



# Langlade County Historical Society Newsletter

Winter, 2012

**Curator:**  
Mary Kay Wolf  
**Directors:**  
Dean Blazek  
Steve Bradley  
Nancy Bugni  
Glenn Bugni  
Judy Grimm  
Lisa Haefs  
Joe Hermolin  
Jim Klapste  
Terri Torgerson

## Annual Meeting Summary



*Roland "Bud" McBain giving his Power Point presentation.*

U.S. soldiers progressed through France, the liberation of Paris, the Battle of the Bulge, and finally the American troops in Berlin and their interactions with Soviet troops as well as the Germans.

The Langlade County Historical Society held its annual meeting on November 17, 2011. Guest speaker was Bud McBain who now lives at Pickerel Lake but spent his youth as an army reporter in Europe during World War II.

He entertained one of the larger audiences that the annual meeting has hosted with his accounts of living in war-ravaged London during the blitz, observing the D-Day invasion from his post in Southampton and then following the troops and reporting to people back home as

Bud's account was both informative and entertaining and the museum received many favorable reviews of his presentation. The Historical Society will make an effort to bring him back to describe his experiences in broadcasting once he returned to the U.S.A. where he worked in New York City and Wisconsin before retiring to Pickerel Lake.

During the business portion of the meeting Dean Blazek, Glenn Bugni, and Lisa Haefs were reelected to serve three-year terms

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as board members.

A recap of highlights of the past year included: working with a new organization, Antigo Visual Arts, to feature local artists, collaborating on a book about Antigo photographer A.J. Kingsbury to be released in May of 2012, cataloging and posting our photographs online of Indians taken by Kingsbury, and remodelling some of the display areas on the first floor.

Over 2,900 visitors came to the museum this year!

## Santa Claus Came to Town and Stops at the Museum

Once again Santa came to the museum during the days leading up to Christmas. As in past years, it was thanks to the Antigo Daily Journal who made arrangements to get him to the museum for so many visits in spite of his busy schedule at this time of year.

During the seven days he visited

the museum, about 200 children brought an equal number of parents and grandparents to listen in as they offered their wish lists and Santa checked whether they had been naughty or nice. Each child was offered a toy, cookies and a drink of punch thanks to C.A.R. and the museum.



*Adults were kept busy photographing the children.*

## Who Was Paul Bunyan?

The Wisconsin north woods, much of Minnesota, and parts of Canada are full of stories about the mythical lumberjack Paul Bunyan. His exploits have been described in numerous children's stories and used to sell everything from building supplies to pancakes.

But how did these stories originate and how have they evolved over time? That is the question that Michael Edmonds of the Wisconsin Historical Society asked himself. His search for an answer led him to several sources, including a woman who graduated from Antigo High School in 1911.

Bernice Stewart grew up in small logging towns across northern Wisconsin and Michigan. Her father was a timber cruiser travelling throughout the woods and visiting logging camps. He often took his young daughter with him.

Her childhood observations provided material for her literary interests. In 1909, as a junior in Antigo High School, she placed second in a statewide essay contest sponsored

by *Outer's Book* magazine. Once she entered University of Wisconsin in Madison she worked on the student newspaper, the *Daily Cardinal*.

It was Bernice Stewart's good fortune to be a student of Homer Watts. He had recently joined the English faculty at Madison. Homer Watts was a scholar of Elizabethan dramatists who had written a guide to Shakespeare's plays. What made him such an innovative teacher was that he believed students should write about their own experiences.

When he read a freshman paper Stewart had submitted on the folk tales of Paul Bunyan that she had heard as a child, he encouraged her to follow up with a more thorough study.

Professor and student began collaborating on collecting stories and giving academic reports on their analysis. It was likely that Bernice Stewart travelled alone to the camps, interviewing loggers and that Homer Watts helped with the critical analysis.



*Bernice Stewart graduated from Antigo High School as class valedictorian in 1911. She went to University of Wisconsin (Madison) where she majored in English. Her research on the folk tales about Paul Bunyan was one of the first academic studies of local folk tales.*

Homer Watts went on to accept a position at New York University. Bernice Stewart, upon graduation, took a job at the university press and later moved to Washington to nurse returning American soldiers. She married one of them. Although both intended to continue their studies of Paul Bunyan tales they never did. But the work they did while Stewart was an undergraduate is still considered to be the most reliable version of the early mythology of Paul Bunyan.

## The Doctors Make a Museum Call

Langlade Hospital used the museum for an evening in December to host a reception welcoming two new doctors and their families to the Antigo community.

Members of the hospital staff were treated to hors d'oeuvres prepared by Heather DeBroux of the Refuge, toured the museum facilities, and the new art gallery organized by Antigo Visual Arts.

A presentation on the history of the medical community and hospital was given by Joe Hermolin and Dr. John McKenna. Dave Schneider, executive director, summarized the plans for the new hospital.

The use of the museum for a private gathering seems to have been a big success and something to consider in the future.



*Preparing for the reception were (left to right): Dan Bastle from Langlade Hospital, Joe Hermolin from the museum, Karen Aulik-Now from Antigo Visual Arts, and Mary Kay Wolf museum curator.*

# Winter in the Pinery

Winter time was when much of the logging was done. Trees were cut and logs skidded out on paths created by water covered paths which then froze. A work crew consisted of sawyers who cut the large trees down, “swampers” who cleared away the brush, and teamsters who used oxen or horses to haul the logs out. Up to about 1875 oxen were favored but horses began to be used more and by 1910 were used almost exclusively. Bunkhouses were windowless and not tightly fitted. They were warm only around the stove. By morning the inside walls were frost lined. Sunday was laundry day and clothes were boiled to kill the lice.

Photographs are by Antigo based photographer A.J. Kingsbury and taken from a forthcoming book about his work.



## The Mail Must Go Through

Before the internet and phone service were common, residents of Langlade County relied on the postal service to keep in touch. Antigo's first post office was in the store front of Neils Anderson who established his store in 1879. His was the second building in Antigo, after the Deeglise's home.

The post office and the appointment of Neils Anderson as postmaster coincided with the changing of the name of the community from "Springbrook" to "Antigo."

In those days the postmaster was a political appointment and when a change in administration was made it also meant a change in the location of the post office. After a series of different downtown sites, the post office we know today was built in 1915.

Rural free delivery began in 1893, putting settlers in rural areas in touch with the world at large. Initially there were three rural delivery routes. Mail was transported by horseback, stage, on foot,

and by boat. In winter dog sleds were used to deliver the mail in the Crocker Hills area around Elton. That mail route followed the old Military Trail.

These star routes, as they were called, served communities throughout the county on a weekly or sometimes daily basis. It resulted in the closing of some of the rural post offices. This trend of closing rural post offices continues today.



*Upper left: Neils Anderson's building was Antigo's second. It served as store, hotel, and post office.*

*Upper right: After relocating several times to different retail stores, the post office was finally housed in its own building in 1915. The building is still Antigo's post office.*

*Lower left: Mail delivery at Pelican Lake by boat*

## The Museum's Continuing Fund Raising Efforts

The Langlade County Historical Society relies heavily on individual contributions to maintain the museum and fund its various programs.

Social events such as our annual summer picnic and our fall annual meeting and dinner do not raise much money. We host these events in order to engage the community and raise some money.

Other events such as hosting intermissions at the Civic Music concerts and summer concerts in the park are an important part of our fundraising efforts.

One such event will take place on Tuesday January 31, when the museum will host the intermission for the Civic Music concert at the Volm Theater. We need volunteers

to prepare cookies or other treats that we could serve.

Contributions can be dropped off at the museum on Monday January 30 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. If you come to the concert please stop at the concession stand.

## AVA Update

The Antigo Visual Arts Association continues to collaborate with the museum to bring a greater awareness of the visual arts to the community.

In November and December, they mounted an exhibit of works by local artists. Also in November members of AVA worked with the Antigo Community Theater as well as other groups in workshops related to the ACT's production of *Suessical The Musical*. AVA helped children prepare and decorate part of the set design for the theater.

The next planned show is an

exhibit of young students' art work in cooperation with the Boys and Girls Club and their art director.

*Right: Museum volunteer Wendy Bunster examines a wall hanging made by Janet Lawton.*

*Below: Making decorations for the ACT production of Suessical the Musical.*



## Thank You:

**Berner Family:** China cups and saucers, slippers of Marie Berner

**Elaine Duchac:** Crib

**Jerome King:** Table top sewing machine

**Ludene Kommers:** Her grandmother's cape from 1884

**Dan Krueger:** Photos of Lockwood Graders

**Laura Lazewski:** Sports items of Tony Lazewski's

**Mary Kay Cherf-Nordstrom:**

Tin type of a railroad porter

**Donna Osness:** Wedding photo and license of Alex and Caroline Murrary, cup with Antigo High School on it

**Peter Poshinske:** Railroad pictures

**James Roesner:** Gerald Ford inauguration commemorative medal, Lawrence Welk souvenir plate

**Rosemary Servi:** Tax books of Town of Antigo

**Joan Van Tilberg:** Campfire girls

items

**Mary Vielbaur:** Card table showing Antigo businesses

**Jacqueline Wahleithner:** Articles about her husband Major General James Wahleithner formerly of White Lake

**Gail Weber:** Army clothes, canteen

**Shelly (Cigel) Wiedenhoef:** Doll house and furniture, Girl Scout items, roller skates

### Monetary Donations:

Antigo High School class of 1940

James Aulik

John Barker

Marie Berner Memorial Fund from Fred and Mary Jo Berner

Phllis Hughes

Bill and Beth Kelly

Langlade County Genealogical Society

### Donations in Memory of:

**Marie Berner** by Glenn, Nancy, and Amanda Bugni

**Lee Dewan** by Joann and James Lawler and Metropolitan Veterans Association

**Tom Portman** by Dean Blazek

**Marian Reichenbacher** by Connie and Jim Hubatch

**Louise Schleiss** by Dean and Polly Blazek

### New Members:

Billie and Marjorie Bussert

Barbara Ziegenwiede

### Renewing Memberships:

Sam Hardin

Susan Johnson

The Langlade County Historical Society was saddened by the recent passing of long-time volunteer Louise Schleiss. Her interactions with visitors made a lot of friends for the museum.

**Address:**

404 Superior St., Antigo, WI 54409  
Phone: (715) 627-4464  
Email: lchs@dwave.net  
web site: www.langladehistory.com

**Museum Hours:**

October 1. to May 1  
Thursday to Saturday:  
May 1 to Oct. 1  
Tuesday to Saturday  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Membership Dues**

Individual, 1 year: \$25  
Individual, 3 years: \$50  
Family, 1 year: \$30  
Family, 3 years: \$70  
Junior (18 or younger), 1 year: \$3  
Business, 1 year: \$100  
Life Member: \$250

**Upcoming Events:**

Civic Music concert and museum fund raiser Tuesday January 31

Exhibit from the Boys and Girls Club art class  
in the museum's AVA gallery during January



**Items from the Museum: Tis the Season**

An early Briggs and Stratton snow blower (unknown date)

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Antigo WI, 54409