

Markesan Historical Society Gazette

January/February/March 2017

The Markesan Historical Society 2017 calendars, designed by Gayle Schultz, feature carriage houses of Markesan. The calendars are \$5, and can be purchased at the Markesan Public Library or from a Society member. A carriage house, also called a coach house, was originally built to house horse-drawn carriages, related tack, and to stable horses. Markesan has many such houses.



The January winds and low temperatures forced the cancellation of the monthly meeting. In the part of the world where we live, this month is usually the coldest. The birds travel less, and many animals sleep both day and night, and so it was that society members kept to their cozy abodes.

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During the month of February, members ventured out for a most interesting meeting.

The video of the Marine Silent Drill Team, of which William Gorr is a member, was viewed.

A discussion of the military, patriotism, gun ownership and related topics ensued.

Refreshments were served by William's parents, Richard and Susan Gorr. Richard's father, Vic Gorr, will be remembered plying the meat marketing trade in Markesan.

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March winds were roaring the night of the monthly meeting. Even though the city hall was rattling, the members enjoyed viewing the video of the 2016 Heritage Day. It was good to see the large crowd that turned out to hear Wisconsin author and story teller, Jerry Apps.

In Remembrance
Sophie Tonn
Terry Wilder
Roma Huitema

Markesan, in its history, has had large fires. When the month of March arrives each year, thoughts turn to Densmoor's barn fire.

Excerpts of the fire, published in the March 12, 1959

issue of the *Markesan Herald*, follow:

Fire, believed to have been caused by faulty wiring, destroyed the large barn on the Alan Densmoor farm during a raging blizzard Thursday night. The farm buildings are located within the village limits of Markesan. Total damage is estimated at \$65,000.

The alarm was sounded at 8:30 p.m. but the barn was completely ablaze when the fire was discovered, therefore none of the livestock housed in the barn could be rescued and 69 head of milk cows and young stock perished in the blaze. Forty-seven milk cows perished and 22 head of young stock also died in the barn. Besides the stock, \$9,000 was lost in grain and feed; and many farm implements were lost.

The Markesan Volunteer Fire Department responded to the alarm with two pumpers and concentrated on preventing the spread of the fire. The situation was very serious with the winds blowing at gale force and gusting up to 50 miles per hour causing embers to be blown towards a garage and the house. The feed mill of the Grand River Co-op across the street from the fire was also in serious danger from flying embers and firemen kept water on the building to prevent ignition of a building which is a virtual tinder box as it is of wood construction and very old. The Kingston firemen made the 9 mile trip to Markesan, taking 55 minutes. Other departments were alerted, but remained in their villages to provide protection there if needed. Wilton Wilsnack received a laceration of the scalp when the extension ladder struck him in the head.

A Markesan area resident has given the Society his collection of matchbooks. Pictured below is a sampling of the books. A display will be arranged featuring the books advertising Markesan and area businesses. Are there any more out there that someone would like to add to this display? They will be a most welcome addition.



Did You Know?

Did you know that Benjamin Franklin's original epitaph, which had been kept hidden in the collection of a Chicago businessman, was made public in 1928?

The body of
B. Franklin
Printer

Like the cover of an old book
Its contents torn out
And stript of its lettering and gilding
Lies here food for worms
But the work shall not be wholly lost
For it will, as we believed, appear once more
In a new and perfect edition
Corrected and amended
By the Author.

Meetings

The Historical Society meets the second Wednesday of the month in the Barn at the Grand River Valley Museum, 214 E. John St. for the summer months at 7 p.m. The Society meets at the Markesan City Hall, 150 S. Bridge St. during the winter months.

Have you paid your dues?

MEMBERSHIP

\$5/yr. individual
\$100/ lifetime individual or
husband & wife

If you enjoy your membership,
invite others to become members.
The work must go on for others to enjoy.
Do it now.

Museum Hours

The Grand River Valley Museum is open
on Saturdays from
1 to 4 p.m.
May through September.
The Museum is also open by appointment.

Board of Directors

Gayle Schultz -- President 920-398-3359
James Fenske -- Vice-President
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Sue Abendroth
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Roger Cotterill
Museum--920-398-3945

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www.markesanhistoricalsociety.org

Working Together

The Markesan Historical Society
and the Markesan Public Library
are joining forces to purchase a new microfilm
reader. The reader will be housed at the library
for easy access
to microfilm reels when doing research.

HANDS

Many hands will be needed to ready the
museum to open for the season on May 6th.
Can you help?