New Glarus Historical Society, Inc.
Swiss Historical Village

Newsletter Issue 4 (98) **August 1, 2016**

Board and Committee Updates

The July Board meeting focused on a proposal for enhancements to the Farm Implement building, marketing and advertising, log building restoration, and planning for the annual commemorative log church service.

Board member Mary Dibble presented a proposal for lighting enhancements and exhibit modifications for the Farm Implement building. Dibble intends to fund the installation of new lighting in memory of her mother, Lila Kubly Dibble. Exhibits will be refined and additions will be made to inform visitors about the importance of horses in the early days of farming.

Denise Anton-Wright presented a summary of marketing activities for the months of May and June which featured several press releases related to Historical Society and Museum activities. The Board reviewed seven advertising contracts for the current and 2017 seasons. More information will be secured, prior to finalizing contracts to ensure advertising venues are focused on appropriate audiences and are cost effective.

Reverend Kim Moeller, the new minister called to serve the Swiss United Church of Christ will lead the service to commemorate the arrival of the first settlers of New Glarus on Saturday evening, August 13, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. The service will be held outdoors and in the event of inclement weather, the service will be moved into the Hall of History, due to the temporary closure of the log church, which needs repairs.

The Board welcomes student Miranda O'Rourke as a new cashier at the Museum this month.

The Collections Committee recently accessioned the following items: a Fred Streiff advertising framed print from Dorothy Heller Abendroth, an adding machine from Kim Tschudy and a Swiss Cow Bell from Mary Ellen Gerlach (relative of New Glarus music teacher, Rosemarie Klassy).

Log Buildings Assessment and Restoration

For the second month in a row, efforts to obtain estimates for the log church stabilization project and settler's cabin restoration were unsuccessful. Board members are taking steps to make additional personal contacts with contractors previously identified as potential vendors. One contractor declined to submit a bid, due to lack of available time due to existing contracts for work during the coming calendar year.

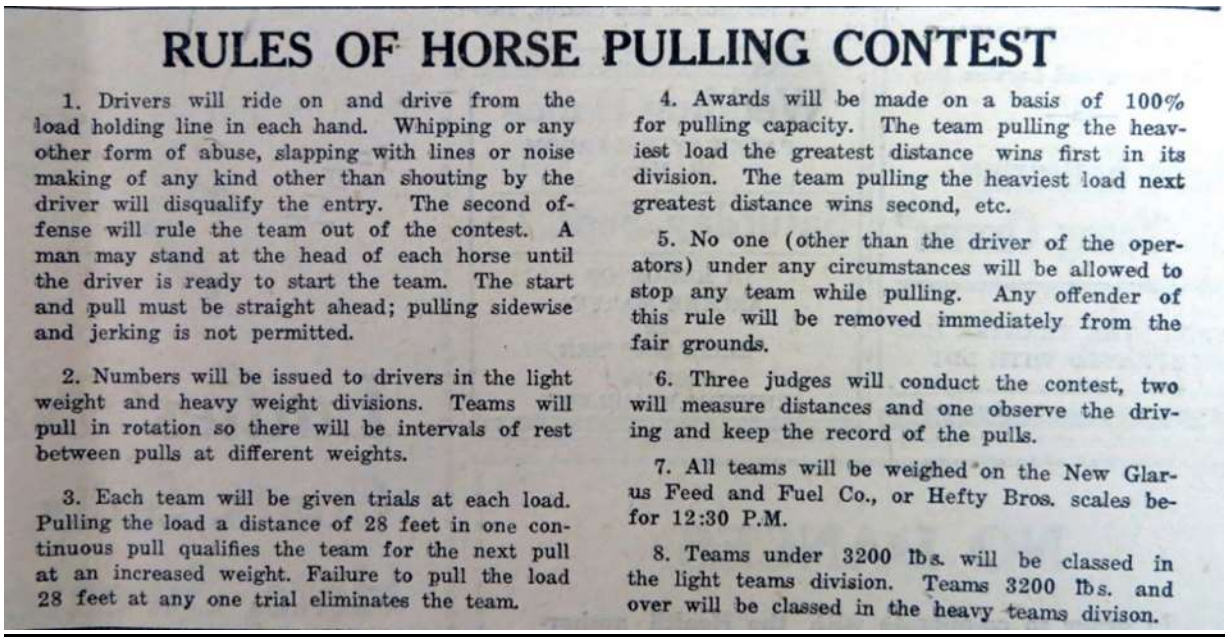
While the consultants' report obtained by the Board repeatedly recommends contracting with vendors with experience in historical restoration, Board members are considering whether an alternate approach might be contracting with a log home builder, as a means to address the repairs and restoration needed. This alternate plan may be viable, because none of the log structures on the grounds of the museum meet standards associated with the National Historic Register and two of the three are not exact replicas of original buildings in New Glarus. The small settler's cabin, found within the walls of a farmhouse on the Harold Hoesly property in the 1970s, although original was determined not to be eligible for the National Historic Register, according to a recent evaluation conducted by a consultant for homes in the Village of New Glarus. This finding would allow for flexibility in the plan for restoration.

We ask members and other readers of this newsletter to send their suggestions for potential vendors and input for approaches to restoration of the settler's cabin or other log buildings on the museum grounds, to the Board of Directors. To do so, please email Ann Marie Ott, Board Secretary at: amott@tds.net, or send written suggestions by postal mail to: New Glarus Historical Society, P.O. Box 745, New Glarus, WI 53574. If you would like to speak to a Board member about the project, please call the Historical Village at: 608-527-2317 between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., seven days a week, provide your name and telephone number and someone will return your telephone call.

One Hundred Years of Horse Power

It was the New Glarus School Fair of 1945.The judging of livestock, crops, and home economics exhibits was done. The band concert and horse show were over. It was time for a featured event of the popular local fair – the horse pulling contest.

The first team of horses began their pull, dragging the stone boat with 50 lb. bags of barn lime across the school lawn. With no wheels or runners, the stone boat was an uncooperative dead weight, but still the horses pulled. They were a work team; it was what they did. At the appointed spot, someone heaved another bag on the stone boat. Muscles and bones straining, hearts and lungs straining, the horses dug in and kept pulling, urged on by their handler. This was horse power!



RULES OF HORSE PULLING CONTEST

1. Drivers will ride on and drive from the load holding line in each hand. Whipping or any other form of abuse, slapping with lines or noise making of any kind other than shouting by the driver will disqualify the entry. The second offense will rule the team out of the contest. A man may stand at the head of each horse until the driver is ready to start the team. The start and pull must be straight ahead; pulling sidewise and jerking is not permitted.

2. Numbers will be issued to drivers in the light weight and heavy weight divisions. Teams will pull in rotation so there will be intervals of rest between pulls at different weights.

3. Each team will be given trials at each load. Pulling the load a distance of 28 feet in one continuous pull qualifies the team for the next pull at an increased weight. Failure to pull the load 28 feet at any one trial eliminates the team.

4. Awards will be made on a basis of 100% for pulling capacity. The team pulling the heaviest load the greatest distance wins first in its division. The team pulling the heaviest load next greatest distance wins second, etc.

5. No one (other than the driver of the operators) under any circumstances will be allowed to stop any team while pulling. Any offender of this rule will be removed immediately from the fair grounds.

6. Three judges will conduct the contest, two will measure distances and one observe the driving and keep the record of the pulls.

7. All teams will be weighed on the New Glarus Feed and Fuel Co., or Hefty Bros. scales befor 12:30 P.M.

8. Teams under 3200 lbs. will be classed in the light teams division. Teams 3200 lbs. and over will be classed in the heavy teams divison.

New Glarus Post, September 12, 1945

Almost exactly 100 years earlier, the first Glarus emigrants came to the area and began breaking ground without the assistance of draft animals. In the early spring of 1846 the men and women used spades and shovels to break up the prairie soil. Not only did they not have plows and horses or oxen, they had no experience in using them. In Switzerland, most farming was done by hand. But Fridolin Streiff managed to purchase plows and four pair of oxen which were used in common the first two seasons, each farmer taking turns to break sod and pull loads. He wrote: *"The draft animals make the round with the settlers whose mutual relations improve according to the degree by which they get out of their misery..."* (New Glarus 1845 – 1970, pg. 175)

The 1847 census of the settlement listed 16 oxen and 2 horses. In 1849, 41 oxen were listed, and only one horse. At the time, oxen were considered more practical than horses. Oxen were strong, tough and steady, and they cost considerably less than horses. But oxen were very slow. Not only were horses faster, they were more agile, easier to maneuver, more sure-footed, and they got more work done.

As the community became increasingly prosperous, farmers traded their oxen in for work horses, and an essential and satisfying partnership which would last for almost 100 years was born. Through the decades horses provided all of the needed power, adjusting good-naturedly to improvements in machinery and other farming advancements over the years.

In the photo on the next page you can see a local threshing crew – men and horses - in the 1890s. Teams of horses are harnessed to a large circular mechanical driver which powers the grain thresher when the horses walk at a steady pace. Many of the work horses in the area were draft breeds, primarily Percherons and Belgians. Others were a cross, carrying the bloodlines of both draft horses and smaller breeds – saddle or cart horses. Size was matched to the work they needed to do.

What is a draft horse? The term "draft" derives from an Old English word meaning "hauling", and can describe any horse adapted to pull loads. In this country, however, the term has increasingly come to mean specific breeds of tall, heavy-muscled and heavy-boned horses with a calm disposition and a conformation particularly suited to pulling heavy loads. A draft horse can easily weigh twice as much as a saddle horse.

Draft horses were stunningly powerful, but they were more than that to the farm families that depended on them. Numerous photographs of proud families standing in front of their homes or their barns with well-groomed horses attest to the horses' place of respect and affection in the family. And then the tractor came. Inventors had been experimenting with tractor models since the late 1800's, but Henry Ford's mass-produced Fordson, available to farmers in 1917, augured the eventual dissolution of the long-standing partnership between farmer and horse.

It didn't happen overnight. The year 1945 fell about in the middle of the period of transition from horse power to tractor power which lasted more than two decades in the New Glarus area. Tractors were in use in the 1930s, but after years of relying on their horses, many farmers were not willing to completely switch their allegiance.

They used the tractor for the heavy work – plowing and disking – and for "belt work", such as driving the threshing machines. Their horse teams did lighter work or work that required some finesse – hauling hay, planting corn, and cultivating. And it was not unusual for a team of trusted horses to be hitched to the *verdammter* tractor to haul it out of the mud where it had become mired. Horses also started in the winter no matter how low the mercury fell, were more reliable on steep grades, and could work efficiently in smaller spaces.

The farm implements in the New Glarus Historical Society collection offer a unique metaphor for the transition period from horses to tractors. Most of the equipment was first used with horses and later converted for use with tractors – their tongues were shortened.

And the horse pulling contest? It was featured in the local fair until 1949, when it was replaced by a tractor driving contest. New Glarus farmer Herman Marty kept his horses through the mid-1950s, but then they – and an entire era – were gone.

What of draft horses today? Conservation foresters use them for logging, because they step lightly on the fragile forest floor. Some small farmers are also using them, valuing the quiet way they work, their eco-friendly source of fuel (hay instead of gas), and the rewarding partnership no tractor can replace.

And you can still see a horse pulling contest ─ the super-athletes of today's draft horse world will be competing at Wisconsin fairs, all season long.

History Mysteries

Have you been a regular viewer of the Public Broadcasting's "*Genealogy Roadshow*" or "*History Detectives*?" If you had been at the The New Glarus Historical Society archives recently, you may have thought an episode of one of these shows was in progress!

Dr. Ueli Bachman, Richterswil, Canton Zurich, Switzerland, has been researching family history for many years, inspired by the oral tradition of his father and relatives before him. In addition, in the 1990s, he and another American relative brainstormed a project that would focus on genetic testing to attempt to identify links between generations of their families, on both sides of the Atlantic. That project continues today, with 75 American, German and Swiss male family members receiving DNA tests and results studied by researchers at Standford University.

However, Dr. Bachman's search at this time was focused on finding information about a woman named Barbara Hottinger, a woman who found her way to New Glarus. Barbara was a resident of Richerswil who, among others, immigrated to Wisconsin. Her immigration story included meeting a Glarner, J.J. Tschudy near her home. J.J. Tschudy, later came to America to secure information about the progress in the colony, called New Glarus. Barbara became Mrs. J. J. Tschudy.

An inheiratance from Dr. Bachman's father, a box of letters set aside in the attic for a number of years, had been remembered and retrieved. Letters, written on thin, onion skin paper, in a spidery script filling the front, back and margins of the paper conveyed the story of the journey, *Der Auswandertbrief*. After many hours of research, and with help from a retired professor of History in Zurich, Dr. Bachman discovered other letters telling of life in rural Wisconsin. Internet connections, emails and the genorosity of genealogists from both our area and Switzerland helped Dr. Bachman find the New Glarus Historical Society and its archives.

As a result, Dr. Bachaman and his wife, Dr. Francoise Bachman, traveled to Wisconsin in July and spent time in Baraboo, Plain, New Glarus and Monroe to conduct more research. His visit was successful!

Dr. Bachman returned home with almost 1200 images of documents, locations, and photographs from his time in Wisconsin. Some of those images were of photographs in the New Glarus Historical Society collection; two are of Barbara and J.J. Tschudy, which were on display in the museum. On a recommendation from Bob Elmer, he was able to obtain a copy of a book, *Amerikas Little Switzerland erinnert sich : 150 Jahre New Glarus,* which told of Barbara's life through letters which she had written to her Swiss connections. This book is also available in the Historical Society archives. Sherry Anderegg, of the Green County Historical Society and Green County Genealogy Society, provided a copy of Barbara's death report which confirmed details in a letter that Dr. Bachman had in his possession. In return, Dr. Bachman shared numerous files and photos that will be available in our archives and a promise to return and potentially present his research to the community.

Genealogy and history experts Bob Elmer and Sherry Anderegg meet with Doctors Ueli and Francoise Bachman of Richterswil, Canton Zurich, in the New Glarus Historical Society's archives, on the grounds of the Swiss Historical Village.

Attendance, Tours and Events – July 2016

Residents of the following WI counties, not previously identified, signed our guest book in July: Buffalo, Crawford, Marathon, Oconto, and Portage.

Visitors from all but seven states in the U.S. have visited the museum this season. New states added this month include: Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Montana, New Jersey, and North Carolina. In addition, we welcomed more visitors from Switzerland, along with tourists from: Spain, Australia and Denmark.

A special tour was arranged for teenage musicians visiting the Midwest from St. Gallen, Switzerland. The tour was sponsored and supported by the New Glarus Maennenchor. In addition, two bus tours scheduled stops at the Historical Village; one a multi-generational group from Kansas and a senior citizen's group from Minnesota.