

# MINNESOTA CITY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

MEMBER NEWSLETTER – Volume 11, Issue 1: January, 2016

*“Minnesota City: A Past that we honor; a Present that we give meaning; a Future that we build together”*

## **Mark your Calendars!**

**January 9:**  
Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Monthly MCHA Meeting; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School.

**January 28:**  
Thursday, 6:30 p.m.; Minnesota City Community Readers and Open Book Shelf; 115 Iowa Street, Former Minnesota City School; Selection: *The Hummingbird's Daughter*, Urrea.

**February 13:**  
Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Monthly MCHA Meeting; 115 Iowa Street, Minnesota City.

**February 25:**  
Thursday, 6:30 p.m.; Minnesota City Community Readers and Open Book Shelf; 115 Iowa Street, Minnesota City.

### **“Go Green!”**

If you receive this letter in paper “hardcopy” and would like to receive it electronically, please call 689-2440.

## **GBDRF (Garvin Brook Disaster Relief Fund) Closes the Books**



Hollis Donehower, Dallas Denzer, Corinne Denzer view photo history of GBDRF

On December 6, a group of current and past board members and friends of GBDRF met at St. Paul's Parish Hall to discuss distribution of their financial holdings to precede the official end of the organization. Board officers and members overseeing the end of the organization were Bryce Maus, Sharon Nako, Duane Hutton, Susan Althoff, LaVern Fritz, Dallas Denzer and Hollis Donehower. A number of former members and spouses participated in discussion, viewing of photos, and refreshments. The

distribution of remaining funds was discussed with information on possibilities for projects suggested. A number of these, because of stature of organizational identities or government regulations could not be beneficiaries. Ultimately the decision was made to divide funds between the cities of Goodview and Minnesota City, for special projects, not projects of the General Fund. The final motion was to terminate GBDRF organization as of December 31, 2015, with all bills paid. Officers will provide publicity to local media. Attendees recalled memories of the group. The first board, Susan Althoff, Jaye Fritz (deceased-2009), Gen O'Grady and Nancy Beach were remembered by Brenda Edwards. Projects recalled were the Stockton Landscaping Fair, the utensils shower, the cleaning of homes, the gifts of Welcome Home green plants, community meals, heroic behaviors of community members, a Flood Art Show, the first year anniversary celebration and others, musical contributions of Pamela McNeill at local and metro benefits, her composition of “Waiting for The Tide”, the film produced by the group entitled “In a Flash: The Flood of 2007” (copies available at the archives), and cooperation with the LaVern and Jaye Fritz coordinated Thrivent sponsored Recovery Effort.

**COMMENT** (Gen O'Grady): I do not want to view the “passing” of GBDRF as demise, but rather as a successfully timed injection of enrichment into the Minnesota City Community by a large number of individuals who recognized that response to tragedy is accomplished through physical and emotional support, through narrative and through presence. Newsletter accounts of GBDRF activities will be archived. We are grateful; we are better because of this organization. Recalling the many images of the activities, we value again the William Stafford lines, “When you turn around, starting here, lift this new glimpse that you found; carry into evening all that you want from this day. This interval you spent, keep it for life.” Thank you, GBDRF organization. You enlarged our view of ourselves and our community.

**Note: There will not be a February Newsletter.**

## December 12 Caroling Event Entertains Overflow Audience

Perhaps best told in photos, this year's MCHA sponsored Community Caroling Event was enjoyed by a large number of interested, appreciative audience persons. **THANK YOU to all Community Caroling Participants--ALL ATTENDEES**, First Baptist Ladies, and special thanks to Jean Gardner, Donna Spaag Friesen, Nancy Volkart O'Malley, James O'Grady, Samuel O'Grady, Madison Church, Ethan Church, Scott Jensen, Kate O'Grady, Pastor David Eckert, Rebecca O'Grady Weiss, James (Jim) O'Grady, Lynda Brzezinski, Brian Ebbinger, Steve Schuh, Edwin Maus, Daniel Lewis, Debbie Karnath, Jenny Ebbinger, Ried and Jody Church, Bryceson Maus and assistants. (See photos, p. 4).

## The Minnesota City Baptist Ladies Aid Celebrates the Holidays

(Contributed by Susan Althoff)

The November meeting of the Baptist Ladies Aid was held in the community room of the Brookview Association in Winona with Sarah Denzer and Donna and Betsy Friesen serving as hostesses. An array of casseroles, salads and vegetables were available along with punch and coffee. Sarah made a special homemade recipe of pumpkin pie for dessert. The meeting was called to order by Jean Gardner with Norma Grausnick leading devotions followed by Corinne Zierfus' secretary's report and Lori Donehower's treasurer's report. Sarah gave those attending a tour of the building. Of special interest were the number of pictures and paintings that adorn the hall walls from the residents living in the building.

In December the group attended a luncheon held at the St. Teresa Alumnae Tea House in Winona. All twelve members were in attendance. The menu consisted of Cranberry Christmas Punch, Frosted Ribbon Sandwich Loaf, Black Frost Ham Quiche, Blue Cheese-Walnut and Fig Finger Sandwiches, Smoked Salmon and Beef Provolone Pinwheels, Cranberry Mascarpone Toast, a variety of cubed cheeses in a Wreath with Rosemary garnish, Tomato, Basil and Mozzarella Sticks, and for dessert, Triple Chocolate Bundt Cake.

Members shared their favorite Christmas reading and Jean Gardner gave a talk about Shiny Brite Christmas ornaments. Kudos went out to Corinne for the article in the local newspaper about the huge manger set display she has put together for the First Baptist Church in Winona that is shared each year during the holidays. Each member in attendance received a homemade tea pot decoration (to symbolize the Tea House) for her tree. Hostess for the luncheon was Susan Althoff.



First Baptist Ladies Aid Members at the College of St. Teresa Tea House in Winona

## Speltz Solar Farm Approved by Winona County Board

At a meeting on December 17, the Winona County Planning Commission approved the first solar farm in Winona County for a twenty some acre solar site in Rollingstone Township. The Shirley Speltz Revocable Trust owns the land. The permit was applied for by Jim Speltz and Solar Stone Partners and NrG. The Commission denied the permit last month, and the petitioners reapplied with a smaller parcel of farmland to be utilized. The panels will not be visible from any bordering homes or roads. According to the Rochester Post Bulletin, "Part of the agreement with the township requires a guarantee in the form of a \$125,000 payment toward the removal and decommissioning of the solar garden, which has about a 25-year lifetime." (December 18, 2015). Bruce Speltz and Don Evanson are among Planning Commission Members. (See November MCHA Newsletter for first petition information).

### MCHA Congratulates:

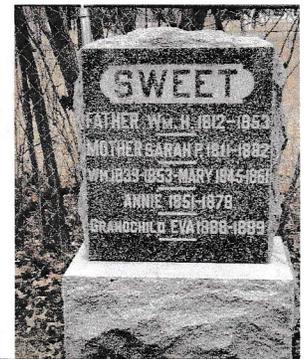
- Jane Althoff-Masyga , Brainerd, (Susan Althoff's daughter) who married Wally Bosstrom, Crosby, on Saturday, December 19 at the Village House in Winona. They now live in Ramsey, Mn.

### MCHA Extends sympathy to:

- to family and friends of Carol Kearney, 73, Mantorville, Mn. Carol, who died on November 22, was the mother of Kevin Kearney.
- to family and friends of Janet Brown Mlynczak, 79, former Mill Street Resident, who died in Winona on December 8.

### An Historical "Valuer" Communicates from Princeton, Minnesota

A December mailing from Nadean Johnson, Princeton, Minnesota, piqued immediate interest in the possibility of connections with "Sweets," Minnesota City founders. These did not result, but the document from Johnson, a parchment-like yellowed typed paper, identified details that add to understanding the 1852 settlement of Minnesota City. A phone call to Johnson confirmed that she was not connected with the Sweets, the family of settlers. She was however a valuer of history, and having read this document found in a box of materials she had purchased at an auction, although only one line names Minnesota City, did the research to get the letter to the Association. Never having been here, she pursued enough Winona County connections to make the location. The contribution is an archival treasure; we appreciate Johnson's effort and interest, and anticipate interesting stories as we trace the connection of Sarah Sweet.



Sweet Monument in Oakland Cemetery

### Area Bannon Resident Request Opens Archival Search

A mailing this week asked about Bannon settlers/relatives in Minnesota City. Charles Bannon, along with O.M. Lord and D.Q. Burley are old settlers of Minnesota City. Among materials already in the archives is a newspaper account of a lecture by famed Elder Ely that includes this note about the first settlers: "The women and children were led to the shanty of Mr. Noracong, which stood under the large oak near by the platform of the Winona and St. Peter Railroad. There in a little room, 7 x 14 were crowded 13 women and children—the pioneer females of Southern Minnesota. Among this company was Mrs. Bannon, Mrs. Dellworth, and some children who are still residents of the Rollingsone Valley." (From the Winona Daily Republican, January 16, 1871). The account that follows outlines the hardships of this first group. Research on this family will enrich the Minnesota City Historical Association Archives.

For MCHA Association information, call 689-4103, (Eckert), 450-0201, (O'Grady) or 689-4344 (Donehower-Community Readers).

Anyone who wishes to be a member of the Association is invited to send \$15.00 to:

MCHA, P.O. Box 21,  
Minnesota City, MN, 55959.

All monies will be used to support Association goals. Separate or additional donations may also be sent to the above address.

### Check Out The Website:

[www.minnesotacity.org](http://www.minnesotacity.org)

Continue to check the website periodically. New information is constantly being added. Remind family and friends and former Minnesota City residents to check it out! Thank you to Marv O'Grady and David Eckert for keeping the website updated.



Jean Gardner and Nancy O'Malley discuss Shiny Brites



Front row performers await their time



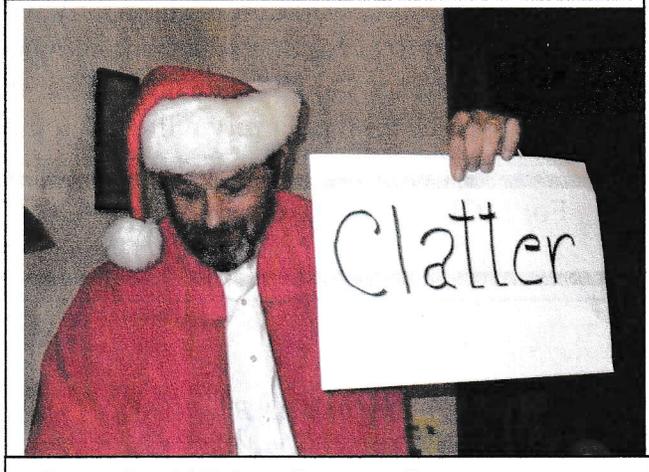
Organist Daniel Lewis, Violinist Steve Schuh, accordionist Edwin Maus



"Twas the Night Before Christmas" performers: Ethan Church, Samuel O'Grady, Madison Church, James O'Grady, and Scott Jensen



Jim O'Grady passes the Yule Log to Marv O'Grady



Pastor David Eckert directs audience response to "Twas the Night..."