

THE REPORTER

Volume 14, Issue 4 Special Edition of The Newsletter of the Waupaca Historical Society Summer 2010

WHS Board of Directors: Dick Bidwell, President, Mike Kirk, Vice President, Betty Stewart, Secretary, Robert Kessler, Treasurer, Gerald Chappell, Vera Duesterbeck, Jim Boyer, Glenda Rhodes, Dennis Lear, David Trombla, Joyce Woldt, and Marge Writt

WHS Director: Julie Hintz

Hutchinson House Museum Curator: Barbara Fay Wiese

Celebrating a Very Good Year, the Waupaca Historical Society Will Hold Their Annual Meeting

At the Holly Center Tuesday September 14, 2010
Hors D'oeuvres, Wine and Punch, Conversation, 5 p. m. to 6 p. m.
Short Program: 6 p. m. to 6:30 p. m.: Things You Never Knew About the
Waupaca Historical Society
General Meeting with Election of Members of the Board of Directors

Art on the Square/Art at the Depot/Art at the Hutchinson House

Waupaca Historical Society's Waupaca Depot will be open from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m. Saturday August 21, 2010, for the Art at the Depot event in conjunction with the Community Arts Board Arts on the Square. More than five artists will be showing various types of art works at the depot. On the same day, if the baggage car gets repaired, it will be downtown being used as part of the Library's Lincoln program. In addition, two bus loads of members attending the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society's annual convention will tour the Depot on Friday August 20, 2010.

In conjunction with Art on the Square, the Hutchinson House Museum will be featuring a special exhibit of hand-crafted needlepoint and cross-stitch. The Hutchinson House will feature this special exhibit on Saturday August 21, from 1 to 4 p. m., and Sunday, August 22, from 1 - 4 p. m. If you have a handmade needlepoint or cross-stitched item that you would like to loan to the Hutchinson House for this exhibit, please contact Barbara Fay Wiese at 715-258-3996 by August 18th. Examples of items we wish to display include needlepoint wall hangings or cross-stitched samplers, table or bed linens with needlepoint or cross-stitch, towels with needlepoint or cross-stitch, holiday items. Your items can be vintage or contemporary.

If you plan to visit "Art on the Square", please drop down to the Depot and the Hutchinson House and enjoy these special exhibits. Volunteers are sought to help with the events on both days. To help, contact Julie Hintz at the Holly Center

Fall Think Tank

On October 9, 2010, WHS will participate in the Fall Think Tank of the Waupaca County Historical Societies. The New London Historical Society will host the meeting in their village in Memorial Park in New London. The Think Tanks give the members of the different societies a chance to share ideas and discuss issues of concern. Then the attendees will travel to the Therm Farm for lunch, a program, and a tour of the historic home and barns where the new London Fairs were held from 1891 to 1912. If you are interested in joining the WHS group in attendance, notify Julie Hintz.

Old Fashioned Pie Social

Come One, Come All to the Pie Social on the Lawn at City Square.
September 11, 2010 from 10:00 a. m. to 2:00 p. m.

This event is being held in conjunction with the Waupaca Library's Lincoln Memorial Exhibit and the Old Abe Camp # 8 Civil War Encampment. We hope you will join us for a slice of homemade pie while you watch the goings on at the "Induction Office".

Further - if you are so inclined - we will graciously accept all the pies that anyone is willing to bake for this affair. Please contact Joyce Woldt at 715-256-0260. Willing hands make many pies!

Hutchinson House Museum Open For "The Rod and Classic Car Show"

The Museum will be open for the "The Rod and Classic Car Show" on Saturday August 28, 2010 (10 a. m to 4 p. m). Drop in to see the "From-Old-To-New" history units Curator Barbara Fay Wiese has developed and see some hands-on craft demonstrations. Admission to the museum is free, however, donations are always appreciated.

Culvers to Acknowledge WHS

Culvers Restaurant will acknowledge the Waupaca Historical Society on September 21, 2010. Ten percent of the proceeds for the period from 5 to 10 p. m. will go to WHS. It would be nice if all WHS members visited Culvers on that evening date.

The Early Years of Waupaca's South Park, 1884 - 1976

A history article by Jerry Chappell

On the occasion of our Nation's bicentennial, the *Waupaca County Post* published a document entitled "*Our Heritage A Bicentennial Project*", 1976. In that document it states (p. 14) that the first consideration and attainment of authority for a city park occurred in 1884:

In August of 1884 the following resolution was adopted by the Waupaca City Council: Whereas it seems to be the wish to a large and respectable number of citizens and tax payers of the City of Waupaca that the Council should secure at once suitable grounds for a City Park before all lands suitable for that purpose shall be converted to other uses and while such lands are reasonably cheap."

"Now therefore be it hereby resolved that a Committee of three be appointed by the Mayor to ascertain and report : 1. If the property at the head of Main Street bordering on the lake and known as Wright's Grove can be purchased for a park. 2. The lowest price. 3. The advisability of purchasing the same or other property, and 4. Any legal objection to your committee. Signed Alderman Bemis, E. Coolidge, and W. H. Holms.

A writer for the *Waupaca Centennial Book* (1857-1957), in describing the third twenty five years of Waupaca's history, mentioned "South Park was just [that is, remained] four empty lots until about 1906 when some Club Women decided it would make an ideal park."(p.7)

The following article {submitted by J. J. Johnson} reveals that by 1909 the women of Waupaca were dreaming of and promoting park advancements:

In 1909 the Waupaca newspapers were filled with talk of park improvements from May through September. On June 17th the *Republican Post* credited the Woman's Club, Ladies of the Danes' Home and Mrs. Charles Churchill for bringing the fund to \$35.00.

The Woman's Club had kicked off the project by donating \$25.00 to the Park Commission the week of May 13. It was their hope to have a fountain like the one at the Veterans' Home within two to three years.

The following week, May 27, the Park Commission officially "decided upon appropriate names for the city parks, [t]hereafter the one on Mirror Lake at the south end of the city [was to] be known as South Park and the other which [was] located at Mt. Tom [would] bear the name of Mt. Tom Park." At the same meeting it was decided to focus attention on improving South Park over the next two to three years and content itself with merely clearing the underbrush and general grounds at Mt. Tom Park. [In July 1914 there was an unsuccessful movement to change the name of South Park to Browne Park in honor of Congressman Tom Browne.]

South Park was probably chosen as the main focus due to the sentiments expressed in the businessmen's meeting reported in the *Waupaca Record* on September 5, 1907. "From the improved appearance of the city's lot at the pumping station and as a result of the Equitable Fraternal Union picnic, the association has become aroused to the necessity of having a city park.

The lot now held by the city, although small, could be turned with very little expenditure, into a very pretty park. There is a good front on Mirror Lake, and the channel between the two lakes could be dredged; bandstand built, a few walks laid, fountain erected, etc."

On June 23, 1909 the *Record* published an updated list of donors to the fountain fund, now at \$62.00, encouraging other public-minded citizens to donate to the cause. Meanwhile, the Park Commission had contacted an expert to draw plans for South Park's development. The fountain was to be placed in the center of the park with gravel paths leading to it from the four corners of the park, culminating with a walkway encircling the fountain. Benches were to be placed beside the walkways. Additionally, a driveway was planned to "run south from the entrance and around the shore of the lake, terminating on Junction Street, with appropriate trees, shrubs, and plants to make South Park an ideal beauty spot." However, the *Republican Post* on July 22 reminded the public that the commission required \$200.00 be raised before the fountain could be placed in the park.

By November \$239.00 had been received.

Although the women of Waupaca used letters and petitions to make their wishes known to the city government, the effort and dreams of the Woman's Club did not gain results until 1921. An excerpt from the Heritage Committee's Bicentennial Project (1976, p. 18)) reports the outcome:

After many delays, the Council agreed to acquire the property now known as South Park from Rose C. Browne. The deed was dated April 7, 1921, and the grantors placed a restrictive clause in the deed specifying that the property must be used by the city of Waupaca for park purposes only. Their wishes have been adhered to strictly even to the extent of abolishing the campground area in the park in the early 1950s.

Additional excerpts from LeRoy Haberkorn's account in the Heritage Committee's Bicentennial Project (1976, pp. 48, 49) report administrative and facility advances that happened relative to South Park during the 1940s and 1950s:

The recreational program for the city of Waupaca was started in the summer of 1946. Mayor Stan Wetherbee appointed a committee of aldermen, with Al Kreeger as chairman. LeRoy ["Hobby"] Haberkorn, high school physical education instructor and coach, was hired to run the program. Because of his duties at school, the program could only be held during the summer.

Baseball, horseshoes, and archery were the activities held in the morning at the Athletic field. Swimming lessons and open swimming at South Park afternoons and softball composed the evening program.

The same program was carried out in 1947 plus the addition of a morning and an evening for girls. {And} "Hobby" [who was given the title and position of Water Safety Chairman] started the Red Cross [swimming] program at the South Park Beach.

Up to this time, a long walkway leading to a small floating dock was located near a small men's bathhouse and a small pier protruded from the women's bathhouse. The walkway was eliminated and a larger floating dock with two new diving boards was placed at the beach through the efforts of the Streets and Park Superintendent, Nels Rasmussen.

The School District took over the program in 1949.

In 1951, the school board wanted Hobby at the beach all day because of the growth of the swimming program and Norman Peterson was hired to handle the athletic field portion of the program under Hobby's supervision.

The Waupaca firemen built the new concrete block bathhouse in time for use during the summer of 1956. Hobby received help in the instruction field from Tad Pinkerton and was paid by the Board of Education. Pinkerton and all future workers in the recreational program were paid by the city.

In 1958 a South Park Committee was formed to find ways to improve the park facilities. This consisted of Tom Godfrey, John Morgan, Harold Schroeder, and Roman Danielsen. [. . .]

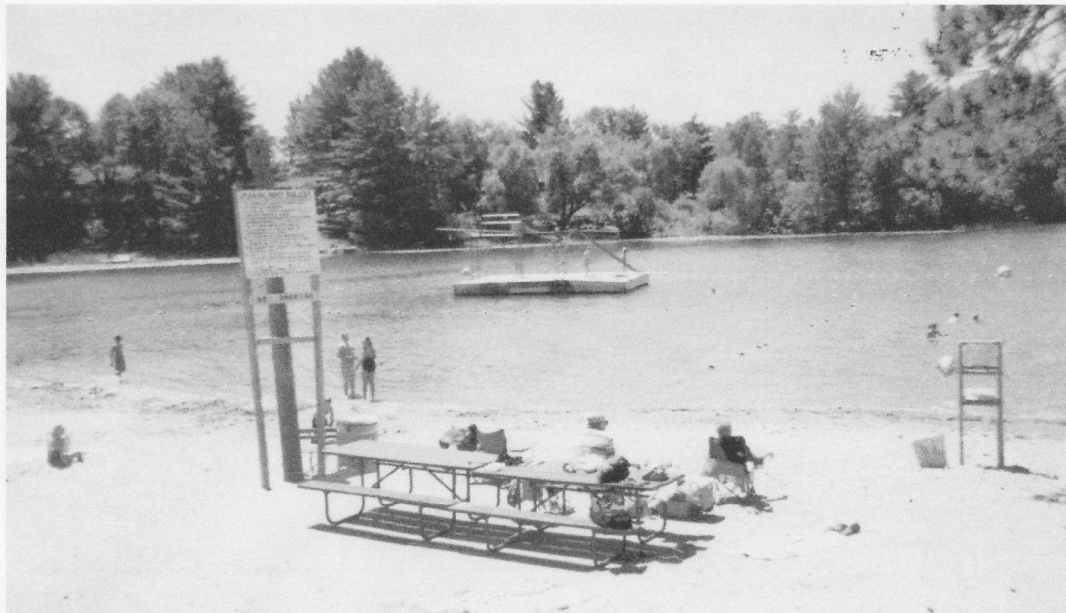
This group [and subcommittees thereof] was instrumental in the development of both parking lots, addition of picnic tables and benches, improvement of the shelter house and the addition of the lower one, the flower gardens, the location of the Hutchinson House in the park as a city museum, dredging the canal between Mirror and Shadow Lakes and the improvement of the area along the channel for added picnic space, and the placement of playground equipment at two locations in the park. Their work also led to the boat docking area on the south western corner of the park. In 1959 Lana Hoyard was added to the teaching staff at the beach to start a long list of those who taught swimming and water safety and served as life guards.

Then, also In *Our Heritage A Bicentennial Project*, David Schneider, the first full time year round Recreation Director, reported (p. 50) that in 1971, the Parks Board and Recreation Committee, under Mayor Ed Kramer, which combined to form the Parks and Recreation Board and, in turn, the Parks and Recreation Department, had eight parks under its jurisdiction.

In 1972, the Beach was added to the Parks and Recreation Department and Scott Olson, hired as the first beach manager under the new system, had a new shelter house built at South Park.



South Park life guards with LeRoy Haberkorn. "Hobby," as lifeguard at South Park Beach, welcomed the girls back after returning from water safety instruction school in 1962.



South Park Beach and High Dive Platform, 2010.

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“Keeping History Alive and Making History”



South Park Fishing Dock, 2010.



The South Park Lifeguards are always on duty. They also teach swimming lessons. Photo from *The Picture Post*, June 17, 2010.