

# BEHIND THE TIMES

## BILL NEUMANN VISITS GILLETT AREA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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### More Questions!

- May I volunteer?
- What can I do?
- Who should I call?
- Is there a form I can fill out?
- Where would I volunteer?
- When are the meetings for Volunteers?

Visit us at the  
Museum  
to discover the  
answers!

(Winter hours open by  
appointment)

On Saturday, March 6, 2010, the Gillett Area Historical Museum had a visitor who'd had the vision of preserving the past since he was in High School. Local history was a passion. In 2003, he gave the boost needed to make the Museum a reality -- a donation of \$50,000.

This month Bill Neumann was able to make the trip to Wisconsin from Alaska, to see what his donations have made possible. It was exciting for Don Pederson and Carol Riemer to take Bill through from the attic turret to the basement, where the Model T used to be kept, filling him in on the long-range plans as they went.

Several Board members also arrived to welcome Bill to the Museum. During that visit, he presented GAHS



Lorraine Gentz VP GAHS, Bill Neumann, Carol Pederson Riemer President GAHS

with another check for \$25,000, which, on our part, was a real confidence booster that we are on the right track. Our gratitude goes out to Bill, to the Ebenreiter Family Fund, and to the people in the

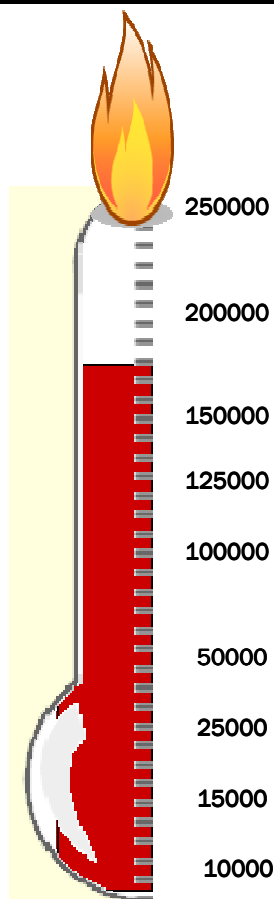
community who have backed us in our effort to preserve the history of the area.

### ARE THERE GHOSTS AT THE MUSEUM?

Many stories have been told about the "ghosts" at what is now the museum. A former resident of the house experienced many ghost-like incidences. She has asked the Gillett Area Historical Society for permission to contact the Wausau Paranormal Research Society to have them bring their equipment and investigate the museum. Their findings will be available, with permission, for folks to view. They will either confirm or debunk the ghost theory at the museum. The Wausau Paranormal Research Society Web Site is: [www.pat-wausau.org](http://www.pat-wausau.org).

Now a bit of history. The Ghost, supposedly in residence, is thought to be a member of the family that resided at the house on the current land before it burned in a fire of 1908. The present home was built shortly afterward by Walter W Smith. There were very few occasions mentioned of ghostly appearances while the Smith family resided in the house, however later owners have many stories to tell. We will await the outcome of a visit from the Wausau Paranormal Research Society Technicians.

**Please!**  
**Help Make Our**  
**Temperature Rise!**  
 (It's still stuck!)



### **DON'T FORGET!**

Donations are now  
 accepted by credit card  
 at

[www.gilletthistorical.com](http://www.gilletthistorical.com)

Just click on the **Donate**

Button on any page of  
 the web site  
 in the upper left corner  
 and follow the  
 instructions for credit  
 card donations.

Your donation automati-  
 cally goes into the GAHS  
 bank account.

**Thank You!**

~ OUR DONORS ~

## 2010

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

### \*Sustaining Benefactors\*

2
Corporate/Business
0
Platinum ~ \$1000 +
1
Gold~ \$501-\$1000
0
Silver~ \$301-\$500
0
Bronze~ \$151-\$300
1
Patron~ \$50-\$150
2
Embers~ \$1-\$49
0

### IN KIND DONATIONS

1

**H**  
**E**  
**L**  
**P**  
**!**

### Musings

The annual fundraising letter was not sent out last year. This may account of the low number of donations so far. Remember folks, this is a non-profit organization and your donation is tax deductible. Are there people out there that have made annual pledges? Just one person so far has turned in their annual pledge for 2010. Reminders have not yet been sent out regarding the annual pledges. Hopefully folks have marked their calendars and will be getting those in soon.

## CALENDAR

### MARCH

25  
 GAHS Meeting  
 7pm  
 Gillett Public Library  
 Ansorge Annex  
 Public Welcome

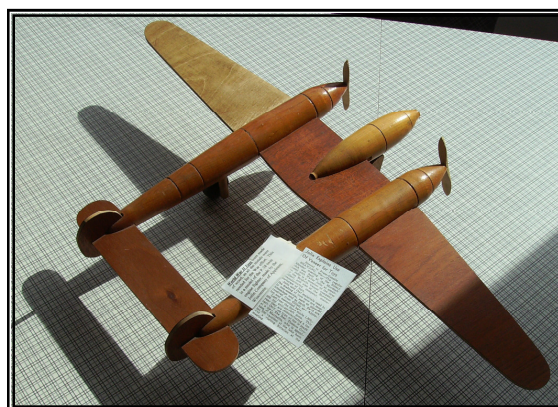
### APRIL

22  
 GAHS Meeting  
 7pm  
 Gillett Public Library  
 Ansorge Annex  
 Public Welcome

### MAY

27  
 GAHS Meeting  
 7pm  
 GAHS Museum  
 110 West Main St.  
 Public Welcome

## THE LATEST ACQUISITION



Model of WW II P-38 twin engine fighter made by Jolin Company of Appleton. The toys were made of wood as all metal were needed for the war effort.

Mr Jolin was Vice President and General Manager of Baldwin Plywood in Gillett.

This plane was donated by  
 Don Pederson

## DID YOU KNOW?

("LETTERS TO THE EDITOR" & "SUGGESTIONS FROM READERS" COLUMNS RECEIVED NO RESPONSES!)

The original house that stood on the lot where the museum is located, was a frame house belonging to Rodney Gillette. He sold the house to disbarred and famed Wisconsin attorney Benjamin M Goldberg. Mr Goldberg had built a mansion in Milwaukee

which was left mostly unfinished when he was disbarred from practicing law in Wisconsin.

This was the first home on fashionable Newberry Blvd. In 2005 it was valued at \$1.7 million.

Mr. Goldberg was in his

home in Gillett when fire destroyed the house, and the land was later sold by Mr. Goldberg to Walter W Smith, builder of what is now the museum. Notes on Mr. Goldberg are available to read in the Museum Library.

### Thank a Volunteer!

*Thank you to Cory Rank's Landscaping Firm and crew for volunteering to take down a dead maple tree which was a hazard to the museum and surrounding properties.*

*Thank you Cory!*

## THE MUSEUM BASEMENT



Part of the foundation is from the original Gillette home that burned.

Can we remodel this for a display area? We're checking the possibilities!



CA: 1940s Kelvinator Electric Stove  
Surrounded by old toilet and claw tub.



## A STORY OF A GILLETT AREA FAMILY

Back in the late 1899 or early 1900 the Freitag family decided to immigrate to America with the Groth family.

Augusta Lenz Freitag and Emily Lenz Groth were sisters.

The Freitag family; Ludwig (father), Augusta (mother), Adolph and an infant Julius were about to leave most of what they had to travel abroad. Ludwig and Augusta were farming in Prussia and many border wars were in progress. The family packed what belongings they could carry and headed for the border. At one border they bribed the Russian border guards and proceeded on. Ahead was another check point and the Prussian Army was taking all men and older boys to serve in the Prussian Army. Grandmother was a smart lady and told her husband, Ludwig,

to pretend he was blind. They continued on toward the border, but Grandfather wouldn't keep his eyes closed. Grandmother asked Ludwig for some of his chewing tobacco in his mouth and rubbed it into his eyes. His eyes swelled shut and looked runny and sore. When the guards saw him they rushed them through thinking he was a carrier of a horrible disease. They met up with the Groth family and came to America on the ship Heir Mier. They encountered rough seas and couldn't put into the New York harbor or Ellis Island.

Eight months old Julius died shipboard and was buried in Baltimore, Md. Somehow Grandmother prevented the child from being buried at sea.

. From Maryland the families traveled by train to Oconto, Wisconsin. The Freitags then walked from Oconto to Gillett. They settled on a farm west of Highway 32 on Sandy Corners. The barn grandfather built is still standing as is the house, though greatly remodeled. Grandmother Augusta was one of the charter members of St. John's Lutheran church, Riverside, Gillett, located by the Oconto River. The framed charter is on display in the church still to this day.

Deanna Freitag Smith, Granddaughter

. According to the third addition of *A History of World Societies* (Houghton-Mifflin) scouts were sent throughout Prussia to recruit (kidnap) young men who would make top soldiers. Indeed, mothers often scolded their sons, "Stop growing or the recruiting agents will get you!" Neighboring rulers would send Frederick William their tallest, most strapping young men as "gifts" for the Prussian army.

~www.german-history.suite101.com

**DISPLAYING VINTAGE CLOTHING**

"One of my favorite ways to decorate with coat racks is to display vintage clothing on them. Wall-mounted coat racks work particularly well for displaying vintage hats and bonnets. And floor-mounted coat racks are a natural for cloaks, gowns, shawls and scarves

You can find wall-mounted coat racks with rosemaling, or other styles of decorative painting. These always add to your accent, as do such features as a plate rack or decorative shelf on top that allows you to display other collectibles."

~www.catspajamas.com

**THE "WOMAN'S ROOM"**

The Woman's Room on the second floor of the museum has on display many hats and dresses from the early 1900s. The dresses, during open hours of the museum, are on display hanging from hangars on the walls. The small TV runs photos of the various dresses in the museum collection

**OLD NEWS ARTICLES ~ PART V OF VI**

**Gillett, One of the Most Prosperous Villages in the State of Wisconsin (Continued from Previous Issue)**

(The following article is believed to have been written in the 1920s)

Press Gazette Thursday January 20th  
Bank has \$8000,00 Deposit

Two Banking establishments, the Bank of Gillett and the Citizens State Bank, furnish all the financial assistance needed to the people of Gillett and those of the surrounding communities. The Citizens State Bank was established 20 years ago with a capital of \$25,000 and \$18,000 deposits; A. G. Wendorf cashier. Today Mr Wendorf is still cashier, the capital is now \$50,000, undivided surplus \$25,000 and deposits over \$800,000. The president of this bank is H. A. Koske, August Zippel is vice president and the board of directors consists of the men show names are mentioned above together with H. V. Sorenson, Gust Bocher, A. A. Gomber, George Hoxie and T. Thibaudeau.

The Bank of Gillett was established in 1921 and it is housed in what is said to be one of the finest buildings for it's purpose in Oconto County. This bank is now passing through a stage of re-organizing according to the cashier, V. H. John. The officers are: J. M. Ankerson, president, J A. Helf, Vice President, and Mr John, cashier. The board of Directors are J. M. Ankerson,

J. A. Helf, John Olson, Albert A. Zippel, W. E. Janssen, C. A. Husman and G. A Schumaker.



Next Issue:

"Big Manufacturing Establishment"

**How Old Were You  
When You Opened  
Your First Savings  
Account?**

"It was always exciting  
as a kid to go to the  
bank with the old  
"passbook" and get a  
stamp in it. A stamp  
and a lollipop, those  
where the days"

~www.filife.com

## THEN AND NOW REMEMBER WHEN .....?

THEN



NOW



Out-of—Towners have been heard to remark how well Gillett has maintained their original high school building. In an era when old buildings are apt to come tumbling down, this is high praise indeed. Our School building was built in 1923. Now 87 years old!

### School Buildings

When Pittsburgh Public Schools Superintendent Mark Roosevelt proposed closing the Schenley High School building last fall as part of the district's "right-sizing" plan, there was a similar outcry from people who said the 90-year-old school should be renovated.

That's exactly how concerned citizens should respond when historic schools are threatened with closing or demolition, according to a new initiative launched this week by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which advocates people organize and form a united front that demonstrates the school is an important asset to the community.

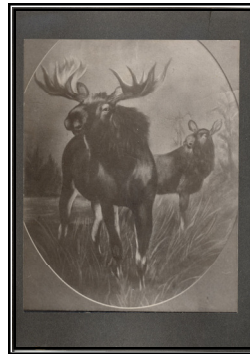
~www.post-gazette.com

## CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS PHOTO?

Can you tell us about this moose photo? GAHS has 3 of these photos on file. They are all the same. Where did they originate? Why are they here? Who donated them? Is there a story behind them?

Questions, questions. We'd like answers~

Email [info@gilletthistorical.com](mailto:info@gilletthistorical.com) or contact any GAHS member.



"If you are lucky enough to see a **moose** in the wild, it will usually be a tranquil scene —"

~ [www.mooseworld.com](http://www.mooseworld.com)

## WHAT IS THIS PLACE AND WHERE IS IT?



Women were sometimes highly visible as business owners. Many ran general or specialty stores, and they were the typical owners and operators of boardinghouses and **small hotels**. In **small towns** their establishments catered to travelers, especially drummers, as traveling salesmen were sometimes called, and other businessmen. "Headquarters for Commercial Men, First-class Accommodations, Rates Reasonable."

~historytogo.utah.gov

## *Gillett Area Historical Society*

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Gillett WI 54124-0085

Phone: 920 855 6439 ~ Deanna

E-mail: [info@gilletthistorical.com](mailto:info@gilletthistorical.com)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.gilletthistorical.com](http://www.gilletthistorical.com)

*MUSEUM GIFT SHOP*

**Redecorated!**

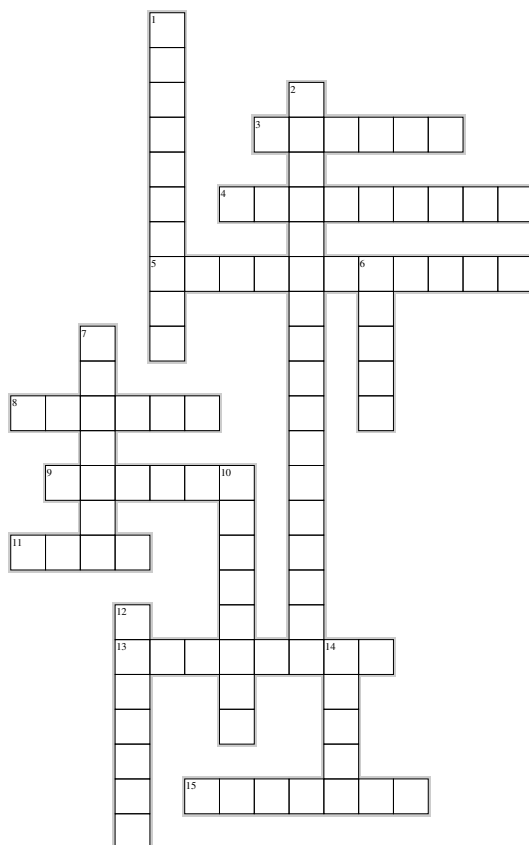


The Gift Shop Closet has  
been painted and  
"redecorated" thanks to  
Deanna Smith!

Order through  
[info@gilletthistorical.com](mailto:info@gilletthistorical.com)

Insert Mailing Label Here

## MARCH CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### Across

3. First teacher in Gillett
4. Eschner Enterprise
5. Latest Acquisition
8. Event at Plywood Factory
9. Furniture store owner in 1940s
11. First mayor of City of Gillett
13. Structure in Zippel Park
15. Lamplighter in Gillett

### Down

1. Brand of stove in basement
2. Front door bell tune
6. Editor of Gillett Times
7. Lutheran Pastor
10. First bicycle owner in Gillett
12. Earliest Grade School principal
14. Dentist in Gillett

EclipseCrossword.com

Answers to this puzzle are found at the  
museum, on the web site, in this news-  
letter, in the book *The History of Gillett  
Continues* or ask a GAHS member!