

## Museum Alive held Sunday, June 25, 2016



Above picture: Cindy Jamieson and Keith Shutt. At right, top: Clarabell Demers as the Grand Marshall of parade. At right, bottom: Petting zoo during Museum Alive.

Every three years, the museum in Minto brings you "Museum Alive." The day's activities began with our parade that was very well attended. The streets were full of parade enthusiasts watching floats, boats, antique cars, trucks and tractors. There were plenty of floats with plenty of candy for the kids.

Activities continued with music by the Prairie Chicks followed by Fall Creek. There were several activities for the museum guests to participate in. These activities

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## Ebertowski plays important role museum



Wally Ebertowski

Wally Ebertowski has played an important role in the Walsh County Historical Museum in Minto for many years.

He is, without a doubt, the most knowledgeable and informed person about the museum and its history. Wally has dedicated countless hours of his time on weekends and on other special occasions giving tours to the general public and anyone else that stops and has an interest. He makes himself available whenever he can.

Wally is a great communicator and has taken a special interest in tours for school groups of all ages, and his tours are always well received. He also keeps our brochures updated and readily available.

Walsh County Historical Society, along with Walsh County Historical Museum in Minto, are extremely grateful for Wally's hard work and dedication for all these years.

Thank you, Wally, and keep up the good work!

# Picnic held at Walsh County Historical Museum

**O**n September 11, 2016 Walsh County Historical Society hosted a picnic and program at the museum in Minto. A good crowd enjoyed a lovely fall afternoon, a chance to spend time in the museum, an enlightening talk by former Lieutenant Governor, Lloyd Omdahl, and a wonderful picnic supper served by volunteers from the museum.

Mr. Omdahl spoke about the reasons why North Dakotans think and act as they do. He suggests that decision making in North Dakota today has been shaped by the pioneer days of the late 1800s when it took self-reliance and rugged individualism to survive on the barren prairies. Neighbors were miles apart and there was no government help. Equality of all persons became a keystone to our policymaking

process. As a result, our institutions must make it possible for everyone to participate and be heard. We have more governments per capita than any other state and the largest legislature except New Hampshire per capita. Public hearings must be held for all changes and we vote on a wide variety of issues.

He also suggests that North Dakotans continue to believe that they are self-reliant and don't need much government. Our social welfare programs expect people to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, even when they don't have any. To restrict the role of government, taxes are very low, and the legislature works to limit government spending and activities. It's just our nature!

## MUSEUM: Continued from page 1

included kids' games, a horseshoe tourney, painting classes and much more. Others enjoyed penny candy in the General Store, five cent beer in the saloon, nickel ice cream cones in Stewart's Ice Cream Parlor, ten cent popcorn and a petting zoo.

After the museum grounds were closed the party continued on Main Street in Minto featuring Billy Dee and the Crystals and ended with a huge fireworks display.

Our next Museum Alive will be in June of 2019; this will give us time to think of more events for crowd enjoyment.



Children's games during Museum Alive.



Jean Bodmer and Joe Koehmstedt



Far left of table is Sandy Mahar teaching a painting class.

# Walsh County Historical Society offers free guidance for your family research history

**H**ave you ever had the desire to look into your family's history but are unsure where to start? Do you struggle with navigating computer programs and internet sites dedicated to genealogical research? Are you interested in viewing some of Walsh County's most historical documents? We can help you get started on your family research. Walsh County Historical Society (WCHS) is now offering our patrons one-on-one genealogical research help.

The mission of Walsh County Historical Society is to "preserve the history of Walsh County." One member, Mary Kovarik takes that mission seriously, particularly when it comes to preserving vital statistics of our Walsh County Pioneers and making that information available to others through the Genealogical Research Project.

## Genealogical Research Project:

During the summer Kovarik volunteers one afternoon a week to assisting any interested patrons with their search of Walsh County's historical documents. This includes instruction on how to use genealogical programs such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.com, and genealogical databases like Roots Magic or Family Tree.

Patrons from all over the world have viewed our website at "Walshhistory.org" and have sent in requests for help with their genealogy research in reference to Walsh County resources. Mary explained the process. "We receive requests on our website asking us to provide photographs of headstones, or to search local newspapers for birth, marriage, anniversary, and death information. If we receive a request for information from our "Walsh Heritage" volumes, we refer the patron to our website, where they can copy and/or print all or part of the contents of the books, or even download the whole set of books to store on their home computers. Many requests ask us to send any information we may have on their Walsh County pioneer ancestor. These requests can take weeks to months to research, so there is often a request backlog of at least three months."

Unlike larger historical societies, WCHS does not have its own library collection of historical volumes. However, the holdings of the Carnegie Regional Library in Grafton include the "Walsh Heritage" 4-volume biography, "Grafton Illustrated," "Pisek, The First Century," "Park River 100 Years," and a biography of Forest River Community, among some local church histories. It also contains copies of the original county newspapers from about 1880 to 1950. Many hours are spent in the library searching these resources for our patrons.

In 2014 the Society received one of our most valuable genealogical resources from Marty C. Byzewski, of Canada. Marty has spent many years researching his family in the Minto area. He soon expanded his interest to the Walsh Heritage volumes, where he spent years transferring the information into a large genealogical database. He then decided to add to his database all census data available for inhabitants of Walsh County from the 1880 through 1940 census records. This database has been a vital component of the

society's genealogical resources.

Through this research process, it has become clear that gathering the county's valuable historical information into digital format would provide a lasting record with searching capabilities that would significantly streamline the research process. "Newspapers are crumbling and township and cemetery records are disappearing into attics. We need to digitally scan these old documents before they are lost forever," Kovarik stated. To that end, WCHS has implemented a variety of programs dedicated to preserving our historical gems.



Mary Kovarik

## The Document Preservation Program:

This program enlists volunteers to scan old books, letters, government documents and cemetery records to be stored in digital format in the permanent records of the society.

## The Newspaper Preservation Project:

The goal of this project is to photograph and digitally store Walsh County's historical newspapers, then prepare a digital index of names and places. This index would be available for use by the society for genealogical research purposes as well as to the newspaper offices themselves to aid in searching for birth, death, marriage, and anniversary announcements.

## The Adopt-a-Grave Project:

Our goal is to photograph every headstone in every cemetery in Walsh County and download the photos into "Find-a-Grave," an international website devoted to preserving cemetery records. "Find-a-Grave" is directly connected to Ancestry.com. If one does a search of their ancestor's name in Ancestry.com, it will automatically search the "Find-a-Grave" database.

If you are interested in taking advantage of the help available through the WCHS Genealogical Research Project, or if you have a passion to assist in preserving the history of Walsh County, you can email Mary Kovarik at [historian@walshhistory.org](mailto:historian@walshhistory.org).

# Walsh County Heritage Village

Heritage Village was closed for the winter and will re-open, weather permitting, on April 1, 2017.

Various events were held at the Heritage Village theatre building this year to include but not limited to: Life Line Screening in March and May, fish fry, graduation party, wedding reception, two funeral receptions, baby shower, thanksgiving family dinner, 80th birthday celebration for board member Gordon Bracken, annual "Shop With Santa" event held by community helpers/ Life Skills and Transition Center, and several rummage sales. Two of the rummage sales were items donated by Stephanie Vaudrin and Sonia Midgarden. SummerFest was held in June. Also included were a parade entry, Valley Cruisers car club, noon luncheon, tour of buildings, flea market, and merry-go-round rides. Farmers' market was held every Tuesday from 5pm until 7pm starting in July and running through the first week of September.

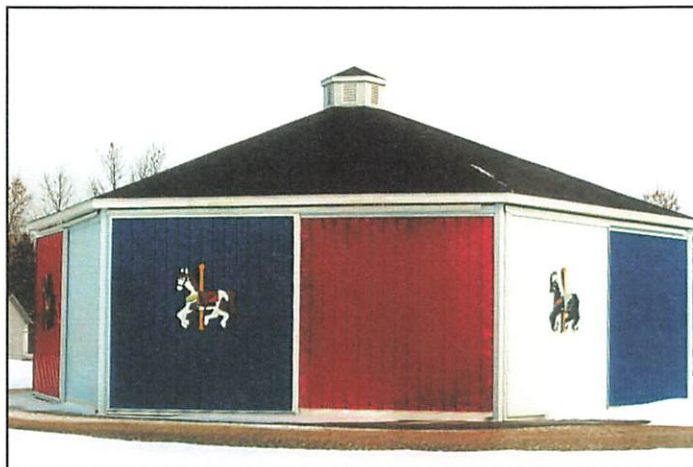
Grounds continue to be maintained by Les Aasand. We replaced a window in the taxidermy building, reshingled and repaired the merry-go-round, and repaired the ramp on the east side storefronts. We are in the process of having letters put on the "big" Morton building to the west of the grounds housing "Uncle" Sig Jagielski's treasures, letting everyone know about that building. This should be done in the spring of 2017.

We were able to sell a Rumely tractor from Uncle Sig's collection to a family in Wahpeton.

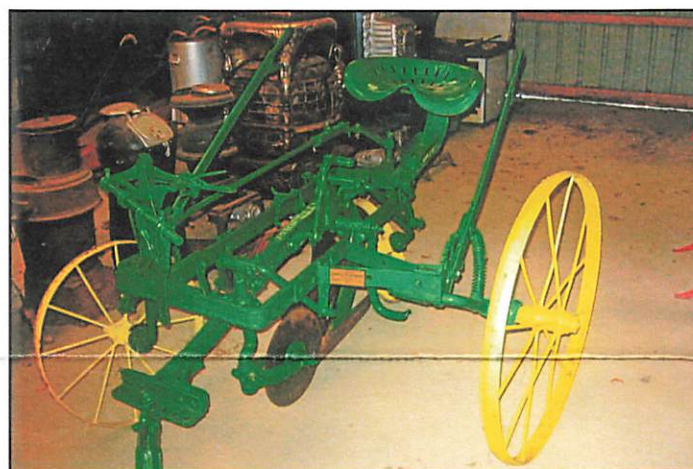
Don LaBerge of Grafton restored a stationary John Deere engine. Heritage Village purchased a wagon for this John Deere engine. Many thanks to Don for his time and talents doing this project for us.

Charlie Thompson of Grafton restored a horse-drawn "Big Mo" John Deere mower, horse-drawn John Deere one-bottom plow and a stationary engine by McCormick-Deering. Many thanks to Charlie Thompson for his time and talents on these projects.

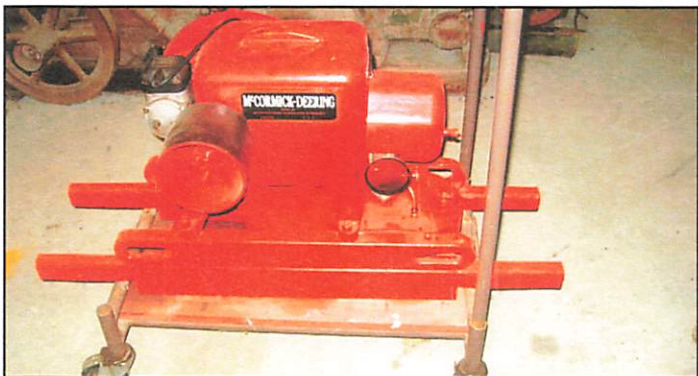
We received a \$1,000 grant from Grafton Community Endowment Fund to be used for re-shingling the merry-go-round building. Thank you so much. We are very grateful for this and any grants. Heritage Village can always use grant monies for the many repairs we have. If anyone knows of any grants that may work for us, we would appreciate the info.



Merry-go-round with new shingles.



Above two pictures are a John Deere single bottom horse-drawn plow.



Above two pictures are of a stationary engine, McCormick Deering

For your information there is a website: [walshhistory.org](http://walshhistory.org) that you may visit to find out lots of historical information. You may read about history in "Walsh Heritage," volumes 1 through 4. For any other information you may contact Mary Kovarik at 435-262-6288.

Current board members are: Ken Hoffmann, president, Gordon Bracken, vice president, Linda Restemayer, secretary, Verna Aasand, treasurer and office manager, and directors include Norman Paulson, Marlene Paulson, Jean Bodmer, Carol Spale, Robert Zidon, Vernon Russum (who has recently moved to Fargo) and Greg Amb and Darwin Hime, members at large from Life Skills and Transition Center.

See HERITAGE: Continued on page 5

# Walsh County Historical Museum

The morning of Friday, June 17, 2016 started out like any other day. Then about 8:30 am, a monster wind and rain storm hit Minto. When the storm was over, about 15 minutes later, our museum grounds were in shambles. Trees were down, branches were all over, windows were broken, shingles were ripped off, and debris was everywhere. This storm was an unexpected expense that we incurred.

With Museum Alive only two weeks away, we went to work on our restoration project. Volunteers went about remodeling the old schoolhouse, repairing windows, shingling the cook car, and replacing shingles on the old schoolhouse, it turned into a very hectic year. With the help of our members and the community, the grounds were in beautiful shape for Museum Alive.

Visitors can now again tour the one-room school house that was closed because of the danger of the floor caving in. Our cook car can now be toured again due to the remodeling job. Things are now back on track and inspiring us to go the extra mile fixing things that seemed to have been put on the back burner. After the work was all done, it left our museum more beautiful than ever.

With the help of our members and the community, the grounds were in beautiful shape for Museum Alive.



General Store at the Minto museum, back row, from left: Andrew Flanders, Michelle Flanders, Kathy Langowski, Jayden Albrecht. Front: Christian Flanders and Doug Flanders.

Thanks again for all who helped make our museum ready for Museum Alive again with such short notice.

## HERITAGE: Continued from page 4

Always remember, the theatre building is always for rent for anything you would like such as rummage sales, showers, graduations, thanksgiving, reunions, funeral receptions, weddings or whatever you like. The Landstad Church would also be available for weddings, reunions, etc. No alcohol allowed. Please call Ken Hoffmann at 701-360-0088 or Verna Aasand at 701-520-1207 to reserve your special date.

Heritage Village wants to thank everyone who participated in any way this past year to help out with our projects and to anyone who gave donations. Continued support from the community, historical society members and individuals is needed to continue the preservation of Heritage Village and Jugville. We hope to see you all in 2017.

Jean Bodmer, submitted by Verna Aasand



Above two pictures of a John Deere stationary engine restored by Don LaBerge of Grafton.



John Deere "Big Mo" horse-drawn mower.

# THE FIRST LEGAL STILL IN WALSH COUNTY

We started talking about making potato vodka in November 2004 at a family gathering and again in June 2005 on a fishing trip to Lake of the Woods. It took a long time to build because Scott Thompson, head chemist and lead engineer, was living in Houston, TX and was only able to be in North Dakota a few weeks a year. We also had to build the still around the farming schedule.

Everything has been built by hand from pieces found online and the stainless steel scrap pile from the Forest River Colony. A federal permit can only be granted once all the equipment to manufacture is in place and ready, but you can't use it until the permit is granted. Therefore, you're really only guessing as to how things will operate. We spent 2012-2014 building and rebuilding our still until it performed to our expectation. John Thompson is our lead fabricator who built most of the still.

After Scott moved to North Dakota in 2015,

we were able to dedicate more time to the details of bottling, filtering and label design. That gave us a finished product.

Moon River Distillery Incorporated on July 31, 2006. We received our federal permit to manufacture distilled spirits October 26, 2011. We got our state permit to operate as a domestic distiller December 5, 2012 and sold our first bottle of Thompson Brothers Potato Vodka in November 2015.

Thompson Brothers Vodka has proved to be a good product. We won a gold medal at the 2016 Denver International Spirits Competition, Potato Vodka category.

We also make mead, which is a honey wine that should be ready in November 2017. In addition to that we are trying to make a rye whiskey, but that's a few years down the road.

Bottles can be purchased at the Thompson Brothers shop, located at 6966 Hwy 18. Tours can be scheduled by calling John (701) 331-1484 or Mark (701) 331-1203.

**THOMPSON**  
**BROS.**  
*Vodka*



DISTILLED FROM POTATOES  
40% ALCOHOL (ALC) BY VOLUME (VOL), 80 PROOF, 750 ml

**TOURS**  
**JOHN 701 331-1484**  
**MARK 701 331-1203**



**PURCHASE AT**  
**THOMPSON BROTHERS**  
**6966 HWY 18**

GOVERNMENT WARNING: (1) According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects. (2) Consumption of alcoholic beverages impairs your ability to drive a car or operate machinery, and may cause health problems.

## 2016 Membership Report

Annual Memberships .....	40
Five-Year Memberships .....	78
Life Memberships .....	89
Ongoing Memberships .....	207

## 2016 New Life Memberships

Eleanor Aasand	Ann Jackson
Sheryl Aslakson	Jean Kieley
Gordon Bracken	Artha Travers
Leo Feltman	Joyce Welsh

## New Five-Year Memberships

(Expires 2021)

Vicki Flanders	Elizabeth Gerszewski
Grafton Chamber of Commerce	Jack Jones
Tweten's Photography	

## 2016 New Annual Memberships

Alyssa Gerszewski

## 2017 Membership Firsts

First Annual Membership .....	Alyssa Gerszewski
First Five-Year Membership .....	Vicki Flanders
First Life Membership .....	Dennis Markusen



**Visit  
Walsh County  
Historical Society  
Website:  
[www.walshhistory.org](http://www.walshhistory.org)**

## 2017 Walsh County Historical Society Five-Year Membership List

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DUE</u>
Elmer and Minnie Agan .....	2017
Rodney Alme .....	2017
June Almen .....	2017
Joel and Sheryl Aslakson .....	2017
Roseanne Bliss .....	2021
Diane Bratlie .....	2017
Virginia Brazil .....	2021
Shirley Burns .....	2019
Bill Cawley .....	2021
Judy Evens .....	2019
Delores Fast .....	2021
Rosemary Fisher .....	2017
Vicki Flanders .....	2021
Dean Flanders .....	2019
Al and Linda Freeman .....	2018
Larry Freier .....	2021
Elizabeth Gerszewski .....	2021
Robert Glinski .....	2021
Paul Gourde .....	2019
Grafton Chamber of Commerce .....	2021
Winten Gunderson .....	2019
Ken Hoffmann .....	2021
Larry Jamieson .....	2021
Larry and Cindy Johnson .....	2021
Pamela Johnson .....	2020
Tork Kilichowski .....	2018
Wilfred Knaus .....	2018
Joe Koehmstedt .....	2021
Andrew Korczak .....	2017
Mary Kovarik .....	2017
Margaret Langowski .....	2017
Mrs. Rich Lapp .....	2019
Dr. Russell Lefevre .....	2021
Carol Rinde Lewis .....	2021
M. Theresa Lutovsky .....	2021
Bill Lyyken .....	2021
Leo Misialek .....	2021
Irene Mozinski .....	2019
Laura B. Munski .....	2021
Leroy Nelson .....	2021
Thelma Nelson .....	2021
Ron Ophaug .....	2021
Jared Peterka .....	2017
Dave Peterson .....	2021
Ken and Shelley Popiel .....	2021
Mary Ronkowski .....	2021
Jim Schanilec .....	2019
Louise Schanilec .....	2019
Rod Schanilec .....	2018
Yon Shutt .....	2021
Lee and Sharon Sobolik .....	2019
Patricia Switzer .....	2017
Bill and Jody Tibert .....	2021
Tweten's Photography .....	2021

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VERNA AASAND  
 1553 LESSARD AVE  
 GRAFTON ND 58237-2705

**2017 Walsh County Historical Society  
 Officers**

President . . . . . Jon Koehmstedt  
 Vice President . . . . . Jared Peterka  
 Secretary . . . . . Mary E. Kovarik  
 Treasurer . . . . . Joe Koehmstedt

**Board Members**

**1-Year Term**

Doug Weberg      Charles Thompson      Chris Misialek

**2-Year Term**

Harlen Bjerke      Wally Ebertowski      Dennis Markusen

**3-Year Term**

John Gudajtes      Larry Jamieson      Keith Shutt

**Committee Members**

Newsletter . . . . . Jean Bodmer/June Selseth  
 Membership . . . . . Jean Bodmer  
 Genealogist/Historian . . . . . Mary Kovarik

**Membership Rates**

**For Life Membership:**

74 Years and Younger . . . . . \$100.00  
 75 Years and Older . . . . . \$50.00  
 Annual Regular Dues . . . . . Per Person \$10.00  
 Five-Year Membership . . . . . Per Person \$25.00

**2017 Centurians**

Clarabell Demers . . . . . Age 106 . . . . . Apartment  
 Ethel Torgerson . . . . . Age 102 . . . . . Nursing Home  
 Mary Osowski . . . . . Age 100 . . . . . Nursing Home

**2017 Walsh County Museum Officers**

Curator/Manager . . . . . Wally Ebertowski

**Officers (1 year term)**

Chairman . . . . . Jared Peterka  
 Vice Chairman . . . . . John Gudajtes  
 Secretary . . . . . June Selseth  
 Treasurer . . . . . Mike Farder

**Directors (3 year term)**

Chris Misialek      Cindy Jamieson      Doug Ulland  
 Les Jallo      Keith Shutt      Tim Nelson  
 Ron Ophaug      John Gudajtes      Kathy Langowski

**2017 Heritage Village  
 Officers**

President . . . . . Ken Hoffman  
 Vice President . . . . . Gordy Bracken  
 Secretary . . . . . Linda Restemayer  
 Office Manager/Treasurer . . . . . Verna Aasand

**Directors**

Jean Bodmer      Robert Zidon  
 Marlene Paulson      Norman Paulson  
 Carol Spale

Member/Director at Large . . . . . Greg Amb  
 Member/Director at Large . . . . . Darwin Hime

**Attention**

The membership renewal form, which is enclosed in this newsletter, goes out to all members. If you are a five-year or life membership, please disregard this information to join. Thank you.