

BHS NEWSLETTER

B L O O M I N G T O N H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y

VISIT US
WITHOUT
LEAVING
HOME!

- The Old Town Hall is closed to the public until further notice.
- Take a Virtual Tour on our website.
- We will continue to post on Facebook. 'Like' us to get our posts.

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From our President

Dear Members,

As we all navigate the restrictions of the Corona Virus we regret that the Old Town Hall Museum has been closed since March. We have spent the time rearranging the exhibits to accommodate social distancing and one way traffic flow. We now await the OK to reopen to visitors.

We plan to announce the museum reopening in the Bloomington Sun-Current, as well as on our web site and Facebook page.

Since we no longer have space sufficient to safely hold an in-person annual meeting, we are taking this opportunity to give an update on what we have accomplished in the past year and ask that you vote for 6 officers for 2 year terms to fill out the Board of Directors. This is half the number of Directors. We are also including revised By-Laws for you to consider. We have included a stamped, self-addressed post card for you to vote on these issues and return before the November 30 deadline.

Yours for Bloomington History,
Frances Stachour
President

*Take a virtual
tour of the Old
Town Hall
Museum from
our updated
website:*

*Bloomington
Historical
Society.org*

Make sure to see the BHS updated Website

A very welcome new volunteer has already made a significant impact at the Bloomington Historical Society. Karl Feind, has joined us and jumped right in with his technology skills to make a number of important updates to our BHS website.

At Karl's suggestion, a brand new Virtual Tour of the museum has been developed. Thanks to his hard work, it is now up and running from our home page. Please stop in via your home computer or device and take a look around!

2020 Annual Report

When an all-new Board of Directors took office in January 2020, we were looking forward to a very busy year! Board Members first took time to study and make recommendations on our By-Laws, our contract with the City of Bloomington, and our Collections Policy. Officers were elected and a curator appointed.

The Museum opened under Board guidance in mid-January and immediately saw a major increase in both volunteer hours and in visitors. We were open 19 days each month in January and February. It was exciting to see that our visitor count tripled in February, partly due to placing more visible signs in the windows stating our open hours.

It all came to a screeching halt in March, when the City of Bloomington ordered the Museum closed to combat COVID-19. Our volunteers continued to put in time cleaning and sorting but the Governor's "Stay at Home" order in late March put that on hold as well. It was sev-

eral months before volunteers again came on a regular basis. A COVID-19 protocol was put in place allowing up to four volunteers in the building, working in separate areas.

Board members quickly recognized that a technology plan was needed. Using our personal computers for BHS documentation is not the best practice. After many hours of work, a grant proposal was submitted in July to the MN State Historical Society for computer hardware and software funding.

Unfortunately, BHS was not awarded a grant. Life Members of BHS were also asked to make a donation toward purchasing computer hardware and software. Several members were quite generous, and we are hoping to purchase desperately needed computers with those donations soon. Collections Management Software will have to wait for another grant opportunity.



Photo by Steve Johnson

BLOOMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Old Town Hall Museum

Penn Avenue at Old Shakopee Road
Open noon-4 Tues, Wed, Thurs & Sat
Sundays 1-5 if there is no Pond House event

Mailing address:

1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431

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Founded in 1964, the Bloomington Historical Society is dedicated to the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the City of Bloomington.

Our mission is to collect, preserve and hold in the public trust the many artifacts, photographic images, memorabilia and life stories of the people who have lived in Bloomington.

The organization is run entirely by volunteers and we depend entirely upon your donations for our operations, programs and displays. We are grateful for your ongoing support.

An Old Days Recollection...

Note: A few Bloomington History buffs got to talking about an old picture of our museum. One wondered what the story was about surrounding buildings. Board member Ken Veness came up with this account.

During the late '30s through the mid '50s, Ed Chadwick had a coal yard on the little triangle west of Penn bordered by Hyland Rd and the Dan Patch RR tracks. Be-



sides the open coal bins there was a small building with doors at each end so that a vehicle could come in to load coal. The building had a 'drive on' scale for weighing your coal purchase as you left. There are a couple of good pictures of this taken from the 'Town Green' (the triangle of grass between the town hall, church and Old Shakopee Rd)

If there was a car of coal coming in by rail, Ed would recruit some of the high school boys for the day to unload coal into the bins. The car would need to be empty when the train made its return trip that afternoon and Ed didn't have a siding track!

Two of Ed's kids were Cal (of the vegetable stand) and Preacher Bill (of the church across the street). By the way, Ed's farm was where Valley West Shopping Center is now located. He had a long driveway from Old Shakopee Rd straight back and across the RR tracks.

Thanks, Ken—and to all who keep stories about 'the old days in Bloomington alive for all!

Re-opening Soon!

The Bloomington Historical Society has been working with the City of Bloomington to put reasonable and safe protocols in place for re-opening the Old Town Hall Museum to the public.

We miss our visitors, but are also very aware that most of our visitors and volunteers are in a demographic that is at high risk for serious complications if exposed to COVID-19.

One of the policies that will be in place when the museum opens is a requirement that visitors and staff wear masks while in the building. Hand sanitizer will be available near the entrance.

There will be a limited number of people allowed in the building at any one time.

We will also be open by appointment. If you would like to visit the museum for a private tour, please contact us and we will make arrangements.



Bloomington Historical Society
1800 West Old Shakopee Road
Bloomington, Minnesota 55431