

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Our Mission

To preserve, document and classify the physical history of the Lake Minnetonka area. To provide a means by which everyone can share in the history of the lake area. To stimulate interest in the cultural heritage of the area.

Founded in 1972, the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society preserves the history of Lake Minnetonka and the communities of Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Shorewood, and Tonka Bay.

The Society's Museum and Archives are free and open to the public, and hold a large collection of historical artifacts and documents. It regularly presents programs and publishes books on topics of local historical interest.

E L M H S

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www.elmhs.org

**ELMHS 2016-2017
Board of Directors**

President: Brianna DePauw

Vice President: Molly
Anderson

Treasurer: Cheryl Ahlcrona

Secretary: Open

Deanna Bunkelman, Scott
Dake, Drue Gisvold, Jerry
Holl, Francesca Landon,
Betty Peck, Mark Read, Tad
Shaw, Lisa Stevens, Jacob
Westman, Tom Williams.

The Harborage

Calling All Members: Celebrate Our 45 Years at Our Annual Meeting!



Tuesday, June 27, 2017, 6:00PM
Southshore Center
5735 Country Club Road, Shorewood

PLEASE JOIN US!

At this year's very important annual meeting we will vote on amendments to our bylaws and will elect a new board of directors. We hope all our members will attend so we will be able to establish a quorum.

Enjoy food and beverages with your fellow members and you're invited to bring your favorite dessert to share. Our recently donated Excelsior Amusement Park and Danceland photos will also be on display.

The bylaw amendments have been distributed to members and the board slate is on page 5. Please contact the Society at info@elmhs.org or 952-221-4766 with any questions.

Tapping History Summer Cruises

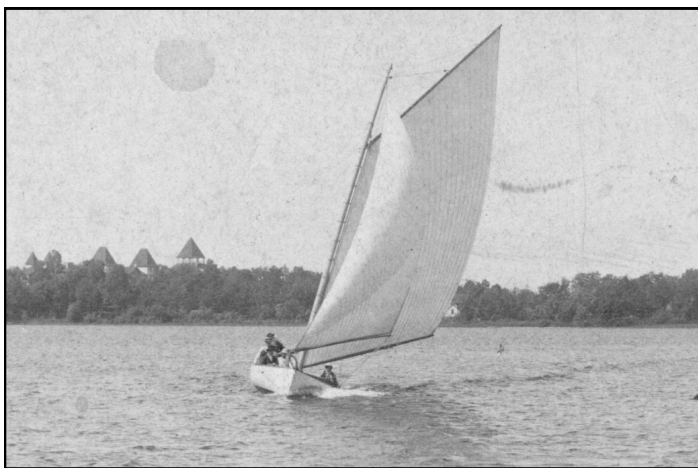
Aboard the Historic Steamboat *Minnehaha*

Boat boards at 6:45 pm and sails at 7:00 pm.

Board at former Bayside Grille docks, 687 Excelsior Boulevard, Excelsior.

Purchase tickets at: elmhs1.eventbrite.com, \$20 ELMHS members / \$35 non-members

For more information: info@elmhs.org, 952-221-4766, www.elmhs.org.



Volante, August 24, 1888

Monday, June 12

***Volante* – Minnetonka's Oldest Surviving Sailboat**

with Alan Lizee

Before there was *Onawa*, there was *Volante*. In 1886, Hazen Burton commissioned Boston boat designer Edward Burgess to design the fastest boat possible to sail on Lake Minnetonka. Described as a shallow draft, gaff rigged, "sandbagger" sloop, boats of its kind rarely survived long. Most were raced hard and sunk when no longer useful.

While *Volante* was successful in many races, the Dyer Boatworks of Excelsior was already working on a lighter and faster boat for the Burtons, the *Onawa*. Eclipsed by faster designs, *Volante* was soon retired from racing and was used as a pleasure boat until the 1930s when it was left to rest next to the Burton's boathouse in Deeplaven.

Alan Lizee will share stories about *Volante's* racing history as well as how his father and partner Jim MacRae gave *Volante* a second life and sailed her another 40 years. Today, she is the oldest boat on Lake Minnetonka, and according to the Mystic Seaport Museum, the last remaining sandbagger in the country still being sailed.

Monday, July 10

Growing Up on Big Island with Joni Scheftel

The Scheftel family moved from Minneapolis to Big Island in 1971, where they lived year-round on a four-acre hobby farm and raised goats, sheep, poultry and other animals.

Marge, Zane and their three children crossed the lake to work and school nearly every day, rain or shine, water or ice. Joni will share her memories of island life, eccentric neighbors, and her mother, Marge Scheftel, who remained year-round on the island until her death in 2008.



Joni Scheftel with her prize goat Bridget on Big Island, 1973.

Back at the Brewery

Monday, September 11, 7:00 pm

A History of Apple Day
with Darel and LaVerna Leipold

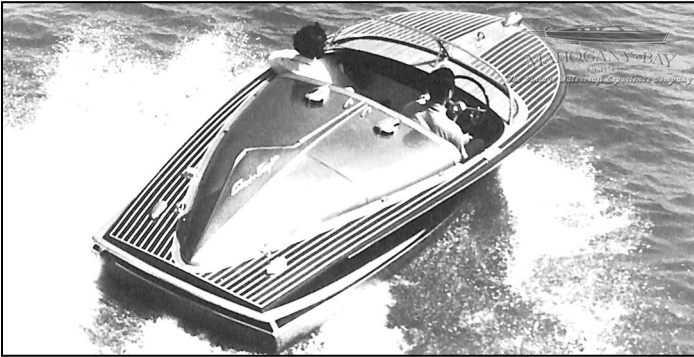
At Excelsior Brewing Company
421 Third Street, Excelsior
Free and Open to the Public.

Doors open at 6:00pm - seating first come, first served.

First celebrated in 1935, this Excelsior community tradition was run for many years by Darel and LaVerna Leipold, owners of Leipold's in Excelsior. Darel and LaVerna will share images from their collection and stories of Apple Days past. Apple Day continues this year on September 16.



Apple Day Apple Queen and her court, 1935



1955 18' Chris Craft Cobra, courtesy Mahogany Bay

Monday August 7 *SPECIAL DATE*

**2nd Annual Classic Boat Show
on the Water**
with F. Todd Warner

F. Todd Warner, owner of Mahogany Bay, will explore the beauty and significance of classic wood boats with the passengers of the "Minnehaha" during this cruise. Classic boat owners are invited to travel alongside the historic steamboat in their own boats, from Excelsior to Wayzata and back, as Warner shares each boat's story with "Minnehaha" passengers.

Boat owners who would like their craft included should email their boat's year, make and model, a photo and its story to the Society at info@elmhs.org. Cruise logistics and procedures will be sent to all participants and there is no charge to participate.

Warner is a leading authority in the vintage boating field and is proficient in the history and authenticity of well-known and obscure boat builders and designers. He frequently lectures on the historical perspective of restoration procedures for vintage watercraft.

Celebrating 45 Years of History at the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society

The following was excerpted and updated from our 2002 newsletter which celebrated our 30th anniversary.

Passionate Beginnings

A group of five passionate and enterprising women - Kari Rice, Mary Willis, Fern Michael, Mary Haering and Fran Windmueller - saw the need to fill a void in their historic community. They felt a group should be formed to preserve the rich history of the area and began by seeking the legal advice of O'Neill Grathwol and then asked others to join them in planning a charter meeting.

Among the charter members were Lincoln and Harriet Aldritt (Tonka Bay), Mark and Grace Knowlton (Excelsior), Ruth Mann (Shorewood), Warren Morse (Excelsior), and Dave Nixon (Shorewood). Staking out their area of interest (Excelsior, Deephaven, Greenwood, Shorewood and Tonka Bay) they began a non-profit organization and met for the first time on May 25, 1972. The Society's mission remains the same today: *"To preserve, document and classify the physical history of the Lake Minnetonka area. To provide a means by which everyone can share in the history of the lake area. To stimulate interest in the cultural heritage of the area."*

Preserving History Made by Others

The Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society was christened at a meeting on June 27, 1972. Mark Knowlton was elected President; Mary Willis, Vice President; Jean Hughes, Recording Secretary; Kari Rice, Correspondence Secretary; Fern Michael, Treasurer; and Grace Knowlton, Historian. The original Board Members were Lincoln Aldritt, O'Neill Grathwol, Dorothea Hillis, Jane Neilson, Dave Nixon, Gladys Peck, Robert Reutiman, Betty Wiley and Mary Willis. Members and the public were enthusiastic about the new group and began to acquire and generously donate volumes of historic material that needed to be organized and securely stored. The City of Excelsior kindly provided a space in their vault and allowed the Society to set up archives there.

Making History

The new organization hit the ground running - participating in parades, providing historical displays in schools, the library, and storefronts; holding bus and boat tours, an auction fundraiser, luncheons and historical style shows.

In 1978 the Excelsior City Council and the Society conducted a Historical Survey of all the properties in



*Fern Michael, Fran Windmuller, Mary Willis, Kari Rice,
and Mary Haering, founders of the
Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, 1972.*

Excelsior which was shared with the public in a book by members Linn Ann Cowles and Peter Johnson entitled "The Lake, The Land and The People." In 1980 a committee including Jerry Holl, Rachel Leonard and Leon Bonander led the restoration of the famous 1892 Lake Minnetonka sailboat the "Onawa." Finally, a show of early pioneer Lydia Ferguson's artwork was presented to launch the publication of the "Lydia Ferguson Diary, 1854-1886," compiled by member Joyce Quinn. In 2003 the Society produced Excelsior's two day, community wide Sesquicentennial Celebration with parades, tours, a pageant and dozens of other activities.

Today, the Society welcomes over one hundred people to the Excelsior Brewing Company or the historic steamboat "Minnehaha" on the second Monday of each month for its innovative, free, "Tapping History" programs administered by Brianna DePauw and Dan Johnson. While our founding members would have been thrilled with the popularity of these standing room only historical presentations, the location might have elicited gasps.

Publications

Publishing books was a natural for the Society. There was no shortage of talented and enthusiastic historians and writers, plenty of unexplored history to mine and a hungry public to be served. These books also served the Society's mission and provided a major source of income.

The Society's first book, published in 1974, was a reprint of S.E. Ellis' "Picturesque Minnetonka 1906," an "official souvenir, story and guide to the queen of all inland lakes." Member Ellen Meyer came forward with her talent and generosity, writing seven books about Lake Minnetonka area history and lent financial assistance in their early production costs. The Society

Call for Museum Hosts

Our Museum is open for the season with even more updated exhibits, and improvements will continue throughout the summer. We hope you'll visit to see the changes!

But we also hope you'll help us keep the Museum open by signing up to volunteer as a Museum Host. Duties include opening and/or closing the Museum, greeting the public, selling books and answering simple questions. No experience is necessary and simple training is provided. Sign up for one or multiple shifts on Tuesdays, 2-6pm and Saturdays, 10am-1pm and 1pm-4pm throughout the summer. To sign up visit www.elmhs.org/museum.html. Contact us at info@elmhs.org or 952-221-4766 for more information.



Our Museum at 305 Water Street, Excelsior features artifacts from the Excelsior Amusement Park, Lake Minnetonka nautical life, tourism and Excelsior's civic and commercial past.

*Open Tuesdays through October 24, 2-6pm
Saturdays through September 2, 10am-4pm,
Saturdays September 9 through 30, 1-4pm*

also benefited from the literary talents of members Isabel Thibault and Grace Knowlton. A dedicated researcher, Grace volunteered in the Archives into her 90s and served as the Society's Historian for thirty years. The Society was lucky to have Ron Hughes of Tonka Printing in Excelsior, always ready with his publishing support and expertise.

The Society has gone on to publish over twenty books in the last 45 years. Its most recent book, "Images of America: Lake Minnetonka" was co-authored with the Westonka and Wayzata historical societies, and is available for purchase from the Society's website with the rest of the Society's publications, maps and notecards.

The Museum

In 1980 trains to Excelsior were discontinued, the railway property was bought by Hennepin County and the Society began to lobby for the use of the old 1952 depot at 305 Water Street as a museum. In 1982 the county agreed to lease the depot to the Society and the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society Museum opened to the public with a historical toy display in December 1983.

In 1986 an addition to house the famous sailboat "Onawa" was built, still safely preserving the boat today, and an Excelsior Amusement Park ticket booth was moved to the property, both made possible by longtime volunteer Bob Bolles. Volunteers Betty and Brad Peck manned the Museum for many years, and it is now led by volunteer Kay Derner and open during the

2017-2018 Board of Directors Slate Announced

The Society will present the following slate of board officers and directors at the annual meeting on June 27 (see front page). The length of each member's initial term in years is noted next to their name.

President: Brianna DePauw (1)

Vice President: Tom Williams (2)

Treasurer: Cheryl Ahlcrona (1)

Secretary: Scott Dake (2)

Board Members: Molly Anderson (1), Deanna Bunkelman (3), Olga Kelly (3), Mark Read (3), Tad Shaw (2), Lisa Stevens (3), Jacob Westman (2).

Emeritus Directors: Jerry Holl (3), Betty Peck (3).

summer months. While donations continue to pour in, the Museum has recently been refreshed, rearranged, reimagined and recommitted to sharing the area's history with the public who have given these ongoing changes rave reviews. The Society is grateful to its many volunteer Museum Hosts, and welcomes anyone with an interest in local history and greeting the public to help us keep the doors open by signing up to host this season (see article above).

(Continued on page 7)

MEMBERSHIP

Members shape the Society's policies and programs, and support our work in preserving the area's history.

Annual member benefits include:

- ♦ The Society's newsletter and mailings
- ♦ Invitations to special events
- ♦ Discounts and special member privileges on select opportunities
- ♦ Voting privileges

Membership Levels

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | Platinum | <input type="checkbox"/> \$45 | Household |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | Gold | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | Silver | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 | Senior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | Bronze | | |

Or, make an individual contribution of any amount!

\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail form and check made out to ELMHS to PO Box 305, Excelsior, MN 55331. You can also join or contribute online at www.elmhs.org. The Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

VOLUNTEERING

- ☐ Please contact me about volunteering for the Society. (See panel to right for more information.)

DONATION OF ARTIFACTS

- ☐ Please contact me regarding the donation of historical items to the Society. (See panel to right for more information.)

Volunteer with Us!

The Society is staffed entirely by volunteers and welcomes people of all ages and abilities to pursue their passions and assist in areas including:

- **Archives:** Assisting visitors, scanning, filing, researching, data entry.
- **Museum:** Serving as a host, cleaning and upkeep, data entry.
- **Publications:** Marketing merchandise to vendors, conducting inventories, selling merchandise at events, creating new books.
- **Programs and Events:** Set up and take down for Tapping History, welcoming people, creating new programs.
- **Membership and Fundraising:** Recruiting new members, contributors and volunteers, helping with direct mail appeals and special fundraising events, data entry.
- **Communications:** Writing press releases, creating marketing materials, contributing to social media, maintaining our website.
- **Technology:** Maintaining the Society's computer network and hardware, troubleshooting IT issues.

Training in all areas is provided. Contact us at info@elmhs.org or 952-221-4766 to learn more or visit our website at www.elmhs.org/volunteer.

Donate Artifacts

Donations of historic artifacts, photographs and documents pertinent to the history of the south Lake Minnetonka area are welcome for preservation in our Archives and display in our Museum. Help us share our community's history with future generations by sharing your history with us! (Due to space limitations, the Society is unable to accept all donations.)



Recent donations of Excelsior Amusement Park photos and scrapbooks from Judy Gabels and Nick Ruehl.

Thanks for your support!
NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS, AND CONTRIBUTORS
December 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017

MEMBERSHIPS

Gold Level

Ron Haberkorn
John Strandell

Silver Level

Cheryl Ahlcrona & Carl Floren
Linda Bean
Jennifer & Tim Caron
John P. & Jan Gray
Dan & Allison Kelly
C. Duffy Larsen-Abramson
Mr. & Mrs. William Naegle
Debby & Doug Schmidt
Kyle Uittenbogaard
Gretchen Wahlstedt
Tom & Barbara Warner

Bronze Level

Kelly & Loretta Dunn
Rolf & Jean Erickson
Peter J. Hartwich
Kathy Johnson
Betsy & Charlie Jones
Rebecca Jordan
Steve & Judy Krause
Lin & Mike Maki
Bruce & Jodi Noll
Alice & John Reimann
John & Audrey Rudberg
Julia & Steve Sherf
Tom Skramstadt
Nancy Smith
Pat Smith
Roger & Jane Stein

Pam & Tom Stovern
Justine Supple
Ron Haberkorn
John Strandell

Individual Level

Susan & Jim Berdahl
Conley Brooks
Sarah Christensen
Tarah Cummings
Kay & Bob Derner
Kathy & Mark Endres
Juli Englander
Michael Goertel
Cate Honzl
Joyce Bakko Hummel
Ken Kotzer
Stuart & Roselind Loomis
Thomas McCarthy
Pam McDavitt
Judy Mueller
Michelle Mullenbach
June Seamans
Roger Smith
Jake & Cari Sturgis
Liz Vandam
Ron Wagner
Rosemary Dupont Whowell
Dan & Brittney Johnson
Joseph Schwartz

Senior Level

Dawn Bjornstad
Carol Carmichiel
Sandy Curtis

Roger W. Cuthbertson
Marybeth & Bill Darusmont
Mike Dierks
Paula Giovannetti
Max Green
Craig Gustafson
Lyle & Mary Hathaway
Bruce & Barbara Jensen
Susan & Michael Kimitch
Jim LaHaye
Paul Maravelas & Joni Scheftel
Pamela Horton &
Michael Mason
Martha Mayer
Leone & Patrick McGlone
Mary & Scot McKenzie
Kristin Miller
Bob Nygaard
Ed & Charty Oliver
Linda Putnam
Allan M. Schneider
Sally Sprengeler
Deanne Gray Straka
Janet Sullivan & Gary Reins

Life Members

(no longer offered)

Bart Baker
Alec & Marianne Beck
Bob & Diane Bolles
Suellen Douglas
Don & Frannie Douglass
Kristin & Ken Dowell
Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Fayfield
John Gorecki

Phil & Eileen Hallin
Paul Huber
Ron Hughes
Dr. & Mrs. Randy Julian
Terrance Kellogg
Mr. & Mrs. Nick Johnson
Mark Knowlton
Tom & Carol Knowlton
Michael Kramer
Ann Lundsten
Scott D. McGinnis
Minnesota Streetcar Museum
Robert L. Naas
Aaron Person
Sharon Provost
Kellie & Gary Ringate
Kathy Knowlton Schmid
Carol Schmidt
Dr. Milton H. Seifert
Tad Shaw
Lisa Stevens & Jeffrey Hatcher
Rodney Thompson
TSP Architecture
Ruth Witrak

CONTRIBUTORS

Kay & Bob Derner
Rolf & Jean Erickson
Michael Goertel
Bruce & Barbara Jensen
Karen Ridgeway
Deanne Gray Straka
Janet Sullivan & Gary Reins
Gregory Thomas

(Continued from page 5)

The Archives

The Society's Archives were set up by librarians Jane Wyer Neilson and her sister, who arranged and catalogued several hundred files. Isabel Thibault, also a librarian, lead the Archives for many years and other volunteers include Betty Peck, Grace Knowlton, Lael Grathwol, Suellen Douglass, Marybeth Sheridan and Cary Smith. The Archives include an excellent photograph collection, local biographical files, searchable digitized obituary files, early newspapers, cemetery records, and files with information about many of the homes and businesses in the area - all a boon to the genealogist or house history researcher.

After moving to Southshore Center in Shorewood and now the lower level of the historic Excelsior Public School building at 261 School Avenue in Excelsior, the Society continues to seek materials of local historical interest, especially photos, family histories and house

and property information. Hundreds of photos from the Archives have been added to the Society's website thanks to volunteer Cary Smith and are shared with researchers around the world. Lisa Stevens, Cheryl Ahlcrona, Kay Derner, Drue Gisvold, Olga Kelly, Scott McGinnis, Betty Peck and Mary Upgren now welcome the public from 10-1pm on Wednesdays and the second Saturday of the month.

New History

The Society has been successful over the years due to the hard work, generosity and dedication of its members and volunteers and the support of its community. Members Grace Knowlton and Betty Peck alone put in thousands of volunteer hours over the decades and 43 years after joining the board, Betty continues as a font of information in the Archives today. The Society welcomes the involvement of new members and volunteers to learn about this community's past in order to lead the organization into the future.

ACCESSIONS

December 2, 2016—March 31, 2017

- **Barbara Colby:** Excelsior Roaring 20s t-shirt, 1978; matchbooks from Anchor Inn, Excelsior Bar—Lounge; “Deephaven” baseball bracelet.
- **Rolf Erickson:** Various Excelsior area assessor’s sheets with photos, 1990s.
- **Excelsior Rotary Club:** “A Short History of the Excelsior Rotary Club;” various issues of “The Excelsior Rotonkan;” Everett Clausen’s Rotary Club of Excelsior “Perfect Attendance Award.”
- **Judy Gabels:** Approx. 400 Excelsior Amusement Park/ Danceland photos, 1920s-1960s; 1939 Apple Day circular; various issues of “Minnetonka Breezes,” 1930s.
- **Lawrence Hallanger:** Minnetonka Centennial commemorative pin.
- **Scott D. McGinnis:** 1947 Greyhound Bus schedule; postcard “Degree of Honor, Casco Point, Lake Minnetonka.”
- **Jerry Montville:** Lake Minnetonka map and holder.
- **Nikki North:** Diary of Mrs. R.D. Handy; misc. newspaper clippings about family.
- **Nancy Steege:** various West Point Association papers.
- **St. Louis Park Historical Society:** 1950 Lake Minnetonka Phone Directory.
- **City of Tonka Bay:** Sugar bowl, spoon, July 4, 1910 menu, dining plates from Tonka Bay Hotel; various mounted photos of Tonka Bay Hotel.
- **Ian Wagner:** 7 - photos from the Eddy collection loaned for scanning.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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PO Box 305

