

Now & Then in Ripon ...

Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society

Historical Society continues to partner with RC for internship

The Ripon Historical Society has partnered with Ripon College student volunteers as interns to collaborate on projects relating to Ripon's history for the past two years.

The hours spent at the historical society provide a mutual benefit to both the society and the students who are enrolled in college-level museum studies and art history, among other subjects.

The student volunteer and intern program was initiated by Ripon Historical Society board member and Ripon College Associate Professor Travis Nygard, who leads classes, workshops and student volunteering that are integral to the success of this collaboration and partnership.

"It has been wonderful to see this relationship grow over the last several years," Nygard said. "Students love learning about the community, and they think that it is wonderful to be able to hold and scrutinize artifacts, research in the archives and write for the historical society."

During the recent 2022 fall semester, the Ripon Historical Society welcomed Ripon College senior Dawsyn Friedauer, as an intern. Friedauer is originally from Omro, WI and will graduate with a major in English and minors in women's and gender studies, as well as museum studies.

Friedauer worked within the society's toy collection at the Pickard House Museum headquarters at 508 Watson St. cataloging and analyzing gender role models and our current living. He identified child role playing, toy functionality, written messaging, photo illustrations and color palette use for consumer marketing over past decades. Friedauer also accessioned the toys for Ripon Historical Society's professional



MANY OF THE toys in the Ripon Historical Society's collection were once played with by these children from the Zobel family, among others.

submitted photo

archives. Accessioning is a modern museum practice of documenting and numbering items in the collection of a museum, which are then assigned storage locations so as to be easily accessible for future exhibits and research requests.

This process is a natural extension of Friedauer's museum studies skills and continual hands-on learning experience.

Ripon Historical Society Vice President and Curator Pat Grahn supervised Friedauer.

"I am confident that Dawsyn learned a lot about how boys and girls were depicted and interacted as children in our past American society," she said. "Early toys reflected what were then 'traditional male and female roles.' Girls played with miniature kitchens, cleaning products and other domestic-related items because motherhood and housework were a societal expectation for females. Boys played with toy guns, automobiles and airplanes, and mechanical engineering types of products as many of their potential career paths included the possibility of entering the military, manufacturing and

building or even business plus travel roles. Presently, it has become more common to allow children to choose what they want to play with, rather than assigning them toys based on their gender alone."

Many of the toys in the Ripon Historical Society's archives were donated by two lifelong Ripon families—the Kruegers and the Zobels.

Both of these families had two children who never married and continued to live in their family's home as adults.

"When these members of the family passed away, the majority of the contents of their houses were donated to the Ripon Historical Society," Grahn said. "These donations provided two and sometimes three generations of childhood toys from the late Victorian period through the early 1900s."

In addition to the recent internship, Ripon College students working at the historical society have created professional displays and exhibits, written articles for the "Now & Then in Ripon" column for the *Commonwealth Press*, created Facebook posts and revitalized the Ripon Historical Society Cemetery and Architectural Walking Tours.

"While still learning, students are gaining related subject-matter experience outside of their college campus," Ripon Historical Society Administrator Steve Arbaugh said. "In this way, we all collectively benefit from collaborative planning, perspectives and project completion."

The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information follow us at Facebook/riponhistory or www.riponhistory.org.



VINTAGE PARKER BROTHERS and Milton Bradley board games, circa 1920s, were educational and fun role-play games for kids at that time

submitted photo



ROBERT WHITAKER, THIRD from left, of McMahon and Associates briefs the Ripon Area Fire District board on the need for recruitment during last week's meeting. *Ripon Channel screen shot*

PURSUE/Recruitment is a priority *continued from page 1*

isn't restricted? And what is it restricted for?"

Treasurer's report

The board talked about cleaning up some financials from Saul's tenure as chief, which included paying some invoices that were 120 days overdue and charge accounts started around town that it is not aware of and have not been paid.

"We are trying to make vendors whole," Sorensen said. "Invoices that have been six months overdue that we didn't know about, the two restaurants in Ripon, we don't know if there are more outstanding charge accounts in Ripon until somebody approaches us."

Robert Whitaker of McMahon and Associates, who was at the meeting to present the treasurer's and administrative reports, noted that a credit card — which he's still trying to get access to — that now are paid up.

Another issue brought up by Sorensen was that many of the invoices for fire calls that RAFD are sending out are coming back because they don't have correct addresses. Whitaker noted that he and his team are trying to get as many of the invoices electronically and created a generic fire chief email address to accomplish that goal.

Questions also existed about work being done upstairs in the fire house, with the consensus being that it was supposed to be done with donations as they were available but that there were many invoices that came out of the general budget.

Sorensen added that she suspects that about \$20,000 in budgeted items never happened this past year, which included physicals for 36 people, travel and fit testing for masks. She said fit testing for masks has to be done for safety and that the budget line will be extended this year.

According to Whitaker, RAFD had a net fund balance at the end of the year, but the year isn't closed out yet.

Administrative report

Whitaker noted the need for RAFD to focus on recruiting as it's been getting a little challenging to fill all the daytime and nighttime shifts. The RAFD has around 29 members currently

and usually runs at about 35 or 36 members.

He was aware of five people who left RAFD who expressed interest in coming back at least for a limited time to help out.

Two of those — Jon Roy and Mike Mueller — were approved to return after a closed-session meeting granted they meet a few requirements that were set out. Roy would return as an engineer, while Mueller is set to come back as a firefighter.

"Recruiting in a department like this is always a priority because you'll always have people coming and going," Whitaker said. "... I was just talking to some of the guys that work here the other day. They're going to school; they're trying to find full-

time jobs, so they'll be here for six, eight months and all of a sudden they're gone. So you sort of have a revolving door. ... I think that'd be one thing that I would say we should work on in January is to start coming up with a plan."

Whitaker also added that his McMahon and Associates' team had trouble initially finding out a lot about the policies and procedures that existed because a lot of it was on the chief's computer and computers aren't networked together.

"We eventually got the password to the computer," Whitaker said. "I started going through some of the files that were in there to see kind of the policies and procedures you have, just from a basic standpoint. ... Unfortunately, the members didn't have access to those policies. It was basically, 'Well the chief just said,' is what we sort of have found is the culture."

He added that he did find some policies on the former chief's computer and he and his team have started going through some of those now, but believes there's a "definite, concerning lack of policy and procedure that needs to be put in place fairly quickly." Whitaker suggested making the policies and procedures accessible to the members, whether it be digitally or a hard copy, moving forward so that new and current members can stay up to date or consult them.

Whitaker hopes to get those policies in place this month and tie them into the training that is taking place.

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