

M-T Historical Society grateful to community

GUEST OPINION

The Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society (MTHS) has enriched the local community for nearly 30 years. Originally founded as the Mequon Historical Society and built around the personal collection of Don and Bev Silldorff, the village of Thiensville was added to the name and focus of the organization in 2012. Since its inception, the mission of the society has been to gather, preserve and share the documents, genealogies, photographs and maps of the former town of Mequon and the two communities that formed from the original town.

As with any organization, the historical society has had its own history filled with ups and downs. Many of the original members of the founding board were still serving as its leaders 25 years after its establishment, but it was clear that “the times they are a changing.”

In 2011, a fresh infusion of support from several local businesses, organizations and individuals brought renewed vigor to the organization. Donations from the Mequon Community Foundation, citizen Connie Pukaite and the Mequon-Thiensville Sunrise Rotary Club provided funding for a presentation by wellknown Milwaukee historian John Gurda. Over 100 people attended the Gurda presentation, and sufficient funds were left over to put out a newsletter. Sommer’s Automotive stepped up to underwrite the MTHS website, Van and Susan Mobley funded a new computer and over 100 people renewed their membership or joined the society within months of the Gurda presentation.

Since that renaissance, several more businesses, organizations and individuals have helped build the society and support its mission. Suburban Harley has become a consistent supporter and underwriter of MTHS.

When a new copy machine was needed, TW Metals on Port Washington Road offered one. The Thiensville-Mequon Lions Club and the Mequon Woman’s Club provided generous donations in exchange for maintaining their clubs’ records. Several private citizens and the Weyenberg Library donated much-needed file cabinets and shelving.

The biggest shot in the arm came in 2013, when Cedarburg Auction Gallery asked the society to work with them to sell over 100 paintings by local artist Earle Raine. That effort netted over \$3,000 for MTHS thanks to the generosity of Tarq Durante, the gallery’s owner.

Over the past five years, MTHS has progressively computerized its collections and spent thousands of dollars on acid-free archival storage materials to preserve its collection. The Wisconsin State Historical Society and The Mequon Community Foundation provided generous donations to purchase additional archival storage materials. When the long-time home of the society, the Logemann Community Center, closed, the Logemann board gave MTHS a generous donation as they closed their accounts. This past spring, the society was able to enter into a very favorable rental arrangement for a new office with Sidney Koritzinsky, property manager at the Thiensville Professional Park, and the City of Mequon volunteered to move the entire MTHS collection to its new home.

As the M-T Historical Society moves forward, one of the biggest changes on the horizon is the hoped-for use of the Isham Day House, the small cottage across from Mequon City Hall, as a postal museum. Using his own funds, Sam Cutler Jr. of Thiensville is making plans to showcase the building as it may have been in the mid-1800s when it housed the Mequon River Post Office (or as he calls it, “the original Town Center”). Mr. Cutler also plans to use the historic building as a stamp museum, with sales to benefit the M-T Historical Society.

Thanks to many years of generous support by the broad Mequon-Thiensville community, the M-T Historical Society boasts a rich past and looks forward to many, many more years of service as they gather, preserve and share the rich history of Thiensville and Mequon.

Bob Blazich is president of the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society.



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