



HISTORICAL NOTES

VOLUME XXIV, No. 4

OCTOBER 2012

A TALE OF TWO PLACES

by Jerry Abitz

Many people like to take vacation trips to see various well-known sights. While in a given area, they may likely seek out lesser-known sites with scenic or historical connections. Some people have a list of places they would like to visit someday; others have a heightened sense of curiosity and are attracted to unusual place names as they travel.¹ It supplements the tourist spots wherever you go. Every state has them. Here in Kewaunee County, we have two that seem to stand out — Frog Station and Euren, neither of which would qualify as a village.

What would you expect to find in Frog Station?! With Euren, named for a place in Germany, its pronunciation is different in German than it is in English, the vowels having a different sound. In German it is pronounced oy' ren, but in English it is ū' ren, the sound of which reminds us of the liquid that flows from our bladders. So what was to have been a simple name to honor their hometown has taken on a bit of buffoonery. But no one living there seems to be embarrassed, perhaps because this notoriety puts them on the map with celebrity status that is way out of proportion to their population or importance.

So, briefly, here's the tale of two places...

¹Many years ago, while visiting the Pennsylvania Dutch country, I witnessed a fascinating barn raising. I also sent my neighbor a postcard from the nearby town of Intercourse, Penn., as a joke.

ARE THE FROGS STILL CROAKING AT FROG STATION?

by Arletta Bertrand

You say you've never heard of Frog Station (once a question on Jeopardy, a TV game show). Well, it's not hard to find... To get there, turn north at the stop-and-go light in Luxemburg (the only one in Kewaunee County). After three miles on County Road AB, at the corner of County Roads AB and K, there — don't blink or you'll miss it! — you will find a bar called Frog Station plus a few local residences.

In the early years, it was a stop for farmers after picking up supplies in Luxemburg. I remember when Eli Cravilion owned the bar. All the way back home, I kept hoping Dad would stop for a drink so I could get a large bottle of root beer and a candy bar. Eli also was known to be a self-taught veterinarian — if you had an animal with a sore foot, he had a remedy. If you wanted to pass a little time with Eli and Ella, his wife, they were always ready to play a few games of Cooyah.¹ According to Darrell and Arleen Jadin, "Ella always came out with some cheese and crackers when they played cards." On Saturday nights, you could always find a card game there.

Even now, during deer hunting time or after a day spent fishing, you will find the local hunters or fishermen there, sharing stories about the deer they shot or fish they caught — the ones that got away, for some reason, getting bigger with each telling.



This is Frog Station, a bar at the corner of Cty. Roads AB and K. Don't blink, or you'll miss it! Photo by Jerry Abitz.

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)

FROG STATION *(cont. from page 1)*

Although the frogs are not as numerous as they once were, you will still find water coming in the front door when the snow melts in the spring and the Kewaunee River overflows its banks. Recently my husband, Gerald, and I stopped in on a Sunday afternoon when two fishermen from Brillion came in, one just to show his friend the famed Frog Station. Needless to say, his friend left with a T-shirt to prove he had been there.

Some people will intentionally go out of their way to visit places with odd names. When a patron wondered aloud who had come the farthest², the owner replied, "Someone from Arizona."

The building was built in 1903 by Henry Demuse, the bar's first owner. Other owners were Henry Sell and Eli Cravillion; the current owner, Pat Michaels, has operated the bar for 35 years. Pat celebrates his birthday on St. Patrick's Day. You will find the place very busy with many well-wishers and, of course, he will be serving green beer. When Eli had the bar, a wood stove provided the heat. You never got cold because it was always plenty warm; if you were on the drinking side of the bar, you would be told to throw another log on the fire.

Many people have fond memories of Frog Station; the stories could go on and on...



Pat Michaels, owner of Frog Station for 35 years. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

¹A Belgian card game.

BOTTKOLVILLE (a/k/a EUREN)

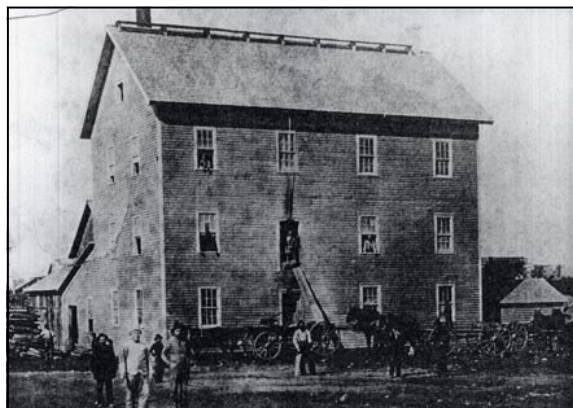
by Jerry Abitz

The Bottkol family lived in the area around Trier, Germany; their small village was named Euren. The family was unhappy with life in this German-speaking province located on the border of France and Luxembourg. They were unhappy with the many wars being fought and the idea their sons would be forced to serve in the Kaiser's Army. They may have seen the pamphlets prepared by the State of Wisconsin encouraging immigrants to come to populate their newly-formed state; they also may have had heard of individuals who were now living there, corresponding with relatives about their success stories and the availability of cheap, but fertile land.

Seeking a better life, the family left their Rhineland Province home in 1856 via France and came to New York. Following the Erie Canal and sailing the Great Lakes, they settled in the Town of Lincoln, north of Casco. They bought adjoining parcels of land and established farms. After the Peshtigo fire of 1871, they built a three-story sawmill, and then a four-story gristmill around which a small village grew. Eventually they built a general store and tavern across the road. They chose the name of their hometown in Europe as the name for this settlement, but because their enterprises dominated life there, it acquired the nickname of Bottkolville.

The flour produced from their gristmill was in demand; a major outlet for it was in Menominee, Michigan. In winter, teams of horses pulled sleighs across the ice of Green Bay over to Oconto and then north. Because of fissures in the ice, they carried planks to span any gap in the ice that appeared.¹ To ensure a safe crossing, no team ever went solo but was accompanied by another team.

In 1894, their mill burned and was never rebuilt. Other than a faded photograph or two, there is nothing here to remind us of this prominent family. A daughter, Helen, married a young man from the area who had become a doctor that many elderly remember — the well-known Dr. Kerscher, who had a long career of delivering babies in the area. In the early part of the twentieth century, the Kerschers erected a fine home that still stands on the south side of County Road S. A KCHS heritage sign stands on the front lawn of this house. There are no members of the family anywhere in the area. Most departed for Menominee County in Upper Michigan; those that didn't leave are buried in the area cemeteries.



Moving to America in 1856, the Michael Bottkol family eventually established several businesses in what was earlier known as Bottkolville, now Euren. Their four-story flour mill was built in 1878. Unfortunately, on Friday, July 13, 1894, the mill along with nearby buildings was destroyed by fire. Photo courtesy of KCHS photo collection.

¹Based upon an article from *The Luxemburg News* of April 6, 1945.

LIMEKILNS; REVISITED

by Jerry Abitz

I recently got an email from a fellow KCHS director, Jim Steffel, telling me about a limekiln in the Ellisville area. It exists on the property owned by Bob and Colleen Rentmeester on County Road F, a short distance west of the Ellisville intersection. The photo (*at right*) was taken on a recent excursion out into the Town of Montpelier.

Because these limekilns are top-loaded, the kiln is built into the ridge to facilitate its loading with alternate layers of wood and limestone. Colleen did not have a great deal of knowledge of its history. She thought it was just to produce quicklime to make mortar for the barn's foundation, and possibly for the house. In viewing this substantial historical structure, it seems like it was a lot of work to build it just for the owner's use. If I had been a neighbor during the period it was used, I would have been chomping at the bit to use some of the quicklime produced here because of its availability within my neighborhood at a time when good, all-weather roads were not available.

As I looked it over, I marveled at the appearance of the mortared, fieldstone exterior; it did not appear to be the work of an amateur. I stuck my head into the pit at the bottom and saw the iron bars that supported the layers of wood and limestone when the firing took place. I climbed the small ridge to view the interior from above, although,



The remains of the Ellisville limekiln. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

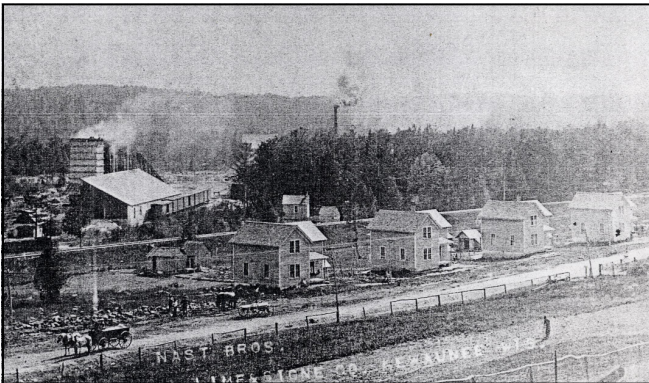
regrettably, it could not be seen because some previous owner had used it to dispose of his junk. That was indeed disappointing, but the lively conversation with Colleen erased my disappointment.

There were the limekilns at Bruemmer Park at Footbridge, outside of Kewaunee on County Road F. Still today, just to the east where F intersects County Road C, there are several identical residences on the south side of the road which were company houses from that operation (*see photo at left*). At one time, there were four huge, square kilns located here. Steam winches were used to draw cars of limestone pieces and firewood up an incline to load these massive maws. It was an around-the-clock operation with hired employees, started by the Seth Moore family.¹ Eventually it was sold to the Nast Brothers which morphed into today's Western Lime Co.

A newspaper article, "A New Industry,"² about a related industry, sent me off in a different direction.

"Large quantities of stone for building and harbor purposes are required by the young and rapidly growing cities of Manistee, Ludington, Muskegon, and Grand Haven, on the east coast of the lake [Lake Michigan], which is now furnished in great part by quarries in Door County and Sheboygan."

A captain from Kewaunee, Capt. John Wrabetz, agreed to furnish them [Michigan limekilns] with one cargo of limestone per week during the navigational season. He planned on going up the Kewaunee River for three miles and loading his ship with stone from the West Kewaunee quarries. By doing so, he was at a comparative advantage over Door County because it was nearer to those Michigan ports.



In 1893, the Nast Bros. built these limekilns in West Kewaunee, in what is now the Bruemmer County Park. This aerial view shows the kilns as well as a row of houses built to house workers, mostly Italians. At an earlier period, 1853-1893, kilns had been operated by the Seth Moore family and, as a boy, Professor Ransom Moore had tended the kilns. Lime was much in demand in early years. Before cement came on the market, lime was used in the making of mortar. It also was used for whitewashing barns; for that matter, walls in pioneer homes were whitewashed rather than painted. Photo courtesy of KCHS photo collection.

¹The Seth Moore log cabin is located at the nearby Dana Farm on County Road F. His son, Ransom Moore, is generally accredited as being the "Father of the 4H Movement" in Wisconsin. While I was a student at UW-Madison, the Horticultural Building on the Agricultural campus was named for Ransom Moore.

²Published in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* on July 27, 1888.

BEER! HERE!

by Tom Schuller

From ancient times until the present age, man has known that fermented grains, such as barley, corn or rice, make an invigorating drink. By reading texts of the first American settlers, we find that beer was one of the most important items on the Mayflower's manifest. We also know that our first president, George Washington, had a brewery on his estate.

In the 1940s, the Kewaunee Brewing Company served the immediate area. It was the descendant of previous breweries, namely the Mach-Pilsen Brewery, the Rausch Brewery and the Kewaunee Products Company.

The recipe for making old-fashioned lager beer included barley malt which was purchased from the Rahr Malting Co. of Manitowoc, water, yeast, hops and a small amount of cornflakes. The first step in making a batch of beer at the local brauhaus was to soak the malt and the cornflakes in the mash tub at a temperature of 180 degrees. This turns the starch in the malt into sugar. After several



Recognized locally as the Kewaunee Brewery, it was also known as Kewaunee City Brewery and as Rausch Brewery when they made soda pop there. The building was demolished this past summer. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

hours, the extract is drained into the brew kettle which has a capacity of 110 barrels. Hops are added to give the mixture its flavor and to clarify the liquid. This boiled extract is known as wort.

The mixture is then taken from the brew kettle and the hops are separated from it. It goes into a storage tank where the temperature is brought down to 45 degrees, then into a settling tank where the liquid is cleared and, finally, to the fermentation tanks.

Brewers yeast is added which changes the sugar in the mixture into alcohol and protein, a process that takes upwards of nine days. Once completed, the liquid can be called beer.

The aging process takes from six weeks to three months. After that, the beer is put into a cooler to bring the temperature to 33 degrees, then a carbonator, through a set of filters and a so-called "government tank" where the beer is weighed for taxation purposes. It is then put into either kegs or bottles.


You may have in your garage or basement one of the bottles that came from this brewery. Remember seeing a Hopp's Lager, Behren's Special or Bohemian Beer bottle? I do!





Advertisement for Bock Beer. Photo courtesy of KCHS photo collection.



THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS...

 **Jerry Abitz** (see pages 1, 2, 3, and 5) — Jerry has been working with and for the KCHS since 1973, serving as its newsletter editor since 1996. 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. If you'd like to contact him, send an email to gabitz@centurytel.net.

 **Arletta Bertrand** (see page 1) — Born in the Town of Lincoln (Kewaunee County), Arletta always has been interested in history and has invested hours in their family genealogy. She's the KCHS treasurer, active in the Luxemburg Legion Auxiliary, serves other organizations in a number of capacities, and volunteers at the Algoma History Research Center. If you'd like to contact her, send an email to artie2003@netzero.net.

 **Tom Schuller** (see page 4) — 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. If you'd like to contact him, send an email to gandolf00@hotmail.com.

Author's note — This article was written by Ivan Kaste and published in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* dated March 8, 1940. It has been rewritten to fit this publication.

BRICKYARDS

by Jerry Abitz

After discovering the limekiln in Red River (see JULY 2012 issue), I spoke to the landowner about my discovery. She commented to me, "My house obviously is a Belgian brick home built after the Peshtigo fire. I wonder where the brick for this house came from?"

That set me on a mission to find out precisely where were the local brickyards? In the 1870s, there were no established good roads, so what the early settlers needed had to be produced in the immediate area. We, the KCHS, have a heritage sign located in Algoma just a few steps south of the Visitor's Center on Wisconsin Hwy. 42. The sign was part of a series of 29 signs we paid for and had erected a decade or so ago.¹ This is the message on the Brickyard sign:

"After the disastrous fires that swept through Kewaunee County in 1871, a more substantial building material was sought and brickyards made their appearance in several localities in the county.

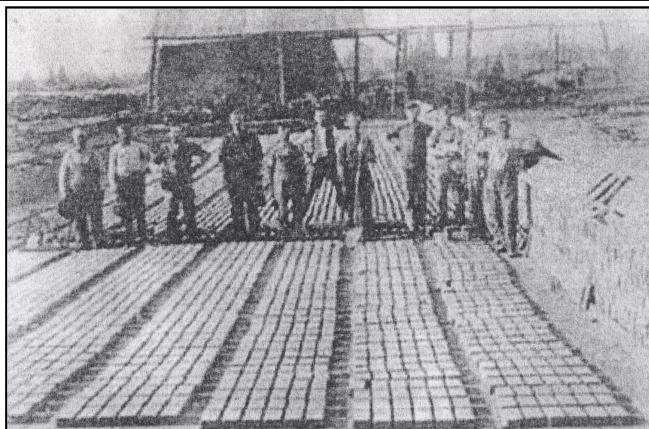
"The crushed clay was placed in molds to form the bricks, which were then placed in the sun to dry. While drying, the bricks would be covered when necessary to protect them from dampness and rain. After several weeks, the bricks were ready to be placed in a kiln. During this time, the fires that heated the kilns were tended day and night. After about three weeks in the kiln, the hardened bricks were ready for sale."

A stop at the Algoma Library to peruse the newspaper microfilms² was next. Viewing the index created by board member, Judy Srnka³, as she read through all of them, I found the following in *The Kewaunee Enterprise*, April 18, 1877:

"Mr. Damien Duchateau has started a brickyard at his brother's old place, a quarter of a mile from bay shore, and will supply the farmers with good building material this fall. Mr. D. has owned a brickyard at Green Bay the last two or three years and therefore knows how to run the concern. He built a handsome residence last fall veneered with brick he made while at the latter place.

"Mr. Stage will buy the brick necessary for his hall of his neighbor. We hear others who will build of this substantial material in the future."

In our History Center in Algoma we have a number of Kewaunee county plat maps. I examined the one from 1876 and found Damien Duchateau owned 90 acres, bisected by the road now known as County Road S.



Ferdinand Storm is pictured with a crew of workers and a supply of bricks, some dry and some in various stages of manufacture, in this circa 1900 photo. A makeshift rain shelter covers the kiln in the rear of the picture. A second kiln is being built at the right. The bricks in the photo represent a good portion of the summer's output which was produced mostly by hand in the days before automation. Storm Brickyard was the last of the Algoma brickyards. Others developed in the hill south of South Street and east of Division. Storm's yard was on the site of today's St. Paul's School playground. Photo courtesy of KCHS photo collection.

Lastly, I queried the expert on the history of the Dyckesville area, Joyce Lampereur. Her response was, "Right where Van's Lumber is located."

Well, Mr. Stage's hall was right around the corner facing Sturgeon Bay Road. When I moved here in 1959, it was known as the Trade Winds. It burned and was replaced by the building which houses the Dyckesville branch of the Bank of Luxemburg. One can view the heritage sign on the bank building and view the aforementioned Mr. Stage's Hall. And, for those of you from my generation, one can also examine the late Ira Paye as an 18-year-old.

¹Jim Steffel and, later, Donna Urban headed a committee responsible for the signage. They researched and wrote the narrative and selected the photos used on most, but not all, of the signs. Jim Steffel and Jim Urban, Donna's husband, erected these signs.

²The KCHS ordered and paid for these microfilms from the Wisconsin Historical Society — editions from the entire nineteenth century through early to mid-twentieth century. However, some issues were missing from the WHS collection, so I personally took to Madison those that were missing so the microfilms would be complete. The Algoma Library has those of *the Algoma Record-Herald* and *The Luxemburg News*; the Kewaunee Library has those of *The Kewaunee Enterprise*.

³Judy Srnka, a KCHS director, has read all of the early newspapers and compiled a helpful index which is located in the Algoma Library.

NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Report from the Trenches



NEW!!! WEBSITE — Still a work in progress, the new website is up and running! Please take a few minutes to check it out at www.kewauneehistory.com.

Please note: Neither updated nor maintained since late 2009, the original website for KCHS has not yet been disabled and is what comes up if you do a google search (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wikchs/>). We hope to resolve this confusion of duplicate sites in the near future, but did not want to delay publishing the new website.

For questions, concerns and/or feedback about the new site, please contact Tammy Etienne (tammy_etienne@yahoo.com) or Tom Schuller (gandolf00@hotmail.com).

OKTOBERFEST — Oktoberfest, an annual event in celebration of the Bavarian culture, will be held on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 6-7, at the Heritage Farm on Hwy. 42, south of Kewaunee. Tom Schuller and Jerry Abitz will be present at the KCHS display to greet and talk with the visitors.



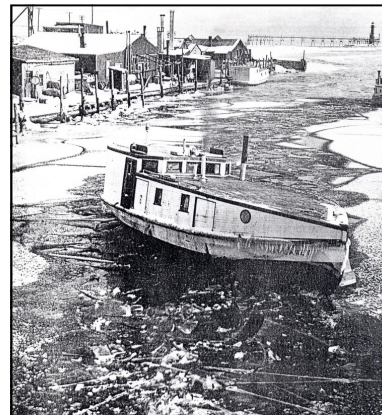
VOLUNTEER DINNER — Another annual event, the Volunteer Dinner is KCHS' effort to give back to the all the volunteers who staff the History Center and Jail Museum, get the newsletter ready for mailing and volunteer to assist with and for other activities. The invitations will be arriving in mailboxes soon.

It will be a potluck held on Saturday, Oct. 20, at 12:00 noon, at the Grace Lutheran Church, N5789 Hwy. 42, Kewaunee. KCHS will purchase the main dish; directors are asked to bring dishes to pass. Guests **do not** need to bring food.

ST. WENCESLAUS CHURCH ALTAR — When St. Wenceslas Church on County Road F closed, the altar was sold to St. Wenceslaus Church of Klondike, near Coleman, Wisconsin, which, unfortunately, has recently closed. Jerry Abitz has been contacted by the Kate Radke family of Wausau, who apparently has the Svoboda-made altar. Part of it has been burned, but under circumstances presently not known. A meeting has been proposed but the date has not been set.

HISTORY CENTER — The Bill Garrett Collection received recently has been scanned, organized, and documented. It was a series of photographs of the Algoma Harbor. The collection included unique photos of the Big Freeze of 1936, the last coal delivery by boat in 1940, the Algoma fishing fleet in 1877, and a harbor view that was used as a Wisconsin calendar scene.

The Mark Von Studio Collection of photos — all 6,000 of them — have been documented. The photos consist of class pictures, class reunions, family photos, and miscellaneous photos.



This photo of the vessel, Caroline, is part of the Algoma Harbor photos from the Bill Garrett photo collection, now property of KCHS. Photo courtesy of the KCHS photo collection.

JAIL MUSEUM — The summer season at the Jail Museum has come to an end. However, that does not mean that one cannot gain admittance. Just call Darlene Muellner, the curator, at 920-388-0117. She can make arrangements for a special showing.

Among the many places in the Jail Museum to explore, in a back cell, is the Tool Shed, full of tools of the past. Some of the tools are handmade and a beauty in themselves. Shapers, levels and many other tools like them helped the early farmer shape the boards and beams when they built their barns and homes.



Old-fashioned tools and a "schnitzelbank" on display at the Jail Museum. Photos by Chuck Baumgartner.

(cont. on page 7)

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

One of the unusual objects is a schnitzelbank. You may be familiar with this German song, "Ja das ist ein Schnitzelbank." Well, we have one on display! It is a special bench for making cedar shingles. Emigrant families supplemented their income during the winter making handmade shingles.

Come! See this room and much more at the Kewaunee County Jail Museum, open in the off-season by appointment. In Kewaunee, stop by on Vliet Street; you'll see the old jail directly south of the Kewaunee County Courthouse. Entrance to the museum is on the north side of the building. Admission is \$2 for adults.

PILSEN CEMETERY WALK —

On Sunday, June 19, the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Pilsen celebrated their centennial. Well attended, one of the day's events was a cemetery walk where five individuals portrayed ancestors of this church family. Prior to 1912, a congregation existed there under the name of St. Mary's. In that year, St. Mary's consolidated with St. Wenceslaus on County Road F and built the present edifice.

Jim Steffel and Judy Srnka, KCHS directors, directed the group's efforts. Director Mark Teske videotaped the cemetery walk; the DVDs (90 min.) are available for \$15, and can be purchased at the History Center in Algoma (920-487-2516) and at Arletta Bertrand's residence in Luxemburg (920-845-2972).

MARY TODD LINCOLN'S "THE WHITE HOUSE YEAR" —

Jessica Michna portrayed the life of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln for a group of interested spectators at the Algoma Middle School auditorium on Sunday, July 22.

The program was co-sponsored by the Algoma Library Friends and the KCHS. For information about future such programs, visit their website at <http://www.algomapubliclibrary.org/friends>.



Sherry Steffel at the recent Pilsen Cemetery Walk, portraying her great-grandmother, Anna Wilkova Halada. Photo by Hana Steffel.



Jessica Michna portraying Mary Todd Lincoln in "The White House Year." Photo by Jerry Abitz.

ALGOMA SHANTY DAYS —

Held on Saturday, Aug. 11, long-time KCHS director Judy Srnka was recently honored at this event for her support of community events, Friends of the Library, her volunteer efforts at the Algoma Center, and many other contributions toward her community and its residents.



Shanty Days honoree, Judy Srnka. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONVENTION —

This year's convention took place at the American Legion Hall in Pulaski on Friday, Aug. 11. Representing the KCHS were Darlene Muellner, Al Briggs, Jerry Abitz, and his wife, Althea. Sessions included the care of photo collections, fundraising, and a session on sharing ideas and problems. A hearty Polish-style meal was served. Tours were available of their historical museum, the local BVM Catholic Church and of the Chase Stone Barn.



Darlene Muellner and Al Briggs standing in front of the National Register Chase Stone Barn. Chase is the name of the small town where this historic 1903 barn is located. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

VETERANS EVENT — This annual event was held at Hamachek Hall, Kewaunee, on Saturday, Sept. 15. Tom Schuller set up a display from the KCHS Edward Bisely Collection.

AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE DAYS — Every year that Agricultural Heritage & Resources (AHR) has sponsored this event,

KCHS has put up and staffed a display for this two-day affair, this year on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 22-23. Supervised by Arletta Bertrand, this year's display highlighted our collection of Kewaunee County schools and their respective histories. If you've attended this event in the past, you'll be surprised to find the 1956 quonset building is no more (*see photo above*).

We invite you to stop by and visit us at the Algoma Research Center. We will be displaying some of the photos seen at Ag Heritage Days.



New display hall at Kewaunee County Fairgrounds. Photo by Jerry Abitz.

Friends of the Kewaunee County Historical Society

~~ 2012 Donations ~~

We sincerely thank you for your generosity and continuing support of the Society. An envelope is included in this issue for your tax-deductible donation. 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 May 29-August 27, 2012. 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 (see below).

~~ **If you have a change of address, please notify Arletta Bertrand as soon as possible.** ~~

By mail: 1106 Colle Street, Luxemburg WI 54217

By phone: 920-845-2972 ~~ By email: artie2003@netzero.com

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Historical Notes

This newsletter is published quarterly by the Kewaunee County Historical Society.

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KEWAUNEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

VISIT OUR FACILITIES...

KEWAUNEE COUNTY JAIL MUSEUM

Courthouse Square at 613 Dodge Street
Kewaunee WI 54216
Phone: 920-388-0117

September - May by appointment.

Summer (Memorial Day through Labor Day) —

Open daily, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

KEWAUNEE COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

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