



**Turn-away Crowd at our March 25 Luncheon-Lecture!**

Yes, says historian, Minnesota really did have a

**KLAN HISTORY**

**IT HAPPENED HERE:  
 In the 1920s, Minnesota  
 Ku Klux Klan activity  
 hid in plain sight**

By Brian Ojanpa  
 bojanpa@mankatoofreepress.com

These skeletons in Minnesota's closet all wore hoods.

When most people think of the Ku Klux Klan, dark images of Deep South hangmen come to mind. But Minnesota also has a Klan past, and for much of the 1920s it hid in plain sight in dozens of counties.



Janet Roeglin's kin was once visited by a Klan cross-burning.

The organization claimed 100,000 Minnesotans as members in the '20s, though that figure is now presumed to have been generously exaggerated.

Even so, Klan presence was unmistakable, particularly in southern Minnesota, where Owatonna hosted several state "konklaves" replete with parades, ballgames, even weddings.

Three couples exchanged vows at the 1925 state meet at the Steele County Fairgrounds amid a backdrop of flaming crosses.

"When I first started giving these presentations, there were people who said, 'Oh, that never happened here,'" said Nancy Vaillancourt, a historian who co-authored an article for Minnesota History magazine on the Klan's link to Minnesota.

Vaillancourt, manager of the Blooming Prairie library, gave an overview of the state's Klan past at a packed house in the Waseca Historical Society Museum on Thursday.

Vaillancourt said her public recountings of Minnesota Klan activity have prompted people to come forward with tales of their own clans' links with the organization. She said she's received letters from southern Minnesotans



Minnesota Historical Society  
 Above: A circa 1925 banner bespeaks the WKKK, the women's auxiliary unit of the Owatonna Ku Klux Klan.

John Cross  
 Left: Historian/author Nancy Vaillancourt holds a vintage Ku Klux Klan hood she received from a southern Minnesota family that had a relative in the Klan.

that bespeak family connections.

Indeed, audience member Janet Roeglin related her own tale Thursday.

She said when she was a small girl, a great-uncle's hotel in Otisoc near Waseca was visited by a burning cross one night in the 1920s. Why?

"He was German," Roeglin said, and the post-World War I Klan didn't warm to that ethnic group, nor any foreigners and Catholics for that matter.

Ku Klux Klan activity is divided into three major periods: post-Civil War, the post-war 1920s and the Civil Rights era.

Vaillancourt's seven-year research challenge was to unearth the secrets of a secret society in Minnesota, for which newspapers

**"When I first started giving these presentations, there were people who said, 'Oh, that never happened here.'"**

NANCY VAILLANCOURT, historian

gave scant account in the 1920s.

Her own family's oral history filled in some gaps. Her grandfather told her Klan members in Stockton near Winona used intimidation to keep him and other German immigrants from speaking in their native tongue, and both her grandfather and uncle saw Klan cross-burnings in the area.

Unlike the violent lawlessness of its southern U.S. counterparts, no lynchings have ever been attributed to Minnesota Klan groups, Vaillancourt said.

In perhaps a perverse forerunner of so-called Minnesota Nice, this state's Klan in many ways operated as a benign fraternal

organization ostensibly espousing the tenets of Americanism.

"What we can learn from history is that something that looks good can still be twisted around to speak to people's prejudices," Vaillancourt said.

Some highlights of her research:

- The first Klan parade in the state was held in Albert Lea in 1923.

- Afterward a Klan naturalization ceremony in Austin welcomed 400 new members.

- The first state Klan convention was held in Faribault in 1924.

- The mayor of St. James, while in office, also served as Grand Dragon for the Klan's Tri-state Realm.

- Virginia School Board members all claimed to be Klan members, mainly to keep schools public

Please see **KLAN**, Page A7

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**New Exhibit is  
 'For the Birds'**

**April 29  
 Luncheon Talk:  
 Brian Peterson  
 "Visions of the  
 Land"**

PAID RESERVATIONS  
 DUE APRIL 27

History Notes is a publication of the Waseca County Historical Society ©2010  
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**WCHS HOURS:**

**Museum, Research Library & Gift Shop**  
Closed Mondays  
Open Tuesdays-Fridays, 9-5  
Saturdays during special exhibits, 10-2  
**(507) 835-7700**

**Looking for Historical Markers**

Former WCHS board member, Dan Swenson, is creating a register of the historic markers within Waseca County. We are aware of the more commonly known markers out there. They include: 1) Wilton town site marker for first official records; 2) Sutlief corner marker for first white settlers; 3) Courthouse Park plaque for stagecoach stop; 4) Courthouse Park stone early survey marker; 5) Trowbridge Park cornerstone founder Waseca city; 6) Large cornerstone Waseca city hall front door; 7) Mutual Insurance Company plaque Waseca; 8) Veterans plaque first floor inside hospital; 9) Veterans plaque and cannon Courthouse; 10) St. Mary's Church bell site; 11) Janesville Public Library, Civil War plaque, and 12) Hound Street.

**Do you know where any other bronze, stone, or concrete markers or signs are located? We need help from our membership and friends to help us locate other markers, both public and private. This project doesn't include gravestones. Call us with your findings, 835-7700 or email: [danielcswenson@yahoo.com](mailto:danielcswenson@yahoo.com).**

# Summer Event Calendar

[www.twitter.com/wasecahistory](http://www.twitter.com/wasecahistory)

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

**(search: Waseca County Historical Society)**

*More ways to check for updates and participate!*

**Check out our weekly "Blog-istory" at the Waseca County News website: [www.wasecacountynews.com](http://www.wasecacountynews.com)**

**SPRING LUNCHEON-LECTURES:**

**Thursday, April 29**

**Photojournalist, Brian Peterson**, will present *Voices of the Land*, a book, video and website featuring the most beautiful, seasonal black and white photographs of Minnesota landscapes accompanied by the voices of the people associated with each of the landscape choices. You will be amazed. And someone we all know is featured in one of the photo series with a narrative by his son.

PAID RESERVATIONS PLEASE, by April 27, call 507-835-7700, 12-1:00 p.m., WCHS members \$11, non-members \$16.

**Thursday, May 27**

**Historian and Food Editor, Raye Eighmey** will present her latest book, *Food Will Win the War: Minnesota Crops, Cooks and Conservation During World War I*. PAID RESERVATIONS PLEASE, by May 25, call 507-835-7700, 12-1:00 p.m., WCHS members \$11, non-members \$16.

**OTHER EVENTS:**

**April 27—Researching Your Family History**

**May 8—Farmamerica's "Springtime on the Farm"**

**June-August—Farmamerica's Walking Tours** on the one-mile Time Lane Trail; Tues-Fri, 9-2

**June 11-12-13—Janesville's Hay Daze** celebration/parade.

**July 3—WCHS Annual Chautauqua Revival** at Historic Maplewood Park in Waseca.

**July 4—New Richland's Farm/City Days** parade

**July 4—Elysian's Fourth of July** parade

**July 14-18—Waseca County Fair:** WCHS's Hodgson Hall will have the History of Clear Lake exhibit; Photo Face-Boards; Used Book Sale, and concessions. See you at the Fair!

**August 1—Waseca Garden Club's Garden Tour—**A free event, WCHS's Bailey-Lewer House hosts with lemonade, cookies and Garden Tour maps

## From the Co-Directors . . .

Sheila Morris & Joan Mooney

Spring is just about here, the snow is just about melted (there's still a mound of it on the south side of Hodgson Hall), and we're beginning our fourth year already, as co-directors. Since the last newsletter, we've had exciting happenings around YOUR museum:

We ended 2009 with all-time high exhibit attendance at the Doll House show, extended into February because of continuing interest and visitorship. Our volunteers gave us 1,707 hours of their time. With new software last year we are now able to keep an accurate count of those statistics. Our new exhibit, ". . . For the Birds" is fun and full of spring, even if the Minnesota temps bob up and down.

The **Annual Ice Harvest** was so successful not just for the students, but for the beautiful day enjoyed by other visitors and new volunteers. Mountains of snow created by the snowplows created great sliding and fun for the kids in between the ice-scoring, ice-cutting and hauling. They learned and laughed through the entire experience.

On March 17-18 WCHS was involved in hosting the **Southern Minnesota Tourism Association Conference**. Some 35 representatives from around our region gathered here to learn about Waseca County's tourist attractions and leisure-time locations. Joan Mooney led them on a tour of our area, showcasing especially our historic homes, buildings, parks and trails.

Our first Spring Luncheon on March 25 attracted a full house. Many had to be turned away, as we were all out of chairs! Thanks to **Nancy Vallaincourt** for kicking off the Luncheon Series with her presentation on "The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Minnesota".

On April 29, **Brian Peterson** will speak about his *Voices of the Land*. Wait till you see his photographs! And on May 27, **Raye Eighmey** will talk about her book, *Food Will Win the War: Minnesota Crops, Cooks and Conservation During WWI*. We are grateful to Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council for funding for these three luncheon-lecture events.

New Richland Historical Society Board, with Joan Mooney



Back on February 22 we met with the **New Richland Historical Society** to advise them on a new donation to their collection—about 250 old glass slides, black and white photographs of 1920s-1940s New Richland residents and business-people found by the Finseth family in the old Faust Theater. Most were in good to fair condition. WCHS assisted NRHS in applying to the Minnesota Digital Library Project which will provide free high resolution scanning of all these images, making them accessible via [www.mndigital.org](http://www.mndigital.org). NRHS will be given a CD containing all those images to keep. The NRHS Board of Directors is planning to make enlargements to display in front of the community and to assist with identifications. This collection is a treasure and we look forward to seeing how this will benefit the New Richland community.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

### Waseca Area Foundation Funds Benefit WCHS

There are 7 funds in the Waseca Area Foundation that benefit the Waseca County Historical Society indicating tremendous support for our mission. The first endowment fund established for WCHS was the **Edgar F. and Ethel Johnson Fund**. The **WCHS Endowment Fund** was started by our Board of Directors and then Executive Director, Margaret Sinn, with a substantial anonymous donation. The **Phil Allen Fund** was established by his family and friends to specifically benefit the Bailey-Lewer Research Library. The **Frank and Barbara Goodspeed Memorial Fund** was started by their niece, Dorothy Moriarty. Our most generous fund came from **Jerry and Linda Rutledge** in 2006. And in 2008 they created a Charitable Remainder Trust in the amount of \$500,000 which will eventually benefit WCHS. At the end of 2008 we created the **WCHS Lifetime Endowment Fund**, in which each \$1,000 Lifetime Membership is deposited. The **Wes and Carol Rethwill History Fund** was started as a donation to the 150th campaign by Dr. Wes Rethwill.

**We are so grateful to all of these individuals and contributors for the kind of support that will last forever! If you are interested in contributing to one of these Endowment Funds, or possibly starting a new endowment in memory of a loved one, please contact Sheila Morris, 507-835-7700.**

Finally, we are looking forward to the Waseca County Fair this summer. Additional upgrades to Hodgson Hall are happening. Our concessions will still be the best buy at the fair—popcorn, pop and ice cream. The Used Book Sale will continue—drop off your used books at the museum. Our main exhibit will be a history of Clear Lake. Let us know if you have artifacts, photos, information, stories about the development and history of Clear Lake.

In spite of all of our successes these last three years, we still face cuts to our operating funds. Operating funds are what keep the doors open and staff in place to promote and write for program and project funding. Project grants cannot be used for operations. Please call us if you have questions about how WCHS is funded. Thank you members and contributors, continue to **LOOK FORWARD TO OUR PAST!**

—Sheila and Joan



The mill in February 2010 is rebuilt and needing funds for interpretation.

## Preservation in Waseca County:

**Seha Sorghum Mill gets new life:** The Seha Sorghum Mill located on E. Elysian Road, has been on the National Historic Register for many years. But not that many years ago, the mill building caved in and the milling machinery lay in the open. This site is a very significant part of early Waseca County history; and because of the care of its owners, Don and Joyce Kaplan, and a caring and knowledgeable neighbor in Gordon Jindra, the mill may be ready for visitors again soon. Jindra has rebuilt the mill shed keeping the original footprint and using most of the salvageable wood. The windows and doors are the same, and the machinery will be reassembled and made stable. Plans are underway to provide the history of sorghum as a crop, the mill story and the Seha family. WCHS is working with the Kaplans and Jindra to raise funds for the interpretive site. The public will be welcomed to visit at any time when the project is completed. That date is yet to be set, so stand by for further information. WCHS is accepting donations on behalf of this project.

**Trowbridge Park Band Shell :** Originally built as a memorial to Ira Trowbridge, the Waseca founder, by his family in 1915—it has stood solemnly for nearly 100 years, and is now needing some maintenance, upkeep and new purpose. At the turn of the twentieth century small town bands were major community entertainment. Especially in the summer weekends and evenings, the bands would play and residents would gather to socialize and listen to the music played. However, by the 1920s and the invention of the radio, staying at home and listening to the wider variety of music, drama and news, was much more convenient. In the 1950s the Waseca Library was built and put the band shell in its shadow. Since then it was rarely used for its original purpose. Instead the structure became a hang out for vandals and a trouble spot for local police.



The Waseca Heritage Preservation Commission has begun the process of nominating the Trowbridge Band Shell to the National Register of Historic Places. The HPC has applied for a Cultural Heritage grant as well as a Waseca Area Foundation grant for the project. If funded, the work should begin this summer.

### Waseca City Council discusses mid-year cuts to Community Enhancement Fund

At the April 6 Waseca City Council Work Session, Crystal Prentice, City Manager, presented recommendations for the City Council to consider. They included a 24.98% cut to the Community Enhancement Fund—which is the program by which WCHS and other Waseca area non-profits' operating budgets are partially funded. Of course for each, it represents significant funding—and thus, significant loss. The decision was caused by the City's loss of Local Government Aid (which was also 24.9%) from the state, recommended by Governor Pawlenty and approved by the state legislature in March 2010. This is the mid-year funding recommendation and will be voted on at the April 20 Waseca City Council meeting. It is important to cite the additional recommendations of cuts to City staff and department budgets—which together made up the amounts lost by the loss of LGA. City Councilperson John Clemons cautioned that it is likely that even further cuts including those to the Community Enhancement Fund will happen into 2011 and beyond.

The Waseca City Council wants us to feel that we are all in this together. As long as cuts are across the board and include some sacrifice by staff and council, we will feel that we are in this recession together. Our question is: How far will these actions go? If the recession turns around by 2011 or 2012, will this city council return the funding? How would you rate our quality of life in Waseca? What does it include?



## Eyewitness Account of the Great Herter Fire of 1942

By Peter Georgas

**A**t approximately 12:45 pm, on Thursday, January 8, 1942, I was walking back to school after eating lunch at my Dad's restaurant, the Crystal Cafe, on the corner of State and Elm. As I approached 2nd Avenue N.E., I heard a sudden and massive explosion from across the street. I spun around in time to see the entire front of Herter's Dry Goods Store fly out into the street--shattered glass, mannequins, window displays, clothing--followed by great billows of black smoke.

Truly frightened, as I was only 11 at the time, I ran back to the restaurant which was three doors away from Herter's, separated only by the Johnson Radio Store. Inside there was chaos as lunch customers quickly paid their bills, bundled up (it was only a few degrees above zero) and ran outside to see what had happened. Waseca's firetrucks arrived but the explosion and blaze were so huge additional trucks were called from Waterville and Janesville.

Dad knew that the store was in jeopardy. He gathered the cash from the register--bills and coins--and went to the safe that was on the landing to the basement. I ran to the rolltop desk he had at the back of the restaurant to retrieve a box of toy warships made of lead to put in the safe along with the receipts. I watched over his shoulder as he knelt on the floor to open the safe. He was so nervous that he kept missing the combination. As I watched, smoke began to seep through the wall and crawl up the steps from the basement. The restaurant was doomed. Dad finally unlocked the safe, threw in the money and my toy ships. After making sure everyone had left, we went out and crossed the street to Didra Drug Store to watch the fire.

It was intense and merciless. In a short time my Dad's Cafe was engulfed in flames. Firemen poured water on the building but to no avail. It was so cold that hoses and equipment froze in the street. It didn't take long for the

roof of the two-story building to collapse onto the main floor which in turn collapsed into the basement. Soon what had been my Dad's restaurant along with five other businesses were mere shells. Only fragments of walls stood--charred brick from which huge icicles hung. Frozen water had turned main street into an ice rink.

I watched till the fire was over and finally walked to school where I was the center of attention because I had witnessed the entire calamity. My teacher asked me to describe what I saw. I stood at my desk and relived the experience. It was later that I learned a woman had died from her burns. She was a clerk in Herter's and had turned on a light in the fitting room. An electric spark apparently ignited natural gas from an undetected leak.

Days later, after everything had cooled off, I joined my Dad to find the safe in the rubble. He was able to open it. We found that the coins had fused together and my toy ships had melted in the intense heat.

Life changed after that--I left the town I grew up in. That April my family moved to Columbia, South Carolina. We stuck it out for four years and then moved to Minneapolis.

I was very happy to be back in Minnesota. —END

Peter Georgas lives in Minneapolis with his wife, Peggy, and is retired from a career in public relations, most notably with the Walker Art Center.



# 2009 Accomplishments

**Despite the recession and economic downturn, some very special things happened in 2009 for WCHS:**

1. A special member donated funds to purchase new front doors for the museum. She also matched that donation to the WCHS Endowment Fund!
2. The 150th Birthday Gift Capital Campaign ended its three-years at \$169,000, well over the \$150,000 fundraising goal! (See a full report in the 2009 Annual Report next month.)
3. We initiated Government Appreciation Day in June that was, well—*appreciated!*
4. Membership goals were reached.
5. Attendance and support for our events increased—exhibits attracted over 2,500 museum and library visitors from 114 MN communities, 30 different states, 75 U.S. cities, and 7 foreign countries! Including ALL our events we reached 8,221 people in 2009.
6. Website hits reached 629,467.
7. Marriage Index was completed at year's end by volunteer, Karen Lechner.
8. This was all accomplished with the volunteer assistance of 1,707 volunteer hours; and the WCHS staff who all work part-time.

## Waseca County's 150th

### BIRTHDAY GIFT CAMPAIGN

*Look forward to our past!*

**Three-Year Capital Campaign Exceeded Goal!**



*New doors installed in October made possible by a member's generous donation.*



*Left: "Unzie" was the face of our Membership campaign! . . . Right: Government Appreciation Day last June thanked city, county and township support! Below: Doll House exhibit attracted record numbers.*

### WCHS Projects for 2010:

**Continue to work on the balance of funding and sustaining operations.**

**Promote gifts to our endowment funds and launch Planned Giving.**

**Finish the Waseca County Timeline—  
IN PROGRESS**

**Begin planning for a Herter exhibit for 2011—IN PROGRESS**

**Upgrade the B-L Research Library bookshelves & storage**

**Begin feasibility discussion for a lift in the museum building—IN PROGRESS**

**Upgrade our technology in 2010—  
ACCOMPLISHED —with grant from Alliance Pipeline!**



# Thanks to Volunteers & New or Renewing Members

**Since January 1, 2010:**

## Donations/ UNRESTRICTED

Itron Employees Book Sale  
MRCI-Mankato Rehabilitation Center, Inc.  
ExxonMobil, *matching volunteer hours of Don Wynnemer*  
Chaffin, Lois & Bob  
Wendland, Helen  
Maidl, Charlie  
Anonymous  
White, Millie  
Brown Printing  
Purcell, Ron & Pat  
**GiveMN ON-LINE:**  
Welch, Janet

## Donations/RESTRICTED

Hunter, Robert  
*for the 150<sup>th</sup> Capital Campaign*  
Waseca Schools ISD #849  
*for Ice Harvest*

## Memorials/UNRESTRICTED

**In memory of Richard Markus**  
by Francis Fitzsimmons  
by Barbara Berringer  
**In memory of Don Wobschall**  
by Donna Fostveit  
**In memory of Lydia Owens**  
by Jack and Jane Kolars  
**In memory of Mabel Priebe**  
by Gene and Kathy Rosenthal  
**In memory of Ethel Ferch**  
by the family of Ethel Ferch  
by Donna Fostveit  
**In memory of Donna McLoone**  
by Donna Fostveit  
**In memory of Dwain D. Nelson**  
by Donna Fostveit  
by Jeanette Rosenthal  
by Henry & Phyllis Lewer  
**In memory of Raymond Sutter**  
by Donna Fostveit  
**In memory of Doris Born**  
by Donna Fostveit  
**In memory of Clara Barbknecht**  
by Gene & Kathleen Rosenthal  
**In memory of Willard Seewald**  
by Evelyn Linde

## Memorials/RESTRICTED

**In memory of Richard Markus**  
by Jerry and Linda Rutledge  
*for Phil Allen Fund*  
by Elizabeth Markus  
*for WCHS Endowment Fund*

## Grants/RESTRICTED

-Alliance Pipeline Grant  
*for technology upgrade,*  
\$2,600  
-Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council  
*for Spring Lunch-Lecture Series,* \$1,500  
-Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council  
*for Chautauqua 2010,* \$3,000

## Appropriations/

### UNRESTRICTED

-City of Waseca  
\$4,500-From 2009 Budget  
-City of Janesville  
\$1,000-From 2009 Budget  
-Byron Township, \$150  
-Alton Township, \$300

## Renewed Memberships

Anderson, Julie  
Bagne, Myrwood & Helen  
Barber, James C.  
Bendix, John & Deanna  
Bentley, Bethel  
Berger, Doris  
Blunck, Doris  
Byrne, Robert  
Byron, Jean  
Carlson, Mary E.  
Chaffin, Lois & Bob  
Crawford, Sharon L.  
DeLaitsch, Steve & Mary Jo  
Dosh, Millie  
Duggan, Chris  
Foels, Arlene  
Ford, Carol  
Forrest, Daniel F.  
Forsythe, Diane & Rick  
Gauger, Barb  
Gigeay, Dorothy  
Groskreutz, Dale  
Guggisberg, Jane R.  
Hansen, Pastor Nancy Ellen  
Hovelsrud, Susie  
Jacobson, Robin  
Kahnke, Nancy  
Kramer, Merila  
Larson, Janette  
Linde, Evelyn  
Lundquist, Jean  
McKinley, Kathleen & Dale  
Miller, Jean  
Pommerenke, Gloria  
Proechel, Lori  
Purcell, Ron & Pat  
Roesler, Bob

Rosenthal, Kathy  
Routh, Warren  
Shepard, Doug  
Smith, Wilda  
Srp, Roy  
Taylor, Linda & Gary  
Turner, Marilyn  
Turnquist, Helen  
Velett, Laurie  
Waggoner, Linda  
Ward, Paul & Doris  
White, Millie  
Witt, Norma  
Wuger, Patricia  
Yamazaki, Stella  
Zimmerman, Randy  
Zimprich, Shirley

## New Memberships

Anderson, Alyssa  
Collins, Larry  
Coyer, Gayle  
Hager, Ruth Ann  
Hedstrom, Kristine  
Kamm, Becky  
Klein, David  
Lamson, Barbara  
Maidl, Charlie  
Meyer, Marlene  
Miller, Jeremiah  
Moorman, Joanne  
Richard, Deborah  
Rosenthal, Carol  
Zimmerman, Tina & Mike

## SPECIAL THANKS!

David Hirscher  
*for indexing the World War I Veterans book*

### *Other Volunteers:*

Rod & Ruth Searle  
Don Wynnemer  
Donna Fostveit  
LDS Elders  
WHS/YSL students  
Kris Foels  
Phyllis Suenmnick  
Michael Hecht  
Jon & Vanessa Zimprich  
Karen Buschow  
Tina Zimmerman  
George Kastle *for construction of new tabletop podium*  
Darv Tollefson's STS Crew  
*for heavy-lifting*

Jean Lundquist, Don Siems & Don Zwach *for teaching Genealogy classes*

### *Our Library Indexers:*

Sharon Allen  
Doris Berger  
Julie Anderson  
Linda Evers  
Karen Lechner *for 1) organizing the used book sale at Itron and donating proceeds to WCHS; and 2) for completing the Waseca County Marriage Index for online accessibility!*

Catherine Lemke  
*for donating a high-res scan of Catherine Elsie Prechel Daehn, the newspaper dress lady!*

Melvin Emery  
*for donation of hand vacuum*

### *Ice Harvest Volunteers:*

Scott Roemhildt  
Amy Roemhildt  
Jeff Huelsnitz  
John Pribble  
Joel Groebner  
Michael Huercamp  
Devyn Rohlk, Roundbank  
Bev Steffen, Roundbank  
Doug Leet, Roundbank  
Carol Raimann, Roundbank  
Marita Wadd  
Curt Tesch  
Harlan Gekkeler  
Marlyn Gekkeler  
Andy Gekkeler  
Mark Wegner  
Darv Tollefson & STS Crew  
Mark Bartelt, City Parks  
Jolene Gundermann, City Parks  
Joe Moen, City Parks

Waseca CIS Principal John Huttemier & sixth-graders

TEAM Academy Charter School Principal Jill Ladwig, teachers, & sixth-graders

Don Siems *for restoring the 1920s knitting machine*

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## BRIAN PETERSON

Minneapolis Tribune  
Photojournalist

### “VOICES FOR THE LAND”

Thursday, April 29, 12-1 p.m.

PAID RESERVATIONS BY APRIL 27



Membership Renewal Date



CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE



Minnesota Historical Society

Minnesota Ku Klux Klan members put their best sheets forward in posing for a 1920s photo. The KIGY (Klansman, I Greet You) on the car bumper was a common covert salute to other members.

## KLAN: Group began to decline in late 1920s

Continued from Page A1

in that Iron Range city, thereby discouraging the start-up of Catholic schools.

■ Cross burnings took place in Brainerd and Red Wing.

■ In 1926 a Waseca Klan unit was chartered, along with those in Kenyon, Dodge Center and Rochester.

■ In Owatonna, a 20-acre site that accommodated the 1926 state konklave is still known as Klan Park.

Public pressure eventually turned on the Klan, and it declined in Minnesota in the late 1920s.

The Midway News, a St. Paul weekly newspaper, began printing the names of Klan members, and one night members of

Owatonna Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization, exposed identities of Klan members leaving a meeting by shining car headlights on them.

In a gesture more symbolic than necessary, Minnesota Secretary of State Joan Growe dissolved the Steele County Chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in 1997.

## Researching Your Family History 101: Beginning Genealogy Classes in Janesville and Waseca

**Registration deadline is Tuesday, April 20.** Sign up through Community Education—the three-part class fee is \$15 per person. Instructors are Jean Lundquist, Don Siems and Don Zwach. Learn simple tips to help develop research strategies to BEGIN recording your family history—online, at WCHS’s Research Library, LDS Resources, and other locations. *To know the past is to understand the future.*



**IN JANESVILLE:** Janesville High School Media Center, 7-9 p.m.

Session 1-April 27; Session 2-May 4; Session 3-May 11. To register in Janesville, call 507-234-5181 or online, [www.jwp.k12.mn.us](http://www.jwp.k12.mn.us).

**IN WASECA:** Waseca High School Media Center, 7-9 p.m.  
Session 1-April 29; Session 2-May 6; and Session 3-May 13.  
To register in Waseca, call 507-835-5626, or register online, [www.waseca.k12.mn.us](http://www.waseca.k12.mn.us).