



Volume 90

February 2018

9030 Forestview Lane N. Maple Grove, MN 55369 763-494-5983 Open 2nd Sunday of the month 1-4 pm

Maple Grove Historical Preservation Society

OFFICERS

President: Al Madsen
Vice President: Caroline Schaefer
Secretary: Joyce Deane
Treasurer: Patty Reuter
Newsletter Editor: Pat Ruffing
Web page designer: Steve Briggs

A Special Gift

Every year as the snow begins to fly and the temperature encourages the wearing of mittens and cats stretch out for hours in the sun, I think of a special gift I received as a child.

I remember the excitement on the day I received the special box from a favorite grandpa. However, finding it labeled with my sisters' and my name was a bit of a disappointment – we would have to share. Grandpa, in his wisdom, knew the secrets if the best gift giving. When we unwrapped the gift we were surprised to find old pieces of tire cut into circles, an old hat and scarf, and two other odd pieces of tire.

It's a snowman kit" grandpa explained, recognizing the puzzled looks on our faces. The kit was put away for a while; in the midst of other flashy packages it seemed insignificant.

Later as the temperatures warmed and the white outdoors turned to the gooey consistency in which all of us delight, thoughts returned to the simple gift. We built the biggest and best snowman with Grandpa's hand cut pieces of tire, forming a mouth, nose, eyes and coal black buttons for eyes.;

As the years passed the special kit has been used again and again. It became a special symbol of grandpa's love that out lasted the other flashy gifts of the holiday. Today, the snowman kit still waits at home for a time when another generation of family will play outdoors when the snow turns gooey and a snowman will be built. By Tricia Leck



MEMORIAL BENCHES AND FLAG IN FRONT OF MUSEUM.

In memory of a MGHPs member, active in the society for 5 years may have his/ her name plate on a memorial bench.

A man outstanding in many fields!

Walter Schumacher, active member of the MGHPs, died Dec 13, 2017. He was born October 13, 1929 in Anoka and lived in Dayton township as a child. Walt's parents were Louis Schumacher and Susan Dehn.

His dad sold the family farm and it became Daytona Golf Course. As an adult, Walt lived in Maple Grove near the Maple Grove Middle School .

Armistice Day Blizzard – November 11, 1940

By Walter Schumacher (Shortened version)

"My name is Walter Schumacher and I was 11 years old. I lived on an 80 acre farm in Dayton township with my family of Father, Mother and 3 brothers and one sister. In 24 hours the twin cities got walloped with 16.8 inches of snow ... a Monday morning ...we had to milk the cows by hand ...Then we fed the cows and young cattle, horses, pigs and chickens. After the cows were milked Mother went to the house to make breakfast on the wood burning kitchen stove...

The second day of the storm the snow was blowing very hard. We could not see anything outside. We had to do the chores, using a kerosene light. Father said he would string twine to tie to the house and he would go and find the barn...We all went together along the twine string to the barn to do the milking...The milkman did not come as the roads were closed. After one day the milk is too old. So we fed it to the pigs. It took four days before the gravel road got plowed open.

Dayton township had narrow roads with high bank hills and low cuts over creeks. With snow filling them 6,8, and 12 foot deep snowdrifts, the snow plow could not go through. Us farm boys would shovel a 3 foot deep path in the middle of the road about 5 feet long. Then the snow plow would drive into the bank of snow, move about 3-6 feet and stop. Snow fell back on the plow and the driver had to restart the motor. We would shovel the snow plow. . . This continued until we got through the snow bank."

Walt married Betty Rutkowski of Elk River on August 23, 1956.



Walt is survived by his wife Betty; children: Edwin, Jerome (Renee), Robert, (Carla), Lynne (Michael) McCormick, Denise (Scott) Halter; grandchildren: Mallory, Dane, Lisa, Tashina, Corbin, and Samantha.



U.S. Army



He studied Auto Mechanics at Dunwoody Institute using his G.I benefits.

Walt taught Auto Mechanics at North Hennepin Technical College.



He loved racing cars –MDRA and driving them in parades and was active in the Back to the 50s Show.



Walt was very active in The Knights of Columbus from age 18. He participated for many hours in charitable and patriotic events.

After his retirement in the late 90's from North Hennepin Technical College, he became involved in Maple Grove Farmers Market, Maple Syruping, and the Maple Grove Historical Preservation Society.

10 Christmas Toys Through the Decades

Museum Display for Christmas 2017



Based on an article by Sarah Pruitt December 1, 2015 written for the History Channel

1910s — Teddy Bear

1920s — Yo-Yo

1930s — Shirley Temple doll

1940s — Slinky

1950s — Mr. Potato Head

1960s — G.I. Joe

1970s — Star Wars action figures

1980s — Cabbage Patch Kids

1990s — Beanie Babies and Tickle Me Elm

2000s — Wii

Honorable mention: *Erector sets, Lionel trains*

Honorable mention: *Tinker Toys, Raggedy Ann*

Honorable mention : *Monopoly, Red Ryder BB gun*

Honorable mention: *LEGOs, Silly Putty*

Honorable mention: *Hula Hoop, Barbie, Play-Doh, Tonka Trunks*

Honorable mention: *Etch-a-Sketch, Easy Bake Oven, Playmobile*

Honorable mention: *NERF ball, Speak and Spell*

Honorable mention: *Rubik's Cube, Transformers, Koosh ball, Teddy Ruxpin*

Honorable mention: *Furby, Nintendo Game Boy*

Honorable mention: *Razor Scooter, Bratz dolls, Webkinz, Zhu Zhu Pets*

The Bobsled

For fun in winter, dad built a 10 person bobsled that could be pulled behind the car on the snow packed gravel roads. We also used it on the hill just to the west of the farmhouse. I remember we hit a tree on one of those runs. Someone come away with just a bloody nose! There was also a frozen pond between our barn and the neighbor's land (Schimmelpfennig's) where Lyn and Al played hockey. They also practiced on the kitchen floor!

By Gwen Joyner Christensen From Life at Elm Creek School



Do you have a story: ABOUT TAPPING MAPLE TREES, MAKING MAPLE SYRUP OR CANDY— May issue - OR ABOUT PLANES, TRAINS, CARS, OR HIGHWAYS FOR AN UP COMING ISSUE ? Send them to Pat Ruffing.

Cross Country Skiing

By Jerry Scherber

Winter was fun with the Kisch boys.....Growing up

in the Osseo area I remember being invited to the Kisch Farm to ski..

This was not downhill but getting pulled on a tow rope behind the pick-up. Farm boys drove at young ages. Someone drove the pick- up, someone rode in the open box and then there was me skiing, hanging on to the rope being pulled on skis in the ditch line. Unknown to me the ditch line was crossed by Mr. Kisch, when he took the team of horses into the field to dump manure. This caused a break in this otherwise very smooth ditch line. I was being pulled one memorable time in the ditch when I encountered the ruts made by the manure being relocated....I flew and crashed. When I finally stopped being dragged my jacket was so full of snow someone said, they would have to cut the buttons off my coat so they could release me – somewhere inside all that snow. AND if you “played” with the Kisch boys there was always an extra plate at the meal table where you ate with them as well.



Cutting the Christmas Tree
Display at Museum.

Don Kisch’s sled and snowshoes, and Museum artifacts: Bavarian boots, pants, ski sweater, a doll, skis and ax.



HAVING FUN ON A MINNESOTA WINTER DAY.

DISPLAY AT THE MAPLE GROVE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

ARTIFACTS FROM THE MUSEUM INCLUDE SKIS, POLES, DOLL DRESSED IN WINTER CLOTHES, SLED, DOUBLE RUNNER ICE SKATES AND STORIES AND PHOTOS FROM MGHPS MEMBERS.

January 2018



Cutter Sleigh

I Remember...

by Lillian Weber Havel

"When I was 4 years old, I used to ride in a cutter sleigh. In early 1920 it was our only means of transportation for our family. Occasionally on Sunday morning if the weather was nice, my parents would dress me in my winter coat, cap, mittens, and overshoes and wrap me in a blanket. They would sit me between them in the cutter and cover the three of us with a buffalo robe. Then we would ride up to Rogers to our parish church and visit my aunt and uncle who lived at a nearby farm. It was always a very cold ride!"



Sleigh donated to Maple Grove Historical Museum



T'WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS-
Museum Display
Decorating the Tree -



Vintage Christmas ornaments on display

Tin Can Hockey

In winter, this ice covered area [on the gravel driveway and yard between the house, barn, garage and sheds] was used for tin can hockey. We would use a tin can and any stick that we could find. If we had an old broom handle or a piece of well rod we would have the perfect stick. The littlest kid would usually get hurt and end the game. When the hurt had healed we would start over again. The game was great fun. by James Weber from Spring on the Farm.



A Maple Grove yard in winter
—awaiting the summer swimming season!

Three Rivers Park District

“your home to the outdoors”- website motto

How did we get the wonderful Elm Creek Park Reserve, Eagle Lake Regional Park and Fish Lake Regional Park-Three River Park System here in Maple Grove? The following is gleaned from the website and from the oral interviews about the Park's early history.

1957– Beginning- 21,000 acres in 20 years

Charles E. Doell was the Superintendent for Minneapolis Park Board when the law passed in 1955 and a county park system or Park Board was established in 1957.

“Charles Doell said: “Interestingly, how the suburban development happened: “This history goes to the time when a park had been used for a summer playground for church and volunteer organizations. Baker Park [Reserve] was finally donated to the park system. In that time period, the movement for a county park system was in the making. Consequently, when Baker wanted to give this to the public, he gave it to the Minneapolis Park Department as custodian of it until a Hennepin County Park Department would be developed.” (p 16 Charles Doehl Superintendent of Minneapolis Park)

Clifton French was appointed as the 1st superintendent of Three Rivers Park District from 1961-1984. He said: “The whole purpose behind the natural resources and saving and protecting the environment is really for the present people and future generations--my children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I want these places to be kept pure and clean and fine.” (p. 32 Clifton French Superintendent of Henn. Parks)

“There are years ... when we were mostly acquiring land and... I was more in the real estate business than I was in the park [business].” (p. 32 Clifton French Superintendent of Henn. Parks)

“There were people that knew that when Clif French was coming they were going to get out the shotgunthere's a story about some lady up there in Elm Creek. They were going to take her land by eminent domain. When he came out there, she was standing in the doorway with her shotgun saying, “You're not taking my place.” And he got to know her pretty well and eventually we acquired her property and she was okay with it.”(interview with Paul Lindholm Former Commissioner: p.47)

“I remember another farmer coming in to get his check after we had purchased [his land], this was in Elm Creek. He came in to get his check ...It was over a hundred thousand dollars. I remember him sitting there talking to me

and saying, “I know this is going to really sound stupid to you, but I have no idea what I am going to do with this money or with my life.” Those were the moments where for me it became more than just a job. It was an understanding that what I was involved in was really important stuff because it had profound effects, both negative and positive, on people's lives.”(Dan Cochran director of operations P65)

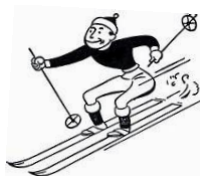
“Think it's a unique part of the history of Hennepin Countyone of the things that we were required to do-- because we were using federal dollars, we were getting grants from HUD, ...was to relocate people. And so, Clif said, “Okay, you're going to do the relocations.” I had no idea what the word meant and I said, “What are you talking about?” He said, “We're going to buy this land and so these farmers are going to move and you're going to move them to wherever they're going to go.” (Dan Cochran, director of operations p79)

1967–1970 Restoring- Wetland, Prairies, Woodlands and Wildlife

“Mr. Lowry [president of Northwestern Bank] was interested in us because he understood our policies. He understood what we trying to become and he wanted to be part of that. He brought some of his private wealth to the District, which resulted in that nature center. Then later, Elm Creek. . .” (Dan Cochran, director of operations p67)

“At that time we also had [named for Whitney Eastman] Eastman Nature Center up in Elm Creek. Each of these locations where we put our trail systems in, and where the buildings were sited, were predicated on how we could access the ecosystems for our educational needs primarily.” (Kathy Heidel naturalist p106)

“I was resource manager of the Park District and we worked together a lot in the field in trying to set a base of operation; i.e. what was the predominant vegetation in the Park Reserves? A lot of the property we were looking at was acquired agricultural lands that we had focus on for converting back to a natural condition, circa 1850. As far as the vegetation was concerned, there was maple-basswood forest and associated wildlife species. Once upon a time, the property was, in fact, a maple-basswood forest, it was native prairie, and there were wetlands that supported wetland-oriented wildlife and vegetation.” (Dave Weaver director of natural resources. P124)



1971–1989 Building–Park Facilities and trails

“What did Snowmobilers, teach the park staff in the 1960’s?” They are bringing about an order and a control that would cost us a lot of money to pay for, but they’re doing it because they want to [keep] a quality trail system [available] for them [to use].” (Clifton French P33)

... “We finally came to the acceptance of connecting the parks through trails and putting the trails on the outside edges of the parks. Because our acquisitions had gone to roads in most cases, we were able to parallel the roads with the trails. That satisfied the snowmobilers generally, not completely...” (Dan Cochran director of operations P83)

“Then it seemed logical for us to bring cross-country skiers into the mix. That program just exploded. As I remember, we bought a hundred pairs of skis and we started at Baker in the back of the barn or someplace. We had a little place out there and I remember we took off with that program. That was probably one of the biggest things. February of “ sixty-nine, we had so much snow we couldn’t get around the trails... so we bought snowshoes and we started having the snowshoe element.” (P111 Kathy Heidel naturalist)

“All of the sudden the state got involved and we had trails being built across the state. We were a big part of making all that happen through the park system.”(Dan Cochran director of operations P83)

“The interior trails were... really important because ... people were traveling out from Minneapolis and wherever coming to these parks... and they were spending several hours because we had trails, we had swimming opportunities, we had nature interpretation, we had picnicking, and in some parks camping, etc. The trails played a critical part of connecting various things within the park. Elm Creek in particular. As I remember, that park was about five thousand acres and I think we had about nine miles of paved trails. Then we put in that first swimming facility. Probably one of the most interesting stories was the playgrounds.” (P81 Dan Cochran director of operations)

“Then Clifton French got the bright idea of creative play area: “Well you create with slides, swings, climbing devices, balance wheels and put [them] together in a pattern or a complex where they can move from one to another safely. We tried to use them in a unique way.” (Dan Cochran director of operations p 81)



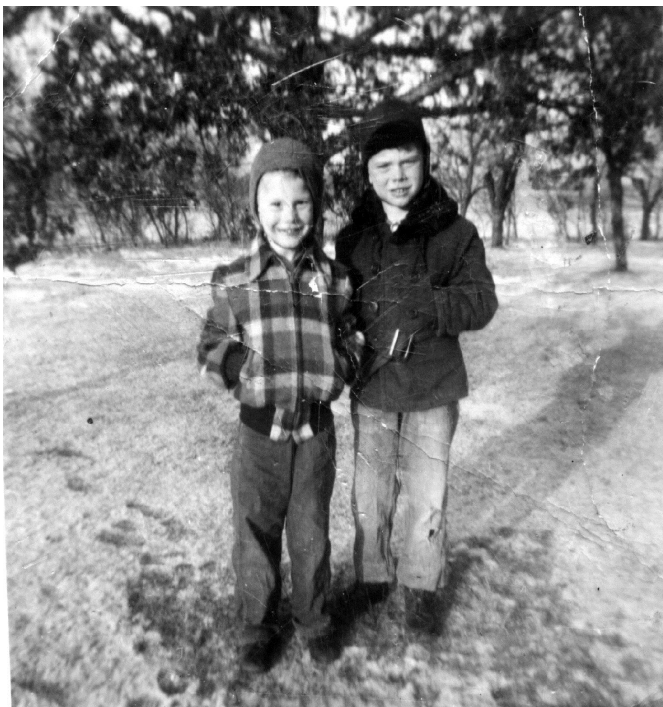
“Later on we were dealing with Elm Creek Park Reserve and we decided to do the second prototype of a swim pond. The water quality of Elm Creek is so bad, that we looked at all kinds of options on improving the water quality, even putting a liner on the lake...We looked at the finances of all the options and decided to build another upland swim pond. Elm Creek is a wonderful park reserve of 5,500 acres with a water presence, but in an area where swimming didn’t fit with the water bodies located on site. So we were able to come up with a creative plan to provide swimming...”(P81 Dan Cochran director of operations)

“I also remember snowmaking on cross-country ski trails... It seemed to me that, having the parks close at five o’clock when people were working until five or six o’clock, and not being able to cross-country ski, that we needed lighted trails. We did it and it was an enormous success. We had winters of no snow or marginal snow. But in the wintertime, which is one of our primary seasons, are we going to accept the fact that people wouldn’t be able to use that facility[Elm Creek] because we had no snow? It didn’t make any sense. So, it’s not about the \$5 million dollars that we invested in snowmaking. We had invested millions of dollars into the acquisition and development of the Park. Didn’t we have an obligation to make sure we had a winter opportunity for the public.”(Douglas Bryant former park superintendent P269”)

1990–Present– Treasuring a leader in the delivery of outdoor recreation, education services, and facilities.

“You know all about our Park District status as an independent agency. Chapter 398, our enabling legislation, established a Park District as our separate government authority with taxing authority. This was, and still is, unique in Minnesota .” (Marjorie Walz interviewer p.58)

“Three Rivers Park District manages almost 27,000 acres of park reserves, regional parks, regional trails, and special-use facilities. The name "Three Rivers" comes from our parks' geography, situated within the watersheds that flow into three significant rivers. . . : the Mississippi, the Minnesota and the Crow. Facilities for every season, includes picnicking, swimming, play areas, boating, fishing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, golfing, camping, and sledding. Three Rivers Parks is the place for recreation, play and relaxation... an extensive trail system for hiking, biking, in-line skating, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing; program sites for nature, recreation, historic, and farm education.” Over 11 million visitors annually-website



Howard and Billy 1948

The NON-FUN winter activity

“Ma, I think the pump’s froze”

Late 1940s. It was my little brother Billy’s job to go out to the pump and bring in a fresh bucket of water every morning . Winter time was no exception. One day Billy came in with an empty bucket. “Ma”, he said “there ain’t no water” “I think the pumps froze”. “The handle won’t even go down”. Right away Mom told Billy to bring in a bucket of snow she could melt on the kitchen stove and they would use that for cooking and drinking until our Dad got home. Now Dad, unlike most country folks at that time worked in the city, so the pump situation was at a standstill until he got home. Once home he checked with a good neighbor friend of his who told him to just unthaw the thing. Ok, so we were a city type family who loved living in the country with no idea how one just unthawed a frozen pump.

Dad asked how to and with a bit of instruction from the neighbor and Dad’s do it or die philosophy started the process. Seems the pump was only part of the well system. Dad was told to remove the metal lid plate from the square base near the pump so he could access the actual well pit. Then he was to go down in the pit wrap rags of some type like an old blanket or dish towels around the pipe extending from the bottom of the well up to the base of the pump. Once that was done he was to pour kerosene on the rags, climb back out of the pit and throw a lit match down on the rags. The heat generated would melt the ice in the well pits pipe and voila we would have

a working pump again.

Well things didn’t go quite as easy as the instructions made it sound. Seems once a ladder was put down into that well pit, about 5 feet deep, Dad was too big to get down there. So Billy and another of my brothers Howard were sent down with instructions from Dad on how to wrap the pipe with an old blanket and a few of Mom’s oldest dishtowels. Job accomplished the boys came up the ladder. So far so good. Now it was time for the kerosene. Dad sent the boys down the ladder again and had them pour a bit of kerosene on the rags they had wrapped around the pipe. Back up they came. Billy came first then Howard. Dad threw in a match those rags started burning. Wait, where was Howard? Not up the ladder as dad supposed, no instead he was about three fourths of the way up the ladder staring at that wonderful fire. Quickly Dad reached down grabbed him and hauled him up to safety. Close call indeed. WHEW!!

Well the pipe thawed out, the pump worked again and, although the rags stayed tied around that pipe until spring, we never had to unthaw that old pump again ...at least not that winter. Sharon Hopkins

MAPLE GROVE HISTORICAL
PRESERVATION SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1180
Maple Grove, MN 55311

MEMBERSHIP FORM (Renewable each January)

Annual Membership: (tax deductible)
\$15 Individual/Senior
\$30 Family
\$100 Supporting Member

I am interested in helping with:
 Writing articles
 Historic site maintenance
 Displays
 Educational Programs
 Publicity
 Cataloging artifacts
 Calling

Name: _____
(Please Print)

Address _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

A Night at the Museum ? Join fellow members for the monthly meeting 3rd Thursday of the month 7:00 p.m. at 9030 Forestview Lane N.