

THE COUNTY CHRONICLER

Polk County Historical Society

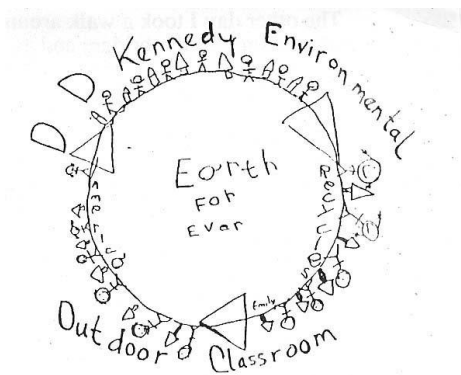
March 2009

HISTORY WOMAN OF THE YEAR ROSALIE KITTLESON



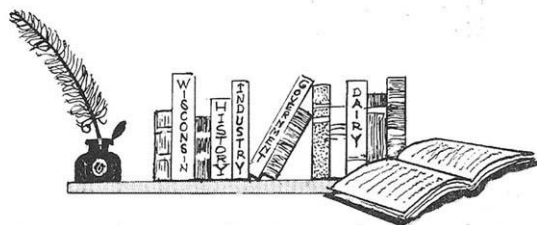
Rosalie will be honored for 2009
Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m.

Darrell will talk on the
HISTORY OF THE
D.D. KENNEDY PARK



Logo Designed 1992 by first grader Emily Felhen

Mark Your Calendar
**Marion Park–Deaver Addition
Dedication July 4, 2009**



BOOKS!

What is that book worth?
How should you care for books?

Ask these questions of our
April speaker, Dr. Allen Hanson

Dr. Hanson lives in rural Centuria, works for the Marshfield Clinic, and is a book seller through AbeBooks.com. His life-long interest in history books and magazines has taught him how to grade a book by its quality, condition, and binding.

Do you wonder about a book in your possession? Dr. Hanson says,
“Bring it with!”

Tuesday, April 28, 7 p.m.

Meetings held at the
Polk County Justice Center, Balsam Lake

Refreshments served after programs

Board Meetings 5:45 p.m.

ROSALIE MARY (NIMON) KITTLESON

Rosalie Kittleson has made a forever difference in Polk County's environment, education, and history. It's hard to think of anyone else who has impacted so many lives in so short a time. She was born in Lancaster, Ohio, but has lived and traveled in many places, including three years in Japan and three trips to Mexico delivering eye glasses for the Lions Club. Rosalie came to this area in 1980 when she and Darrell joined their families that spring. Making friends comes easy with Rosalie, and working a variety of jobs through the years has brought her into contact with many interesting people.

Rosalie was working as a teacher's aid in the special-education department at St. Croix Falls when she made a call to the county and asked if there was a project that her students, four handicapped first-grade children, could be involved in. Polk County did have a needy project—THE D.D. KENNEDY PARK. Violet Kennedy's dream of preserving the Kennedy farm and mill for a recreational and educational park became a reality largely due to Rosalie and Darrell Kittleson's leadership. Rosalie enlisted students, scouts, 4-H members, sportsmen, financial institutions, the extension agency, the 327th Army Engineer Company, and the community to make the D.D. Environmental Nature Center a prime natural, historical, recreational, and educational Park for everyone to enjoy.

Working with Violet Kennedy and others connected with the park, Rosalie continued to learn about the history of the area; and when there was an opportunity to expand this with the job of Museum Director for the Polk County Historical Society, she and Darrell applied and were hired. They are a great team; together they have cared for the museum and also headed the very successful Polk County Sesquicentennial Celebration held at the county fair grounds in 2003.

School tours, authors' day, music and art on the lawn, history woman of the year, and style shows are some of the programs that Rosalie has coordinated for the benefit of the Museum. The improvements in the Victorian garden are enjoyed by all who pass by. The new sidewalk makes it safer for walking, and the limestone wall has been repaired. Under Rosalie's direction many improvements have been completed in the museum controlling air, lights, insects, and small mammals. The roof was repaired, slate shingles were replaced, and exterior trim repaired and painted preserving the building for many decades to come.

An elevator addition to the museum has been a goal of the society for many years, and the proceeds from the 150th county birthday celebration gave a big boost to the hope of an addition becoming a reality. The Kittlesons headed up many fundraisers including auctions, dances, and food sales and gave many, many hours of labor to raise funds. Because of the fundraising, labor, and grantwriting, the Polk County Museum has the attractive and useful three-floor addition.

Rosalie has combined her love of children and nature with PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE. This is Polk County Historical Society's mission statement, and Rosalie Kittleson has greatly helped to fulfill it.

D.D. KENNEDY PARK

The D.D. Kennedy Environmental Area consists of 106 acres of open prairies and abundant woodlands along the waters of the Balsam Branch River. In the late 1800's, a miller, August Gumpert, bought Lenroot's Mill and developed the Balsam Branch Roller Mills into a saw and flour mill, cheese factory, store, blacksmith shop, and built a large house. He also built a channel (flume) to direct water from the mill pond to the water wheel.

In 1914 D.D. (Dougald Duncan) Kennedy became owner and rebuilt the wooden dam with concrete. The saw mill operated three to four weeks in the spring when the river was high for water power. After the sawing season, it became a grist mill for livestock feed. Kennedy installed a small water wheel in 1926, which supplied electricity for the farm until 1960. Kennedy was an active community organizer and served three terms in the Wisconsin Legislature as Assemblyman.

After Kennedy's death in 1941, his widow Violet continued to operate the grist mill and farm including a dairy with assistance of hired help until 1965. Violet's brothers built her a new house closer to the mill pond in 1952.

On August 14, 1973, the Polk County Board of Supervisors accepted Violet Kennedy's gift of 100 acres for a park and recreation area. Violet and D.D. both loved the place and felt the public should also enjoy it.

Little was done with the property between 1973 and 1990 when new leadership took over and non-profit organizations and individuals formed the **FRIENDS OF THE D.D. KENNEDY**, led by Darrell and Rosalie Kittleson. The Sportsman's Club, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, financial institutions, University Extension, school, and community had representatives on the Board of Directors who drew up a constitution and established committees to implement the plan for the Environmental Classroom Park.

Wildflowers and native species were seeded, prairie grass was restored. Picnic facilities, a pump, restrooms, and a parking lot were installed with donated funds, including a substantial grant from the Bremer Foundation.

A major project was the 98-foot bridge over the Balsam Branch built by the 327th Engineer Reserves Company in 1992. Trails were constructed and blacktopped that same year by the Polk County Parks Department.

Dedication of the Park took place on June 13, 1993, featuring ribbon cutting and speeches by Polk County officials and Mrs. Kennedy. In 1994 the bike trail system from Amery and Balsam Lake opened and the following year cross-county ski trials were established. Fundraisers continued; with the funds, the flume was cleaned and water again reached the Branch on the east side of the road; walkways and a small bridge were built, Violet Kennedy's house was moved, a new picnic shelter

and restrooms built, playground equipment installed, a large aluminum handicapped dock was installed, and benches were placed throughout.

Violet Kennedy celebrated her 95th birthday on September 1, 1998, at the Park. She passed away early 1999. Her dream had been fulfilled in her lifetime.

Disastrous damage done in April, 2001, when a unusually large amount of rainfall eroded a section of the dam, washed the pier downstream, and damaged the walkways and other areas, was the stimulus of a new phase at the Park. After discussing dam replacement, it was decided by the County Board to proceed with 75 percent funding by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the state and county each contributed 12.5 percent. The total cost was around \$400,000. The new dam was completed in 2004; the aluminum dock was moved to the Mill Pond, and memorial boulders, benches, and trees were added.

An Educational Center became a reality in 2007. The building was financed by donations and grants, the main grant coming from the Marion Park-Deaver Foundation, giving \$30,000. The red pine logs for the building were harvested from Polk County Forests by volunteers and paid for by many individuals who purchased logs for \$250 or shingles for \$50. The 30- by 30-foot Educational Center was designed by the strong collaborative efforts of J. P. Johnson, Joyle Anderson, Larry Karlson, and Darrell Kittleson. It is not an exact replica of the 1901 mill but resembles it with the familiar center tower.

The Land, Air, Soil, and History (LASH) program, a combined effort of the Polk County Land and Water Resources Department, the Polk County Historical Society, and the Friends of D.D. Kennedy Park is an educational tool used to teach children the importance of learning about the past for saving the world for the future. Eight public schools and several smaller schools brought their students to the Park in 2005 through this program funded primarily by the Park-Deaver, Ann Marie Foundation, and the Polk County Sportsman's Club.

This history was taken from work of Marge Hallquist, friend of the family and park.



Deteriorated Kennedy Mill – 1970's



D.D. Kennedy Park Educational Center

VIOLET (NELSON) KENNEDY

One Woman's Dream

On August 14, 1973, Resolution 25 was adopted by a unanimous vote of the Polk County Board of Supervisors authorizing the gift of 106 acres to Polk County for a park and recreation area for use of the public. Mrs. Kennedy would have a life estate; "upon termination of said life estate the lands be named the **D.D. Kennedy Park.**"

Violet said, "When my husband was living, we loved this place and felt the public should enjoy it too." D.D. Kennedy's favorite motto was, "**Ask nothing for yourself that you would not be willing to grant to all members of society.**"



D.D. Kennedy Park Dedication – June 13, 1993
Violet Kennedy and A Stanley Anderson,
Polk County Board Chairman

WHAT IS THE D.D. KENNEDY ENVIRONMENTAL AREA?

- An outdoor classroom around a knowledgeable guide as students gain appreciation and concern for their natural environment
- A 4-H Club sighting flashes of brilliant blue as they learn to develop their own bluebird trails, inspired by this extensive trail
- A garden club delighting in the beauty of their projects and planning future expansion of wildflower plots
- A family picnicking beside the babbling brook of the music of birdsong, breezes rusting through pines and the chatter of chipmunks
- An artist or photographer capturing the glories of the outdoors
- A science class exploring ecological concerns as they study natural ecosystems
- Friends with physical challenges pulling in the catch of the day from accessible fishing pier, then enjoying the 1 ½ mile paved nature trail and crossing over the 98-foot timber bridge
- A Sportsmen Club (Pheasants Forever) working to restore and maintain the 20-acre prairie grass area, improving the habitat of game birds
- Scouts planting trees and contributing in many ways to the preservation of this unspoiled land
- A group of senior friends escaping their apartments or nursing homes to find joyous renewal in the great outdoors
- Lions clubs devoting time, talent and funds to the improvement and maintenance of the site
- Outdoor lovers of all ages, all physical capabilities, and all backgrounds frequently visiting this gift to the public from the Kennedys; deeply appreciative of the opportunities afforded by everyone

POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HIGHLIGHTS

Five members of the Polk County Board of Supervisors visited the museum in September (Bob Dueholm, Gerald Newville, Arthur Gamache, Marvin Caspersen, and Bryan Beseler).

The contract was signed with Paradise Landing for the **Northwest Regional Convention** to be held September 19th.

There was a large attendance at our October meeting held at the Museum. People enjoyed seeing the new addition and the PowerPoint presentation, although it was the consensus that the museum is not warm enough for meetings in October.

Tim Ericson, retired museum archivist, was a student at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in mid-1970s when he was called in to be an advisor for planning the construction of our museum galleries. He also edited *Recollections of 1876 Polk County's First Written History*. We appreciate his help again – he visited in September.

The Museum hours will remain the same in 2009. The dedication will be July 4th.
The meeting dates will remain the same with general election in October.

Greg Marsten will work with Darrell Kittleson to complete the sound system in select museum rooms.

Henrietta Anderson, PCHS life member, passed away January 27, 2009. We appreciate Henrietta's gifts that have helped make our elevator possible.

The Museum Research Room needs personnel to oversee it when the museum is open. Contact Rosalie if you are willing to help. The county genealogy group plans to staff it on Monday afternoons. They will be available to help with family genealogy.

The County Chronicler will be sent our four times a year. Your next copy should be mailed in May.

December 18, 2008, Rosalie sent thank-you letters to the businesses that provided support to the addition elevator project. They received a free newsletter subscription for 2009.

The following individuals sent financial support for our future projects at the museum:

- Bradley T. & Susan M. Johnson
- Carter & Joyce Dedolph
- Dolores Riegel
- David Butler
- Fred Olson
- Mildred Jerdee
- Amery Regional Hospital.

We also received donations from Patricia MacDonald, Connie Hill, Jean Chaffee, and Osceola Community Drive. Excel Energy gave \$1,000 to be used for the LASH program. David Butler, of Greatmats in Milltown, gave for our newsletter and postage for a year.

2009 EVENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your Antiques • Expo Fair • Museum cleaning days • School tours • Brat sales • Book sale • Park-Deaver Addition Dedication • PCHS table at Information Center • Picnic at Lake Wapogasset Park • Polk County Fair Little Red School House • Northwest Regional Convention | <p>May 26</p> <p>May 2009</p>
<p>June 3, July 22. and August 28-29</p>
<p>July 4</p> <p>One week-end in June</p> <p>July 28</p> <p>July 29 – August 2nd</p> <p>September 19</p> |
|--|--|

**Spring 2009 Local History Workshops provided by the Wisconsin Historical Society
Open to all interested, contact Rosalie Kittleson.**

	Date	Place
How to Develop Successful Youth Programs	April 6	Menasha. WI
After a Disaster: Salvaging Artifacts	April 20	Lake Geneva. WI
Costume Duration	May 8	Madison, WI
Communications and Publications	May 11	Menomonie. WI

MARAIN PARK-DEAVER ADDITION

Saturday, July 4, 2009

A special event calls for special preparation –

Call Greg Marsten, Joyce Bergstrand, or Dianne Dueholm if you're willing to help.

BRAT SALES

Call Carl Johnson if you can help on one of these days.

June 3, July 22, August 28 & 29

2009 POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES

David Knutson, President

P.O. Box 213
Balsam Lake WI 54810
(715) 485-9667

Muriel Pfeifer Vice President

635 Dickey Avenue
Amery WI. 54001
mpfeifer@amerytel.net
(715) 268-6578

Joyce Bergstrand, Secretary

750 S White Ash Court
Balsam Lake, WI 54810
jbergstr@amerytel.net
(715) 268-9523

Dianne Dueholm
904 State Road 48
Luck, WI. 54853
(715) 472-8365

Dorene Hendrickson
912 W. Main Street
Balsam Lake, WI 54810
(715) 405-3354

Carl Johnson
307 West South
Amery, WI. 54001
carljohanson@amerytel.com
(715) 268-8353

Ralph Laduke
Apt 110
611 Harriman Ave. So.
Amery WI 54001
(715) 268-5939

Greg Marsten
2491 170th St.
Luck WI 54853
marscafe@lakeland.ws
(715) 472-8465

Patricia MacDonald
1185 240th Ave.
Luck WI. 54853
(715) 472-4991

Larry Lee Phillipson
1027 85th Street
Amery, WI 54001
bunnytrail@centurytel.net
(715) 268-7494

Helen Stolz-Wood
726 Seventh St.
Hudson, WI 54016
(715) 386-7537

Martha Filip
682A 263rd Avenue
Frederic, WI 54853
marloufilip@yahoo.com
(715) 472-2206

Non-Board Officer Jeanne Reinhardt, Treasurer

Museum Director
Rosalie Kittleson
1141A State Road 65
Amery, WI 54001
darose@centurytel.net
(715) 483-3979
(715) 485-9269 **Museum**

Finance Committee

Carl Johnson
Fred Salmon
Merle Bergren
Joyce Bergstrand

Program Committee

David Knutson
Patricia MacDonald

Advertising

Martha Filip
Larry Phillipson
Joyce Bergstrand
Greg Marsten
Dianne Dueholm

Curators

Larry Lee Phillipson
Linnea Phillipson

Membership Committee

Carl Johnson
Ralph Laduke
Muriel Pfeifer

Bus Trip

David Knutson
Carl Johnson
Ralph Laduke
Rosalie Kittleson

Addition Dedication

Greg Marsten
Joyce Bergstrand
Diane Dueholm

Northwest Regional Convention

Darrell Kittleson
David Knutson
Martha Filip **Program**

Newsletter Editor

Judy L. Wester

THE MUSEUM NEEDS HELP

Spring Cleaning

Museum floors, displays, and windows—Rosalie can find a job that fits you.

Garden and Yard

Lend a hand—help keep our grounds attractive.

JOIN THE 47-PASSENGER BUS FOR HISTORICAL BUS TRIP

Mark your calendars for Friday, June 12! The stops below are confirmed, but expect more, including The Baker Land & Title Building. The Northern States Power Plant and others are pending.

1855. Folsom House



Kohbakong Cemetery



**Remember to renew your membership
for 2009! Join for a lifetime!**



Send \$15 to:
Polk County Historical Society
Box 41,
Balsam Lake, WI 54810

MUSEUM BOOK AND MAGAZINE SALE

One of the purposes of the Polk County Historical Society is to “establish and operate a local history library... for research.” Our Society has pursued this purpose for many years, and the Museum contains a very valuable collection which will be held for future generations. There are some magazines, books, and other miscellaneous items taking up space that have no relevance to our library. Tim Ericson, retired museum archivist, and Dr. Allen Hanson, book collector and seller, have looked through our shelves and closets, and both agree that we have many items that are not appropriate for our library’s purpose. A sale of books and magazines not suitable to the Society’s purpose will be held at a future date.

POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 41
Balsam Lake, WI 54810



POLK COUNTY MUSEUM
120 Main Street
Balsam Lake, Wisconsin
715-485-9269

Open May 30 – September 7
12:00 – 4:00

Adults \$3 • Students \$1
Children under 12 free
when accompanied by an adult

Rosalie Kittleson, Museum Director

715-483-3979

I would like to become a member of the Polk
County Historical Society:

Lifetime\$100
Yearly\$15
Student\$2

Name
Street
City.....
State & Zip.....
E-mail.....

darose@centurytel.net
www.PolkCountyMuseum.com
www.co.polk.wi.us/history