

# Franklin Historical Society June Newsletter

First order of business is a start of a new series of stories of **Franklin's Founding Farming Families** by board member **Judy Scherrer**, our FHS's historian. Judy has been writing for sometime a series of articles for the now Chronicle newspaper called **Historically Speaking**.

## BOLDT FARM

With this newsletter we begin a series of articles about Franklin farm families whose stories have not yet been published. The barn fundraising efforts have brought together these families and the sharing of their histories.

Boldt Barn on a 80 acre farm

The Boldt family, who was a part of Franklin history, for over 100 years is our first story:

The Boldt family begins its history in America in 1864 when they arrive from Mecklenberg, Germany, an area where it seems many Franklin families came from. In 1868 Friedrich and Anna Boldt purchase 80 acres on S. 76<sup>th</sup> St. in Franklin and where they will establish their farm.

The farm they bought would continue to stay in the family, being passed on to Friedrich's son, Wilhelm and his wife Bertha (nee Paap). Then their only son, William Jr. and his wife Lillian (nee Tretow) would purchase the farm in 1950.

William Sr. (Wilhelm) was one of a group of people that left St. Paul's Church on S. 51<sup>st</sup> St. to form a new congregation named St. Peter's Lutheran Church. Years later the church closed and it was moved to the historical park and renamed St. Peter's Chapel.



Son William Boldt Jr. became active on numerous Franklin school boards from the 1940's to the 1950's and in 1952 he would sell 7 acres of his farm land for the

construction of Ben Franklin School, which opened in 1953.

Boldt also served on the Town of Franklin election boards, the Franklin-Oak Creek Mutual Insurance Co. board and the cemetery board of his church, Emmanuel United Church of Christ in Hales Corners.

His wife Lillian Boldt was a very active member of the Franklin Historical Society and was responsible for designing and working on the bicentennial quilt that hangs in a showcase in the old Town Hall.

Her creative talents also included flower arranging, making jeweled ornaments and being known as an “egger”. An egger is someone who creates scenes inside hollowed out eggs, usually for holidays or special occasions.

Lillian was also one of the original members of the Golden Agers group (now known as the Franklin Senior Citizens) in addition to being active in the Women’s Guild of her church.

The Boldt farm was a dairy farm and sold milk to the Borden dairy. In 1965 the remaining 73 ½ acres were purchased by the Tuckaway Country Club (Note: This is the corrected amount from the stated 5 acres that was printed in the Images of America - Franklin book). After the sale, Bill and Lillian Boldt remained in Franklin, purchasing a home on 92<sup>nd</sup> & Ryan Rd.

Lillian Tretow Boldt died in 1986 and William Boldt, Jr. died in 1989. Their daughter Bonnie (Boldt) Wiegand resides in Wauwatosa.

## **Spring Barn Dance**

The FHS hosted our second barn dance Sunday April 21 at The Hideaway. Our barn fundraising committee received many requests for another barn dance after the great success of the 2012 fall barn dance. Committee members Luanne Burdick, Joan Thompson, Ken Gawrisch, Barbara Pforr, Brenda Magee and Al Block presented a great program of music, dance, raffles and a lot fun for everyone.

Pictured is Stacy Zupancic holding Reese Richlen of the Wendt Family at the dance.

Special thanks goes out to Vern & The Originals for their wonderful music. They will be performing Sunday June 23 at 1:30 p.m. at the Lions Legend Park Band Shell part of the free Music in the Park summer series.

## **Mahr Family Barn Floor Rescue**





From left to right: Oscar Meir, Jim Luckey , Steve Gyuro & Gary Edwards

On May 30 the Oak Creek Fire Department did a burn on the Mahr family barn and house as a training exercise. Many of us would remember purchasing apples at this beautiful farm.

With only one day left before the burn the FHS put together a crew led by Steve Gyuro to save the **very valuable** long tongue & groove floor boards for our own barn project. These floor boards will save the FHS thousands of dollars, and are the same era of the Wendt family barn we are building in Lions Legend Park.

There was a great deal of refuse piled up on the desired floor that had to be moved first. 100 boards were carefully removed and de-nailed. They are now safely stored.

## Barn Project Update

The FHS barn fundraising committee continues their hard work to find the funds to reconstruct the Wendt family barn this year. The current focus is to call on Franklin businesses in person to inform them of our project and ask them for their help. Donations can be sent to: Franklin Historical Society Barn Raising Project PO Box 320012 Franklin, WI. 53132.

The FHS barn construction committee is working with a local architect who is donating his services to help us design the barn. Once this is completed the design will be presented to City Planning and Inspection. We have had meetings with both departments recently.

## 2013 Franklin Historical Society Annual Meeting



Bennett Hoeft honored for his Eagle

The April 13, 2013 FHS Annual Meeting was opened by Franklin's Mayor Tom Taylor. Mayor Taylor praised the FHS for their community effort to preserve the city's history.

Luanne Burdick, the chair of the barn fund-raising committee reported on the current promotions to raise funds for the barn project.

Board Member Joan Thompson followed and gave a brief history of the Sheehan -Godsell Log Cabin noting that the Sheehans and Godsells were not related. Joan acknowledged Sheehan/Sheahan guests in attendance and introduced Sue Dolinar, Jack Domencich and Ann Sheahan.

Sue Dolinar gave a presentation on the results of their genealogy. She said that the story her family knew was different from the story told by the FHS. Sue explained the story they had heard was that there were four Sheehan boys in Ireland who did something (stole some sheep, stole a horse or blew up a building). One of the four boys was caught and hung.

( Further details of this presentation are in the minutes of the meeting)

### **Thank You Sue for this Interesting Presentation**

**Bennett Hoefft** was honored for his Eagle Scout project to build a stairway to the attic on the backside of St. Peter's Chapel. This project was very complicated and included many challenges. **Thank You Bennett.**

After a refreshmen break where Steve Gyuro played the harp, the annual meeting was called to order. First order of business was the approval of the minutes by membership. Treasurer Marian Luckey gave reports for both the operating and barn fund. They both were approved by membership.

President Jim Luckey gave a report on the year 2012 in review. Committee reports followed.

Luanne Burdick reported on the school program and the curator's report. Board member Ken Gawrisch reported on the Civil War in Song. Board member Judy Scherrer reported on her Historically Speaking articles. Luanne reported on the barn fund-raising committee where Ken has created a barn for our float in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July city parade. Jim reported on the barn construction plans. Steve Gyuro explained in detail the disassembly of the

Wendt family barn.

Doug Schmidt paid a moving tribute to valued members we have lost during the past year: Amy Zvara, Bill Gross, Ed Schlueter and Irene Tretow.

A brief meeting of the Board of Directors was held immediately after the annual meeting. The current state of officers will continue to serve in their same capacity.

## Upcoming Events

The morning of **Saturday , June 15** the Franklin Health Department has its annual **Bike Rodeo** in Lions Legend Park. The FHS will have our historic buildings open for touring at the conclusion of this event.

Open house for touring the FHS historic buildings will be **Thursday July 4** just after the City of Franklin's 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade (FHS will have a float in the parade) and **Sunday August 4** after the Music in the Park Concert. Our new farming tools and implements display will be featured.

On **Saturday Sept. 21** the FHS will dedicate the opening of the **Delikat Smokehouse**. The smokehouse had been dismantled from its original Drexel Ave. location and rebuilt by the FHS in Lions Legend Park in our historic village. Our other buildings will be open for touring.

**An Old-Fashioned Christmas** - On **Saturday Dec. 14** there will be three non-denominational services held at several times: 4 PM, 5:30 PM & 7 PM. at our St. Peter's Chapel in Lions Legend Park. After each service, cookies, snacks, and beverages will be served in the Old Town Hall. Live music and song of the season will be enjoyed by all. This is free to the general public.

On **Saturday Dec. 7** from 10 AM to 3 PM children are invited to celebrate the Christmas season by making decorations for the schoolhouse. On **Saturday Dec. 14** the Whelan School Program precedes the first St. Peters Christmas service.

## Court of Honor

Many members of the FHS Saturday May 4 were at the Franklin Public Library to witness Bennett Hoefl's Eagle Scout Court of Honor to show our

appreciation for his building of the stairway to the upstairs of the St. Peters Chapel.

This Eagle Scout ceremony was most impressive. I was given the great honor of being a guest speaker telling of the challenges of his Eagle Scout project. Franklin's Mayor Tom Taylor and State Senator Mary Lazich were the special guest speakers.

The FHS hosted the reception in our old Town Hall for Bennett and his guests. His parents John and Bonnie provided some fine food and refreshments. We opened our buildings for touring. It was a great day for all.

## **Tiger Scouts Visit our Historic Village**

The Tiger Scouts pictured in the Cabin toured last month the FHS historic village along with their parents. These first graders found our buildings exciting and asked a number of good questions about the buildings and the artifacts inside. It was a really fun tour for everyone.

Perhaps one day one of these boys will do an Eagle Scout project for the FHS.

Pictured from left to right is Vince Lamp, Ryan Cronin, Ryan Boswell, Brett Lorbiecki and Matthew Bauer. In the back is Harrison Cunningham.



## **Pathways/Lighting/Electrical/Bridge ge PLEB Project**

The FHS is beginning an ambitious project for our historic village in 2013. I will go into details shortly but I want to explain first this project is totally separate from the barn project. The barn fund raising is a capital fund raising program where all money is dedicated to build the barn. It has a separate checking account and treasurers reports

for IRS reporting.

The PLEB project is funded from our normal operating budget. In 2011 and 2012 the FHS board had been very careful with any expenses in order to save dollars to make some serious improvements in 2013 for our village.

Vice-President Doug Schmidt and myself will be presenting a plan and budget to our board at our next board meeting.

**Pathways** - The current gravel pathways are serviceable. There are two problems with them. First people drag in small stones on their shoes into the buildings. A larger problem is winter operations. The pathways because of the stones require hand shoveling. This has been a real problem for our Christmas program in some years. This year because of the late winter snow it took three days of shoving, chopping and a lot of salt to clear the pathways for our open house tour after the Lions Easter Egg Hunt where we had well over 100 guests tour our buildings.

The solution is a hard surface asphalt pathway like we have back to the Cabin. This would allow the use of a snow blower. Also City of Franklin Public Works would help on occasion.

The second part of the pathways is to cut a new path from the current pathway between the Chapel and Town Hall to the new Smokehouse, and then to the Cabin with two short branches to the basement door of the Town Hall and to the new back stairway of the Chapel.

**Lighting** - There is currently very little light on the pathways and around the buildings. The City of Franklin has some street light poles that have been put out of service. Our plan is to refurbish the poles and put heads on them that would be historically correct for the time period of our buildings.

We are considering up to 12 lights including the area where the barn will be built. These lights will add beauty and safety to our grounds.

**Electrical** - Our School House and Town Hall have electrical service, the Chapel and Cabin do not. We need to have service to the Chapel to put in an electric heater for our Christmas services. For fire safety reasons we cannot use the stove any longer. We would also like to have power to the Cabin to have portable light when needed. (Fireplace in Cabin supplies the heat).

A detailed plan for the layout of the wiring to the buildings, pathway lights, taking into account the new pathways, paving the current pathways and planning for the future barn is going to be complicated. Fortunately Mr. Steve Rukowski of Pieper Electric a Franklin man has volunteered to

donate time to give us a professional plan to present to the city.

**Bridge** - Going back to the new pathways we plan on building a small stone bridge over the dip in the ground where the prairie garden is now. We would be using extra rocks from the Smokehouse to build the bridge to match the Smokehouse. The prairie garden will be located on both sides of the bridge. This will give the bridge a real natural look.

Eagle Scout candidate Thomas Laidlaw will present this project to the Eagle Scout review board for his Eagle Scout project.

Please read what board member and curator **Barbara Pforr** wrote about the FHS Whelan School program

## **WHELAN ONE-ROOM SCHOOL NEWS**

June marks the closing of the spring term for the Whelan One-Room School Educational Experience. Twenty-one classes participated in the program this spring. Students came from Hales Corners Elementary, Country Dale, Southwood Glen, Maple Grove (Greenfield), Our Father's Lutheran, Brookfield Home School Group, Ben Franklin, St. Paul's Lutheran, and Robinwood schools.

We appreciate the volunteers who make this program possible for Franklin students and nearby communities. Luanne Burdick, Sue Gawrisch, and Barbara Pforr have been the lead "school marms ." Their assistants have included: Anita Nickerson, Judy Scherrer, Cathy Lange, Sheri Coulter, Virginia Dekker, Kathy Milanowski, Dell Lester,, Barbara Geiger, Ken Gawrisch, and Dale Pforr. A special thank you to all of you for your support and faithfulness to the program! We are celebrating our 6th year of operation!

If you are interested in participating in this Franklin Historical Society educational outreach program please contact Barbara (425-0244), Luanne (423-0065), or Sue (529-2494).

We would welcome more volunteers to help lighten the schedule.



## **Some Final Notes**

On Sunday Aug. 18 the FHS will open our buildings for touring for the Sheehan/Sheahan family reunion.

Just decided at our June 10 board meeting we will have a special open house Saturday Aug. 24 from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM to thank and honor everyone that has helped with our barn project. Further information will be sent out.

Planning for a harvest barn dance at The Hideaway has begun.

Please visit our website [www.franklinhistory.net](http://www.franklinhistory.net) for there has been a number of recent changes. The Smokehouse has been added to the buildings page. There are new pictures of the barn rescue and annual meeting, new information and an interesting story about the barn project with pictures.

Next newsletter will be mailed out Aug. 14, 2013.

Please call me at 414-421-6539 or e-mail me at [luckeyjim@yahoo.com](mailto:luckeyjim@yahoo.com) with any questions or ideas. Thank You.

Jim Luckey  
President FHS

