

# The Lake Area Preserver



White Bear Lake Area Historical Society

Summer 2007

## Manitou Days Celebrates 40 Years

BY SARA MARKOE HANSON

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN *TOWN LIFE MAGAZINE*

The precursor to Manitou Days was Summer Fun Days, which were started by Bill Knaak. In 1967 the White Bear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce started the tradition that has carried on for four decades. The local organization kicked off a series of weeklong events dubbed as “Manitou Days” and Chamber officers spoke fervently that “this year is only the beginning... it is hoped that the historical theme will be continued throughout the years.”

The chair of that first celebration was Jack Hoffner with Georgia Hillman serving as Executive Secretary of the Chamber and Richard Wright as its President. That initial group with contributions from countless others would lead to decades of parades, theatrical productions, retail events in the downtown area, and children’s activities.

The highlights of the first Manitou Days community celebration was the Jaycees sponsored Luau at Memorial Beach with the coronation of Miss White Bear Lake and the Shakespeare in the Streets performance troupe at Railroad Park. The annual Luau which predated Manitou Days but was quickly incorporated into the celebration had an average draw of more than 800 people who would pay a five dollar admission to enjoy dinner and a dance on Memorial Beach with tiki huts and hula skirts as their surroundings.

By the next year the events had grown to include an Outdoor Art Fair, Sailboat Races, a Style Show, several concerts and a dedication of the historical marker at Matoska Park.

Since the beginning the annual festival served to bring the community together. Events were planned in the downtown area as well as the White Bear Shopping Center, on the lake itself, at Memorial and Ramsey County Beaches and the area schools. Other events such as a horse show even branched out to neighboring Hugo.

Heritage and pride in your community were popular themes of this time period. The State of Minnesota celebrated its centennial in 1958 and the nation was looking ahead to its bicentennial in 1976. With the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the Vietnam War people began to look closer to home to re-ignite that home town feeling of security, pride and belonging. It was the late 1960s when the White Bear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce formed the Heritage Committee and from that came the historical markers at Matoska and Railroad Parks, the publication of Nancy Woolworth’s *The White Bear Lake Story* and the formation of the White Bear Lake Area Historical Society in 1970.

The 1970 version of the annual festival was expansive. By then the community and its merchants seemed to really embrace the idea and supported a fifty page insert in the *White Bear Press* which included brief histories of all of the communities around the lake. Sponsors took out ads showing their pride in longevity and heritage.

Continued on page 2

**Continued from page 1**

In the early years Manitou Days generally ran from late July through the beginning of August instead of what we are accustomed to in more recent years as being the end of June. The early 1970s brought the circus to town when a Circus Under the Big Top was held at Highway 61 and Cedar for an evening. The Grand Opening of the YMCA, sporting tournaments, a Twilight Parade, the Drum and Bugle Corps Contest, a fish fry and trap shoot, a kiddie parade and the Tour of Homes were all additions during the first decade.

The 2007 Manitou Days Parade Grand Marshal, Gwen Drummond Floerke joined the White Bear Lake Area Chamber in 1972 when Manitou Days was in its youth. At



**THE WHITE BEAR LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATES IN THE MANITOU DAYS PARADE AS IT TRAVELS THROUGH THE SOUTH SIDE OF WHITE BEAR LAKE, CA. 1975**

The bicentennial of 1976 brought an even bigger celebration to White Bear Lake. The one hundred unit parade was met by one hundred degree temperatures but that didn't stop people from coming out. Other

Sixteen teams entered the competition and many of them left the Shopping Center parking lot covered in mud.

An entire generation of children waited anxiously in the 1980s for their heat to begin in the big wheel races along Washington Avenue in order to receive their balloon at the finish line. Normally modest adults wandered the streets of downtown White Bear Lake in their pajamas in honor of the moonlight madness sales put on by the merchants. The smell of mini donuts and popcorn permeated the town for a week at a time and everyone was lost in the coming together of neighbors and business associates.

The annual Beach Dance after the parade at Optimist Beach—originally and now renamed Memorial Beach—eventually evolved from the luau event. Two beach dances served as bookends for the celebration by occurring on the night of the parade and then again the following Saturday as a cap to the ten day festival. The event was a hit during



**BIG WHEEL AND TRIKE RACE ALONG WASHINGTON AVENUE, 1986**

that time the Chamber was focusing on growing the festival and encouraging people to get involved. “We pushed that so much,” said Floerke. “It really was fun.”

events included rugby games, sailboat races, the home tours, a performance of *Taming of the Shrew* at Lakewood Community College—now Century College—and the first tug-of-war competition at the White Bear Shopping Center.

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Continued from page 2

the 1980s. The Optimist Club sponsored the beach dances and later they were promoted by other area organizations until it became too large and complicated to maintain the hometown feel. High band costs and the uncertainties of weather made the dance a gamble local organizations were no longer able to take.

By the twentieth anniversary of Manitou Days in 1987 participation was at a peak. A record setting 12,000 people attended the grand parade where parachutists performed by landing at the intersection of Fourth Street and Washington Avenue. The festival featured more than fifty-five major events including the Great Cow Drop and the Mr. Manitou Contest. Button wearers received discounts or special deals at more than forty-five shops and businesses in the area.

As the 1990s came upon the scene the tide seemed to turn in community involvement. The event and slowly the festival began to shrink from more than a week to a long weekend and eventually to the parade on Friday night with a few smaller events surrounding it. The focus of the Chamber of Commerce had shifted as well and the time commitment necessary to put on a well planned and executed festival was not available. The Chamber was pursuing a stronger emphasis on promoting business-to-business relationships and needed more assistance with the parade and events.

With the new millennium upon us things are shifting yet again. Community members have come forward and indicated they would like to see an expanded Manitou Days festival. In 2005 the now White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce chose to retain the Grand Parade activities but relinquish the events to a committee of volunteers. That year the festival was returned to ten days in June and brought back many of the types of events that had occurred in the earlier years including a Community Pool Party at the YMCA, an Art Fair at the White Bear Shopping Center, Tours of the Fillebrown House and a few new ones such as a Disc Golf Tournament at Lakewood Hills Park and a Class A Sailing Regatta on the lake.



1983 MANITOU DAYS BUTTON DESIGNED BY CURT HANSEN

A favorite event that returned to Manitou Days in 2005 was the Beach Dance. The Rotary Club of White Bear Lake and Explore White Bear co-sponsored the event featuring the 617 House Band and lit up Memorial Beach with twinkle lights and more than five hundred smiles as people swayed to the music and the waters of White Bear Lake smoothed the sand beneath their sandals. In 2006 the crowd had increased to more than 800 attendees and even more are expected to enjoy the event in 2007.

The following year things evolved a bit further with the Chamber deciding to pass the parade to the committee of volunteers as well. In 2006 White Bear Events—a volunteer driven committee that promotes and celebrates our hometown through fun and exciting events—was formed to coordinate Manitou Days and other events throughout the seasons. That year events continued to expand and community members and local organizations responded enthusiastically. Special events such as the First Annual Community Picnic were included to celebrate the City of White Bear Lake's 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of incorporation.

Manitou Days 2007 celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Parade co-chairs Paul Carlson and Doug Shepard and Events Chair Randy Fulton bring their experience with the parade and other community events to their leadership roles during this commemorative year. Bill Foussard, Chair of White Bear Events, encourages everyone to participate. "We want to get everyone involved!" says Foussard. It looks like some things never change.



## News From The Board of Directors

**A**s I have heard many times in my life “Time goes by too quickly.” This is the case with two former Board Members, Penny Norman, Community Liaison and Flora Lee Rauch, Fillebrown House Tours. Both contributed greatly to the Historical Society and deserve some recognition.

I would like to thank you Penny for your professionalism, time and generosity throughout your tenure at the Historical Society, our entire Community benefits tremendously from your efforts and frankly you made us look good.

Flora Lee, our Board Member in charge of Summer House Tours at the Fillebrown House for the past six years, is extremely competent and gracious. Thank you, you set a phenomenal example for the spirit of volunteering.

### SPRING “FUN”RAISER

Fun and excitement is what we try to create for our Annual Spring Fundraising Event. Coordinating this event takes creative planning, knowledge, energy, enthusiasm, money and optimism. A heavy thank you to Jenni Corbett, Corinna Morse, Sarah Norman and Ellen Richter.

When the Board of Directors decided to begin a yearly Fundraising Campaign approximately seven years ago, Kate Huebsch, her husband, Rob, sons, John and Jake, along with niece, Christy Gutt, have consistently supported the Historical Society and its Mission. As a benefit and our good fortune, this Family, year after year has played a leading role in the Spring Fundraiser. I am thankful for the extraordinary enthusiasm shown by this extraordinary White Bear Lake Family.

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## WBLAHS 2007 Board of Directors

Holly Geck, President  
Peter Reis, Vice President  
Corinna Morse, Secretary  
Ray Smith, Treasurer  
Mike Campbell, Fillebrown House/Asst. Out-house  
Jenni Corbett, At-Large  
Keith Hisdahl, Community Liaison  
Kathy Hoelscher, Planned Giving & Development  
Lin Lindbeck, At-Large  
Meg Todd, At-Large  
Jean Woodberry, Education Liaison

The WBLAHS is currently seeking board members for the following positions:

Fillebrown House – In-House  
Fillebrown House – Tour Coordinator  
Membership  
Education Liaison  
Programs

For more information on becoming a board member please contact Holly Geck at 651-426-1110 or Sara Hanson at 651-407-5327.

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## Mission Statement of the White Bear Lake Area Historical Society

**T**he White Bear Lake Area Historical Society connects the community to its past, fostering an understanding and appreciation for our history. We fulfill our mission by . . .

- Gathering and maintaining historical information and artifacts.  
*We are safe keepers of our heritage.*
- Educating the community about our history.  
*We are the community storytellers.*
- Encouraging personal and community responsibility for preserving our physical links to the past.  
*We are advocates for historical preservation.*

**Learning from  
Our Past,  
Preserving for  
Our Future.**

# Roaring '20s 'Round the Lake – A Wonderful Success!

The White Bear Lake Area Historical Society's "Roaring '20s 'Round the Lake" Event was a wonderful success thanks to the support of the many volunteers on the committee and those who attended that evening. The funds raised through the silent and live auctions allow the WBLAHS to continue to collect and preserve the images and artifacts that tell the stories



DR. & MRS. ECKHOFF GREETED GUESTS, NEXT TO THEIR VINTAGE CAR, DRESSED FOR THE EVENT IN THEIR BEST 1920s ATTIRE

of our community, to offer educational programs at the Fillebrown House and through our outreach offerings, and to provide research opportunities at the Depot Museum's Resource Library and online as well as much more. Not only was the event our most successful fundraiser of the year, but also a fabulous evening for those in attendance with live music, good food and fantastic ambience. Mark your calendars for next year's WBLAHS Spring Event on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. You won't want to miss it!



LOUANN LINDBECK AND JAN RAPHEAL COMPETE AS FINALISTS IN THE "HEADS OR TAILS" GAME TO KICK OFF THE LIVE AUCTION PORTION OF THE EVENING.



TOM FRAZER ROARED INTO THE WHITE BEAR COUNTRY INN'S GRAND BALLROOM ON HIS HARLEY TO PROMOTE ONE OF THE LIVE AUCTION ITEMS-A RIDE WITH THE "WILD HOGS OF WHITE BEAR".

## Proudly Serving

The White Bear Lake Area Historical Society is proud to serve the following communities:

- Birchwood
- Dellwood
- Mahtomedi
- White Bear Lake
- White Bear Township



If you have a story, pictures, or any information that you would like to share, please contact Sara at 651-407-5327

## Memorial Gifts

Special thanks to the following individuals who have made contributions:

◆ In memory of Tom Jefferson  
*Susan Ward*

## A Special Thank You to Our Hometown Business Members



Commercial Printing  
Garden of Hope Montessori  
Hisdahl, Inc.  
Hoffman Corner Heating & Air  
Conditioning

Judy King Estate Sales  
Just Two Bikes  
Knutsen Auto  
Mélange  
Mortgage Works  
Sunbear Salon & Med Spa  
Ursula's Wine Bar & Café  
White Bear Country Inn/Rudy's  
Red Eye Grill  
White Bear Eye Clinic  
White Bear Lake Lion's Club

For information on how your  
business can be a WBLAHS Home-  
town Business Member please  
contact Sara at 651-407-5327

## Your Society in Action - WBLAHS Creates Searchable Website!

**T**hrough the help of our technol-  
ogy committee the WBLAHS  
website will now feature a database  
search through census records and  
the cemetery indexes that are avail-  
able for the five communities situated  
around the shore of White Bear  
Lake.

The first installment includes the  
1860-1885 Censuses of White  
Bear Township,  
1885 Census of the Village of  
White Bear and  
1930 Census data for  
Birchwood, Dellwood, Lincolntown  
(Mahtomedi), White Bear Lake and  
White Bear Township.

To access the databases visit our  
website at  
[www.wblareahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.wblareahistoricalsociety.org).

## Pavers Make a Great Gift

**J**ust can't find the perfect gift for  
that special person? The White Bear  
Lake Area Historical Society's paver  
program is the solution for you! Give  
a permanent legacy to commemorate  
a parent, an anniversary, a birth or  
any other special occasion or person  
for just \$250. In addition to being  
able to see their paver gracing the  
walk to the Fillebrown House for  
years to come the recipient will be a  
guest of honor at an event to dedi-  
cate the new set of pavers. For  
more information please contact Sara  
Hanson at 651-407-5327.



## From the Director's Desk...

**N**ew things  
are in store for  
the White Bear  
Lake Area  
Historical

Society this summer. The change in  
seasons brings a revamped website  
with searchable resources as well as  
new themes for tours at the  
Fillebrown House and new offerings  
through Community Education. For  
more on the website updates please  
see the Your Society in Action  
section included in this issue of  
*The Lake Area Preserver*.

The Fillebrown House will be the site  
of several new programs and tours  
throughout the rest of the year in lieu  
of the regular Sunday tours this  
summer. Topics for the programs  
include the history of photography,  
Victorian etiquette and a style show  
of fashions throughout the decades  
from the mid-1800s to more recent  
times. Watch the *White Bear Press*  
for updates on dates and times for  
these programs.

This season has already been a busy  
one with new offerings through the  
White Bear Lake Area Schools  
Community Services and Recreation  
Department. Our guided boat tour  
offering has grown from one date to  
possibly three due to response-these  
tours are currently full but the pro-  
gram will be repeated in the early fall  
schedule. The introduction of our  
narrated bus tours – one encircling  
White Bear Lake and the other  
focusing on Mahtomedi have both  
been filled to capacity as well. These  
will also be repeated in upcoming  
sessions. The overwhelming re-  
sponse has been fantastic and we  
appreciate the support of everyone  
who has taken the tours.

I hope each of you is enjoying the  
warmer weather. Don't forget to  
check out the many opportunities to  
get involved with the White Bear  
Lake Area Historical Society-there's  
something for you!

-Sara

# WBL Boat Tour Update

Summer's here and it's time to hit the water. Don't forget to get a copy of the WBLAHS Boating Tour for your next excursion. The bear sculpture originally carved from the elm tree of the Mark Twain legend whose story is featured in



**COVER OF WBLAHS BOATING TOUR BOOKLET**

the tour booklet has been replicated and returned to its monument on the north side of Manitou Island. Boating Tour brochures are available at the Depot Museum and Tally's Dockside for \$10.

**YOU TOO CAN VIEW THE BEAR FROM THE WATER**



## Volunteer Spotlight

The grounds of the Fillebrown House have received much needed attention recently thanks to **Mary Parenteau**. From weeding the flowerbeds to arranging ferns and other plants for our decorative urns in the front **Mary's** efforts have made quite the difference! Thank you, **Mary!**

We would not be able to provide many of our programs and events without our numerous volunteers who make things happen. Whether it is giving tours at the House, sorting papers at the Resource Library or answering questions for visitors, we rely heavily on the help of our volunteers. Thank you to all of you—new and continuing! For more information on what you may be able to do to help please contact Sara at 651-407-5327.

## *White Bear Lake Area Historical Society Membership Application*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Check level of membership:**

Individual \$20

Family/Household \$30

Patron \$80

Sponsor \$150

Preservationist \$300

Aerial \$500

Summit \$1000

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send with check to WBLAHS, PO Box 10543, White Bear Lake, Minnesota 55110-0543

# Calendar of Events

*JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup>-JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>*

40<sup>th</sup> Annual Manitou Days

*JUNE 21<sup>ST</sup>-JULY 26<sup>TH</sup>*

Marketfest Thursdays 6-9pm Downtown White Bear Lake  
Don't forget to stop and see Keith Hisdahl at our booth on  
Washington Ave.!

*SATURDAY, JUNE 23<sup>RD</sup>*

Downtown White Bear Lake Then and Now Walking Tour  
10am-noon Tour begins and ends at the Depot Museum\*

*WEDNESDAY, JUNE 27<sup>TH</sup>*

Downtown White Bear Lake Then and Now Walking Tour  
3-5pm Tour begins and ends at the Depot Museum\*

*SATURDAY, JULY 14<sup>TH</sup>*

Cruise Into the Past – Historic Boat Tour of WBL 10am-  
noon\* **(FULL)**

*THURSDAY, AUGUST 16<sup>TH</sup>*

Pops on the Porch Concert and Ice Cream Social  
6–8pm on the Fillebrown House Front Lawn  
Bring your lawn chair or blanket to enjoy the free concert

**\*Registration Required through Community Services & Recreation. Fees apply and space is limited. See program booklet for information or contact the White Bear Lake Community Services and Recreation Department at 651-407-7501.**



TO SHARE YOUR  
MEMORIES IN  
FUTURE ISSUES,  
CONTACT:

SARA MARKOE HANSON  
DEPOT MUSEUM  
4751 HIGHWAY 61  
WHITE BEAR LAKE, MN  
55110  
651-407-5327

The flowerbeds at the Fillebrown House are always in need of attention.  
If you're interested in helping weed, deadhead or otherwise assist in the  
garden, please contact Mary Parenteau at 651-426-4623.

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