

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Jul 2025

Brat Sale



Jim Neist takes a quick break from grill duty to pose for a photo.

Our very hungry customers and talented, dedicated Brat Team helped make this a fun and successful event. Thank you, everyone!



Elaine Ledrowski taste tests a brat to be sure the grill marks are in all the right places. *Photos by Gina Neist.*

Artifact Donations

This is a partial list of items donated. Thanks to the following donors:

Claire & Mike Kastenzholz—Pictures for Stereoscope
The Kau Family—Several boxes of assorted items
Mary Pratt—Seven *McGuffey's Readers*

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Member Renewals

Senior \$8

Pauline Adler
Alfred Gruling
Amy Kinosian
Judy Walters

Individual \$10

Sharon Fisher

Family \$15

Jackie & Brent Hegwood
Mary & Jerry Pratt
Chrystal Shamsi

Sustaining \$25-\$49

Chris & Carmen Ballman

Sponsor \$50-\$99

Robert & Charlotte Miller

Patron \$100-\$199

William & Jackie Adams
Nancy & Jim Wilhelm

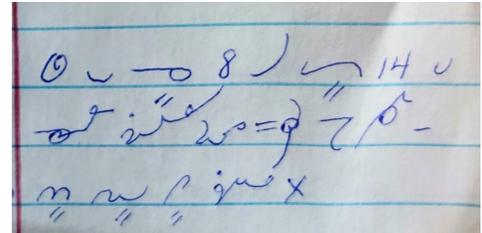
If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Gina Neist at:

262-594-8961 or
curator@eaglehistorical
society.org.

Thank you.

Shorthand Question

(See pages 2 & 5 for translation/answer.)



Upcoming Events!

Check out the enclosed, full-color insert to see what we've been busy planning. We hope to see you at one or all of these family friendly, free community events.

Mystery Artifact

Can you identify this item?



(continued on page 2)

EHS MUSEUM

262-594-8961

OPEN HOURS

Wednesdays: 9 am-Noon
Fridays: 9 am-Noon
Saturdays: 9 am-Noon

WEBSITE

www.eaglehistoricalsociety.org

FACEBOOK

Like us at Eagle Historical Society

School Tour

by Carrie Peavy



In April, 43 very eager-to-learn Eagle 3rd graders toured our museum. Mrs. Neist conducted a one-room school-house experience beginning with the ringing of the bell, recitation of the original Pledge of Allegiance, and assignments using *McGuffey's Readers* and slate chalk boards.

Mr. Rice held the attention of a captive audience while retelling the discovery and fate of the Eagle diamond and playing a clip of a video featuring the story by TMJ4 News in the 1990s.



Mrs. Gilbert provided students with brief descriptions of artifacts inside the museum and then challenged them to a scavenger hunt to learn more on their own.



Mr. Nowicki and Mrs. Peavy shared how children came up with games to entertain themselves using commonly found items at home (i.e., eggs and Mom's clothesline). Kids ran egg races on spoons, tossed eggs, and jumped higher and higher in addition to dropping clothespins into a milk jug and mason jar.



Thank you for visiting us. We hope you enjoyed learning a little bit about school back in the old days before iPads, TVs, and video games. Stop in again to learn more, and bring your families.



Local Author Visit

by Carrie Peavy

In April, Michael Sullivan of the Mukwonago Historical Society promoted his new book, *The Congdon Brothers and Significant Others*, to EHS board members. It documents the lives of local brothers who fought for the Union in the American Civil War. We have a few copies available for sale if anyone is interested.

Photos above by Elaine Ledrowski.

EHS Board

- President**
Jeff Nowicki, 2026
- Vice-President**
Eloise Hall, 2027
- Secretary**
Art Peavy, 2026
- Treasurer**
Pat Hawes, 2027
- Financial Officer**
Jim Neist

Board Members

2026

- Diana Hall
- Eloise Hall
- Julie Mann
- Gina Neist
- Mike Rice

2027

- Steve Gulgowski
- Pat Hawes
- Richard Moeller
- Carrie Peavy
- Carolyn Rosprim

2028

- Scott Bovee
- Janet Evans
- Jim Neist
- Jeff Nowicki
- Art Peavy

Curator

- Elaine Ledrowski
- 262-594-3301

Newsletter Editors

Art & Carrie Peavy

Webmaster

Mike Rice

Facebook

Elaine Ledrowski

(continued from page 1)

Shorthand Question Translation:

Why are May 8 and August 14 of 1945 important dates in WWII history? (see p 5)

(continued from page 1)

Mystery Artifact Answer:

Antique mop handle/wringer.



Photo by Art Peavy.

How many people can say they found their dream job as a teenager and loved that job throughout their working career? Jim Grotjan for one.

Jim grew up on a small, 85-acre hobby farm near Hwys. S and 59 in Eagle. Dad and Mom grew their own food such as pears and grapes and lived off the land canning everything they could. They baked their own bread and only went to the store for staples. Dad sold pumpkins before it was a common item to sell. Jim and his four siblings enjoyed horseback riding, sledding, and cross country skiing, but they also learned a valuable work ethic. There was hay to make and gardens to tend. When they wanted to swim in their pond, they first had to weed a row in the garden.

Jim began working at a dairy farm owned by two brothers located three miles from his home at age 15 and fell in love with it. He fed calves, milked cows, and did other chores including field work, but his thoughts were always about the cows. He wondered if they needed more feed and wanted to get back when it was getting close to milking time.

After completing the UW-Madison Farm and Industry Short Course, Jim worked full time at the farm until 1988 when he accepted a position at another farm near Platteville from a farmer he had met in college. He learned a lot and considered him a smart, progressive dairyman.

In April of 1991, Jim heard about an opportunity back home in Eagle. Ken and Jerry Kau were getting big into crops and looking to

bring in a partner for their dairy, so at age 31 he became a partner and the farm's herd manager of about 60 cows.

A few years later, the Kau brothers decided to sell the dairy. Jim bought their shares of the herd and began renting the barn from them while buying their feed. A year later, the farm he had worked at as a teenager went bankrupt. Jim bought the herd, and the Kaus bought the farm. A total of 130 cows were milked twice daily at both locations.

In August 1998, Jim purchased 35 acres of the 300-acre farm from the Kaus. The farm went through a major renovation as many improvements were seriously needed. He turned a new shed next to the tiestall barn into a three-row freestall barn with 81 stalls. Jim also gutted one end of the tiestall barn, put in a holding area and double-8 flat barn milking parlor and converted the other side of the barn into free stalls which allowed him to combine two herds at one location, and added a sprinkler system and fans to keep the cows cool. He also built a cover-all calf barn in 2001 and a year later replaced the roof, windows and siding on the farmhouse.

Eventually, the flat-barn parlor was replaced with a more efficient double-8 German herringbone parlor allowing him to increase milking to three times daily seven days a week yielding 100 pounds per cow daily, an increase of 20 pounds. Cows benefited health wise by increased milking, and the increased production helped the profit margin. Seven part- and full-time employees were needed to run the farm. Corn continued to be purchased from the Kaus and hay from local farmers. Feed was not stored in silos but in silage bags.

Jim learned the most from other farmers sharing their experiences and felt a part of the farming family. He was very thankful for the help provided by local teenagers and young adults and often became a mentor to them by sharing the work ethic he was raised on. The youth benefited by learning responsibility in a flexible, yet supervised, setting and assimilating into the farm family. In the early 2000s, The Grotjan Dairy Farm hosted Farm Fest to raise money for scholarships.

For eight years, on the last Saturday in September about 800 people attended the event which offered many family activities including concerts put on by the community band and kids making scarecrows.



Photo by Jim Grotjan.

By 2022, Jim and Michele had built the herd up to 450 replacements and were milking 200, making the Grotjan Dairy Farm the largest of five dairy farms left in Waukesha County. They decided to sell the cows and partially retire by no longer milking on site as it was

hard to find help. The Dempseys are now the only farm milking in Eagle. Jim spent 1-1/2 years floundering because he missed being actively involved with the care of the cows, and is currently raising 400 heifers owned by Katzmans of Whitewater. It is the perfect part-time retirement job for him. No employees are currently on the payroll as he and Michele are responsible for the feeding and general care of the heifers for about 6 to 12 months at which time many go to Kansas and replacements are added. The Grotjans are now able to enjoy camping and visiting local museums, auctions and farm equipment shows more often.

One would not guess that Michele, a self-proclaimed “city girl” has only been active on the farm for about a decade. She confidently

filled in details of many of the processes (i.e., milking parlor) performed when the dairy was at its peak and shares her love for the cows. Michele quickly adapted to farm life jumping in feet first helping her husband with whatever tasks needed to be done. She demonstrated to us the timid nature of cows as they tend to back away when approached face to face and their curiosity to nibble or sniff your hands or clothing when someone simply turns their back to the herd.

What a sight it must have been back in the 1930s and '40s when there were more cows than people and about 4,400 dairy herds dotted the countryside in Cow County USA. Jim expressed sadness over the loss of small farms and feels it is hurting small town Main Street businesses and communities.

He feels very fortunate to have accomplished all that he has on the property and to have had this opportunity to do what he enjoyed. He learned early on in his very first job there is nothing else he has ever wanted to do.



Photo by Art Peavy.

Works Cited: “Looking Back”, Grotjan, W., *EHS Newsletter* April 2013, p. 3 and “From Teen Employee to Farm Owner”, Smart, S., *The Dairy Star*, Feb. 8, 2020.

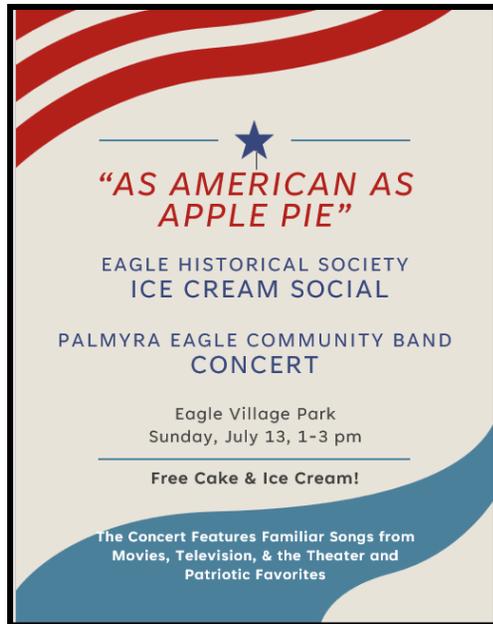
Swing Dance Lessons

By Jim Schneck and Mike Rice



On USO Night, Jim Schneck and his wife Ruth will take us on a journey through the history of swing dance, tracing its roots to the 1920s with the birth of the Lindy Hop. As swing dancing evolved, both coasts developed their own distinct styles—East Coast Swing and West Coast Swing—leading to its peak popularity during WWII up into the 1950s. The genre saw a revival in the late 1980s and early '90s, and today, many places in Southeast Wisconsin continue to keep its spirit alive including our very own Kettle Moraine Blues. On Aug. 19, the Schnecks will teach us a few dance steps to help us shine on the dance floor. While they are not professional instructors, they promise to share “just enough to be dangerous!” Photo from Jim & Ruth Schneck's archives.

July 13, 2025



Our annual **Ice Cream Social and Band Concert** will be held on Sunday, July 13 at Eagle Village Park. **Cake and ice cream will be served starting at 1:30 pm, and the director of the Palmyra Eagle Community Band, Jim Neist, will drop the stick at 2:00 pm.** The audience will enjoy selections from this extensive playlist:

The Phantom of the Opera, Mary Poppins,

Theme Songs from Comedy Classics of the 60s, Musical Memories from World War II, The Music Man, Mamma Mia!, Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, The Blues Brothers, Hits from Henry Mancini, Stars & Stripes Forever, Carnival of Venice, and Wicked. The band will feature local Mukwonago violinist Andy Tanel performing “The Devil Went Down to Georgia” with the entire band.

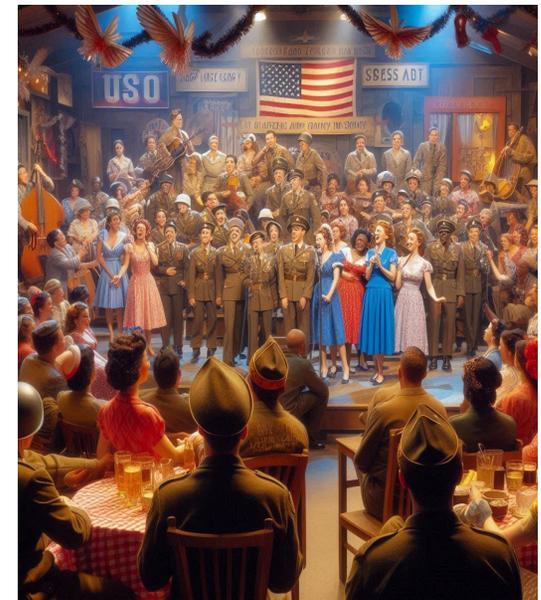
Bring a lawn chair, sit back, and enjoy a summer afternoon. This event is free and open to the public!



August 19, 2025

In WWII, USO Shows provided a needed escape for service members, offering them a chance to relax, connect, and experience a slice of civilian life. These traveling shows brought live entertainment to military camps across the country, featuring professional actors, producers, radio hosts, and dancers. Performers like Bob Hope, the Andrews Sisters, and Marlene Dietrich volunteered their time.

Step back in time and experience the magic of a WWII USO Show at the Eagle Historical Society Museum. Enjoy an evening filled with the sights and sounds of the 1940s, featuring Jim Schneck, lively swing dancers, talented singers, and the sounds of the 40's with the Kettle Moraine Blues group. Join us as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII with a celebration on **Tuesday, August 19, 2025, from 5 PM to 7 PM.**



PICNIC WITH THE POLICE

August 9, 2025 11am – 2 pm

GAMES, GAMES, AND MORE GAMES

Adults – What the heck is it?

What did kids do for fun years ago?



Kids – Jacks - marbles – tiddly winks - kites

ACTIVITIES

1. Play pickup straws
2. Yoyo
3. Juggle 3 balls
4. Clothespin in the bottle



**Give Away – Adults & kids –
Enter a Drawing for 2 Prizes**

(56" Delta Kite & Spinner)

Prizes donated by: Scott Fisher



Scott Fisher
9955 W. St. Martins Rd
Franklin, WI 53132
Cell: 414 425-9993
Office: 414 425-8002
Email: Info@GiftofWings.com
Web: GiftofWings.com
[facebook.com/GiftofWings](https://www.facebook.com/GiftofWings)

GIFT OF WINGS
Kites and Aviation
Gift Products
and Ice Cream

*Eagle Historical Society
presents...*

TRIVIA NIGHT

All about Eagle!

How much do you know?

Date: September 23, 2025 7pm-8pm

Where: EHS Museum on Main St.

EAGLE PUMPKIN PARTY

Oct. 25, 2025 2pm-4pm



**Fun Games
For the whole family**

VISIT THE "GROSS" HOUSE
FOR THE LATEST IN
MONSTER FASHION & FOOD

Eagle Historical Society Museum

The Mead family moved to Wisconsin in 1847 from Brooklyn, New York. As a farmer there, David Mead saw that area double in population, with farm land giving way to cities and industrialization. The 1850 Eagle Federal Census lists the Mead family as: David 53 yrs., farmer, wife Eliza (short for Elizabeth) 47 yrs., daughters Julia 19 yrs., Emma 14 yrs., Fanny (Francis) 9 yrs., Mary 7 yrs., Matilda 4 yrs., and sons Lyell 21 yrs. and William 11 yrs.

David Mead family history shows a farming background; however, Eliza (nee Thompson) came from a very different lifestyle. She was the daughter of the Honorable Dr. John Thompson. Her high society sister Jane was married to Dr. Addison K. Hoffman, and they are the parents of the 23rd governor of New York, John Thompson Hoffman.

The Mead family owned 85 acres of land which is presently located east of South Street and north of Co. Hwy. LO. Unlike nearby rocky and sandy soil, their land is level and fertile. It is thought the Mead family produced and lived off the crops they farmed: rye, corn, wheat and oats, probably selling or bartering for other foods, materials, and goods.

David Mead died in 1854 and Eliza in 1870. Their large Oak Grove burial site holds a large monument, has stone posts, and chain link fencing. Daughter Julia married David Snover and became the owner of the family's farm property.



In 2023, restoration and preservation efforts have begun on the Mead monument that has seen its 6-foot obelisk toppled. Thick vegetation, rodents, and age have undermined the bases putting the whole monument in a precarious state.

Enter the Wisconsin Questers chapter Heritage Trails. This organization, which supports the preservation and restoration of historical artifacts within its communities and education regarding that history, provided a grant donation to fulfill this need. Roger Houk and local businesses Pett Construction and Cardinal Point Construction provided services to disassemble and reassemble the monument. A sign is posted by the site to recognize the efforts of the Eagle Cemetery Preservation and Questers organization.



Photos by Sandra Shorr.

(continued from pages 1-2)

Shorthand Answer: VE (Victory in Europe) Day celebrates the formal acceptance by the Allies of WWII of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tue., May 8, 1945 with the signing of the German Instrument of Surrender, Article 2 in Karlshorst, Berlin. Coinciding with President Truman's 61st birthday, his only wish was "that FDR had lived to witness this day." Emperor Hirohito initially announced Japan's acceptance of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration on Aug. 14; however, President Truman did not declare an official VJ (Victory over Japan) Day in the US until the signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender on Sept. 2, 1945 aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, marking the end of WWII.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_in_Europe_Day & https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victory_over_Japan_Day

Erikson, M. Karen*Feb. 10, 1942—May 3, 2025*

Mary Karen Erikson, 83, of Eagle, WI passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at her home.

Karen was born on February 10, 1942 in Lafayette, Indiana the daughter of Richard and Neta (McGuire)

Stockholm. She moved to Wisconsin with her family and graduated from Whitewater High School. Karen continued her schooling at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater where she obtained a degree in Education. After undergraduate school, Karen obtained her Masters in Education from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. Karen worked at Mukwonago High School for over 30 years as a math teacher, retiring in 1998. On July 25, 1964 Karen was united in marriage to Gordon Erikson at the Whitewater United Methodist Church and the two would go on to enjoy 60 years of marriage together. Karen and Gordon made many wonderful memories together on the

family farm and traveling together. She enjoyed cooking, especially cookies and baked goods, family holidays, and rooting for the Green Bay Packers. Karen was smart, kind, strong and capable. She will be dearly missed by those she leaves behind.

Karen is survived by: her loving husband, Gordon Erikson of Eagle, WI, and a number of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

She is preceded in death by her parents, and her two sisters, Nancy Brown and Darlene Telfer.

Memorials in Karen's honor were made to the Eagle Historical Society.

A Memorial Service was held at 11:00AM on Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at the Gibson Family Funeral Home in Eagle, WI (499 Elkhorn Road, Eagle, WI 53119). The Rev. Duane Goetsch officiated the service. Visitation took place from 10:00AM until the time of service at the funeral home. Karen will be laid to rest in Oak Ridge Cemetery at a later date.

Gibson Family Funeral Homes of Eagle and Palmyra, WI served the family. Online condolences were placed at gibsonfuneral.com.

(Moore) Fisher, Dorthy I.*Mar. 3, 1931—Jun. 29, 2024*

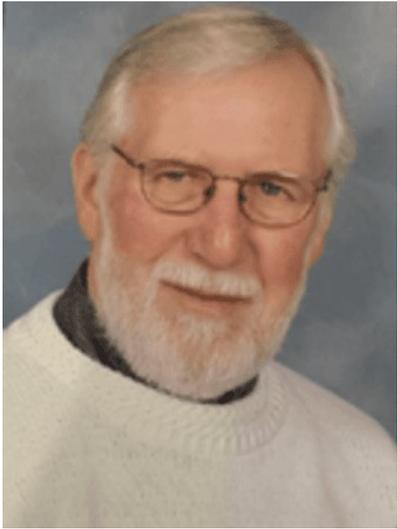
Dorthy I. (Moore) Fisher was born March 3, 1931 to Henry and Lela Moore on homestead in the town of Eagle. Dorthy passed away peacefully on 06/29/2024.

She will be missed by her children Tom and Sharon (Roe) Fisher of Waukesha, Jeffrey and Gwen Fisher of Jacksonville, FL, David

and Kathy Fisher of St Francis, Randall Fisher of Racine, Vicky Fisher-Cogan of Muscato. She is also survived by 21 grandchildren and 27 great grandchildren. Sister Hazel Arnold and brother Dick. She was preceded in by her Parents Henry and Lela Moore, three sons Mark 2001, Aric 2011, and Paul 2022, two infant grandsons John Howard Cogan, and Franklin Jessie Fisher. Sister Della, Ethel, Ruth and Betty, brothers Robert, Edward, Harold, Howard, Henry, and former husband Howard Fisher 2012 a friend and companion for 63 years. There will be NO SERVICES there will be cremation.

Potrykus, Conrad J.

Mar. 3, 1926—Jun. 14, 2025



Conrad J. Potrykus, 89, of Eagle, WI passed away on Saturday, June 14, 2025 at Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital.

Conrad was born on March 3, 1936 in Milwaukee the son of Joseph and Antoinette (Hapka) Potrykus. He grew

up in Milwaukee and graduated from Pulaski High School. After his schooling, Conrad served his country in the United States Army. On July 26, 1958, Conrad was united in marriage to Elaine Hillegas and the two enjoyed nearly 50 years of marriage together until Elaine's passing in 2007. God blessed Conrad and Elaine with three children, Scott, Pam, and Kari. The couple spent many years in the Milwaukee area before moving to Dousman and then built a home in Eagle in 1996. Conrad worked as a supervisor for the US Postal Service in Milwaukee and took pride in working hard and providing for his family. He was an active member of St. Theresa Catholic Church in Eagle for many years and served his local parish in a number of different capacities including: singing in the choir, assisting with the parish fish fries, turkey dinners, the baked potato booth at Eagle Kettle Moraine Days and was always happy to provide flowers for the church from his garden. Conrad had a friendly and social personality, he enjoyed chatting with friends and family and could hold a conversation on pretty much any topic. He also loved to work in his garden. He grew both flowers and vegetables and would give away or

donate much of his produce to the food pantry or anyone in need. Conrad will be remembered for his ability to fix just about anything and his generosity in sharing his time and talents. He was a good man who lived his faith by serving others. He will be sincerely missed by those he leaves behind.

Conrad is survived by: his children, Scott (Beth) Potrykus of Franklin, Pam (Jim) Nejedlo of Delafield, and Kari (Garrett) Hoyt of Mukwonago; his dear grandchildren, Evan (Brittany) Potrykus, Alex (Sami) Potrykus, Ethan Potrykus, Griffen (Jensen) Potrykus, Caitlin (Jonah) Drake, J.T. Nejedlo, T.J. McCormick, Joe (Lindsey) McCormick, Kati (Aaron) Adam, and his great-grandchildren, Hudson, Miles, Owen, Jack, Will, Mya, and Eli. He is also survived by his sister, Virginia Boehler of Milwaukee, as well as a number of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

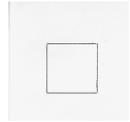
He is preceded in death by his parents, his loving wife, Elaine Potrykus, and his siblings, Agnes, Harry, Chester, Artie, and Eugene.

Memorials in Conrad's honor may be made to St. Theresa Catholic Church of Eagle, WI.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11:00AM on Thursday, June 26, 2025 at the St. Theresa Catholic Church in Eagle, WI. Visitation will take place from 9:00AM until the time of service at the church. Conrad will be laid to rest next to his wife in St. Theresa Catholic Cemetery immediately following the mass. Full military honors will be conducted at the burial.

Gibson Family Funeral Homes of Eagle and Palmyra, WI is serving the family. To place an online condolence please visit gibsonfuneral.com.

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.
217 Main Street
P.O. Box 454
Eagle, WI 53119-0454



Visit our website



Mailing Label

Women of Faith Tour

by Elaine Ledrowski



In May, a fun group of women from Palmyra visited the museum. They were good sports and went on a scavenger hunt while Jeff showed off our player piano. If you would like to schedule a group tour, call the museum at 262-594-8961.

Photos by Elaine Ledrowski.

