



The Bulletin

**St. Croix County Historical Society
The Octagon House Museum**

1004 Third Street • Hudson, WI 54016 • (715) 386-2654 • www.pressenter.com/~octagon

SCCHS Welcomes Our Newest Volunteer

We first became acquainted with Kim Holbrook when she accompanied her husband, Charlie, a civil war reenactor, to the Octagon House in the summer of 2009. As the reenactors gave demonstrations on the lawn, Kim, also dressed in period costume, set up her tent and demonstrated the art of quilting. Along with it came the stories of the quilts' importance during that period in our history. Kim told how the quilts helped the runaway slaves get to freedom via the Underground Railroad. Some quilts were actually maps in disguise, some were signals showing the runaways where to find help; some gave various messages depending how they were hung. Kim returned to the Octagon House during our 2010 Civil War presentation and has volunteered to be present during this year's 150 anniversary of the Civil War.

The entire Holbrook family, who reside in Brooklyn Park, MN, is active as Civil War reenactors. The unusual route to their avocation began 10 years ago when, then 15 year old, son became passionately involved in reenacting, but was not old enough to drive to the various sites. So mom became her son's chauffeur to the reenactments, which led to her involvement also. As Kim was pondering what her focus should be, she read the book "Hidden in Plain View" which revealed the theory that quilts played an important role during Civil War period by guiding runaway slaves' flight to freedom. Kim then joined a quilting group and made herself a "code quilt" for demonstration. Thus, quilts became her specialty as she continued to research quilt history. Kim also recites period poetry in the flourishing style of the 1800s during reenactments. Some of her "behind-the-scenes" activities include cooking for the performing soldiers, mending uniforms when necessary and writing letters home for the troops. Kim's husband and daughter became reenactors about 6 years ago, making it truly a family affair. They all belong to the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry (Iron Brigade) Co. K, the 5th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Co. C and the 3rd Maryland Volunteer Infantry Co. B.

When Kim learned that the SCCHS could use some help with its quilt collection, as an historian she willingly



Volunteer Kim Holbrook in her Civil War hoop-skirt costume

volunteered to help inventory, photograph, correctly describe and properly store the society's extensive quilt collection. Kim is quite impressed by the Society's collection, mentioning especially the "Bow Tie" quilt, the "Lutheran Church Signature" quilt, the "New Year's Day" quilt and the many "Log Cabin" quilts. One quilt, made entirely from velvet fabric, has really peaked Kim's sense of history by its uniqueness, causing her to dig more deeply into its background. She has promised to share any information she discovers with us.

We thank Kim Holbrook for her assistance and welcome her as another wonderful volunteer.

~ LaVonne McCombie

*President's
Letter*



Have you been at the Octagon House lately? Spring came at last—and our wonderful gardens are beautiful. And, if you notice, we have new brick steps leading up to the entrance—the old ones gave away over this long winter. You'll have to be watching in June, too—we will have the entire outside of the House repainted. Tour-goers will come to see our Civil War theme and enter a bright and shiny Octagon House.

The inside of the House is superb this year, too. Lots of volunteers helped Heidi make the place look as it might have during the War Between the States. She has lots of information on those years in Hudson.

On July 16th, we'll have the Civil War Re-enactors in the garden again. This, the 150th anniversary of the War, is a very important year, so it should be a wonderful event.

Everything we do here is due to our wonderful group of volunteers. Thousands of hours each year are spent at the House by these great people. The committees listed here are what makes our museum work.

The House Committee, the Finance Committee, the Publicity Committee, the Publications Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Garden Committee, the Maintenance Committee, the Tour Committee, the Research and Preservation Committee, the Membership Committee, the Garden House Committee, the Acquisitions Committee, and the Gift Shop Committee—all these committees and their hard-working members make our museum possible, along with our Tour Guides and Receptionists.

At the Volunteer Tea in April, it was so rewarding to see everyone stand to be recognized for their hard work in all these areas. They all seem to take pride in their work for the House.

If you'd like to help out on any of these committees, stop in and see us. It's work to help out at the Octagon House, but it's a lot of fun, too.

Come and see our new theme anyway—and don't forget to stop in our Museum Gift Shop. There are lots of new things for spring and summer.

And while you're there, join me in remembering that this grand old Victorian House owes it all to volunteers and say thank you.

~ Dolores Taavola



**13th Annual
Artful Garden Tour**

presented by
The Hudson Women's Club

will begin at the
Octagon House

**Saturday, June 25,
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Sunday, June 26,
1 - 4 p.m.**

This is a self-guided tour of Hudson and River Falls area gardens. Gardens will showcase artists and musicians. Cost: \$12/person

For more information, call (715) 386-7787



House Director's Corner

Our Octagon House theme for 2011 is "The Civil War Revisited." Each year, the house committee chooses a different theme and changes the museum's exhibits. This is the best way to highlight our vast collections, artifacts and photographs. It also keeps the museum fresh; visitors can return year after year and our tour guides get to switch it up a bit.

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who helped to take down Christmas decorations and do the spring cleaning. Thank you to all those who helped decorate the house for the season. We are especially grateful to SCCHS volunteer Bill Leckey for loaning the museum several items from his Civil War collection to display this year.

Some of the SCCHS Civil War items on display include: antebellum hand-made pot holders with the abolitionist slogan "Any holder but a slave holder;" a newspaper from Vicksburg, Mississippi dated July 2, 1863 that is printed on wallpaper; and a letter written home from a soldier to his children. J. G. Berstler wrote to his daughters, "...your papa has not forgotten you, he would like to see you and stay home with you all the time, but there are a great many bad men down here that keep us here and will not let us come home..."

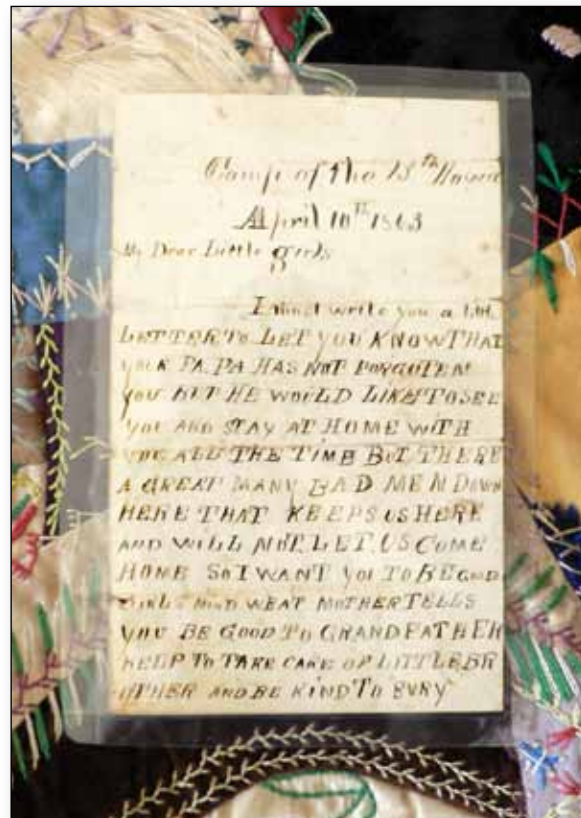
Be sure to stop by the Octagon House this summer! Remember that SCCHS members receive a free tour every year. The museum is a great place to bring relatives and guests who are visiting the area. Come and experience the Civil War Revisited.

~ Heidi Rushmann



(above) abolitionist pot holder

(below) 1863 soldier's letter written to his daughters



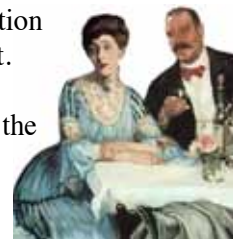
Members Invited to Social Night at Mama Maria's

St. Croix County Historical Society members are invited to meet for a social night at Mama Maria's Italian Restaurant on Tuesday, June 14th at 5:30 p.m.

The members social event is designed as an opportunity for member to take a break from their busy volunteer work at the Octagon House and enjoy delicious

food, good wine, and friendly conversation for a relaxed and enjoyable social event.

Drinks and food will be ordered off the menu. Members are asked to RSVP to the Octagon House at (715) 386-2654 by 3:00 on Sunday, June 12th.



Pigskins & Leatherheads at the Octagon House Museum

The Octagon House Museum opened on February 5th for the annual Hot Air Affair with a football theme of "When Pigskins Fly." The Museum's display took guests back to the early years of football; the era of pigskins and leatherheads.

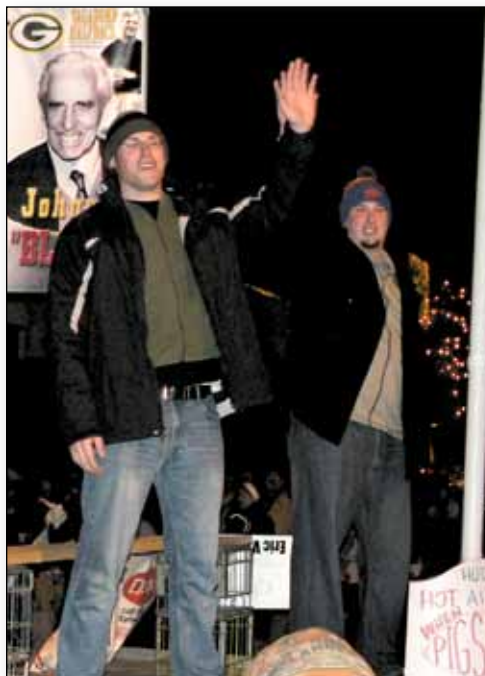
Guest speaker Bill Driscoll shared his football memorabilia for an entertaining display in the library. His display featured football legend New Richmond's own Johnny "Blood" McNally and included a mannequin dressed like Johnny Blood in a reproduction uniform, a vintage helmet and football.

Johnny Blood played in the National Football League (NFL) for 14 seasons with five different teams. Starting in 1925 with the Milwaukee Badgers; in 1926 -27 with the Duluth Eskimos; 1928 with the Pottsville Maroons; 1929-33, 1935-36 with the Green Bay Packers; and 1934, 1937-38 with the Pittsburgh Pirates. He ended his NFL career in 1939 as the head coach for the Pirates.

Other local players highlighted that day were Hudson's Jim Bertelsen who play for the University of Texas and then the Los Angeles Rams from 1972 to 1975. A more recent player was 2004 Hudson High School graduate Kraig Urbik. After playing for the Wisconsin Badgers, Urbik was drafted



(above) SCCHS volunteer Gloria Kramer poses the with the Johnny Blood mannequin.



(left) Eric Vanden Heuvel, Kraig Urbik and Bill Driscoll on the Johnny Blood float in the Hot Air Affair parade.

in 2009 by the Pittsburgh Steelers. In September 2010 he was claimed off waivers by the Buffalo Bills and in November made his first NFL start against his old team the Steelers.

Bill Driscoll also created a Johnny Blood float for the Hot Air Affair parade. He was joined by NFL player Kraig Urbik and his Wisconsin Badger teammate Eric Vanden Heuvel.

Dopkins Accounting Service of River Falls and Hudson was the Historical Society's 2011 Hot Air Affair Sponsor.

8th Annual Volunteer Appreciation Tea

Historical Society volunteers were treated to another delicious tea at the 8th Annual Volunteer Tea on April 27th at the Phipps Center for the Arts.

Once again Dorothy Wilson organized a wonderful tea with the aide of her "Tea ladies" team who prepared a variety of finger sandwiches and served tea. Volunteers were treated to a lovely Cream Tea, with freshly ironed linens and sparkling silver, fresh baked scones with jam and clotted cream, finger sandwiches, a tasty assortment of cakes, and bottomless cups of hot Earl Grey tea.

Historical Society President Dolores Taavola thanked volunteers for their many contributions and shared the many projects everyone was working on.

House Director Heidi Rushmann gave an update on the 2011 house theme the "Civil War Revisited." Following the tea volunteers took an preview tour of the museum to learn the details of this years house decor.

This year's tea was deemed to be exceptionally



Volunteers enjoy a cup of tea. (l-r) Barbara George, Tami Tulibaski and Ellen Burnley.

wonderful with about 30 volunteers attending. It was nice to see familiar faces as well as many new volunteers.

The Historical Society offers Victorian Cream Teas to paying guests. The tea can be combined with a museum tour, a tour of the Phipps Center and/or a city tour. It makes a delightful and tasty event for your groups of 25 people or more.

Please call 715-386-2654 for more information or to make group reservations.

Free Museum Tours for Dad on Father's Day



Rob Cesena shows his daughter Gabby how to churn ice cream.

It has been a time honored tradition at the Octagon House Museum to offer free tours for mothers on Mother's Day and free tours for fathers on Father's Day.

So once again the Museum is offering Free Father's Day Tour on June 19th from 2:00-4:30 p.m. Fathers are invited to take advantage of free admission when accompanied by a child of any age. And this year's house theme of the "Civil War Revisited" is sure to please Dad.

In recent years the Museum has started another tradition by offering samples of hand-cranked ice cream to tour-goers. This cold and creamy treat brings back memories of childhood days for many of the fathers and grandfathers who take a tour; and the children enjoy taking a turn churning the ice cream and asking "Is it done yet?"

Second Annual Yellowstone Trail Heritage Days



Yellowstone Trail Historians Alice and John Ridge greet visitors and share information about the Yellowstone Trail.

Hudson's second annual Yellowstone Trail Heritage Days carried on despite inclement weather. Building on last year's inaugural event, organizers expanded the May 13th through 15th event to include more activities to celebrate the Yellowstone Trail and Hudson's Heritage.

The Yellowstone Trail was the first transcontinental automobile route through the northern United States from New York to the state of Washington. The Trail came to Hudson in 1915, crossing over the St. Croix River by the old Toll Bridge, and continued through Wisconsin to Kenosha and into Illinois.

The original Yellowstone Trail Association was formed in 1912. It was a grassroots organization that built and promoted "a road good from Plymouth

Rock to Puget Sound." More recently a new grassroots Yellowstone Trail Association was formed in 2003. Its goal is to increase knowledge of the Yellowstone Trail, acquire information, preserve artifacts along the Trail, and to promote the Trail.

The Historical Society joined this year's celebration with a variety of activities including free history exhibits at the Octagon House Museum.

The museum had the honor of hosting Yellowstone Trail Association President John Ridge and wife Alice, the Trail Association's Secretary. They manned a display with a wide selection of Yellowstone Trail items including their book "Introducing the Yellowstone Trail; A Good Road from Plymouth to Puget Sound 1912-1930."



(above) Volunteer Carol Rieg explains how to operate a spinning wheel to the guest at the Octagon House Museum.



(right) Beekeeper Jerry Rodewald from the St. Croix County Beekeepers Association demonstrates the equipment used for harvesting honey.

The Society extends a warm thank you to the many volunteers who braved the weather to share their talents. They include Carole Rieg who brought her spinning wheel; Civil War reenactors Kim and Charlie Holbrook; Jim and Marlene Carciofini with a sock knitting machine display; Beekeeper Jerry Rodewald from the St. Croix County Beekeepers Association; Madeline Olivier who gave a demonstration on making tussie mussies; John Gushue and Christopher Rivard who manned the artifacts display and children's games; and LaVonne McCombie at the refreshments table.

The museum was open for walk-in tours with Jackie and Tom Hugdahl on hand as tour guides.

The Historical Society also organized history activities at the Hudson Public Library where the History Room was open for tours. SCCHS volunteer Nancy Hawkinson, also a representative of the St. Croix Valley Genealogical Society, was on hand to answer questions and present a wonderful Yellowstone Trail display.

Historical Society volunteer Stacey Lokker ran a short movie on the history of the Yellowstone Trail, which was compiled by John and Alice Ridge. She also assisted visiting author Barry Prichard with his presentation on his book "We Blazed the Trail; Motoring to Yellowstone in Mike Dowling's Oakland!"

The Historical Society presented two different walking tours. Jacki Bradham and Peter Close gave a Downtown History Tour. Heidi Rushmann, Patt Colton and Doug Peterson took guests on a tour of the Humbird Chapel at Willow River Cemetery and the historic residential area of Hudson.

Historical Society volunteers Jacki Bradham and Nancy Hawkinson also assisted the Downtown Retail Group with history research on their downtown business buildings.

Those who braved the bad weather were treated to several other Yellowstone Trail Heritage Days activities. The weekend started with a Friday night Locust Street Car Show. On Saturday there was a vintage car display at Lakefront Park and historical geocaching. On Locust Street the Downtown Retail Group held an Olde-Tyme Market Fair with carnival games, vintage portraits, a strolling musician, and vintage high wheel bike demonstrations. Associated Bank sponsored yellow rock painting for children. Casanova offered cave tours and Saturday ended with Fiddlin' at the Phipps featuring Randy Sabien. The event wrapped up with Sociability Drive on Sunday.

Next year marks the 100 anniversary of the Yellowstone Trail and organizers are already considering activities for next year. It has been suggested that the Historical Society should revive the very popular "Cemetery Walks" which were discontinued in 2006. The Walks take considerable preparation, with research and script writing, as well as several actors and choir singers. We are already seeking volunteers, so if you are interested in helping with the Cemetery Walk please contact Jacki Bradham at 715-386-3826 or rbradham@presenter.com.



Marlene Carciofini shows Civil War reenactor Charlie Holbrook how to operate one of the sock knitting machine.



Historical Society tour guide Jacki Bradham and visiting author Barry Prichard pose with a vintage road sign at the Hudson Public Library.



Kim Holbrook (left) and Madeline Olivier (right) make tussie mussies.

July 16th Civil War Encampment at the Octagon House



At last year's encampment reenactor Charlie Holbrook of the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry explains the use of soldier's musket.

The annual Civil War Encampment is set for July 16th on the lawn of the Octagon House Museum. 2011 is the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and with that in mind this year's museum decor theme is the "Civil War Revisited."

This will be the third year for the encampment and thanks to the volunteer reenactors the encampments have grown to be a popular event for the Museum.

Doug Harmon, coordinator of the Prescott Guards Volunteer Infantry, explains their mission, "We, as Civil War Reenactors, have a responsibility to you and to those who came before us, to teach this part of our American history so that we can best understand what the soldiers had to endure, and what the civilians back home went through."

Also returning this year are Civil War living historians Kim and Charlie Holbrook. You can read more about Kim and Charlie on the front page.

At the encampment the reenactors shared stories about the everyday life of a soldier, what they ate, what they did for entertainment, and more. This year we hope to add a medical tent in honor of local Civil War surgeons Dr. Otis Hoyt and Dr. Samuel Johnson of Hudson.

Hudson Women's Club Fashion Show

The Hudson Women's Club celebrated its 95th anniversary on April 19th and as part of the club's annual luncheon the Historical Society assisted with a fashion show including old and new fashions.

In honor of the 95th anniversary fashions from the 1916 era were presented from Historical Society collection. Dorothy Wilson ended the show with the wedding dress of Margaret (Ingram) Hughes which was worn by three generations. Margaret was married in the dress in 1913, the dress was later worn by her daughter Betty (Hughes) Swanson and finally by her granddaughter Peggy (Swanson) Stern.

The fashion show concluded with the latest fashions presented by Baglio's of Afton and Coldwater Creek of Woodbury which were modeled by members of the women's club.



(l-r) models Danielle Vogler, Victoria VanAntwerp and Alexa Harris; historic fashion show coordinator Dorothy Wilson and model Barb Garbe.

Membership & Memorial Thank You

Thank you to our 149 new and renewing members. In addition to current memberships, we have been very fortunate to have received several memorial donations.

2011 Memorials Received:

In memory of: **Catherine Hawksford**
from Robert Hawksford

In memory of: **Winnifred McDiarmid**
from Jean R. Oxley

In memory of: **Albert & Rosella Obermueller**
from LaVonne McCombie

In memory of: **Ken & Ethel Prister**
from Janet K. Stahel

In memory of: **Curtis Solsvig**
from Beverly Solsvig

In memory of: **Jack Stayberg**
from Rose Marie Stayberg

In memory of: **Betty Swanson & Mary Moffat Hughes**
from Peggy Stern

For these and for all donations we are very grateful.

Also to all of you members who have added an extra donation to the annual membership, we extend a mighty big THANK YOU!



Artifact Donations Help to Preserve Our Local History

Over the years the Historical Society has been fortunate to receive numerous artifact donations. Back in the 1940s the founders of the Historical Society actively sought donation from pioneer families. Volunteers like Willis Miller and Genevieve (Cline) Day collected photographs, newspapers, books, documents, letters, personal mementoes, and much more, with the goal of preserving these treasures for future generations.

In 1964 the Octagon House Museum open. You can imagine how thrilled those early Society founders were to have a new, bigger, home for their collection. Just think of all the artifacts that could be added to the collection. Like the small bed that is now on the sleeping porch. It once belonging to Captain John Page's family, one of Hudson's first "Yankee" settlers. Or the 1839 Nunns & Fischer piano that belonging to Elizabeth (Young) Richardson. This piano

was the first piano ever seen, or heard, by some of the early area pioneers. It was accidentally dropped in the Ohio River and the St. Croix River before eventually making its way to Hudson, and now sits in the music room of the Octagon House.

These artifacts, like countless others, all have a story to tell; from George Hosford's Civil War musket to Helen Phipps' china. The Historical Society endeavors to collect these types of artifacts, to document their stories, and share their stories with generations to come.

If you have family heirlooms we encourage you to take the time to document their stories before their history is lost to the past. Take the time to ask your parents and grandparents about their treasures, write down their stories, and share the stories with your children.

2011 St. Croix County Historical Society Members & Volunteers

Life Members

Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Bertelsen
Matthew J. Blakeman
Rudolph Blakeman
Carolyn Craig
Edrys Heywood
John & Catherine Hughes
Helen E. Jensch
Mrs. Erling Jensen
Katie Kelly
Norma Stone Lewis
Zonzetta Morrisette
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Nagel
Florence Railsback
Mrs. Donald Reppe
Andrew Richardson
Barbara Richardson
Barbara Rohl
Dora Rohl
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Amy Richardson Timberlake
Dr. & Dr. & Mrs. L. B. Torkelson
Burt & Patricia Witthuhn*
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Amy Thurston

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Opal & Manny Rorig
Donna Mae Seim
Daryl & Jan Standafer
Peggy Stern
Shari & John Thomas

2011 Contributing Members

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Bob & Jacki Bradham*
Johannes & Arlene Dahle
Roger & Patricia Everson
William & Sally Friedlander
Robert & Barbara George*
Wayne & Jean Haut*
Tom & Eldora Larson*
William & Carolyn Leckey*
Richard & Sheryl Lindholm*
Shannon Materka
Bob & Lorraine McGrew

Corinne Nelson
George & Dorothy Nelson
David Reid & Katherine Houston
Christopher Rivard* & Stacey Lokker*
Rose Marie Stayberg*

2011 Family Members

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Art & Nancy Hawkinson*
Robert & Marion Hawksford
Irene Hines*
Gloria Kramer*
Tom & LaVonne McCombie*
Jeff & Christopher Meyers-Quarberg*
Bill & Henrietta Ness*
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Wayne Peterson
Jeannie Kant & Keith Relyea
Irvin & Mary Sather
Clayton & Renee Snow*
Susan Sroka
Lars & Dolores Taavola*
Byrd & Dorothy Wilson*
Jenebelle Zappa

2011 Individual Members

Allen County Public Library
Jon Belise
Sally Blair
Barbara Burkholder
Mary Jane Bridge
Peter Close*
Jeanne Diefenbach
Amy Fetzner
Marjorie Giese
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Carol Harris
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**indicates member & volunteer*

2011 Grants

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City of Hudson
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Phipps Inn B&B
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Xcel Energy Company

2011 Silver Corporate Members

Hudson Flower Shop
Oakwood Dental
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2011 In-Kind Members

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2011 Volunteers & Guides

Steve Anderson
Heidi Boiteau
Nancy Brooks & Family
Ellen Burnley
Jim & Marlene Carciofini
Patt Colton
Joan, Ellie & Anna Davenport
Slyvia & Anna Emery
Connie Frantz
Jhon Gushue
Charlie & Kim Holbrook
Susan Hurt
Barbara Ivey
Jessica, Pierce & Natalie Johnston
Jessie Moore
Minxie Olivier
Carole Rieg
Jerry Rodewald
Janan Terperstra
Tami Tuliaski
Robyn Wefel
Lisa Yerry & Sons
Abby Zappa

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The Historic Octagon House Museum
Hudson, Wisconsin
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Spring & Summer Calendar

2011 Theme: "Civil War Revisited"

June 14th • **SCCHS Member Social** • 5:30 p.m.
at the Mama Maria's Italian Restaurant, North Hudson

June 19th • **Father's Day Tour** (2 to 4:30 p.m.)
Children of all ages may bring their Father for a free tour

June 25th & 26th • **The Artful Garden Tour**
Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. & Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m.

July 16th • **Civil War Re-enactors Encampment** (12 to 4:30 p.m.)
Local Civil War re-enactors will stage an encampment on the lawns of the Octagon House. Learn about the everyday life of a soldier, what they ate, what they did for entertainment, and more. Other activities include a display of Historical Society Civil War artifacts and old time children's games.
The Civil War activities on the lawn are free and open to the public.
The Museum will be open for guided tours at regular admission prices.