



# New Brighton Area Historical Society Newsletter

## NBAHS 40<sup>th</sup> Activities Postponed Until a Later Date

What a year this has been for many non-profit organizations! COVID-19 has caused many groups to cancel or postpone many events, and we are part of this group. At this point, our depot museum will not reopen this year at all. We have kept in close touch with a group called "All Minnesota Historical Societies," via Facebook. This group has offered webinars on procedures for opening up their

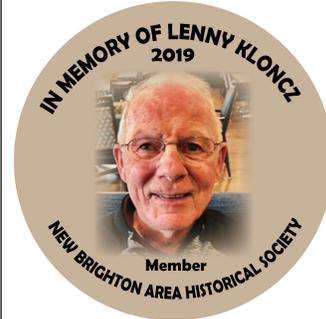
museums, but many of them have also decided not to open at all. Our number one reason to not reopen reflects on the ages of our volunteers, many of whom are seniors for whom this pandemic is dangerous. So in the abundance of caution, our decision makes sense. We miss welcoming guests to our New Brighton History Center and hopefully we can meet again next April.

### Calendar of Events

**October 11: 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Harvest Dinner - cancelled**

### 2019 NBAHS Button

Here is a photo of the 2019 button that the New Brighton Area Historical Society produced in honor of Lenny



Klonz, who provided many hours of volunteer labor and support for the society from 1980-2017.

For many years he spent evenings and weekends working at the depot, from building the exterior deck, to renovating the freight room which was down to stud walls, to building storage shelving in the basement, to assisting in building historic displays, to painting the interior walls, etc., etc., etc. The depot was his "happy place"



### 40<sup>th</sup> Annual NBAHS Button

For 40 years, NBAHS has produced an annual button, usually during Stockyard Days. Here then is our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary button, replicating the button we used for the City of New Brighton Centennial in 1987.

## NBAHS CELEBRATES FORTY YEARS OF HISTORY TO OUR COMMUNITY

The New Brighton Area Historical Society was excited to have the opportunity to honor Pletschers' Greenhouses at our postponed April Annual Meeting. With that unfortunate happening, the Board of Directors made the decision to make Pletschers' 100th Anniversary our April 22, 2021, program at



our next Annual Meeting. We have prepared a slide show with hundreds of photos of Pletschers' 100 years of being a successful New Brighton area business and we will thus honor this business next April. At that time we will also celebrate the society's 40th anniversary. Put this on your calendar now and we'll keep in touch as the year goes by.

---

## Message From The President

What can I say? After great expectations and extensive planning, the Society's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year gradually disappeared before our eyes. Just as many of us were adversely impacted by the virus, virtually all the Society's activities and events were put on hold.

Fortunately, the Board was able to remain quite active during the year, discharging numerous internal and "housekeeping" functions.

However, without the benefit of our major fund-raising activities, the Society lost its main

source of financing (principally from our Annual Meeting in April, the Rhubarb Festival in June and Stockyard Days in August). This was compounded by the closure of the Depot/Museum for the entire season.

Being a nonprofit organization, we rely exclusively on the financial support of our members, which has always been augmented by the annual fund raising activities mentioned above.

Our unrestricted operating cash balance is only \$3952, due to the lack of fund raising activity this past year. In addition to your regular financial support, we encourage all of you to acquire our recently re-printed signature book, *A Centennial History of New Brighton, Minnesota*. This hard cover book is a must-have for anyone interested in New Brighton's colorful history. It's just \$25 plus \$6 shipping and handling. Please see the convenient order form in this newsletter. Your support will certainly help to fund operating and maintenance costs during this critical period. (Please note that our Museum/History Center receives no financial support from either the City or County.)

On a positive note, things are still happening. We continue to maintain and improve the Depot. And pursuant to a \$10,000 grant received last year from the Minnesota Historical Society, we are now in the process of installing a state-of-the-art security/surveillance system for our Museum/History Center.

And finally, we are pleased to welcome a new Board member coming on this summer, New Brighton resident Art Oglesby. Art has hit the ground running, making a major contribution in upgrading the Society's technical/internet capabilities.

In closing, we sincerely appreciate the support and generosity of our members. The Society exists for you; and we look forward to seeing you at our 2021 Annual Meeting next year on April 22.

Fred Behrens  
President  
New Brighton Area Historical Society



**Treasurer’s Report**

DEDICATED BOOK ACCOUNT	\$20,683
DEDICATED SECURITY GRANT	\$10,000
AVAILABLE FOR EXPENSES	\$3,952
AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENSES	\$10,000

Wayne Searles, Treasurer

**Reflections from Art Oglesby,  
New NBAHS Board Member**

Upon moving to New Brighton, I stopped in to chat when the depot museum was open in 2019 and started attending monthly Board of Directors’ meetings. I was amazed to see how hard everyone worked towards the society’s objective of . . . “the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history of the area in and about New Brighton.”

2020 being our fortieth anniversary year, NBAHS planned several big events. Sadly all have been cancelled. But we have been successful in a way to preserve and disseminate knowledge about the history of the area in and about New Brighton by reprinting and selling the sold-out Gene Skiba book, *A Centennial History of New Brighton, Minnesota*. It can now be purchased at New Brighton City Hall, New Brighton Community Center, and Beisswengers Hardware for the same low price of \$25, or can be mailed. See page 4.

If you buy one of our books, those sales will provide vital revenue this year and will continue to disseminate its knowledge for decades after we are gone.

Another vital project is to upgrade our website to more effectively discover, preserve, and disseminate our historical knowledge while the depot museum is closed.

Before the end of 2020 we hope to reveal our newly refurbished website. Also, learning to use new tech tools like Zoom and Meet could allow virtual visits and interactions for our followers.

**Security, Internships and Bringing History Remotely in 2020, by Dave Peterson, Vice-President**

Working in the Historic Preservation and Academic fields, I learned how crucial it is to actively pursue grants and share our history. But sharing our history and using it for education are even more critical than funding. Without sharing our history, people don’t know about it, and it’s no longer important.

First, we need to protect what we have. Our last security system cost less than \$1k and was installed when the museum opened in the 1990s. After the caboose exhibit was broken into, we applied for a grant for an updated security system in 2018 from the MN Legacy Fund Grant administered by the Minnesota Historical Society. As frequently happens, at first we were turned down. I’ve applied for enough grants to know that frequently that can happen. Sometimes it’s because of the number of applicants, and how many didn’t get funded in the previous few years that applied again this year. It takes persistence.

We applied again in 2019, and we are happy to report that the grant was awarded to us in 2020. With the generous support of the State of MN, we received \$10k for a new state-of-the-art security system that will include the caboose, something we could never afford without the grant. By the time you read this, it will be installed, working, and protecting the depot and collections, as well as our staff and visitors when we reopen.

A grant like this is structured so we can *only* use it for the new security system. Without your support, the depot museum would cease to function. As our President Fred Behrens tells us elsewhere in the newsletter, we need your support for other costs now that our 2020 fundraisers are canceled due to the pandemic.

I’m thrilled to say that even in this difficult year, we’re doing well sharing our history. We have a new intern program. In this newsletter, our first intern from the University of Northwestern, Andrew Roth, gives us a fascinating story about the old Seminary and Northwestern’s history.

If you are, or know of, a college or high school student that needs an internship, we encourage you to contact us. From helping with websites to researching articles, there are many things to do even when the museum is closed.

We are also providing virtual tours and talks using Zoom. We will provide the information to attend these through Facebook (in the search bar, type in New Brighton Area Historical Society), but if you don’t use Facebook you can email me at [davepeterson26@hotmail.com](mailto:davepeterson26@hotmail.com) to learn how to join us using Zoom with a computer or smart phone.



Shown is the bench installed by the NBAHS to honor Lenny Klencz, a valued volunteer for the society from 1980-2017. Pictured are loyal volunteers Wayne Searles & Ron Cota, who have willingly taken on the responsibility for much of the maintenance of our depot museum. We thank them for their service, and for always being there when something needs to be done.

**Membership & Book Order Form**

**New Brighton Area Historical Society**

**For new and renewing members. All memberships are due by April 30 of each year.**

Mail to: NBAHS, Box 120624, New Brighton, MN 55112

Help us preserve and share the fascinating history of the New Brighton area by becoming a member today!

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Options (Check One)

\_\_\_\_\_ Single \$10.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Family \$15.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Business/Club \$100.00



If you wish to order one of our history books, here are the prices.  
Please indicate how many books you wish mailed on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_ *A CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF NEW BRIGHTON, MINNESOTA - \$25*

\_\_\_\_\_ *A PICTORIAL HISTORY: NEW BRIGHTON AREA, MINNESOTA, FROM THE 1880s - 1950s - \$25*

\_\_\_\_\_ *A PICTORIAL HISTORY: NEW BRIGHTON AREA, MINNESOTA, FROM THE 1950s - 2000s - \$25*

\_\_\_\_\_ *HISTORICAL SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST - \$12*

Each hardbound book, including tax \$25; Snippets \$12. Packaging & Mailing (per book) \$6.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Check total \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



## New Brighton Area History: University of Northwestern – The Early Years

By Andrew L. Roth

*(Andrew L. Roth is a University of Northwestern History student, and an intern with the New Brighton Area Historical Society. With guidance from the New Brighton Area Historical Society Board, he is preparing articles about local history especially pertaining to the University of Northwestern Campus. Along with the New Brighton Area Historical Society's website and Facebook page, these articles will help us share the history of the New Brighton area while the New Brighton History Center is closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.)*



Nazareth Hall Seminary, 1920. NBAHS Photo #10.13, printed with permission from the Minnesota Historical Society files.

The University of Northwestern-St. Paul was first established in 1902 by William Bell Riley. Originally, it was named Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School, dedicated to training young men and women into ministry. It originally began as a Bible Study that developed into the school that we know today. The campus was originally located at the First Baptist Church property where Dr. Riley was Pastor. To fit classes in the one building, Riley had an expansion added to the church. Eventually, with more students coming in, campus was moved toward Memorial Hall “at 50 Willow Street facing Loring Park.”

Dr. Riley was able to examine the groundwork for the campus at Loring Park before he passed away in 1947. When Dr. Riley passed away, Reverend Billy Graham took over as President of the College. Under his tutelage, there were three portions of the college that operated: “The Bible Institute, which was about to become a Bible college, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Theological Seminary.” Under Billy Graham, KTIS also began with the college, and many more students came to school. However, Billy Graham was eventually called to continue his ministry and resigned as President of Northwestern.

The next President of Northwestern was Dr. Richard Elvee. He was sadly left with financial trouble, which would last until the end of Northwestern's time at the Loring Park campus. He was known for reconfiguring the teachings of the school to help with finances. He believed that the three schools were not strong in resources and not unified in a single purpose. So, to make a clear purpose for school, Dr. Elvee closed down the Bible College and Seminary, transitioned the Liberal Arts College to having a strong Biblical emphasis, and renamed the school Northwestern College.

Sadly, Northwestern still struggled. The presidency was then given to Dr. Curtis Akenson. During his term, Akenson tried to get accreditation for the school; however, he could not receive it because there was no financial backing for the school. After his presidency, the school lasted one more year under a new President named Dr. Robert T. Sandin. Tragically, the main college closed in 1966 and became a radio station and a night school. Next, the school would eventually come back with a new campus. What some people don't know is that Nazareth Hall has been around for almost as long as Northwestern.

### Looking Back: A Little Bit of History New Brighton Squash Show.



The New Brighton Squash Show was a big event for many years in New Brighton, from 1928-1960. Preceding the Squash Show was the Potato Show, run by the New Brighton Commercial Club in the early 1920s. In 1975, the New Brighton Lions Club revived the event. Competition for squash and pumpkins was keen among the top growers, including the Beisswengers, Hipps, Perrons, Reasoners, Perrys, Leiers, Kerstens, Pletschers, Brosts, Richters, and Goldemans. Left: little folks are shown inspecting the squash and pumpkin winners at the October 1988 Squash Show. NBAHS photo #4.086



New Brighton Lion Ed Salverda, right, is shown making apple juice at a Squash Show. For years, the Lions used the old apple press loaned by Fred and Laura White of New Brighton. That same apple press is now on display in the freight room at the New Brighton History Center in Long Lake Park, on loan from Bob White, their son. NBAHS photo #4.215



Harvest dinners and the awarding of prizes were the main themes of the event. The demise of the farms in this rapidly growing suburb brought about its discontinuance. Above: Squash Show participants decorated their pumpkins in an interesting fashion. NBAHS photo #4.213.

- 2020-2021  
NBAHS Board of Directors
- |                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Fred Behrens, President        | Directors:   |
| David Peterson, Vice-President | Ron Cota     |
| Wayne Searles, Treasurer       | Dave Fleming |
| Joyce Klonecz, Secretary       | Peg Joyce    |
| Jerry Bensing - Honorary       | Art Oglesby  |
| Jerry Blanski - Honorary       |              |
| Jerry Laumeier - Honorary      |              |