The McLeod County Historical Society would like to invite you and your family to our McLeod County Historical Society & Museum 2013 Annual Meeting and Program on Monday, October 28th at the McLeod County Historical Society & Museum Educational Meeting Room from 5:30 PM-8 PM.

A delicious meal will be catered in by Joanie’s Catering, starting at 6 PM, followed by our Annual theme presentation, “Murder and Mayhem in McLeod County” by Scott Rehmann.

The board of directors and staff will present this year’s Donor of the Year Award, Volunteer of the Year Award, and our newest 7th Grade History Project Award Winners!

We hope you and your family can join us in honoring these outstanding folks who have helped to make 2013 another historical year!

The Museum’s Executive Board will hold a short business meeting, board member introductions and the election of open spots for our 2014 Board of Directors.

Please RSVP by Thursday, October 24th
Murder & Mayhem Mystery Tour

Wednesday, October 30th
4 PM to 9 PM
Starting at the
McLeod County Historical Society & Museum

All year long the McLeod County Historical Society and Museum have been bringing you the true stories of Murder in McLeod County. From Halloween tricksters to star crossed lovers, each of these murder cases happened right here in McLeod County. Now you can have a front row seat to the places all of this mayhem occurred, with our Mystery and Mayhem Tour!

If you and your family are looking for a little Halloween fun with a side of history, then this is the tour for you. Sheriff Scott Rehmann will be our tour guide to terror as he highlights each of the Mystery tour locations and what he has uncovered in his research over the years. The Museum has featured 18 different murders that occurred in our County between 1881 and 1959. Of these 18 murders, only a few of the most notorious will be a part of our Halloween Murder tour.

Although many of these Murders occurred almost 100 years ago, the murderous motives could be ripped from the headlines today, with love, greed, and insanity playing key roles in each of the plots. Many of the streets, buildings and roads, each of us travel everyday, were once the scene to Murder. After taking the Murder and Mayhem Tour, you may never look at the history of McLeod County the same again.

Tour Ticket Includes:

Coach Bus Seat
Dinner at a Mystery Restaurant
Entry into our Murder and Mayhem Booklet Drawing
Goose bumps and chills!!!

Please fill out and mail in form below...

Murder & Mayhem Mystery Tour:

Name: ____________________________  Total Seats: _______ X $30 each = Total $_________

Address: ________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

E-Mail: ________________________________

Please make check or money order out to:

MCHS
380 School Road NW
Hutchinson, MN 55350
“Conspiracy!”

Who really Killed Lincoln?

By Dean Urdahl

Book Program &
Author Book Signing

Sunday, October 20th
2-3 P M

Museum Educational
Media Center

A plot to kill Lincoln that reaches far beyond John Wilkes Booth, into the Masons, the Catholic Church, and Knights of the Golden Circle. This is the fourth book in the Uprising series by author Dean Urdahl.

Dean taught American History for thirty-five years at New London-Spicer Schools in Minnesota. He was first elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 2002 and served as Minnesota’s commissioner to the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and was instrumental in forming the Minnesota Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission. Urdahl was appointed in 2010 to chair the Minnesota House Legacy Funding Committee and continues to champion for the preservation of Minnesota and local county history.

“Conspiracy” is the next historical step in the “Uprising” series of books by Urdahl. “Uprising”, “Retribution”, and “Pursuit” each tell a different part of the historically true story of the War of 1862 through the eyes of fictional characters. The War of 1862, between the U.S. and the Dakota Native Americans in Minnesota and the northwest frontier, all took place during America’s Civil War. Making it a war within a war during a time of great turmoil in the United States. “Conspiracy” follows this turmoil to the man who played a pivotal role in both wars, President Lincoln.

We hope you will join us for a presentation of “Conspiracy” by Mr. Urdahl on Sunday, October 20th in the Museum’s Educational Media Center. Dean will be signing books after the program along with refreshments being served. The Museum will also be open for guest tours before and after the presentation.

Left: Each of Dean’s books are available in the Museum’s Gift Shop for $16.00 each.

Above: “Conspiracy” Book # 4 in a series retails for $16.00 each and will be available for purchase at the Museum’s Gift Shop

Left: Author Dean Urdahl


**Mission Statement**
The McLeod County Historical Society is dedicated to connecting with the past, understanding the present and making informed choices about the future by finding, preserving, explaining and sharing McLeod County history.

**Membership Fees**
- Individual $20, Family $35
- Business $200
- Individual Lifetime $500

**Board of Directors**
- Stan Ehrke, President
- Karen Hendricksen, Vice President
- Tara Russell, Secretary
- Gerard Stifter, Treasurer
- Dave Horrmann, Ray Pavlish, Anne Hahn, Scott Rehmann, and Lowell Ueland

**Executive Director**
Lori Pickell-Stangel

**Assistant**
Peggy Paulson

**Volunteer Staff**
- Stan Ehrke, Tech Support
- Bev Swenson, Collections
- Marlys Fredrick, Research
- Marge Ruzicka, Archivist
- Liz Schwarze-3-D Artifacts

**McLeod County Museum**
380 School Road NW
Hutchinson, MN 55350
(320) 587-2109
www.mcleodhistory.org
e-mail: info@hutchtel.net

**Museum Hours**
- Monday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Thursday and Friday: 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Saturday: 1 to 4 p.m.
- **Also available by appointment**
- Closed: Tuesday, Wednesday, Sunday

**Board of Director’s Meeting**
- Fourth Monday of each Month at 7 P.M
- Museum Research Library

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**Director's Review:**

I hope you noticed a big change to the cover of this month’s Newsletter. A new logo that incorporates the Les Kouba Mural featured on the side of the Museum building. This logo change is a small part of a bigger project that the Museum has been working on for the past few years. Soon the Museum will be rolling out a new website, showcasing our new logo. But this site is not just about good looks, it will also deliver real historical content and make it easier to interact with the Historical Society online.

Our old site was great for keeping you up to date on the latest programs and events going on at the Museum, but our new site will be able to do so much more! The Museum will be able to take donations, new and renewing memberships and gift shop purchases on-line through a new Pay Pal account system, making credit and debit card purchases a snap. All of the Museums past Newsletters will also be archived on the site. Artifacts from the collection will be showcased in a virtual display, so you can see many unique pieces that may not be on display in the galleries. And the most exciting change of all is the ability for guests to logon and search up to 10,000 images from our unique Family Photo Collection. Volunteers have been working for years, scanning and adding historical content to our searchable database, and now you will be able to search this part of our collection from your home. Wow! Now the Museum has over 45,000 records currently in our database, thanks to a lot of hard work by many volunteers, but will only be offering a selected 10,000. This will give the public a taste of what the Museum’s collection has to offer and hopefully inspire a visit!

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!

The Museum has so many reasons to say Thank you! To our many volunteers, guest presenters, and to our generous donors! As seen by the photo on the right, the Museum has been busy! Our Basket Social Fundraiser was a huge success, thanks to Benny Weinbeck and his talented piano playing, McCormick's for all the great food, and Crow River Winery for giving us a spectacular place to hold our event. Also thanks to all the local businesses who donated items for our Silent Auction Gift Baskets: DQ, Hutchinson Liquor, Lillian’s, Purse-a-nalities, Lamplighter II, Ace Hardware, Main Street Sports Bar, Mad Cake Coffee Co., and Serendipity!
2013 McLeod County Historical Museum Theme:

**Murder & Mayhem in McLeod County:**

The McLeod County Historical Society will be researching the topic of Murder for our 2013 theme!

Through the research done by board member and McLeod County Sheriff, Scott Rehmann, the Museum has compiled a number of the most sensational crimes to occur in our boundaries. Each month, the Museum will feature an excerpt from our theme booklet, “Murder and Mayhem in McLeod County”, which will be available for purchase in the Museum’s gift shop. The booklet will cover McLeod County’s earliest Murders in the 1800s, through the 1950s. Each case has its own mystery and historic lore to explore and we hope you will join us as we play detective and learn more about a small part of our County’s notorious and tragic past.

Gordon Jones -1950

Love, Lies, Adultery, and Murder

Laura (Safford) Miller was born February 15, 1926, in Danville, Illinois. Laura’s mother died eight days after she was born. Mr. And Mrs. Dell Miller, Laura’s uncle and aunt, adopted Laura when she was seven months old.

Mr. and Mrs. Miller moved to Minneapolis, MN, when Laura was 12 years old. She attended Jefferson Junior High School, where one of her teachers encouraged her in her faith. In 1944, she graduated from West High School. While growing up, Laura had a passion for music and took piano and voice lessons. After graduation, she studied at the University of Minnesota where she took English and psychology courses. In 1946, after two years of study, her adoptive mother, Etta, became ill with a severe heart condition. To help, Laura left college and went to work. She worked in several jobs as a stenographer, bookkeeper, and in sales analysis. Most of the money she made went to her mother.

Laura struggled with self image. She did not see herself as beautiful, but she tried to look her best. With work and hobbies, she did not date often, and she could not find anyone who shared her passions. She often felt lonely but was not unhappy.

On a night in August, 1948, she and a friend went to the Covered Wagon in Minneapolis for dinner. While they were eating, her friend recognized a man and introduced Laura to Gordon Jones.

Gordon Jones, son of Daniel and Alice Jones, was born in St. Paul, MN on May 21, 1913. He had two brothers and one sister. When Gordon was a child, his family relocated to Duluth where he attended Central High. After graduating from Duluth Junior College, he was educated at the Minnesota College of Law, where he received his law degree in 1941.

Gordon married Catherine Davies on September 3, 1940. Catherine was the daughter of Hal Davies, a newspaper publisher, from Minot, N D. The couple had two children, Kathleen and Patrick. While attending law school, Gordon lived in Minneapolis and worked for the Hennepin County Probation Office as an investigator. He enlisted in the army in 1942, serving in the military police and in intelligence. He was discharged as a staff sergeant in 1946. While in the military and stationed at Omaha, Gordon spent only one year with his wife. The rest of the time, she lived separately in Minot, N.D.

McLeod County Historical Society Newsletter
In 1946, Gordon opened a law practice in the cities of Glencoe and Brownton, where he bought a home and moved with his family. In 1948, the family moved to the city of Hutchinson, where Gordon opened a law office. In Hutchinson, Gordon served as the Third District American Legion Post Commander.

A Chance Meeting Leads to Love

On the evening that Laura and Gordon met, she enjoyed her time. Gordon kept the conversation lively, and he was very charming. He even escorted her to the apartment that she shared with her mother. After Gordon departed, Laura did not think she would ever see him again.

A week later, Laura’s telephone rang. Gordon asked if she remembered him. Laura was delighted; she had thought of him often.

Soon, the two began to see each other frequently. Gordon saw Laura when he was in Minneapolis. He either picked her up at home or arranged a meeting place. As fast as their romance began, however, it ended. Months passed before Laura saw Gordon again.

In June, 1949, Gordon called Laura. He was in Minneapolis on business for three days and wanted to spend as much time with her as he could. Initially, when he invited Laura to dinner, she said "no," stating that she had not heard from him in a long time. The next night, Gordon called and asked her to dinner again. She declined again. Gordon persisted. He asked permission to come to her home. Laura agreed and Gordon presented her with a bottle of liquor. After this date, the pair began to see each other more and more often. Laura was in love.

About a year after they first met, Gordon finally confessed that he was married and had two children. For unknown reasons, however, Laura believed that Gordon also loved her and that they could continue their relationship. She began to view their relationship as though they were married, stating:

*Somehow I knew that if there was room for me in Gordon’s heart there was room for me in his life. I came to think of Gordon and me as husband and wife...*

_Hutchinson Leader, March 3, 1950._

Promises Broken

At one point, Gordon told Laura that he planned to divorce his wife and marry her. Laura reported that the pair initiated a sexual relationship in July of 1949. In November of that year, Laura became pregnant. Initially, she kept the pregnancy a secret. Shortly after this, and unaware of the pregnancy, however, Gordon began to distance himself. He informed Laura that he had reconciled with his wife and intended to remain married.

On January 6, 1950, the pair met for dinner. Laura finally revealed her secret. When Gordon inquired why she had not told him earlier, Laura replied that disclosure was difficult since he was still living with his wife. Gordon assured Laura that he would marry her after his divorce. Laura divulged that she was growing concerned that her mother would discover her pregnancy, and she felt that she needed a place of her own. In response, Gordon assured Laura that he would help her. He instructed Laura to call him the following weekend at the Andrews Hotel.

As instructed, on Friday, January 13, 1950, Laura called the Andrews Hotel. With the first few calls, there was no answer. Finally, a woman answered and replied that Laura must have the wrong number. The next day Laura called again, and Gordon answered the phone...

Gordon’s Secret Life Catches Up with Him

On January 18, Laura arrived in Hutchinson at about 2:30 P.M. She called Gordon’s office but there was no answer. She spent some time talking with an elderly woman who had also ridden on the bus. Afterward, Laura went to the cab stand by the L&S Café and asked cabdriver, Lee Cooper, to show her around Hutchinson. Lee consented; he escorted Laura to the Maplewood Academy and showed her some of the newer homes in the city. Laura asked Lee to drive her to Grove Street, Gordon’s street.

About 3:45 P.M., Laura went to Gordon’s office and found a note on the door, indicating that he would be back soon. When he arrived, he found Laura waiting. Gordon left the premises and came back, locking the door to his office. Laura questioned him about her inability to reach him at the Andrews hotel, as planned. Gordon rationalized that he was not able to engage in conversation because Catherine and Kathleen, his wife and daughter, were present at the time of her calls. Laura asked whether arrangements had been made for a place to live and for help with her pregnancy. Gordon replied that he was making arrangements.

Gordon revealed that he had something for Laura. He presented some pills, informing Laura that they would cause a miscarriage. Procuring a glass of water, Gordon encouraged her to take the pills. Laura refused, but Gordon was persistent, stating that “everything will be alright.”

To be continued...
Donations & Memorials:

Log Cabin Home:
In honor of Gerald & Dorothy Johnson’s 50th Wedding Anniversary from Bev & Ken Wangerin

General Fund:
Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club: David & Betty Jensen; Delores Gustafson
Ken and Carolyn A. Schumann; Gary & Carmen Ziemer; Bev Baumetz

Archives:
In honor of Harold Sanken and Frances Olson Sanken from Annette Zimmerman
In honor of Irma Kreie from Annette Zimmerman and Eldonna Christensen

Heritage Garden:
In memory of Maxine Ladd from Larry Ladd; In Honor of Pat Schmidt and Eileen Mielke from Annette Zimmerman

Endowment Fund:
In memory of Pearl Baysinger and Orvis Wahl from Roger & Shirley Karstens
In memory of Fern Olesen from Ken & Jane Kirby

Genealogy Fund:

Technology Fund:

Dugout Canoe Grant Fund:
Ken Schumann

Restoration Fund:

Welcome New and Life Members:

Katie Berning, Zimmerman, MN; Jennifer Chrast, Silver Lake, MN; Kate Nelson, Grove City, MN;
Dave & Betty Jensen, Hutchinson, MN; Bruce Brummond, Lake Zurich, IL; Jane & John Orvis, Hutchinson, MN;
Dava Illig, Minneapolis, MN; Lyall Schwarzkopf, Minneapolis, MN; Beth Jensen, Scottsdale, AZ

Museum Artifact Donations: The Society thanks you for your donation!

Nancy Shamla  Pat Schmidt
Marlys Fredrick  Betty Lou Cords
Darlene Matuska  Arlen Axdahl
Beth Christianson  Herman Stark
Leona Karg  Julie Jensen
Floyd Horrmann  Steve & Michelle Kleist & Family
Peter Smyth  City of Lester Prairie
Dorothy Lindeman  North St. Paul Historical Society
Helen Piehl

Artifact/s of the Month:

Donor: Melvin Wolter
Accession #: 2009-0279-124-Mask

History:
Cardboard “Funny Face”, cut-out for children from a Kelloggs cereal box.
The cut-out belonged to LaVerna Birkholz.
From around 1930.

McLeod County Historical Society Newsletter
McLeod County Historical Museum’s
Historical Happenings Radio Show

Tune into AM 1260 KDUZ the last Friday afternoon of each month to catch the latest in Museum Programs & Events, Local History, and special topics on Preservation.

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