

# The Iola Historical Society's Window

Quarterly Member and Activities Newsletter



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## IOLA'S "Silent Cops"

Introduction of the automobile into Iola brought time saving convenience to the citizenry. With an increase in travel opportunities, they were able to partake of enjoyable drives around town, through the nearby countryside and much further afield.

However, the automobile also spawned new problems. Traffic laws were initially few and minimalist in nature, with few drivers being knowledgeable of those that existed, if they were inclined to observe them.

This lack of knowledge of proper driving etiquette led to carelessness and a rapidly increasing

incidence of accidents as traffic increased, many of which were humorous but, others proved to be deadly.

The first mention of an automobile in Iola appeared in the *Iola Herald* edition of September 24, 1908, where it was reported; "Dr. J. H. Lee has placed an order for a new Auto to use in his practice. We understand that several others are also contemplating the purchase of cars." Dr. Lee, a local physician, purchased his

*A buggy and an early automobile backdrop this enlarged photo of one of Iola's Main Street "Silent Cop" installations.*



*This picture postcard depicting the west side of North Main Street, looking north, shows the "Silent Cop" placed at the intersection of Main and State streets.*

vehicle from Frogner Brothers & Sons in Iola.

In the November 18, 1908, edition of the *Herald* it was reported; "Dr. J. H. Lee's new auto arrived yesterday. It is certainly a beauty."

**by Lyle Mork**

The make of the car was not stated but, since it was ordered through Frogner's, it was most certainly either an E-M-F manufactured from 1908-1912, or the Studebaker-Garford built from 1903 to 1911. The E-M-F, lampooned as "Every Morning Fix-it," "Every Mechanical

**Continued on page 2**

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## President's Corner

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The last edition of the *Window* did not convey a President's Corner commentary reflecting on the activities or state of the Society. That wasn't because I was at a loss for something to say; those of you who know me, know that I seldom am. Rather, a time crunch was at hand and in making a decision to get the issue out on a timely basis, time constraints made it expedient to trim back the normal content, inclusive of the column.

I'll pick up where my last commentary left off by commenting that during 2012, in addition to inaugurating a new community exposure and fundraising event, we conducted a pair of very successful repeat events. The first of the latter was the 28th annual Iola Strawberry Fest & Antique Appraisal Fair. The second was the third annual Taste of Norway & Lost Arts Fair, held on what turned out to be a beautiful first Saturday of October.

While the latter was certainly an overwhelming artistic success, drawing an estimated attendance in excess of 500, on the other hand it turned out to be only marginally beneficial financially. With the event being hosted in the midst of the Depot/Oak Street reconstruction project, we had our fingers crossed.

*Continued on page 4*

### Iola Historical Society

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### IOLA'S SILENT COP

*Continued from page 1*

Fault," or similar, was named after founders

Barney Everitt, William Metzger and Walter Flanders, the latter having defected as Ford's production-manager as Henry Ford was fine-tuning his assembly line. The intention was to build a "well-finished" mass produced vehicle in the medium price range, as contrasted to the low-priced Model T. The E-M-F was initially distributed under an agreement with Studebaker, which in 1910 absorbed the company but, continued the nameplate until converting to the Studebaker identity as of the 1913 model year.

For early automobilists, one of the high frequency accident situations that prevailed in villages and cities was caused by drivers cutting corners sharply in making left hand turns. While this still happens today, in areas of congestion left hand turn lanes or mediums are provided to minimize the danger. An initial solution to this problem was developed -- which became known as the *Silent Cop* -- being installed in Iola in 1916.

A report carried in the September 14, 1916, edition of the *Iola Herald* reported that the village was installing control signs on Main Street to control the execution of left hand turns; "KEEP TO THE RIGHT. We have just installed our 'Keep To The Right' signs on Main Street and as we understand it all persons violating the laws in regards to them will be severely dealt with. The sign acts as traffic police and are placed in such a manner that ample room is on each side and the excuse of not having room to turn need not be used."

Iola installed two "Silent Cops," one in the center of the intersection of State and Main streets, and a second one located on Main Street between the intersections of Depot Street and Water Street. The latter installation was intended to serve both of these slightly staggered intersections, by keeping drivers from cutting their turns short while

making left hand turns onto the abutting streets. It is not known if the "Silent Cops" were surmounted by reflectors or lighted gas lamps at night to call them to the attention of drivers.

In the September 28, 1916, edition of the *Herald* it was reported; "We observe one of our traffic posts has been put away off up the street where it is useless. We need that post back on the north end where it will do some good." The village had apparently relocated one of the "Silent Cops" where less traffic was being generated, probably at the South Main and Iola streets intersection. The indication was that this was probably the device originally installed at the Main and State streets intersection, not that at the North Main and Depot/Water streets location, but it must have subsequently been relocated.

An interesting report on a misfortune visited upon one of the "Silent Cop" installations appeared in the June 22, 1922, edition of the *Herald*; "Somebody collided with one of Iola's 'Silent Cops' at the corner of State and Main Street last Saturday evening. The 'Cop' received several injuries, but is back on duty again."

One of the "Silent Cop" traffic controllers was in the news again in the October 5, 1922, edition of the *Iola Herald*, when it was indicated that on September 29 a resident failed to obey the law:

"AUTOS COLLIDE. Because he failed to make a proper left turn by not going to the right of the 'iron policeman' in the center of the intersection of Main and State Streets. Matt Olson, who was driving a Ford, collided with Morris Katz, who was also driving a Ford, on last Saturday morning. Morris endeavored to get out of the way of the on-coming car, but was unable to get far enough out of the line of approach to avoid a collision. Olson failed to go around the 'iron policeman' in making his left turn, cutting the corner, at the intersection, and was responsible for the accident."

The two "Silent Cop" posts were

*Continued on page 4*



### Dalland and Peterson Saluted for Dedication

The 2012 Christmas Potluck Dinner gathering of the Iola Historical Society provided the occasion for saluting two dedicated members for their ongoing contributions to the growth and development of the organization. Lola May Dalland (left) was honored as the "Volunteer Of The Year" for her contributions towards the success of last year's three annual special events. Sharon Peterson (right) was recognized as "Docent Of The Year" for her leadership in organizing and scheduling volunteers to cover 2012's visitor hosting at our Iola Historic Village & Museum.



### Lyle Mork Recipient of IHS Honorary Lifetime Membership

In recognition of his ongoing interest and dedication in the pursuit of recapturing the history and heritage of the Iola community, IHS past-president (2007-11) and unofficial historian of Iola's heritage, an honorary lifetime membership was bestowed upon Lyle Mork at the 2012 Christmas Potluck Dinner on December 3. Here Lyle displays the framed certificate symbolic of the honor, with his wife, Nellie, joining him at the time of the presentation.



### Fun in the Schoolhouse

Society members Mary Larson and Robbie Louison created a "Touch of Norway" in our schoolhouse where children enjoyed making trolls from colored paper, listening to Norwegian songs, and coloring pictures. Takk to Jack Vater for providing these photos. Additional images will appear in forthcoming issues.

## TASTE OF NORWAY

**Donors:** The Iola Historical Society likewise appreciates the generosity of the following individuals, businesses and supporters for their donations of prizes raffle drawing prizes: Louise Adams (for the quilted wall hanging awarded as the grand prize); Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative; Community Insurance and Associates; Crystal Cafe; First National Bank - Iola; Iola IGA Foodliner; Iola Old Car Show; Iola-Scandinavia Chamber of Commerce; The Iola Tax Place; JD's Corner Bar; Just Rusty's at Glacier Wood Golf Course; Little Norway; The Millstone at Iola Mills; Mortensen Oil Company, Norm's Amoco; Premier Community Bank - Iola; Silver Lake Lanes; State Farm Insurance - Dan Tap, Agent; Sweet Medicine, Prescriptions Plus; Too-Dars Diner.

**Raffle Winners:** A big Thank You to everyone who sold and purchased tickets for the 2012 Taste of Norway raffle drawing. Congratulations to the following winners: John Bertelson, Jr., Plover; Jerry Biedermann, Iola; Catherine Borgmann, Iola; Glenda Brown, Manawa; Brian Derus, Iola; Mary Dobbe, Clintonville; Mason Faldet, Waupaca; Valerie Fay, Scandinavia; Paul Finch; Ted Gjertson, Iola; Joanne Hagen, Waupaca; Don Helgersen, Chili; Jean Iverson, Amherst; Dave & Cathy Jansen, Tigerton; Nancy Johnson, Waupaca; Kate Korb, Iola; Jerry Larson; Ann Lensmeyer; Jean McClain; Shery Medrow, Iola; Pat Melum, Iola; Clifford Mishler, Waupaca; Terry & Ann Murphy, Iola; Phyllis Shatters, Amherst; Mary Ann Shippert, Iola; Mary Strand; Roxanne Terry, Iola; Phil Trussoni, Scandinavia; Ryan Thern, Waupaca; Kay Tichonchik, De Pere; Carole Wright, Iola.

## IOLA'S SILENT COP *Continued from page 2*

apparently in use for nearly nine years at the two Main St. locations.

The following report was published in the June 4, 1925, edition of the *Herald*, at which time the "silent policemen" traffic control devices were reported to have been removed: "The 'silent policemen' that have graced Iola streets for years past were removed on Wednesday. They will be replaced by six inch concrete blocks, lettering with 'Keep to the Right' warning. Traffic on streets will be safer with the iron traffic police in storage."

No reports have been uncovered confirming if the concrete blocks referenced were ever placed at either intersection after the "Silent Cops" were removed. Similarly, no report referencing a subsequent removal of the concrete blocks has been discovered.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *Continued from page 2*

As it turned out, from the standpoint of exposure to, and sharing with our community it may have been our best event ever.

With a new year upon us, planning is already underway for a second annual Spaghetti Luncheon

## Hand Crafted Indian Ceremonial Drum Complements Towne Indian Artifacts Display

*A ceremonial Indian powwow drum skillfully hand crafted by Menominee tribal member Pat Peters, and donated earlier in 2012 by Wayne Towne, to accompany the Ray Elmer Towne collection of Native American artifacts on display at the Iola Historical Society, was described by the maker when he was guest speaker at the Monday, October 29, regular meeting of the society. Peters also shared with those in attendance insights into his involvement as a spiritual leader of the "Sun Dance" ceremony and commitment to the preservation of that and other Menominee and Native American traditions.*



fundraiser in April, along with the 29th annual Strawberry Fest and the fourth annual Taste of Norway events later in the year. In conducting these events we will be building upon a rich history of commitment and achievement but, recognizing that the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead are virtually limitless.

I also must, however, reflect for a moment on the disappointing side of the ledger. While we were pleased to have had the opportunities of hosting a half dozen or so groups on special tours of our Historic Village & Museum complex during the course

of 2012, the year's regularly scheduled Saturday visitation traffic through the summer was weak on a comparative basis to that experienced over the previous three years. For 2013 we must redouble our efforts to enhance the appeal of our historical assets and promotional efforts thereof going forward.

I trust that everyone experienced a most enjoyable holiday season, and are look forward to the promise of an exciting and rewarding new year. I'm looking forward to working with the membership in maintaining the high standards of the Iola Historical Society, as one of the leading local history organizations, given the size of our community and membership, in the state of Wisconsin, proceeding in step with the state motto . . .

**FORWARD!**

## Events Schedule

### Monday, January 14

7:00 IHS Will Host FOSH (Friends of Scandinavia History) meeting & program: Scandinavia RR History Video.

### Monday, January 28

6:00 IHS Board Meeting  
6:30 IHS General Meeting

### Monday, February 25

6:00 IHS Board Meeting  
6:30 IHS General Meeting

### Monday, March 25

6:00 IHS Board Meeting  
6:30 IHS General Meeting

## Donors & Loaners

July • August • September • October • November • December

**ARCHIVAL DONATIONS:** Dorothy & Donald Berg, Lee & Joan Bestul, Ann Church, Russell Larson, Carol Lashua, Joanna Rheingans, Robert Stamstad, Stella Strand.

**DONATIONS FOR CASH AND IN-KIND:** Mark Anderson, Mary Jane Bennett, Gloria Briquet, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative, Bob & Beverly Ellingson, David & Kay Holz, Chester L. Krause, Carol Lashua, Greg Loescher, Wanda Berge Lompfrey, Mildred Mathieson, Clifford & Sally Mishler, Joan Neimiec, Elise Ostrom, Barbara Pelnar, Premier Community Bank, Robert Stamstad, Waupaca Mobil Travel Center, Keith & Patricia Williams.

## 2013 Supporting Members

The Iola Historical Society wishes to extend special recognition and thanks to the following individuals and organizations for the extra financial support provided to our activities through their status as 2013 Supporting Members: Mary Bennet, Central Wisconsin Electric Cooperative (Mark Forseth), Bob & Bev Ellingson, Leonard & Irene Haroldson, Iola & Rural Fire Department, Lee & Ruth Johnson, Duane & Darlene Louison, Phyllis Morris, Joan Niemiec, Susan Shambeau, David & Ruth Strand, William & Jacqueline Wilker.