New Glarus Historical Society, Inc.
Swiss Historical Village

Newsletter Issue 1 (95) **May 1, 2016**

Historical Society Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the New Glarus Historical Society was held on Saturday evening, March 16 at the Chalet Landhaus. Board members Doris Arn, Judy Reuter, Mary Dibble and Ann Marie Ott were unanimously re-elected to another three year term. Prior to the vote, the women shared some of the reasons for their interest in continuing on the board. Doris related her 30 years of service and experience with changes at the Historical Village. When Judy was invited to become a tour guide, she toured the many buildings and fell in love with the place because it reminded her of growing up on a farm. She has enjoyed the roles she has been involved in, including making Bräzeli. Mary was impressed by her mother, Lila Dibble's involvement in the Historical Society and enjoys research and helping to manage the collection of artifacts. Ann Marie shared that teen guide experience and relation to Esther Stauffacher, prompted her desire to serve on the Board.

The annual financial report was accepted by the group. While museum admission revenues and donations decreased slightly, gift shop revenues increased and expenses remained consistent. The biggest expense in 2015 was the log building evaluation conducted by Charles Quagliana, Preservation Architect which resulted in a report outlining the needs to repair and restore the buildings.

Following the dinner, Tom Mitchell and Mike Davis presented a program on the history of prairies in our area. Tom, a member of the Prairie Bluff Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts, shared many literary excerpts that provided a picture of our ancestors' view of the country-side as they made their way to New Glarus. Mike, also a member of the Prairie Enthusiasts and a charter member of the Green County Master Gardener Volunteer group provided the group with examples of the types of plants growing in prairies, the amazing depth of their roots and the work it took to break the prairie for farming many years ago. He also related the work that the Prairie Enthusiasts continue in our area to preserve and maintain prairie land throughout our county.

Log Buildings Assessment and Restoration

This article provides some background and information about the assessment and restoration of the log buildings at the Swiss Historical Village Museum. In 2014, Board members expressed concerns about the condition of the log buildings and sought advice from Rick Bernstein, the Wisconsin Historical Society staff member assigned to our region. Rick provided us with a list of professionals with expertise in log building assessment and restoration. One responded to our inquiries, Charles Quagliana, AIA and based on his extensive experience, we retained him to prepare a building condition and assessment report. The report documents the current condition of the buildings, discusses strategies for preservation and makes recommendations for repairs, including probable costs for rehabilitation.

The Board has initiated discussion about the pros and cons of implementing the recommendations in the report. The estimated cost for full restoration of all of the buildings is $376,000, and skilled craftsmen with expertise in this specialized work are limited. Discussions will continue as we consider the many details and costs outlined in the report, as well as explore contracting and funding options for repair and restoration.

The first priority established by the Board is to address roof of the log church, in order to ensure the safety of our visitors, volunteers and staff as well as the artifacts displayed in it. The roof is showing signs of significant movement and is affecting the integrity of the east and west walls. We are coordinating a follow-up site visit with the structural engineer who contributed to the original evaluation of the buildings to detail his recommendations and document the specifications for repair. Until the repair is complete, entry to the building will be limited.

The 44 page report is available for reading at the Museum, whenever the museum is open. We encourage you to stop by the museum and read the report.

Swiss Historical Village – Season 2016

Our museum will continue its daily operation from May 1 through October 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission prices will remain the same as 2015: Adults $9.00 and children ages 6-13, $3.00. Beginning on Memorial Day and through Labor Day, active military members and their families are eligible for free admission to the museum as part of our ongoing participation in the national Blue Star Museum program. Remember members of the New Glarus Historical Society enjoy free admission all season long!

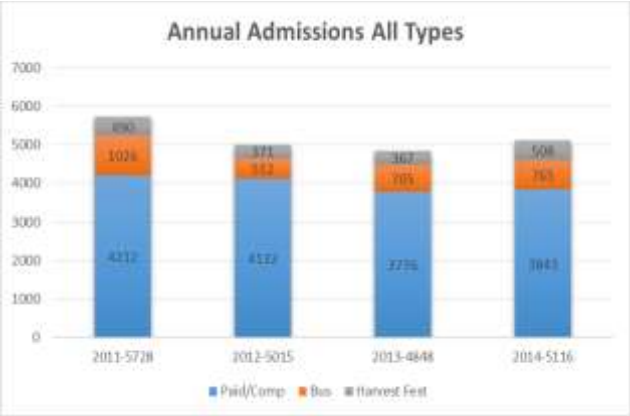
Special Events

The season's special events kick off with the grand re-opening of the FeuerwehrHaus or Firehouse on Monday, May 9. An Open House will be held from 7 – 8 p.m. Through the ongoing collaboration of the New Glarus Fire Department and the Historical Society, and as a result of special donations, the lighting has been improved and exhibits expanded. The exhibits provide a wonderful look at the history of the Fire Department since it was established in 1902.

Mark your calendars for these additional special events: Commemorative Service for the Arrival of the First Settlers on August 13 and Harvest Fest on October 9.

2015 Season Statistics

The Board collected and reviewed the data related to admissions for 2015 and overall trends. In 2015, bus tours brought us 990 visitors; 573 adults and 407 children. Walk-in visitors numbered 3953 and 533 people attended HarvestFest. The bar chart below depicts the admission trends for the past four years.



New Glarus Historical Society Committees

The Board of Directors has created committees to manage the operations of the Society and Swiss Historical Village. Members are as follows:

- Advertising: Denise Anton-Wright, Doris Arn, Gail Beal
- Archives/Collections/Exhibits: Mary Dibble, Gail Beal, Ann Marie Ott
- Buildings and Grounds: John Marty, Larry Klassy, Dave Hustad, John Colstad, Pete Etter
- Finance: Doris Arn, Pete Etter
- Gift Shop: Gail Beal, Doris Arn, Judy Reuter
- Group Tours – Gail Beal
- Labor/Hiring: Ann Marie Ott
- Membership: Judy Reuter
- Newsletter: Mary Dibble, Ann Marie Ott with support from Judy Reuter and Gail Beal
- Website and Facebook – Ann Marie Ott, Denise Anton-Wright

Please consider sharing your time and talents by joining a committee! Contact any committee member or send an email through the contact link on the Swiss Historical Village website at: http://www.swisshistoricalvillage.org/contact/ We'll be happy to find a way for you to spend time with us!

Prairie Installation

The Green County Master Gardeners Association has been awarded a $400 grant from the Wisconsin Master Gardeners Association to install an education garden plot on the grounds of the museum. Prairie plants will be established along the side of the Farm Implement building to provide information about the landscape of the area, at the time of settlement. In addition it will offer opportunities to describe the transformation and loss of natural land to plowed farmland. The plot will include 50 species of plants. Work begins in May with a plan to complete the planting by the end of June. Master Gardeners Mike Davis, New Glarus and Mary Nelson, York Township are leading the project.

CHICKENS GO TO WAR

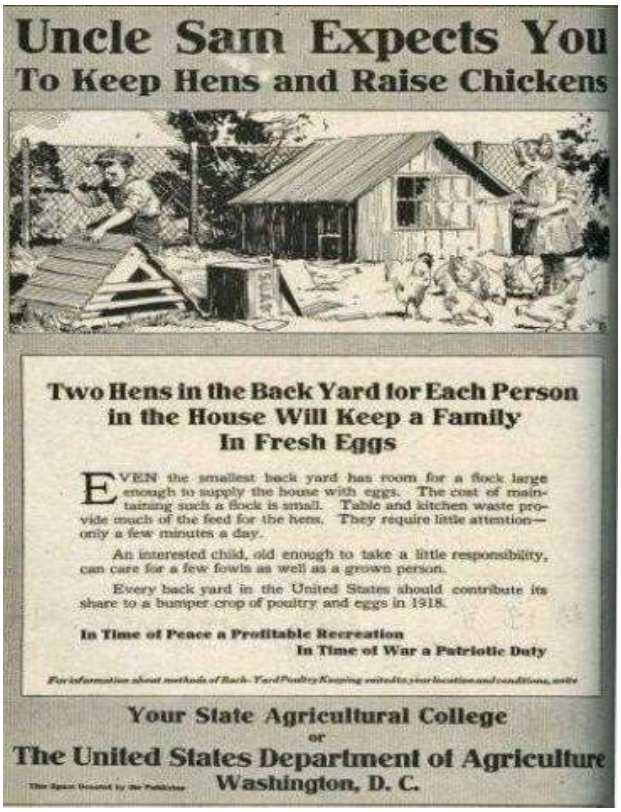
Recently, interest in raising chickens in one's own backyard has been growing for a variety of reasons, and not just in rural areas. You may know someone who collects blue-green eggs every morning from the half dozen hens in her backyard coop. Backyard flocks have become so popular that they now have their own store in Paoli – *Cluck* – dedicated to meeting their needs.

Chicken fans around the country have not always found a receptive audience when lobbying their city governments for the right to keep a small backyard flock. There was a time, however, when the relationship was flipped, and the government was asking its citizens, both country and city dwellers, to raise chickens. During WWI and WWII, raising chickens wasn't just practical, it was patriotic – an integral part of winning the war. Why? The United States was supplying food not just for its own troops and civilian population, but also for those of its European allies. Food production had to be ramped up to win the war, and that meant that the government had to get directly involved.

The US declared war in early April, 1917, and on April 26, 1917, the New Glarus Post included an article announcing that Secretary Houston of the Department of Agriculture had "asked Senate to grant great powers" with the intent of "stimulating production and encouraging conservation". The Secretary was not just targeting businesses. He was also seeking the "enlargement of the force of experts in home economics, because, so the secretary wrote, some of the greatest preventable wastes are in the home". One strategy the government identified for preventing waste was raising chickens.

"The Necessity of Producing an Extra Pound of Poultry Product for Every Man, Woman and Child in the United States. Before another hatching season, the Great United States will, no doubt, be in the deepest throes of the world's most cruel war and no one can foretell the countless thousands that may be crying for bread…. Every one of us must do our bit….Every home can have a self-supporting and profitable flock in the backyard by converting the offal from the table and kitchen into the very choicest poultry feed. Why such an astounding waste, an utter extravagance that costs us nearly seven dollars for every man, woman, and child in the United States? Let every home have a neat poultry house and a few well kept, profitable fowls." - New Glarus Post, May 24, 1917.

If American families could meet much of their protein needs by eating eggs and the occasional chicken (not considered "meat"), beef, pork, veal and lamb could be sent to the fighting forces overseas.



In August of 1917, Herbert Hoover was appointed head of the newly created US Food Administration, which was responsible for managing and assuring the food supply for the American and Allied troops and populations. He emphasized conservation and self-sacrifice. Housewives had a lot of power over the food the family ate, and Hoover's public relations campaign – asking each housewife to sign a pledge card - helped get the country through the war without forced rationing. School children were also recruited. "Hoovering" was patriotic.

Hoover was aided in his efforts by poultry associations and popular poultry and agricultural magazines. The Country Gentleman published several articles on "City Chickens" in 1917. And Everybody's Poultry Magazine published numerous articles about improvements and efficiencies in poultry production and healthy flock maintenance.

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The emphasis on raising chickens during WWII was a bit different. The government was strongly encouraging increased egg production, not just as a protein replacement for families during the war, but also for shipment overseas. Dried eggs were a significant source of protein in a compact and lightweight package.

"Wisconsin Swells Dried Egg Supply For War Effort... 'Barry' Hayes, extension poultryman at the University of Wisconsin, reports Wisconsin is playing an important part in supplying this concentrated food. Of 80-odd egg-drying plants in the country, 12 are in Wisconsin…Federal requests for expanded production increased Wisconsin's yield of eggs 18.7 per cent during 1941, and raised its layer hen population over 11 per cent, Hayes says." - New Glarus Post, July 1, 1942.

Efficiency and conservation were strongly emphasized, as they were during WWI. University experts played an important role in educating farmers and "homemakers" as to the most scientific methods to produce and preserve food. County extension agents penned a weekly column – *Farm and Home News Notes* – in the New Glarus Post. They also co-sponsored a "Farmers and Homemakers Institute" with the New Glarus Commercial Club on March 20, 1942. The first workshop was "Good Chicks plus Good Management equal Dollars." Homemakers were still recognized as the primary decision-maker regarding food for the household. They were therefore an important target for outreach and an appeal to patriotism.

"*Women Purchasers Can Aid U.S. Farmers. Fitting Family's Diet With Farm Production Helps U.S. War Effort. America's 6,000,000 farmers today aren't feeding a mere 132,000,000 citizens of the United States. They are also responsible for filling huge gaps in the food supplies of most of the free world – the uniformed and civilian. This is a large order. They will need all the help they can get from the consumer at home….. This is where the housewife can offer one of the greatest contributions to winning the war. She can see to it that the diet of her family fits in with farm production and the shortages created by the war."* New Glarus Post, November 11, 1942

Local businesses also appealed to patriotism in advertising their chicken feed.

New Glarus Post, May 27, 1942

Rationing of certain commodities and staples needed for the war effort was a way of life in WWII. In 1943, meats - beef, pork, veal, and lamb - were added to items subject to rationing. Poultry and eggs, however, were not rationed.

Chicken is now the most frequently eaten type of meat in the United States, and the consumption of eggs, down significantly for a while during the cholesterol scare, is back up with improved understanding of their nutritional value. You probably get your eggs from the grocery store. But if you like fresh, colorful, flavorful eggs, you might want to consider the convenience and charms of having little feathered echoes of velociraptors pecking about your backyard. And if your municipal government isn't too enthused, give it a history lesson. The chicken may not be winning wars now, but she seems to be winning many hearts.