

**The Negaunee Historical Society
303 East Main Street (P.O. Box 221)
Negaunee, MI 49866 (906-475-4614)
DECEMBER 2018 NEWSLETTER #48**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT, Virginia Paulson



Happy New Year!

As I write this, we have just had a snow fall of 10-12 inches here in Negaunee. With hats, boots and mittens, a warm jacket and good snow tires, we are able to handle the elements.

We had approximately 400 guests at the museum this past year. A group of Tanzanians that were guests of Immanuel Lutheran Church were among our guest list. The display that caught their attention was our display of telephones. They all had smart phones but they had questions about rotary phones. Their country has caught up with technology so rotary phones were something new to them.

This will be my last note as President. At our annual meeting, Art Gischia was elected President. It was a pleasure to serve as President but I am grateful that Art has accepted the position. He has been an asset to the board and brings expertise in many areas. I will still serve as a trustee and volunteer. The museum has been one of my favorite places to volunteer.

I'm looking forward to new displays in the summer season. Remember to visit.

VIRGINIA PAULSON

Our 34th annual meeting was held on December 4, 2018 in the Immanuel Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. Art Gischia, Pat Johnson, Roland Koski and Theresa Rinehart were re-elected to 3-year terms but a major surprise announcement was made by Virginia Paulson. She decided to resign as our President after 15 years of outstanding dedication and leadership. Steve Perucco reluctantly accepted the Vice President position while donna bjork and Roland Koski were reelected as Secretary and Treasurer respectively for 2019. Trustees include Dave Dompierre, Laura Jandron, Paul Jandron, Pat Johnson, Miles Parkkonen, Virginia Paulson, Theresa Rinehart and Jeanne Sandstrom.



***Merry Christmas and A
Blessed New Year***



REMEMBERING “UNCLE JOHN” CHIRI

Excerpts taken from “Mining Journal” articles in 1978 and 1979

“I have to get up and do something.”

“I guess I must have lived right.”



These are two quotes from John Chiri that everyone should consider to living a long and healthy life. Known as “Uncle John”, this legendary gardener and bartender was born in Italy on November 21, 1883 and immigrated to Negaunee in 1902. He resided in the Patch Location (east of Division Street) for 78 years. He loved working in his three gardens while still working a 40-hour week as a policeman, security guard and miner. After retiring in 1964 at the age of 81, “Uncle John” continued working as a bartender for the Knights of Columbus while still working in his gardens until his death on May 17, 1981 at the age of 97. His daily chores began with his gardens that grew almost every vegetable that could be harvested in the Upper Peninsula. That meant being on his hands and knees every morning pulling weeds and probably talking to the growing plants. Then it was off to his daily work schedule besides. “Uncle John” must have left an impression amongst all of his friends and organizations. He was saluted in his last years by the City of Negaunee and the Knights of Columbus even though he was a member of almost every lodge in Negaunee. In 1976, the KC’s told John they were going to honor him by naming their new addition “John Chiri Hall”.

In 1979, the KC’s and the City Council honored “Uncle John” on his 95th birthday with a huge celebration. It was going to be a night to remember, according to Francis Method, a K of C member. “We expect to have one of the biggest parties ever given in the city”, he boasted. John was also honored for his dedication and involvement with several civic activities. Method also said “He had been the most active organizer the KC’s ever had”. “Uncle John” was also honored by the Negaunee City Council when council members supported a move to name the City Park on the corner of Iron and Silver Streets after him. A resolution honoring John was also presented by City Manager Ronald Cardone at the birthday party.

Chiri, who was the oldest living KC Grand Knight at that time, said he couldn’t be idle for very long. **“I have to get up and do something”**. Chiri mentioned that except for his knees that he always felt good. How does he do it? Chuckling, he said **“I guess I must have lived right”**.

GIFTS, DONATIONS AND TIME

Brian Ostwald – donation

Teddy Palomaki – donation

Betty Lukkarinen – donation

Dr. Rodney Bessolo – monetary gift

Jeanne Sandstrom – donation in memory of Suzanne Morris

Dale Rogers – donation in memory of his parents 60th Wedding Anniversary

Julie Rogers Johnson – donation in memory of her parents 60th Wedding Anniversary

Don Palomaki – antique cameras, tape player, saw blades, tools and many other items

Mark Trehwella – loading up our computer with several hundred pictures of Negaunee history, donated his NHS letter jacket, and making a cash donation



NEGAUNEE SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS OPENED 1N 1915



In 1913, the Negaunee School Board used good judgment and foresight to see the necessity for a school playground. They took steps to procure the present site shown here (circa 1952). After the property was obtained, about \$2,000.00 was

expended in filling in and bringing the swampy land up to grade. In 1914, the fill dirt was allowed to settle and a six-foot heavy woven fence was placed around the property enclosing about 5 ½ acres.

In the spring of 1915, the apparatus was purchased and installed. This property included a football field, 2 ball diamonds, basketball and volleyball courts, 4 tennis courts, and a quarter-mile cinder running track. Swings, teeter-totters, slides, monkey bars and other items were included for the children. The playground was officially open to the public on June 15, 1915. The hours from 1pm-8pm six days a week (closed on Sunday) were thought to be the most convenient. The morning hours would be left as home time allowing the children to be of much help as possible to their parents in one way or another.

Since the start of football in 1894, the high school team had been playing their football games at Union Park (north of Suicide Hill). However, their first home game at the playgrounds was held on Saturday, October 4, 1917 against Hancock. This date was the only story mentioned in the "Negaunee Iron Herald". I had to research the late Tom Pellow's book "Negaunee Athletics 1894-1995" to find the final score. (Maybe, it was because Hancock won the game 40-0.)

ST. PAUL'S BASKETBALL TEAM 60-YEARS AGO

Al Spike, Ed Brisson, Paul Maino, Doug DuShane, John Campaign, Bill Maki, Joe Maino, Dave Bertucci, Dave Jandron, Angelo Bosio, Dave LaMere, Joe McCormick, Mike Sharland, Coach Dick Pellow



Neg. St. Paul Emeralds 1958-59

DAUGHTER AND FATHER 1985 INTERVIEW

***“Try out, whether it’s for the class play, cheerleading or basketball.
Get involved, try everything. Don’t be afraid to participate.”***

Donald Price

(Thank you to Jana (Price) Nicholls for allowing me to use excerpts from her biography)



The above quotation comes from a former member of the Miner basketball team who participated in the first game played at the Memorial Gymnasium in November 1951, as a Negaunee school bus driver and also the girls’ basketball coach. Well known by everyone as “Booner”, Donald Price gave an interview to his daughter, Jana, for her school project back in 1985. It was very interesting to read and I’ll try to highlight her three-page report from 30 years ago.

Don lived at 303 E. Main Street which was occupied and owned by the American Legion (and where our museum is now located). He lived in a small apartment with a big kitchen, one medium-sized bedroom and one very small bedroom. His parents were the caretakers at the Club and they had five roomers who were mostly bachelors. Don’s father was a janitor at the Central Grade School from the day it opened in 1937 until his retirement 28 years later. When Don’s mother was ill, he was taken to the school with his dad. Don played basketball for 4 to 5 hours a day while his dad was working.

When Don was in the 1st grade in 1940, he used to bring a spoon from home and the teacher would dip it in a jar to get some cod liver oil and make him swallow it. ***“It tasted so bad but it was like a vitamin and kept me from getting sick. We also had to take an iodine pill once a week. Our dentist was Dr. Roland Sanregret who reported any cavities to my parents. The school nurse was Amanda Williams who checked my eyes and made sure I was healthy”.***

Don recalled that from 1st through 6th grades there was only one male teacher and his name was Mr. Donald MacDonald. He was his favorite teacher because their main conversations involved sports. Some of the lady teachers he remembered included Beatrice Jennings, Miriam Carter, Edith Thomas, Louise Burge, Ethel Niemi, Rettie Ibbotson, and Elsie Tullberg. ***“The teachers in those days were very strict. When you came into the classroom you sat down and didn’t dare do anything out of the ordinary or you would get your knuckles rapped with a ruler. They taught you how to behave and they influenced me by teaching me to respect authority”.***

The lives of children in 1985 were different from when Don was a child. On a Saturday, 20 to 30 boys would get together to play basketball. If there was snow, everyone would just shovel it off. ***“We’d go out at 8:00 in the morning and choose up sides. The teams would play each other. The winners stayed in and the losers sat and watched. We would still be playing at 9:00 at night”.*** (continued on next page)



Don remembers being on the high school basketball team when the first game was played in the Memorial Gymnasium on November 20, 1951 against Ironwood. ***“Back then, people were really interested in basketball. When we played Ishpeming, there would be 3,000 to 3,500 at the game. They would have to put seats under the baskets so all of the people could fit in, but people still would come and line up at noon and wait four to five hours to get in.”***

One final thoughtful bit of advice from Don was ***“The thing with kids these days is they don’t hang around in groups. Most kids these days only have one or two real close friends. Try out, whether it’s for the class play, cheerleading or basketball. Get involved, try everything. Don’t be afraid to participate.”***

True to his word, Jana Price Nicholls sure followed her father’s advice graduating from NHS in 1991 while earning All-U.P. basketball honors during her senior year. Jana graduated from NMU in 1996 and has been working at Northern for the past 22 years, 16 years as the principle secretary in the Department of Earth, Environmental and Geographic Sciences. Jana wasn’t afraid to get involved.



Coach Don Price with the Negaunee 1986-87 girls’ varsity team

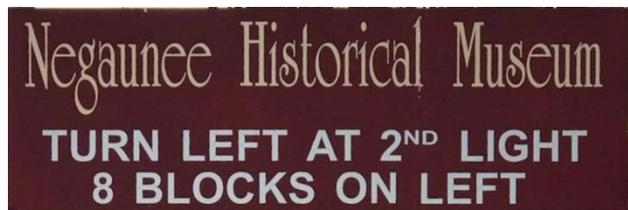
Front – Jackie Borlace, Raquel Lakari, Gina Comensoli, Deanne Sunne

Back – Coach Price, Terri Carlson, Christine Krause, Kaet Collins, Jill Pynnonen, Robin Soine, Beth Maki

Thursday, November 20, 1986 “Mining Journal”

MUSEUM SIGNAGE VISABLE ON US-41

A special thank you to Miles Parkkonen and his son Gary for relocating our museum sign on US-41 (by Cattron’s). They had to clear overgrown vegetation, do some painting and replace rotting timbers when raising the signage for easier viewing from vehicles.



NEXT REGULAR MEETING - MARCH 6, 2019

No meetings are scheduled for January or February for our winter break. The next monthly meeting will be held at 7:00pm on Tuesday, March 6th in the Immanuel Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall. All members and/or guests are welcome and encouraged to attend our meetings which only last about an hour or so. Refreshments are even available.

NEGAUNEE DRUGGIST REMINISCES ON CHANGES IN LAST 25 YEARS

Excerpts from "Negaunee Iron Herald" November 21, 1958

Changes that had marked the drug store business since 1933 were recalled by Harry J, Cronin as he prepared for a 3-day observance of his silver anniversary in the pharmacy field. Cronin is the successor to Perkin's Drug Store, a business which was founded by the late John M. Perkins, an early day resident of the city. It was on November 21, 1933, that the drug store was purchased by Cronin. Prior to that time he had gained experience as a pharmacist in Kalamazoo, Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio.

Mr. Cronin observed that when he opened his store here, penicillin wasn't as yet discovered. At that time there were no antibiotics in combating a variety of infections and reducing considerably effects of common colds. Rapid strides were brought about in these fields, as a result of World War II. Laboratories worked feverishly to cooperate with our government in furnishing new drugs that would combat diseases and infections encountered by the armed forces. Penicillin was the first, and in the intervening years there was the development of many of the so-called 'miracle drugs' in tablet form. Just a few people were in the habit of taking winter tonic because vitamins were comparatively unknown. In 1958, for better health to supplement lack of sunshine and diet deficiencies, there were special vitamins for the children and multi-purpose vitamins for all members of the family. Other changes, Cronin noted, had occurred in packaging and wrapping of drug store items, in greeting card lines, cosmetics, toiletries, photography and numerous other lines which are now handled by drugstores.

Along with other landmarks rapidly vanishing from the American scene was the old soda fountain, once probably the most popular feature of the drug store with the older generation. *"In most cases this was an absolute necessity, as druggists needed more room to properly display merchandise and the other lines they featured, so the fountain was eliminated,"* Cronin said.



In preparation for the anniversary observance that 1958 weekend, the latest type of fluorescent fixtures were installed throughout the interior of the store replacing incandescent lamps, while walls and ceiling were redecorated with the predominating color, being willow green. The Cronin's have three children, two of whom, Patricia and Jim, followed in their father's footsteps, receiving degrees in pharmacy from Ferris. That only left Kathleen, a student at St. Paul's High School, to decide upon her future occupation.

Cronin's Ad
28MAY1937
"Iron Herald"

Girls: — You can't expect a feller to love a girl with pimples, a red nose, colorless lips, dull eyes. Don't wait — your "chance" might come tomorrow. Better take Hoillster's Rocky Mountain Tea at once and be on the safe side. — Cronin's Drug Store.

We never really liked the term "**Old People**", but this makes us feel better about it. And if you aren't one, I bet you know one! I'm passing this on as I did not want to be the only **Old Person** receiving it. Actually, it's not a bad thing to be called an **Old Person** as you will see.

OLD PEOPLE PRIDE



***Old People** are easy to spot at sporting events during the playing of the National Anthem. **Old People** remove their caps and stand at attention and sing without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them.*

***Old People** remember World War II, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Normandy and Hitler. **Old people** remember the Atomic Age, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Jet Age and the Moon Landing. They remember the 50 plus Peace-keeping missions since 1945 not to mention Vietnam.*

*If you bump into an **Old Person** on the sidewalk he will apologize. If you pass an **Old Person** on the street he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. **Old People** trust strangers and are courtly to women. **Old People** hold the door for the next person and always, when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection.*

***Old People** get embarrassed if someone curses in front of women and children and they don't like any filth or dirty language on TV or in movies. **Old People** have moral courage and personal integrity. They seldom brag unless it's about their children or grandchildren. It's **Old People** who remove their hats while eating in a restaurant in respect of the ladies and guests.*

*It's the **Old People** who know our great country is protected, not by politicians, but by the young men and women in the military serving their country. This country needs **Old People** with their work ethic, sense of responsibility, pride in their country and decent values. We need them now more than ever. We were taught to respect our elders. It's just getting harder to find them.*



Thank God for Old People



Visit our Website --- www.negauneehistory.org

IN MEMORY OF OUR DEPARTED 2018 MEMBERS

(Deaths reported to the Society since our December 2017 newsletter)



Robert Sutherland – December 15, 2017

Rachel Hirvonen – December 15, 2017

Ellen Vivian – April 12

Nancy Decaire – April 17

Eleanor Wangberg – June 8

Linda Perucco - June 22

Martin Olgren – August 3

Lorna Hiller – September 6

Keith Wangberg – September 22

Phil Langlois – September 25

Judy Dobi – November 12



DID WE FORGET TO MENTION YOUR NAME?

There have been so many items being brought to the museum, especially after it was closed on Labor Day. Some items are not being logged in our receipt book. Some volunteers have been very helpful at times but might not be recognized for their thoughtfulness. I have tried to collect all the data so those persons can be acknowledged accordingly. Please accept my apologies for any donations or deeds not mentioned in our newsletter. Feel free to inform me of any omissions.



2019 MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE

Our active membership is now at 308. Take time to renew your membership now and ask a friend to join and support the Historical Society. The following types of memberships are available and can be mailed to Negaunee Historical Society, P.O. Box 221, Negaunee, MI 49866-0221. Thank you.....

Lifetime Individual - \$100.00

2019 Individual - \$10.00

2019 Student - \$5.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

City and Zip: _____

Note: If you want your newsletter via e-mail please indicate _____