

what's new at the cummins-phipps-grill house

THIS OLD HOUSE

There's lots of life in this old house! No, we didn't have Bob Villa and a Hollywood crew arrive with hammers and cameras. Under the quiet guidance of the Historical Society's Cummins-Phipps-Grill House Task Force and generous donations from Joe and Carole Stoenner, the Eden Prairie Foundation and many others, the house has undergone a much needed refurbishment and restoration over the past two years. The result - Eden Prairie now has a beautiful and useful piece of History that can be used and enjoyed by our community.

Some of the many projects that have been completed include: the remodel of the bathroom, now handicapped accessible; bringing clean city water to the house; upgrading the electrical systems to allow for more lighting and appliances; and repairing and painting the walls in the kitchen, to name just a few. The most recent completed project is the refurbishment of the second floor Hired Man's Room, above the kitchen. The room has adequate lighting, rather than just light bulbs dangliing from the ceiling, insulation for energy efficiency and those old walls now sport a fresh coat of paint. The old homestead of JR Cummins, one of Minnesota's first pioneers in horticulture and experimental apple farming, looks loved and cared for!

Mr. Cummins' pioneer spirit would probably have wanted his old house to continue be a working and useful part of the community. Now, with its new swagger, it certainly will be. With all these improvements and conveniences, the house is almost ready to show off and perhaps even host your next get-together. The Historical Society Board has been hard at work formulating a plan for occasional event rental. Yes, you could rent a home listed on the National Register of Historic Places for your next special event! The house would be perfect for a bridal or baby shower, retirement party, book club or Red Hat Club meeting. Or just for fun, consider a catered dinner, murder mystery party or wine & cheese tasting. Is anyone in your family about to celebrate a "milestone" birthday or anniversary? Businesses too would find the house a unique place for an off-site meeting, client reception or holiday party. Rates will be reasonable and as a Historical Society member, you are hearing about it first, so dates are available. Proceeds will benefit the house. For more information on renting the house email cumminshse@edenprairiehistory.org or call Valerie at 952.937.0423.



CUMMINS-PHIPPS-GRILL HOUSE GARDEN PARTY

You can see, first hand, the house's fresh new look at the Cummins-Phipps-Grill House Garden Party on May 6 from 1:00-3:00! It's free and open to all; no reservations necessary. There will be lots to do: Carrie Marshall of Marshall's Farm Market will speak about the importance and ease of eating local (both produce and meats) and farming with a conscience; Tracy Hope of Retro-Chicks will be selling her antiques and vintage home and garden treasures; and the Smith-Douglas-More Dunn Brothers will be selling their wonderful coffee and delicious treats to enjoy while you learn, browse and shop. Come join us, we're going to have a great afternoon!

CPG House Task Force and Board Member Valerie Ross

With the responsibility to protect its past, the Society's mission is to: gather, preserve and protect Eden Prairie's historic artifacts and memorabilia; share the stories of its people and places with audiences of all ages; and foster an understanding and appreciation for historic preservation.

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The Prairie View

EDEN PRAIRIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SPRING & SUMMER 2012

please join us

ANNUAL MEETING: APRIL 26

Members and guests are cordially invited to the
Eden Prairie Historical Society's Annual Meeting
April 26 at the Cummins-Phipps-Grill House
13600 Pioneer Trail, Eden Prairie
6:00 social - 6:30 Annual Meeting



Meeting Agenda

Message from the President
Elections of Board Members
Keynote Speaker Sever Peterson

Sever Peterson, long time historical society friend and supporter, will be taking the podium to talk informally about *his* early farming days in Eden Prairie. He will reminisce about some of the local, long-gone farmers that he worked for and hopes that some will come to the meeting to share in the conversation.

SEVER'S EARLY FARMING DAYS IN EDEN PRAIRIE

Mark your calendar now for what is sure to be a fun and informative keynote speaker address.



... a lad with his dad. This is Sever II holding his son Sever III, our featured guest

farming is all in the family

SEVER PETERSON x THREE

The Peterson family has lived in Eden Prairie for generations. Their story is not unlike many an early Eden Prairie pioneer. Severin Peterson left Sweden for America in 1886. He worked his way west eventually settling in Minneapolis where he owned a small confectionery store. In 1896 Severin married Inga Maria Harling, also from Sweden, and they lived above the store. When the second set of twins was due to arrive in 1899 they knew it was time for a change. From shop owner to farmer; from urban Minneapolis to rural Eden Prairie. They bought 40 acres of land on Spring Road, west of Flying Cloud Airport and later bought an addition 49 acres down on the Minnesota River. The Peterson farm is still in the family, owned and worked by grandson, Sever III (our guest), and his children.

Sever III's father, Sever II, was born in Eden Prairie in 1904 and carried on the farming tradition. When Highway 169 was built in the early 1930's Sever II and his brother Ernest built their first farmstand ... which became Lions Tap! By the time Sever III and his siblings were teenagers they were planting, hoeing and harvesting cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes, muskmelons, squash, pumpkins and the crop the Peterson family is still famous for - corn. They sold most of the produce at the Minneapolis Farmers Market. After school and on weekends the younger siblings sold produce at the farmstand.

The rest, as they say, is history. Today Sever's produce is sold far and wide and we all still savor that glorious sweet corn from the gazebos with the green and yellow tops ...
SEVER'S FARM MARKETS.

Sever III, center, with his wife and the fourth Peterson generation of farmers.



*from a Tonka Times article
by Eden Prairie historian Marie Wittenberg, edited*

growing up in our new ep home

A PEEK INTO THE PAST

When moving from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie in 1929 we discovered that the majority of Eden Prairie homes did not yet have electricity which meant no indoor plumbing, running water or refrigeration in our new abode. We had to read by kerosene lamp, buy ice for the icebox, cook on a kerosene stove and heat the house with coal ... and there was an outhouse in the back yard. Each morning we pumped a pail of water, brought it in the house, set it on the counter and drank from the common dipper.

Before electrification in 1938, there were many different people providing specialized services for the family. There was the ice man we advised with a window card as to how many pounds of ice to bring in. The milk man left bottles of milk outside our basement door which we had to bring in promptly whether it was freezing or sweltering outside. Then there was the bread man who brought our family's favorite, raisin bread.

The laundry man picked up our dirty clothes and returned the "wet wash." The Watkins man brought cooking necessities such as vanilla, lemon extract, baking powder and baking soda, plus a wonderful orange drink concentrate. The Raleigh man had grooming items for sale including soaps, lipstick and rouge, face powder and face cream. The coal man filled the coal bin four times a year and an oil man filled the kerosene tank by a hose through the basement doorway. The library lady parked her bookmobile at the end of our driveway and the paperboy usually hit a snow bank with the day's edition.

Our connection with the community was a wall-mounted telephone, a crank sending the phone number out onto the party line. We also had a battery operated tube radio for the news and Sunday night specials like Bob Hope, Jack Benny and Bing Crosby. To not get bored, our family played a lot of games together like dominos, checkers, chess, crokinole and various card games. My dad played violin accompanied by my mother on the piano and we three kids could fall asleep listening to their sweet music.

Board Member Reuel Long

the history center & museum asks

WHAT IS IT?

We get so many wonderful things donated to the History Museum, but at times, we don't exactly know what a certain tool or item was used for. This beautifully built wooden table-type piece, a donation from Sue and Ross Yeschek, stands 28" high at the back, where the top is 19" wide, and then slopes to 24" high where it narrows to a 6" opening. At that point, whatever this was used for, would slide off into perhaps a sack, basket or small barrel. The stick handle moves freely both up and down and back and forth over the surface of the table. It's also squared, so it meets the table flat surface to flat surface - great for crushing something?

What is it?

Museum Curator and Board Member Kim Carlander



not a bad list ...

CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY

- Keep only cheerful friends.
- Keep learning: learn more about the computer, crafts, genealogy, bridge, playing an instrument, yoga, whatever. Never let the brain get idle.
- Enjoy the simple things.
- Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh spend lots and lots of time with him or her.
- The tears happen: endure, grieve and move on.
- Surround yourself with what you love and what is beautiful, whether its family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, art, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
- Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
- At every opportunity, tell people you love that you love them.

retiring from the presidency but not the historical society

MEMORIES AND HIGHLIGHTS



On April 26th, 2012 at the Historical Society Annual meeting, I will step down as a board member and president. This was a difficult decision for me, as I have loved serving on the Board for the last 24 years.

It began in 1988 as I reached out to the local Historical Society in search of information about our newly-purchased old farm house. I soon had the privilege

of meeting Eden Prairie's finest "long time" residents. People such as Earl More, Ralph Nesbitt, Eva Hirt, Helen Anderson, Marie Wittenberg, Sever Peterson and so many other descendants of those that settled here in the 1860's, were already deeply involved in the effort to preserve and protect Eden Prairie's history. I was asked to join the Board and within a year became vice-president. In 2004 I had the honor of becoming the president.

Each EPHS member has his or her own passions. I've had several over the years! I helped initiate the Historic Plaque Program, an ongoing joint venture with the Heritage Preservation Commission, to recognize our local Historic sites. I created Eden Prairie's historic afghan, met with an artist to design cards recognizing our city-owned historic sites, recruited volunteers to help with Sunbonnet Day and other civic events, and helped to grow the membership of our Board. Concerned that so many of our original farm houses were being demolished in the line of construction, I assembled a record of data and photographs that documented their proud existence.

But the efforts that I am most proud of are helping to save and restore our historic community-owned properties. The "Save the Gym" campaign fortuitously turned into a successful "Restore the Gym" effort. Today the historic 1924 gym, the oldest community space in Eden Prairie, is a treasured community asset that once again reverberates with the sounds of children. The award-winning Smith-

Douglas-More home (Dunn Brothers) has become a standard in the preservation world as a stellar example of how to preserve and reuse with minimal impact to tax payers. The restored Riley-Jacques Barn is an amazing amenity that hosts many city-sponsored events as well as being available for rental opportunities. The Dorenkemper log cabin was moved from the Settler's Ridge neighborhood and restored to its original 1860's condition by a generous developer. Finally, the Historical Society in partnership with the City is finally finishing the thirty-year restoration process on the Cummins-Phipps-Grill house, an effort that will ensure the property remains a valued and treasured relic from our river-town/farming past.

I will be forever grateful to the Board and members as well as the community that over the years have given of their time and energy toward the goal of saving these properties. Although we never had a formal downtown we certainly had a rich and meaningful history lived through the lives and stories of the residents who preceded us and remembered through buildings, artifacts and data that has been painstakingly preserved through the years, and continues to be, thanks to the work of our current Eden Prairie Historical Society. The current Board is an amazing group of hard-working, history-loving, and passionate members. I feel so confident that this is the right time to step aside and allow others to pursue their interests and through their strengths and passion give direction for the next phase of the Society.

I do not plan to go away! I hope to continue to be available for specific Historical Society functions, to stay connected with the preservation efforts that are ongoing in Eden Prairie and to be a resource to the Society and community-at-large. And last but certainly not least, I am so grateful to all of the friends I have made over the years by being involved in such a wonderful organization. I will always feel a special gratitude to Helen Holden Anderson, Marie Wittenberg and dear Lorraine Sohm.

Sincerely, Kathie Case



Mark your calendar now: May 6, 1:00-3:00
Cummins-Phipps-Grill House Garden Party

see back page for details