

Cornerstones

Preservation Alliance of La Crosse

Summer 2005



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From the President...

Summer is always busy for the Coulee Region, and people all over are doing property improvements with the summer months. PAL is looking at some improvements with our property, as well. We are looking at repainting the Greek Revival House, which is in dire need of an adequate coat of paint, or two. The Cobbler Shop is already getting a bit of a face lift through the dedicated efforts of Dave Morrison and his volunteers, and soon the Greek Revival house will look even more shabby without some paint. We are asking for donations toward paint, brushes and volunteer time to get our little house fixed up. Hopefully we'll get a break in the weather to do that!

Additionally, PAL is receiving a \$300 grant from the La Crosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission to prepare interpretive signage for the Cobbler Shop, hopefully to complement the existing signage for the Greek Revival House. The new sign will give visitors who are curious about this unusual little building basic information about its history.

We'd also like to extend a special welcome to those who are receiving this newsletter as the result of participating in PAL's Architectural Treasure Hunt in the La Crosse Tribune. All entrants received a complimentary 2005 PAL membership—welcome!

And finally, we are gearing up for our Third Annual Heritage Home Tour, this year featuring homes in the Cass and 10th Streets Historic District. Mark September 11th on your calendar, and we hope to see you there!

Enjoy the remainder of your summer, and stay cool!

*Barbara Kooiman, President,
Preservation Alliance of La Crosse*

The Preservation Alliance of La Crosse Third Annual Heritage Home Tour is scheduled for **Sunday, September 11** from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The featured homes this year are located in or near the Cass and 10th Street National Register Residential Historic District and represent architectural styles popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Owners of the homes are offering interior tours of their homes to the community. Architectural historians and PAL members will present an architectural/historical overview of each property and guide guests through the architecturally significant areas of the interior. (Guests will be asked to remove their shoes for the interior portions of the tour.)

Tickets will be available the day of the tour and are \$15 (\$12 for PAL members). For more information, or to volunteer for the event, contact the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse, located in the Pump House Regional Arts Center at 119 King Street, by calling (608) 784-1976. Proceeds will go to continue PAL's mission to provide educational programs and promote the protection of our architectural heritage.

The tour includes:

The Bentley/Wheeler House (1891) 952 Cass Street. This highly visible La Crosse landmark was remodeled and expanded by noted local architects Gustav Stolze and Hugo Schick for prominent local banker J. E. Wheeler in 1891. The massive three-story home is one of the finest examples of Queen Anne style architecture in La Crosse. Just to the west facing north at **950 Cass Street** is a much smaller vernacular home with Greek Revival elements that was built by banker E. E. Bentley in 1868. Both homes have been restored by current owners Ken Riley and Jay Lokken.

The Frank Burton House (1884) 1018 Cass Street. Mr. Burton, the original owner and a local grain broker and customs agent, was tragically murdered by a disgruntled competitor before the house was finished. This house is a more modest example of the popular Queen Anne style and also has some late Victorian Stick details. Another Riley/Lokken restoration, the current owners of this home are Scott and Kahtleen Koenen.

McCullough/McCord/Van Steenwyk (1876) 237 South 11th Street. This house sits high on corner lot and is associated with several pioneer La Crosse families. Dutch born Gysbert Van Steenwyck was a wealthy railroad developer, financier and public servant who established the Batavian National Bank. The Van Steenwyk family purchased the home in 1909 and lived here into the 1960s. This towering two-story home exhibits a blend of elements of the Queen Anne, Italianate and Stick architectural styles. Current owners Ken and Jill Bernstein have lived here for more than 20 years.

Dr. H. H. Chase House (1913) 221 South 11th Street. One of two twin bungalows designed by noted La Crosse architect Percy Dwight Bentley. These simple one-story homes have exterior design elements and interior decorative detailing seen in the highest style Prairie School homes. These two homes share a driveway and have matching one-car garages and are mirror images of each other. These two distinctive bungalows were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The current owner of the north twin is Laura Nelson.

—*Eric Wheeler*

Centennial Celebration Planned for McGilvray Bridges

The Friends of McGilvray invite everyone to attend the event on **Saturday, September 10** from 11 am to 3 pm, with a program at 1 pm. Guest speakers at the celebration, which takes place at the Bridges will be re-enactors for Alexander McGilvray (Steve Kiedrowski) and Charles Horton (Russ Stephens). Senator Brian Rude, and Carl Miller from the La Crosse County Historical Society have also agreed to speak. Other state and local dignitaries will be attending as well as members of the DNR, and local historical societies.

Local residents and students are very involved in this event and taking part in an art contest. The entries will be on display at the Town of Holland Town Hall, Creative writing will be featured at the town hall. There will be a shuttle bus from the Holland Town Hall site, which should help with parking. Musical Entertainment will be provided by Grand Picnic and Don Harvey. Don has written a lovely ballad about three generations of people who lived in the Mc Gilvray area. Food and beverages will be sold by Friends of the Holland Sand Prairie. Buttons, shirts and hats will be available for purchase and there will be an opportunity to win prizes.

The first of the five Charles Horton designed arch truss bridges was built in 1905. The project, which was designed to place permanent bridges on the McGilvray Road, was completed in 1908. Two other bridges, a kingpost bridge and the main channel bridge across the Black River, led to the popular "Seven Bridges Road" designation. This was the only road for travel from La Crosse to Trempealeau. It is hoped that the long term impact of this Centennial celebration is that the local schools will continue to view the

Bridges and the Van Loon Wildlife Area as a significant resource for the curriculum areas. It is also hoped that more people will learn about the Bridges as a place to enjoy the environmental and architectural aspects of the area..

The bridges were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980, but were slated for demolition in 1989 because the Department of Natural Resources could no longer afford the maintenance of the road or justify spending money for the restoration of the bridges, some of them in twisted condition because pilings and supports had disintegrated and decks were not safe for pedestrians. The road was closed and prospects looked bleak. Years of hard work, creative fund raising, and love for the two mile trail in the Van Loon Wildlife area were rewarded in 1997 when the Old Road was re-opened.

The Preservation Alliance was very instrumental in helping save the historic bridges by organizing a successful letter-writing campaign, providing leadership assistance and lending money to the small group of concerned citizens from the Holmen area. Several PAL members helped set up a separate non-profit corporation, organized very successful fund-raising projects and still remain active in the Friends of McGilvray Road organization. They have published the book "The McGilvray Bridges and the Friends Who Saved Them" which is full of interesting stories about the area. The book is available at the PAL office or at the Centennial event.

There are plenty of opportunities for assistance before, during and after the event. Chairman, Phil Yehle can be contacted at 526-3155. You may also check out the website at www.7bridgesrd.org.

—*Marisel Carlisle*

PAL Announces the 2005 Medallion

In conjunction with the McGilvray Bridge Centennial, PAL is pleased to announce the 18th medallion in its commemorative series. The 2005 medallion will feature one of the distinctive and beloved McGilvray Road bridges.

More information will be forthcoming in the Fall issue of *Cornerstones*—stay tuned!

In the meantime, remember—PAL medallions aren't just for the holidays! If you don't yet have 2004 War Eagle Grand Excursion Commemorative Medallion, or you'd like to fill in gaps in your collection with medallions from past years, stop by the PAL office at the Pump House. A limited number of complete sets are also available.

Congratulations to the 2005 Preservation Award winners!

Lifetime Achievement Award—John Satory

Outstanding Individual Service—David Morrison

Commercial Restoration—Community Credit Union, 311 Main Street, La Crosse

Residential Restoration—Reginald and Donna Destree, 1023 Cameron Street, La Crosse

Adaptive Re-use—People's Food Co-op, 315 5th Avenue South, La Crosse

Rural Residential Restoration—John and Wendy Severson, N3216 Smith Valley Road, Medary

Awards were presented at the 28th Annual Preservation Awards reception in May.

The Greek Revival House Needs Your Help!

PAL's Greek Revival House is in dire need of a fresh coat of paint (actually, stripping, priming, and two coats of paint!). PAL members are invited and encouraged to fund this much-needed project by sponsoring a paint brush or a can of paint. Volunteers are also needed!

The project will require:

3 gallons of primer @ \$20/gal.

6 gallons of paint @ \$20/gal.

5 scrapers @ \$5/ea.

5 brushes @ \$10/ea.



Contributions can be mailed to:

The Preservation Alliance of La Crosse

119 King Street

La Crosse, WI 54601

And thank you!

PAL Annual Architectural Treasure Hunt a Success

This year the Treasure Hunt attracted 111 entries with 102 of those scoring 100% correct! The relative ease of this year's contest was highlighted by one contestant who stated "this was the easiest contest ever! We need a more difficult contest in 2006." Several others had similar observations. (Duly noted!) Others made more favorable comments. "I look forward to this contest every May.....good mother/daughter project." "Another fun hunt that allowed us to slow down and admire our architecturally rich and diverse neighborhoods! Looking forward to Architectural Hunt 2006. Thanks!"

Nine winners were drawn at random to receive gift certificates to La Crosse businesses (Grounded Coffee, Elite Mediterranean Café, Jules Coffee House, The Cavalier Lounge, and Satori Arts) and to receive house histories and walking tours from Architectural Historians Eric J. Wheeler and Barbara Kooiman of the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse.

Thanks to all who participated and special thanks to all of the above sponsors and the La Crosse Tribune. Look for another treasure hunt next year.

—*Eric Wheeler*

Calendar of Events:

Hixon House Grand Re-opening.

Monday, August 1. The La Crosse Historical Society invites you to tour the newly restored "crown jewel of La Crosse." Opening-day guided tours from 1 pm—4 pm. Tickets: \$8.50 for adults, \$7.50 for seniors, \$4.50 for children. LCHS members receive free admission.

Great Stories in the Back Yard of the Holway/Carlisle Home.

The Bluff Country Talespinners and the La Crosse Storytelling Festival will present "Tales in the Tent" at 1419 Cass Street on **Wednesday, August 24** from 5:30-7:30. Enjoy wine, hors d'oeuvres, and non alcoholic beverages while listening to some great local storytellers. Your \$25 donation will help support the La Crosse Storytelling Festival which will be held in September. This will be a wonderful evening of story, friends, and fun at a La Crosse historic home.

McGilvray Bridges Centennial. Saturday, September 10. Please see article for more information.

PAL Heritage Home Tour. Sunday, September 11. Please see article for more information.

Grand Picnic and Tour.

The Holmen Historical Society invites one and all to attend their Grand Picnic and Tour on **Saturday, September 17** from noon until 4:00 on the farm of Bill and Julie Yahnke near Holmen. This event will feature the private collection of Yahnke's antique John Deere tractors. This is a wonderful opportunity to view the collection of over 40 beloved tractors. It is not a public museum. The tractors are at home on a beautifully landscaped setting and protected in a large building. The cost is \$5.00 in advance or \$7.00 on the day of the event. Entertainment will include the "Grand Picnic", a basket lunch, vintage costumes, and prizes.

Updates...

La Crosse Heritage Preservation Commission

The City's HPC, which meets once a month on the third Thursday at 6:00 p.m. in the south conference room of City Hall, has been busy at their monthly meetings reviewing "carriage house" designs. The so-called "Carriage-house Ordinance" passed in July 2003, allows people who want to build a garage higher than 17 feet ground to peak if they design their accessory building to be historically and architecturally compatible with the primary structure. That design needs to pass through the HPC for acceptance, or the building permit will not be issued. The HPC is working with a draft design guideline book to help property owners and the commission members in coming up with appropriate designs for these new buildings.

The HPC has recently designated the Stephen Gantert House, 1304 Main Street, to the City's Landmark list.

For more information on the La Crosse HPC, please go to http://www.cityoflacrosse.org/Planning/HPC/hpc_home.html.

—*Barbara Kooiman*

La Crosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission

The LaCrosse County Historic Sites Preservation Commission has been busy with a few projects. They have recently had a consultant from Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center complete a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Long Coulee Archaeological District just north of Holmen. This coulee has numerous prehistoric archaeological sites which in recent years are increasingly threatened due to the rapid development of the Holmen area. It is hoped that this listing will help protect some of these sites.

The commission participated, with the La Crosse Heritage Preservation Commission, in having an informational booth at the La Crosse Interstate Fair in early July. Brochures, photo displays and publications were available for the public to view every day of the fair.

The Commission is continuing to work with the county board in the Smart Growth planning document, to ensure that heritage preservation becomes an acknowledged and important part of La Crosse County's future planning.

—*Barbara Kooiman*

Newsletter Submissions Welcomed!

PAL members are invited to contribute to Cornerstones...if you have news of preservation events, preservation-themed book reviews, or information on architectural styles or local history, please give us a call or drop us a note. Questions and comments are also welcome.

Join PAL!

Yes! I will support historic preservation thru membership in the Preservation Alliance of La Crosse.

Name

Address

City/State

Zip Code

(_____)_____
Phone Number



- \$500 and above (Presidents Circle/Corporate)
- \$250-\$499 (Heritage/Business)
- \$100-\$249 (Patron/Business)
- \$50-\$99 (Supporting/Small Business)
- \$30 (Household)
- \$20 (Individual)
- \$15 (Senior/Student)

Please return to:
Preservation Alliance of La Crosse
119 King Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
