

- A. MNHS Elysian School Grant – Punchlist completed and presented to LCHS Board.
- B. Ballot for Election of New Board Members at the Annual meeting April 16, 2024, was presented for LCHS Board approval. It was approved.
- C. Volunteers to take care of/count the Ballots. Tim Collins, Dr. Ruth Collins, Ron Greenwald, Dean Pettis.
- D. Speaker – Al Batt, Topic: Wildlife and Birds in Southern MN. Motion to pay the speaker \$100.00, Approved.
- E. Finance Committee – Priorities list for LCHS spending: Put the rankings in order to show what the LCHS Board wanted to get accomplished. Approved.
- F. **Genealogy Center** – Opens April 19th & 20th. Fridays and Saturdays, 1-4 pm. Closing Sept. 14, 2024. Messages and voicemails are being monitored.
-Ramp access: Mr. Schmall drew it up. Computer construction format will be edited for comprehensive construction. LCHS provide the materials, and

hopefully School shop classes can provide the labor. The poured moorings can be reused from the previous ramp access. Mr. Schmall did the previous ramp. A volunteer will check with an engineer for ADA access for a short-term solution. Ask Membership for Donations to purchase the materials to complete this project.

- G. Artwork – Joy Wolfe is now a certified Appraiser of artwork equal to archives of LCHS. She has committed to working with LCHS and work on appraising the artwork.
- H. Newsletter – Next Newsletter will be sent out after the Annual meeting. New Board, and 4th of July.
- I. Cleveland Church – email was received from a realtor expressing that someone has an interest in purchasing the church. LCHS has declared the church is not for sale.
- J. Presentation: PETTIS STATION, Pettis, MN project, by Dr. Ruth (Pettis) Collins. 3 years of research and coordinated work efforts compiled information to bring back to life a small village along the railroad that her Great Grandfather Alva Pettis built. Pettis, MN was at the intersection of County roads 18 and 19 in Kasota Township. It is now tillable land. The project started as a gift to her nephews who may someday farm that land.
- K. New Membership Total – 244; 104 Life Members, and 140 Annual Memberships.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dr. Ruth (Pettis) Collins
Secretary, LCHS