



HISTORICAL NOTES

VOLUME XXIII, No. 4

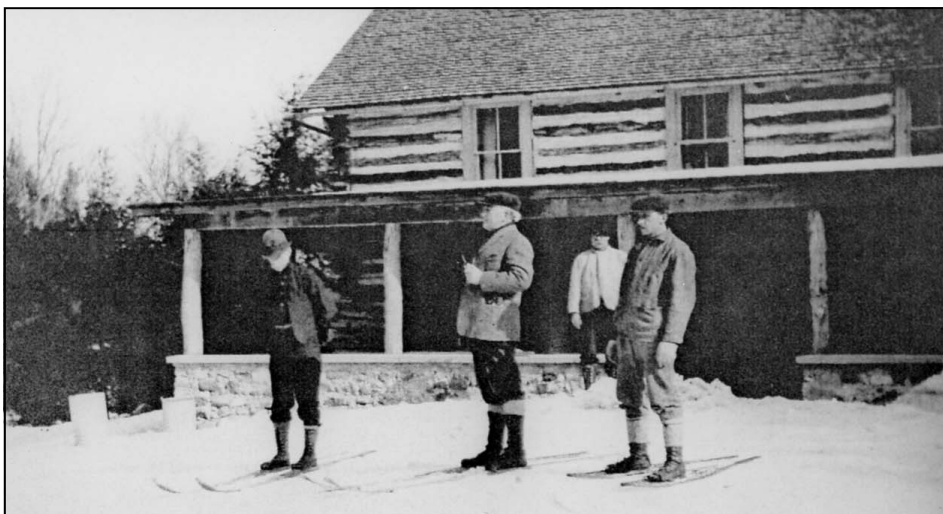
OCTOBER 2011

4 SEASONS MAPLE CAMP

by Jerry Abitz

As a professional who is subject to taking calls seven days a week, 24 hours a day, what does one do to get away from that kind of responsibility? In today's world, you would buy a cottage up north and make arrangements for someone to respond to the emergencies in your absence. You would head up north in your automobile, and relax.

However, in the early decades of the twentieth century, automobiles and good roads leading out of town were non-existent. That was the situation in which Dr. R. E. Minahan¹ found himself. Railroads were the dominant mode of transportation for any distance traveling. Being familiar with Kewaunee County, he found a location at Casco



(Above) Although the men are not identified, this photo is one of only a few that show the front of the resort built by Dr. R. E. Minahan at the maple sugar camp, where they processed maple sugar from 1917 to 1920. Photo courtesy of KCHS photo collection. (Right) The resort building as it looks today, presently being used as a home for its owners, Mike and Bonnie Schanhofer. Photo by Jerry Abitz.



Junction, about a half mile from that station. He purchased land from the Edward Decker² estate — there were trails through the woods, and nearby was Scarboro Creek, a trout stream, that would appeal to a fisherman. A photo in our collection shows a horse-drawn vehicle headed toward the train station, a short distance to the west, implying that one could easily catch the train from Green Bay to Casco Junction where the owner and his guests then could be transported to the resort. Between the station and resort was a gravel pit, the result of years of excavation for fill for the railroad right-of-way at various locations. Over time, the excavation site had filled with water and could double as a swimming hole for the guests.

Microfilms of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* for September 1, 1911, identify the property as a summer home. Dr. Minahan had purchased this 80-acre wooded property expressly for the production of maple sugar and a summer home. "The summer house will be built on the old-time log house plan, 34x36 ft., two stories high. Two picturesque porches, 14 ft. wide, will be built on two sides, and a combined ancient and modern fireplace will be one of the novelties." The article continues, indicating that a sugarhouse would be built and the necessary equipment for making maple sugar ordered. A concrete sidewalk would be constructed which linked the property to the railroad station at Casco Junction. Mr. George King oversaw this project.

If you wish to receive the *Historical Notes* in color and online, send your request to sksluk@centurytel.net with your name and email address.

(cont. on page 2)

4 Seasons Maple Camp (cont. from page 1)

The builders, as identified by Mike Schanhofer, were: Frank Miesler, Louis Stuebs, Charles Miller, Frank Radue, August Schneider, and Henry Veesser. The Schanhofers, its current owners, also pointed to a house across the driveway to the east. *"They built that strictly for the ladies to enjoy."*

Photos in our collection show Minahan and his friends collecting maple sap and converting it to maple syrup. Every step in the operation was illustrated. While it may have been a summer home, it resembles more of a rustic hangout for his close male friends.

While digging through our Algoma archives, I discovered a copy of a letter sent from the White House in the 1920s, signed by President Calvin Coolidge. A member of the Minahan clan had apparently sent a sample of their maple syrup to the White House in Washington. The letter acknowledged receiving it, and thanked them for their generosity. It also indicates that the Minahans ran this operation over a long period of time.

In 1937, the property was sold to Milton Thibaudeau. He reduced the second floor's eight rooms to four bedrooms, and operated the maple sugar camp under the name, 4 Seasons Maple Camp.

Mike and Bonnie Schanhofer purchased it in 1968 from the Thibaudeau family, and are the current owners. Bill Ehren bought the ladies' house which has passed through several owners — Mike Schanhofer, Pat Staeger, Joe Masjeski, and Bev Zimmerman. Schanhofer, Ehren, and Staeger are all retired Luxemburg-Casco teachers.

The exterior of the house has not changed much except for the addition of a garage. The rough log interior has been covered with drywall and changed into a modern home. The sugarhouse, while still there, has not been used for a long time.

Today the area resembles an unincorporated village. The soils perk well for septic systems, it's off the beaten track with larger than normal lots for more privacy, and the area is still heavily wooded.



Making maple sugar — These three photos show a few of Minahan's friends in the process of gathering the maple sap. Photos courtesy of KCHS photo collection.



The "ladies house" still sits across the driveway to the east of the former 4 Seasons Maple Camp. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

¹Dr. Robert E. Minahan was born in 1858 in New York to immigrant Irish parents that moved to a farm in Calumet County in 1860. He attended Oshkosh Normal School (now UW-Oshkosh), and received his medical degree from the Rush Medical College in Chicago. As a doctor, he practiced six years in Illinois, and then obtained a law degree from the University of Michigan. He practiced law in Kewaunee while his brother, John, who helped get him through medical school, was the town doctor in Casco. Eventually, they both practiced medicine in Green Bay.

²Some consider Edward Decker as the founder of Kewaunee County, having purchased 10,000 acres of land in this area which he sold to the early settlers in Southern Door and Kewaunee Counties. Casco is named for his birthplace in Maine.

HISTORY OF WISCONSIN MEDICINE

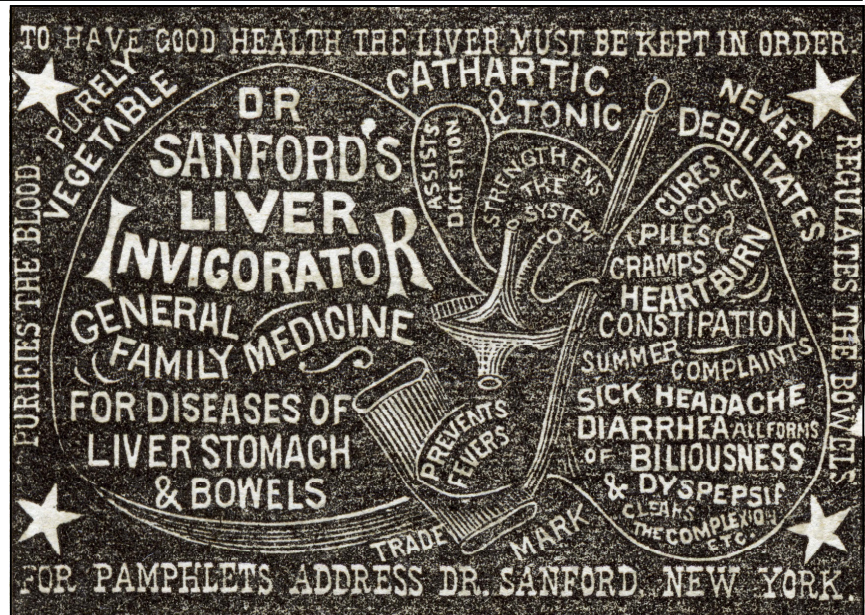
by Jerry Abitz

There always has been a medicine healer of some kind. Even the Stone Age man left carvings of a medicine healer in his cave as evidence of their presence. Still today, there are many references to shamans in various cultures. From the Greek writings, we learn they practiced the art of healing. Each era had some kind of a physician. The first operation we know of was cutting a small hole in the skull to let the demons escape or for nervous and mental conditions. Even the American Indians of this area have been found to have a medicine herbal bag in their graves for their medicine ceremonial.

In the 1830s, settlers died from diseases with little or no help from a medical doctor. He knew almost nothing about the cause of the disease, and even less about its cure. Germ theories were unknown. All the doctor had in his repertoire was to bleed, using leaches or special scarifying devices, or purge the system of its poisons. We all learned that George Washington was bled just before he died. The Lewis & Clark Expedition carried Dr. Rush's¹ "thunder pills," used to purge the digestive tract. Just imagine that the Corps of Discovery² spent two years on this expedition, and thunder pills were their only medication! So, theoretically, you could heal yourself or suffer in silence. Surprisingly, only one person in this expedition died, and experts say it may have been from a ruptured appendix.

Growing up in the 1930s myself, medical practices of that era were not the sophisticated ones of today. The doctor making house calls carried everything he needed in his little black bag. That ubiquitous bag was even a substitute for the stork when children asked, "*Where did I come from?*" My parents responded that I came in Dr. Krueger's black bag. I pondered that in amazement for a long time. "*Really? Could I really fit in his black bag?*"

If surgery could solve what ailed you, your doctor did the surgery with nary a specialist in sight. As general doctors, they were expected to know everything that medical science had discovered.



Newspaper advertisement (1878) for Dr. Sanford's Liver Invigorator for diseases of the liver, stomach, and bowels, which includes a long list of diseases which the tonic is purported to treat. Dr. Sanford operated out of New York. Photo used with permission of Wisconsin Historical Society. (Image ID: 82405).

Most people did not die from old age. They died instead from diseases such as flu, coughs, fevers, diphtheria, TB, and farm accidents. Giving birth to yet another child killed many a housewife. Diphtheria killed many children within a short period of time. In my mother's 1880s family, she lost three siblings while a fourth survived.

In 1877, nineteen died of diphtheria in Ahnapee town alone. There was an epidemic of scarlet fever in Clay Banks in 1879, measles in Ahnapee in 1880, typhoid fever in Lincoln in 1916, and the Spanish flu in 1918. Who could forget the polio scares of the 1950s? No surprise, then, as medical discoveries were made, they were gradually accepted within medical practices. Vaccinations appeared, and saved countless lives.

In 1876, the State Board of Health was started. They pushed forward with education about vaccinations, improved sanitary conditions, better conditions for outhouses, the cow barns, and slaughterhouses. In 1894, children had to be vaccinated when entering school. In 1900s, the state licensed all plumbers, embalmers, barbers, beauty parlor owners, and anyone who worked with the public. In 1916, Kewaunee laid sewers and required homeowners to connect to it, forcing the removal of outhouses. In 1926, garbage pickup was begun in Kewaunee; the same city outlawed pigs in 1898.

Medical schools were changing too. The first medical school in Wisconsin was in Madison in 1909. It was a two-year institution but, ten years later, was

(continued on page 4)

THE MEDICINE MAN

by Tom Schuller

Before there were all-night pharmacies and pills by mail, the medicine man and his traveling tent show would come to town with his not-quite-patented cure-alls.

Just like the old-time circuses, the medicine man employed an advance man. He would come to town where the good doctor was planning on doing his show, and put up posters on every available spot that he could find. The posters would advertise the free entertainment, prizes, and other “bait.”

The medicine man usually operated out of a rather large tent. It would be set up in a vacant lot where it was convenient for townspeople to attend. Sometimes he would employ a small band to play on the street corners, drawing the people towards his tent. The “barker”

would appear on an elevated stage, giving his spiel about the show. Tickets or coupons would be given out for drawings held later that evening.

On a stage, a few free acts would be performing — magicians, contortionists,

singers, or dancers would appear in gaudy costumes or uniforms. After a short, free show, the medicine man would appear, dressed to the hilt in a silk top hat, white gloves, and patent leather shoes. Usually, a scantily clad girl would accompany him as a delightful diversion.

Among his many offerings were products that would relieve a person’s sufferings. The emphasis was on “relieve,” not cure. There might be licensed doctors or physicians in the audience who would have called him out or even sued him if he claimed positive cures with his “quack” ointments. Of course, at the time, the medical profession was not much better in either their practices or knowledge.

The medicine man had ointments for warts and skin blemishes, but would claim that the problem would disappear only if the salve was applied religiously. He had curatives for tapeworms, epilepsy, poor blood, and rheumatism. He was careful to never say that these concoctions would rid you absolutely of your problem.

If you knew what went into these “medicines,” you would wonder why people bought them at all! Jugs of well water, kerosene, turpentine, anise, and pine oil were brought to him by the local schoolboys. They were always instructed to deliver the stuff in the back way, so no one knew what was going into his concoctions. He usually used pepper, spices, and tallow for the salves. Calf or chicken intestines, preserved in alcohol, were passed off as tapeworms removed by his cure-alls.

Usually he would stay in town for only a week. For the first two or three nights, his wares would cost the townspeople a dollar. The price would drop as the needed ingredients ran out. The sample bottle that he gave to the people to try always tasted much better than the one that they took home. By the time they came back to complain, he was long gone, having left quietly in the middle of the night. His next stop would be too far for the average person to travel.

Although they went by many names back in those days, only one is remembered in Kewaunee County — a doctor whose last name was Reka. Spell it backwards, and you’ll understand.



Picture of an old-time medicine show. Photo courtesy of the Michael Cheek website, <http://michaelcheek.com/2011/03/30/profiles-in-marketing-the-medicine-man/>.

History of Wisconsin Medicine (cont. from page 3)

changed into a four-year school. Doctors got better educated, learning about germs and causes of major diseases. Vaccinations were used, as was sterilization. They studied anatomy and surgical techniques. There were other medical schools that were diploma mills. Most erstwhile doctors went to the latter.

However, relief was supposedly available whenever a medicine tent show came to town.

The medicine man’s spiel was “*You have a problem? This tonic is the answer. It soothes, it restores, and it strengthens. It is the answer to your problems. It settles a queasy stomach, calms the nerves, controls worms, fights rheumatism, improves one’s singing, makes unhappy people happy, stops headaches, toothaches, earaches, and repels mosquitoes. Only 50 cents a bottle or two for 95 cents. There will be some for sale after the show.*”

To get a better idea of what was happening on the medical scene, check out the article, “Giving Them What They Want: the Reinhardtts and Quack Medicine in Wisconsin.” It’s in the Summer 2011 issue of the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*.

Author’s Note — This article is based, in part, upon an oral presentation made last February at the KCHS History Center in Algoma by long-term director, Judy Srnka.



¹A leading 1700s Philadelphia physician.

²The self-given name of this group of explorers headed by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

ONE NIGHT AT OUR MUSEUM

By Tom Schuller

"EMMA!" The voice rang out loud and clear on the tape recorder although no one else had heard it and the person that spoke it had been dead for many years. It happened on Halloween night of 2010 as the investigators from S.O.S.¹, the paranormal investigation team of Green Bay, went through the various rooms in the Historic Jail Museum in Kewaunee.

The founder of this ghost-hunting group, Cory Jandrin, and the rest of his team (lead investigator, Caren Spredemann, Tim Friess², and Gretchen Jandrin) had set up their van full of equipment to see what they would find in the 1876 jail. They had been there the previous summer and had found enough evidence to warrant a second look. This time, the public had been invited, and about twenty hardy souls came out on that cold and blustery night.

The old building looked somewhat eerie in the darkness as the crew went in and set up their equipment consisting of eight cameras, digital voice recorders, K2 and EMF meters, temperature guns, and hand-held video recorders; flashlights were used as well to see if the spirits would use them as a form of communication by turning them on and off. All of the video coming from the cameras could be seen on a large screen monitor set up on a table outside.

The crowd outside consisted of both believers and skeptics. At intervals during the evening, they were invited into the building in small groups to sit with the investigators in various rooms on all three floors. Some had attitude-changing experiences.

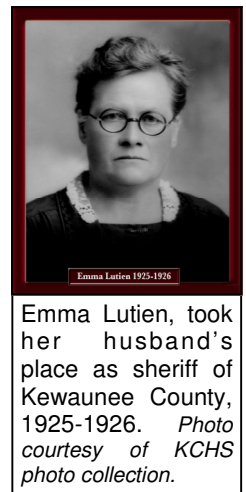


Kewaunee County's Historic Jail Museum. Photo courtesy of wisconsinosity.com.

One young man, a confirmed skeptic, said that his arm was grabbed in the darkness by some unseen hand as he stood by himself in one of the rooms. He came back out of the building a believer! Another young lady had to leave the building because of a heavy feeling on her chest that didn't scare her but made her feel so sad that she went outside and started crying.

The spirits inside were talkative that night as if they had been saving up their comments for just such an occasion! Besides turning the flashlights on and off in response to questions, which could be seen on the monitor outside, they also could be heard responding when the recordings were reviewed after the investigation was completed. You can hear both male and female voices saying, *"I'll get Emma."* *"It hurts."* *"I'm Polish!"* One voice even sounded Native American. Ghostly whispers and knocking can also be heard throughout the over three hours of recordings that were done that night. One voice even said *"SHUT UP!"* as if getting tired of the whole ordeal!


Does this change my attitude about going into the museum to work on displays or to volunteer as a tour guide? No, not really. I'll just make sure to say goodnight to Emma³, Kewaunee County's first woman sheriff, before I lock up for the night!




Emma Lutien, took her husband's place as sheriff of Kewaunee County, 1925-1926. Photo courtesy of KCHS photo collection.



THIS ISSUE'S QUEST AUTHORS...

 **Jerry Abitz** (see pages 1 and 3)— Jerry has been working with and for the KCHS since 1973, serving as its newsletter editor from 1996-2010. Married to Althea since 1956 and living along the shoreline of the bay, he enjoys writing about historical topics, and takes time to dabble in landscaping; he's a gardener, a voracious reader, and loves the outdoors. Equipped with a very curious and active mind, he's taught 45 classes for Learning in Retirement at UWGB, and is still going.

 **Tom Schuller** (see page 3) — Currently president of the Kewaunee County Historical Society, Tom is a self-proclaimed information junkie — he's been collecting stories about Kewaunee County since he was first asked to join the Society. He and his wife, Bonnie, live in a restored Victorian home built in 1890 which is surrounded by over 3,000 plants.

¹The S.O.S. acronym stands for Shadows of Spirits.

²Author of *Haunted Green Bay*, on sale at Bosse's Newsstand on Cherry Street in downtown Green Bay.

³Emma Lutien was appointed Sheriff to complete her husband's term of office after he was killed in a traffic accident in 1925.

NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Report from the Trenches

Compiled by Glennie Wilding-White

NEW MAILING ADDRESS — Effective immediately, our new mailing address for donations is: P.O. Box 306, Luxemburg WI 54217. All correspondence should be sent to: Kewaunee County Historical Society, c/o 613 Dodge Street, Kewaunee WI 54216. Our phone number remains the same.

HISTORY CENTER — Gloria Peterson reports that the Center has been busy with numerous requests and a lot of research going on. The Center's camera is back in use, enabling some projects to move ahead.

The Center has also acquired a cd of sheriffs' portraits, provided by current Sheriff Matt Joski. Center volunteers are continuing the search for more portraits, so as to have a complete set. If anyone has any pictures of past sheriffs to share with us, it would be greatly appreciated.

NEW DIRECTOR, NELLIE DE BAKER — For the past 30 years or more, Nellie has been a very active volunteer in numerous entities. Military organizations and music have been dominant. For the American Legion, she is serving in her fifth year as department historian and national chaplain; she is past department vice commander and has served in virtually all offices of the club. In the American Legion Auxiliary, she is serving actively in Local Unit 262 and on the state bowling committee. Twice she has been a national history book winner, and continues to serve as a national judge. For thirteen years, she has been a member of Robinson Post 538; for the Navy Club, she is currently serving a second two-year term as state commander.

Nellie is a delegate to numerous conventions every year, has set up and carried out a national newsletter contest, has been the writer of monthly newspaper articles (plus newsletters) for a seven-year period, and is a founder of three new clubs. She researches and writes her own speeches, researches and writes workshops (carried out nine in 2010) on various topics including membership, leadership, civility, attitude virus, history, and the flag. By serving in the U.S. Navy, Nellie has earned the right to belong to and be active in many military organizations, including Polish Legion

of American Veterans (PLAV) and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

Nellie is a 27-year member of Algoma Community Band, many, many years in the Luxemburg-Casco Community Band, and a member of the Peninsula Symphonic Band.

She is currently active with the Learning in Retirement (LIR) program at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and NWTC-Sturgeon Bay as a finance and curriculum committee member, coordinator, and presenter. She also volunteers with the Kewaunee County Transportation Program.

Nellie and her husband, Don, have been married 43 years, have two daughters and four grandchildren, and have lived in Luxemburg since December of 1970. Don was born and raised in Luxemburg.



DONATIONS SUMMARY — Arletta Bertrand, Treasurer, reports \$677 has been given to the KCHS by 28 individuals (*see pg. 8*). From all of us, a hearty "Thank you!" to these generous people.

END-OF-THE-YEAR GIVING (by Jerry Abitz)

— KCHS seems to be at a fork in the road where dissonant voices are saying we need to curb production of the newsletter because the donations are not matching our costs — either cut back on the number of issues or reduce the size of each one. Or, perhaps we need to prune deadwood from the mailing list.

On the other hand, some of us are saying, myself included, that with the death of our longtime treasurer, Joe Blazei, people have been holding back over confusion as to where to mail funds. His name and address are on the self-addressed envelopes sent out earlier in the year. Perhaps we did not emphasize in our last issue that we had an agreement with the Kewaunee Postmaster that they would hold those envelopes addressed to the KCHS for us to pick up.

How does one communicate that we are a hard-working group when newspapers seem to be growing irrelevant? This is our only way to communicate, especially if you live out of the area in places such as California or Alaska. At the same time, we wish to educate, using stories about our past to help preserve these snippets of history.

Hopefully there won't be a change but, to a great extent, the solution to our dilemma lies with you, our readers. All of our efforts and outcomes are funded by you. I'll continue to pay the postage for each mailing as long as I can.

(cont. on page 7)

Report from the Trenches *(cont. from page 6)*

It's nearing the end of the year. Your donations keep our doors open and inspire us to keep doing what we have been doing. For those who itemize your income tax returns and wish to donate to a nonprofit organization such as the KCHS, we have provided a new envelope. Your donation to the KCHS is tax deductible to the limit the law allows.

Your donations and bequests from estates upon the death of a loved one have kept us in business since this organization was revitalized in 1969. For that, we are so very grateful.

WAYSIDE CHAPELS UPDATE *(by Jerry Abitz)*

— Cletus Bellin's wish before he died was that people pay more attention to these unique roadside chapels that dot the landscape in the three-county area centered around Dyckesville. Properties change hands and the families that may have built and maintained these shrines are no longer doing this. Bellin tacitly understood that the ruling of the local Catholic bishop would produce a flood of religious pilgrims to the shrine at Champion. He believed that with a brochure in hand, their experience while here would be enhanced.

Knowing what was on his mind, I encouraged him to approach the KCHS Board to outline his proposal. Consensus was to go ahead but to enlist other historical societies to participate in this endeavor. Bellin envisioned simple metallic markers erected at each site, a brochure be developed which would include all 30 of the shrines he had researched and identified, and a book be published with the complete history and photos of each.

Unfortunately, Bellin died unexpectedly before any of that happened. The project languished awhile, casting around for a potential leader while no one seemed to want that responsibility. Some agreed to represent their county or historical society. In the end, a number of people stepped up to bat, including Barb Chisholm, Sue Marchant, Sue Havel, Joyce and Jim Lampereur, Cletus Delveaux, Nellie De Baker, and myself.

I called a meeting where various interested individuals hashed out ideas. There was agreement that Bellin's plan was costly, and we did not have access to sufficient funds to carry it out. However, a plan for a brochure emerged. I enlisted a friend, Don Kraft, who serves with me on the Brown County Historical Society's Historic Preservation Committee. He designed the entire brochure, thus saving us a ton of money. DC Printing of Green Bay ran off the copies that are now in the hands of the organizations we represented. To date, comments all have been positive.

We agreed to meet again in September to pursue the idea of publishing a book. Do wish us well.

CALENDAR

AHR: Agricultural Heritage & Resources Inc., located at Heritage Farm, N2251 Hwy 42, five miles south of Kewaunee. Phone: 920-388-0604. Website: www.agriculturalheritage.org

WHS: Wisconsin Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. Phone: 608-264-6400. Website: www.wisconsinhistory.org. Kewaunee County is part of the Northeast Region of WHS.

Kewaunee County Historical Society (KCHS) monthly board meetings — 10:00a, second Saturdays (October 8, November 12, December 10, January 14). History Center, 219 Steele Street, Algoma. Info: 920-487-2516.

October

Sat., Oct. 1 — KCHS Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner, 12:00n, at the Hotel Stebbins. All volunteers and their spouses will be invited to attend this annual event. Mark Teske will talk about the Civil War; his great grandfathers served in the military in this war.

Sun., Oct. 2, AHR — Oktoberfest at Heritage Farm. Sunday Mass, German food demonstrations and exhibits, German dinner and dancing. The KCHS will have a display centered around German immigration to Kewaunee County. Details: call 920-388-0604, or visit www.agriculturalheritage.org.

December

Sun., Dec. 3 – AHR Christmas on The Farm. Traditional food, music, and a good time for everyone. For more information, call 920-388-0604 or visit www.agriculturalheritage.org.

GOING DIGITAL — A survey of the current computer equipment has shown that, to keep the KCHS at least *close* to current data preservation and security standards, some serious upgrading is in order. We have obtained cost figures, and are looking for a corporate or individual donor to underwrite the amount. More information on this topic is available; just call or send us a letter.

CORRECTION — *It has come to our attention that Volume numbers for some of the issues in 2010 and 2011 were incorrect. The volume number on this issue has been verified historically, and is correct. Our apologies for any confusion.*

Friends of the Kewaunee County Historical Society

~~ 2011 Donations ~~

We thank all of you for your continuing support of the Society. In recognition of your contribution(s), you should have received a personal thank you note from us. Since we are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, these donations can be used as deductions on your income taxes.

Note: The listing below is based upon donations received June 13 - August 29, 2011. If your gift was received at a later date and not listed, it will be acknowledged in the next issue. If your name is not listed and you gave, please contact our treasurer, Arletta Bertrand (920-845-2972).

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Historical Notes

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Other days/times by appointment only.

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