



Franklin Historical Society June 2024 Newsletter

On Saturday May 11 the Franklin Historical Society hosted a special ceremony for the planting of a Liberty Tree a wonderful addition to Franklin's Lions Legend Park and our historic village of buildings.



The ceremony was presented by the Sons of the American Revolution. They donated the Liberty Tree and plaque. The tree is planted just behind the marker sign.

The Liberty Tree (1646–1775) was a famous elm tree that stood in Boston, Massachusetts near Boston Common in the years before the American Revolution. In 1765, Patriots in Boston staged the first act of defiance against the British government at the tree. It became a rallying point for the growing resistance to the rule of Britain over the American colonies, and the ground surrounding it became known as Liberty Hall.

2026 will mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The ceremony was the first step to honor that event here in Franklin.



Mayor John Nelson spoke about the history of Liberty Tree and explained that planning was in place for a community funded project to have a bronze plaque of Benjamin Franklin placed in front of the main entrance to city hall. He thanked the community groups for their efforts including the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, the Franklin Historical Society, the Franklin Lions Club, the Franklin Noon Lions Club and the Franklin Lioness Club. He also thanked the Sons of the American Revolution for the special ceremony.

Also at the dedication were Aldermen Ed Holpfer, Yousef Hasan and Alderwoman Michelle Eichman. I am the guy in the dark blue shirt.



May 11th Franklin Historical Society Membership Meeting

Pictured on the previous page in full uniform is **Mr. Brian Barrett** presenting his “**Finding the American Revolution in Wisconsin**” program. Sadly just over a week later Brian passed on.

He had serious health problems and was receiving treatment which weakened him yet he was determined to honor his commitment to do the program.

Brian was a published author and a revolutionary war historian. He was a long time greatly valued and highly respected member of the Wisconsin Sons of the American Revolution.

He had called me about his idea that being the City of Franklin was named after Benjamin Franklin, and with 2026 being the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, he felt that Franklin would be the perfect community to honor the anniversary by planting of the Liberty Tree and developing a special plaque of Benjamin Franklin in the city. This seemed to me a great idea and with a lot of initial help from Brian and the Franklin community this plaque is going to happen.

At our annual meeting Judy Scherrer summarized the 2023 annual FHS meeting minutes and membership approved them.

Jim Luckey read the Treasure’s report and membership approved the report. He also spoke about the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and plan for a Liberty Tree planting and plans for a plaque honoring Benjamin Franklin.

Barbara Pforr spoke of the continued success of the Whelan grade school program.

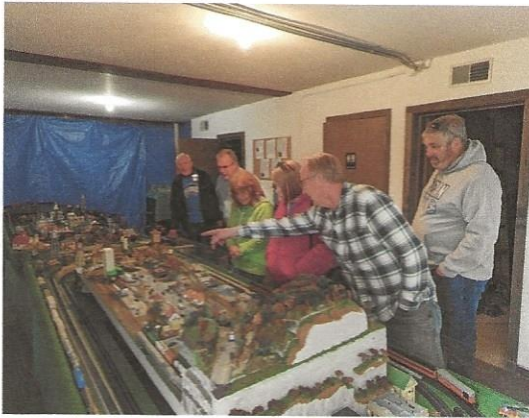
Ken Gawrisch reported on the popularity of the train exhibits and how Bob Storm is consistently creating new exhibits in the Town Hall Museum.

Judy Scherrer, Roger Lange, Barbara Pforr & Dale Pforr were all elected by FHS membership to serve a three term on the board of directors.

Kathi Kube was elected by the board of directors as Secretary.

Saturday May 18th was a busy day for the FHS for right after the Liberty Tree Ceremony the Great Lakes Model A Ford Club along with members of the Oak Creek Historical Society toured our buildings. It was a fun tour and a good afternoon. Bev Zehren of the Oak Creek H. S. supplied the picture to the right.





Bob Storm showing the model trains Ken Gawrisch in the Barn Museum

Up Coming Events & Tours

The Franklin Historical Society will open our historic buildings after the free Concerts in the Park summer series which start at 1:30 p.m. and our buildings will be open before 3 p.m. The listing of the bands follows:

Concerts in the park – June 30 The Falcons, July 14 The Do Wa Wahs, July 28 Floor it, August 11 AARPers Bizarre and August 25 The Wolfs Band. The concerts start at 1 p.m.

We will have our traditional open house on Thursday the 4th of July and our Christmas program on Saturday December 7th and other dates are being planned. If you have a group that would want a free private tour just contact Jim Luckey at 414-421-6539 or email luckeyjim@yahoo.com.

Memories Of July 4th Celebrations

For over the last 55 years the community has held a 4th of July parade. It has been followed by games, rides, food, entertainment and the annual fireworks display. Organized by a group of volunteers who serve on the 4th of July Commission, the parade and the festivities years ago began with a one day celebration and now has been expanded to several days of festivities.

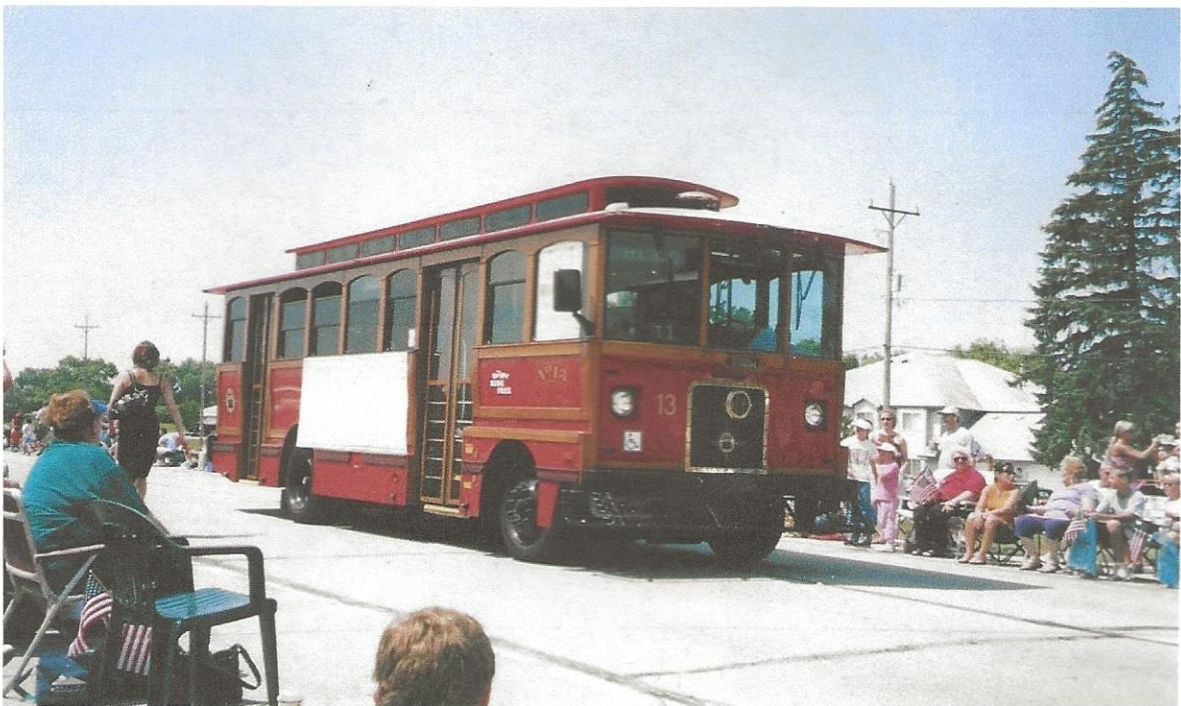
The location of the parade has also changed throughout the years. In the beginning the parade moved along S. 76th St. and culminated at the old Ben Franklin School where post-parade events were held.



Before moving to its present location on Loomis Rd. and Lions Legend Park, the parade was also held at Croatian Park on 76th St. and another time along S. 51st St. culminating at Franklin High School.

In the past children in the community could enter their decorated doll buggies, tricycles, bicycles and wagons to compete

for prizes. They could also enter bicycle skill contests, food eating contests or clown contests. Today children decorate scooters, motorized cars and bicycles in order to participate in the Children's Parade, which is held before the main parade begins.



Descendants of early families getting a trolley ride in the July 4 parade (Franklin's 50th anniversary)

Games that were played in the park in previous years were held not only for kids but also for the adults. A popular adult game was the "Mummy Wrap", where participants used toilet paper to cover their partner and the potato sack races that challenged partners to stay on their feet. Today time in the park is usually spent going on the many carnival rides that are available for several days.

Musical entertainment was usually in the form of variety shows that were presented by local school groups, church groups, 4-H clubs and scout groups. Today there are magic shows, kids shows, an "Idol" contest or performances by local bands that play at scheduled times in the large tents that are erected each year.

As with any event, changes occur because of the times. For years equestrian units were usually seen at the end of each parade but now horses are no longer a part of the parade because of the cleanup that is involved. The number of floats and marching units have also decreased in numbers because of people's busy schedules or varying interests. Today parade watchers are more likely to see more motorized vehicles that carry local celebrities and politicians.

One event that is not held anymore but was done for years in the 1960's to early 1970's, was a post-parade fly over by a small plane that would drop ping pong balls marked for prizes into the crowd. Tragically in 1972 the plane that dropped those balls made too low a pass and suddenly went into a spin, crashing into the swampy area behind Lions Legend Park.



All 3 men on the plane died that 4th of July. The plane had been piloted by John Karsten, newly elected President of the Franklin Lions Club. He was accompanied on the plane by Marvin and Ronald Arsand, cousins from Oak Creek. They were assisting Karsten in throwing out the ping pong balls and unfortunately they also

lost their lives.

For several years, small planes flew over the July crowds. lost their lives.

Years later another incident occurred that could have disrupted the beginning of the parade. A small grass fire began to burn near the Lions Legend Park. Immediately the fire department was called and the fire fighting equipment had to leave the parade line up and go put out the fire. Luckily the fire was extinguished rather quickly and the fire fighters and their equipment could return to their place in line to start the parade on time.

The weather during most of the 4th of July parades has usually been very hot. Years ago, when Franklin High School band students received their very first band uniforms they found out that wearing black wool can become unbearable. It was not thought of then to have people walking the parade routes with misting sprays or water bottles.



The Franklin Historical Society's parade entry, an antique farm tractor and barn float.

The 4th of July celebration and holiday is an important tradition of summer. The parades, rides and entertainment, family picnics in the park and the fireworks display are all a part of the holiday. It is how we as a nation continue to celebrate the founding of our country.

This story is from Judy Scherrer's book **"Footprints Of Franklin"** a walk through Franklin's past to present published by the Franklin Historical Society in 2015 with some minor changes for the newsletter. There is a very limited supply of the book left but if you are interested in it please call me at 414-421-6539 and I will get one to you. The cost is \$20.

Also available for only \$10 is the **"From Cabins to Condos"** book published in 2006 by the Franklin Historical Society as a special edition for the City of Franklin's 50th anniversary. On August 15, 1956 Franklin went from the Town of Franklin to the City of Franklin

Welcome - Joy Kuharske as a new lifetime Franklin Historical Society member! We are glad you joined us. Joy has already volunteered to do a clothes spinner demonstrations for one of our open houses this year.

St. Peters Chapel Weddings

For many years the Franklin Historical Society has done weddings and wedding anniversary celebrations in our St. Peters Chapel. The chapel can hold up to 49 people and is a perfect setting for a small wedding. Being in Franklin's Lions Legend Park and the FHS historic village of buildings it is a wonderful place for picture taking. Here are some recent pictures, and some of the past.



4th of July Wedding

Please visit our website www.franklinhistory.net. We have added some new information about our activities, open house tours and pictures. We do have a face book that has the latest information about us.

Jim Luckey - President FHS