

# Mineral Point HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

## Now It's On to Phase 2!

On a soft summer evening at the Gundry House, with a light breeze stirring the flowers in the formal gardens, the fundraising campaign to finish the restoration of Orchard Lawn moved from a quiet phase to a much wider appeal to the entire Mineral Point community.

The June 30th "midpoint celebration" welcomed a crowd of 75 supporters, scattered amiably on the lawn. MPHS Vice President and Fundraising Chairman **Jim Stroschein** announced that \$105,000 has been raised or pledged, to be added to a \$155,000 challenge grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation, for a total of \$260,000 toward the final goal of \$310,000. "We are so thankful the community has shown its enthusiasm for our project, and we're confident we'll raise the rest of the funding by our November deadline."

Phase 2 work will complete the restoration of the 1868 home of merchant Joseph Gundry and his family, providing needed repairs in the foyer, the double-parlor, the dining room and the upstairs bedrooms and hallway. The work will ensure that the home's public rooms are finished with top-quality materials and skillfulness. The project will also implement plans drafted by nationally-renowned landscape architect **Dennis Buettner**, to beautify the

nine original acres that still surround Orchard Lawn. **Tom Jeffris**, who heads the generous family foundation, said, "Orchard Lawn is right on target — the kind of place I am proud to support — because it's not like other home museums." He explained, "It's being restored to be used by the community every day, with meetings, weddings, theatre and concerts, and not just roped off with 'Don't Touch!' signs."

Gundry descendant **Joan Young** thrilled the audience with a poignant recollection of her childhood visits to the home, saying, "I look forward to coming here again, after the dust has cleared, and seeing the house just as it was when I was a little girl."

Announcing the names of many donors as well as the total amount raised for restoration, Stroschein said, "Our work is half done. In the past six years, Phase 1 work has taken a Civil War Era relic and made it straight-shouldered and colorful once again; the work in Phase 2 will make Mineral Point proud." "We're especially grateful to the Jeffris Foundation and are happy Tom Jeffris could join us today," Stroschein

continued. He noted that there have been 50 to 60 individual contributions so far. "That proves," he said, "that in addition to the larger gifts, there is widespread support for our project among the townspeople."

**The Jeffris Foundation** of Janesville is dedicated to Wisconsin's cultural history and provides money for preservation of regionally and nationally important historic buildings and decorative arts projects. The Foundation grants about \$1 million annually. Other donors to Phase 2 include **Fleetguard/ Nelson Muffler Foundation** and **Farmers Savings Bank**.

Orchard Lawn is owned by the membership of the Mineral Point Historical Society, and receives no state funding, depending on volunteer and monetary contributions from supporters throughout the area. On this pleasant evening, members could look forward to days — not far away — when the Gundry House will appear as it did in 1905. It will boast of architectural and historical authenticity, and it will truly welcome its visitors as "the Living Room of Mineral Point," but it will also symbolize community spirit and generosity. 1





## “Signs of the Times” is Fall Exhibit

With dusty items from the cellar, attic and garage, a new Orchard Lawn exhibit is coming together, and the entire community is helping to make it exciting.

“Signs of the Times” will debut in September, about the time of Cornish Fest. The show will feature old signboards and sculpted advertising pieces, such as those seen on local breweries, doctor’s offices and retail shops and stores. Board members **Mark Speltz** and **Lucille May**, along with one of our most steadfast and talented volunteers, **Scott Dietrich**, will mount the exhibit, and have asked the public to contribute old signs that may be stored away in their homes and businesses.

“The show is pure Mineral Point history,” says Mark Speltz. “We want to tell stories of local interest by using the signs. In the old photos of the town, signs are visible everywhere, announcing the name of the proprietor of a business place, and the goods or services offered.”

The Gundry House already has in storage signs large and small, including a Gundry and Gray board and a First National Bank sign from before the bank’s collapse. We also have a sign from Max Ferneke’s studio and an old sign from Pendarvis, along with odd pieces like the old red boot that advertised a footwear store. Lucille May says, “We’re sure there are more signs out there, with interesting stories that connect them to the people who ran local businesses, so please contact us if you can loan one or more of your signs to the exhibit.” Lucille’s phone is 987-3081; Mark’s number is 987-1516 or you can email mark.speltz@americangirl.com. 1

## Meet our New Director

The MPHS has a new Director, to oversee operations at Orchard Lawn, help develop new programs and expand the volunteer and membership rosters.

**Therese (Machotka) Hess** is a Mineral Point native who, coincidentally, lived on Madison Street within a block of the Gundry House until her family moved to Highland when she was in the 7th Grade. She remembers the band concerts at Orchard Lawn in the late 1940s, and fondly recalls a still-standing oak tree in “Gundry Field” where she would sit on a sturdy limb and read comic books.

After earning a Bachelor’s degree at UW-Madison, Therese moved to the east coast and spent the next forty years building a personal life with husband Karl Hess and a professional life as writer/editor/program developer for a number of business and non-profit organizations in Washington D.C. and West Virginia. In January, she retired as Executive Director of a three-county adult literacy program, and with her husband deceased and her grown children in scattered locations, Therese returned “home” to Wisconsin. Her bright spirit, lively sense of humor, and a host of professional skills will make her welcome as the guiding force at Orchard Lawn. 1



## Welcome Lucille

The Board of Directors is pleased to welcome its newest member, **Lucille May**. A native Mineral Pointer and the middle of nine Regan children, Lucille was raised in the Greysville area. Following high school, she was the secretary/bookkeeper for the Iowa County Co-op when it was located in what is now the Foundry Books building.

Lucille remembers going to dances at “the Lake” when she was dating her future husband, the late Paul May, and says Eddie Howard was one of their favorites. After their marriage, she had a full time job as a farm wife and mother of seven. Lucille says that all of her children were active in “everything” and she spent a lot of time driving them back and forth to events in town. “My record was seven trips in one day”, she says.

When her youngest was in sixth grade, she went to work for Dr. Gibbons; in 1982 she obtained a real estate license and has been an active Realtor since.

Lucille says she has always had an interest in history, which was encouraged by her mother. She’s proud of Mineral Point and its history and confident of its future. Welcome to the Board, Lucille! 1



There was a day when celebrities drove to Mineral Point to enjoy pasties and saffron cakes at the tiny cafe at Pendarvis House. The inspiration... and all the perspiration... came from Robert Neal and Edgar Hllum. Their story in pictures in the delightful “On the Shake Rag,” a project of the Memorial Pendarvis Trust. \$9.95 at Pendarvis and elsewhere. 1





ca: 1905



2005

# High Street on History

by Frank Beaman

Have you noticed that business places along High Street are busily “un-modernizing?” Are these people totally out of touch with the times?

Well, not exactly. In Mineral Point, history makes good sense! There’s been a flurry of construction from Mitchell’s Hardware, at the top of the hill, all the way down to the buildings that many say started the “back-in-history” trend: the Commerce Street complex lovingly restored by Bruce Howdle, Rolland Sardeson, Dr. Tim Correll and a handful of other brave souls.

The Mitchell family corporation owns three buildings, and brothers **Mike, Mark, Bill** and **Jon** have been working on the 1868 Perry Building, with father **Bob** watching approvingly. They think stepping back in time is “good business,” because “Mineral Point needs historic unity in its downtown streets.”

A few steps down the hill, **John Feters** and **Coleman** point proudly to their restoration of the front of the building that houses the Bargain Nook. **Chuck Pound** and **Jill Engels** at Sirius Sunlight Glass Studio, and **Tom** and **Ann Cabezas** at the Spotted Dog Gallery, have been busy with “hands-on patch-and-paint work.”

Across the street at 145 High Street, **David** and **Ruth Anne Steuber** and builder **Tim Marr** are using old photographs to recreate the front of an old Firehouse to house their home and garden center. I found Marr working in the sturdy basement of 114 High Street, a wide-fronted building he bought in partnership with **Jim Kackley** last year. So far he’s opened up the building, and unveiled the “prism glass” in the front windows. The space will soon house **Jim** and **Peg Turkington’s** home furnishings store. Building owners along the town’s main shopping and gallery street obviously feel that it’s a good idea to invest time and money to present a historic face to the public. There are many names I could add to this account, as reflected in the activity we see every day on High Street and other locations in Mineral Point. **Jean Bohlin** summed it up well, “My daughter Leslie gutted the gallery (at 22 High), and then rebuilt it, simply because history is the ambience of this wonderful town we live in.” 1

## What is a Symphonista Rex?

No, it’s not a singing dinosaur.

It’s the beautiful wind-up phonograph on a table in the library at Orchard Lawn.

Our Symphonista Rex was a found object at an estate sale in suburban St. Paul in the early 1990s. Not so beautiful at that time, its wooden horn was coming apart at the seams, the motor had seized up and some of the trim had fallen off. It was restored to playing condition by Audio Antiques of Hortonville, WI and was donated to the Mineral Point Historical Society by member David Springer, M.D. This particular “Rex” was built in Saxony, in Germany, in the 1920s, but in style and sound it is similar to phonographs made in the U.S. by the Columbia Talking Machine Co. a decade or two earlier. In the early 1900s recorded music was a luxury reserved for the well-to-do; a machine like Rex cost about \$80 in 1907 (\$600 in today’s dollars).

The next time you visit The Gundry House, step into the Library, wind up the old phonograph and enjoy the music. Dr. Springer, a member of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Michigan Antique Phonograph Society, has provided clear instructions for its use and has volunteered to answer questions about this machine and others like it. 1



# Historic Preservation Commission

by Frank Beaman

Preserving our historic architecture is truly our responsibility, but also our privilege. Our old buildings are the look and feel of Mineral Point, symbols of the way we live, with roots as deep as the lead mines, and dreams as high as High Street.

The preservation of our old buildings makes good sense from an economic as well as cultural viewpoint. Just think about it. Restoration simply requires less time and money than starting construction from scratch, and changes the emphasis from materials to labor — that can mean more local jobs.

Property values go up when wise investors buy an older structure at a reasonable price and add imagination and “sweat equity” as well as their rehabilitation dollars. Rehabbers may also be entitled to a tax credit. But the real rewards of restoration are the character of the structure and the quality of its materials and craftsmanship. Today’s building materials are designed to last 15 years. Then, the suppliers tell us, it’s time to replace and discard the original. But our sturdy old rock homes are standing as they did 150 years ago — ten times as long as the predicted life span of “modern materials!” Apartments and business places in historic buildings can generate higher rents, and restored homes sell at an “historic premium.” And the entire community benefits from preservation, because visitors and new residents are attracted by an historic setting, and they become consumers of local commerce. Neighborhoods are dramatically improved by rehabilitation. Property

*The importance of Mineral Point's heritage is reflected in its historic architecture. Architecture is a part of our heritage that reveals the character of the folks who came here before us — their dreams for their families, homes and community. And it is part of our heritage that can slip away from us, if we do not actively promote the preservation of one of the finest stocks of early-to-mid nineteenth century architecture in all of the midwest. We are custodians and are responsible for making certain that we pass along our heritage in even better condition than it was passed to us.*

*Bert Bohlin in 1993,  
"A Heritage So Rich"*

tax revenues increase too, when vacant or underutilized buildings are returned to the tax rolls. And, of course, tourism becomes a significant factor in future community growth.

The legal power to protect Mineral Point’s architectural legacy lies with the city government, the Historic Preservation Ordinance of 1972, and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), created in 1987 to enforce the ordinance. “Not an easy task,” said **Tim Freeman**, Chairman of the commission. “We live in a time of high enthusiasm for personal property rights, and some people view the work of the HPC as an infringement of ownership privilege.” “Basically, we just try to get people to do the right thing,” Freeman said. “In the long run, It

really doesn’t cost more to use good plans, good materials and good workmanship, and doing things right will improve property values.” The “right thing” isn’t the view of the property owner, or even the commission — it’s what is laid out in the city ordinance.

Freeman said the Commission is not antagonistic to property owners, and that the required review of building improvements should be viewed as a partnership designed to foster civic pride in the city’s architectural heritage. “We can also offer suggestions to property owners to save them time and money.

Members of the commission have valuable experience, and can share it with those who are ready to work with us,” he said.

What the ordinance does and does not provide are summarized elsewhere on these pages.

The language of the ordinance has produced some understandable confusion about the Preservation Program, what land and buildings are “landmark structures” or lie within variously designated historic districts. Freeman’s view is that a property owner should simply ask himself, “Does my building have “historical significance”? The next step is to seek advice from the city and the HPC. If the property is a “contributing building” in a local landmark district, contemplated changes must be reviewed with the commission.

The time for launching a cooperative effort between property owner, builder and the preservation commission is the

day you apply for a city building/remodeling permit, required on work that will cost \$300 or more. At that time the city will advise the historic status of the property and will discuss the required Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC. The next step is an appearance (with a fee) before the commission, to review plans for the project. In most cases, if the designs are well-drawn, and in keeping with the historic character of the structure, the commission will approve the project on the spot, or call for further discussions. If there is a stalemate over planned improvements, the City Council has overriding authority, although that step is rarely taken.

"Our prime directive is to preserve the historic fabric of the city," Freeman said. He feels that preservation is not in conflict with a building's function. "We're aware that buildings have to change with the times," he said, "and there's just no sense in spending a great deal of money for a building that can't be used when the work is done. So I'm a big fan of adaptive re-use, to alter buildings for new uses without spoiling their historic character," he said, pointing to many successful examples within the community.

Freeman chuckled at one of the ironies the HPC faces: "A lot of people don't get too excited about raising property values, because they enjoy life in Mineral Point and don't plan to ever sell their house." 1

### Historical Preservation Commission of Mineral Point

**Tim Freeman, Chairman**  
608.987.1570  
**Nancy Graber**  
**Randy Fleming**  
**Donna Toay**  
**Ulrich Sielaff**  
**Dick Poad**  
**Dave Menoff**

The Commission meets at 7 p.m. on the 3rd Thursday of the month, but has held only three meetings so far this year, because of a scarcity of applications. In 2004, nine meetings were held, most of them with three or four items on the commission's agenda.

# The Historic Preservation Program

## Does:

- Offer restoration and rehabilitation information to interested individuals, including tax credits for approved work
- Assist in the preservation of important buildings in the community
- Promote local history and tourism to boost the local economy
- Foster civic pride
- Improve property values
- Require HPC review of proposed exterior alterations, new construction and demolition within the boundaries of the city

## Does Not:

- Prevent property owners from performing ordinary maintenance tasks, or painting their buildings in the color of their choice
- Affect interior changes in a building
- Usurp individual property rights
- Discourage contemporary styles of architecture
- Force businesses to change existing signage
- Demand improvements or restoration of any building

## Here's what you can do as a homeowner who cares about our architectural legacy...

- Get advice before doing anything to change the exterior of the home — "improvements" have robbed many homes of their history
- Contact the HPC which should be able to put you in touch with experienced people to help with planning, materials, supplies, design and tax credits
- Avoid additions that reduce front or side yard open spaces
- Retain original materials, or shop for something that matches
- Avoid removing or covering architectural features of the house
- Look at your siding. Perhaps removing it will reveal handsome older features
- Use wooden storm doors and windows, or paint the aluminum
- Don't add inappropriate details, like fiberglass awnings
- Hide the machinery, and the antennae
- Don't forget the yard; make it blend with the character of the house



# The Fine Print

## [The Fine Print]

The need for historic preservation was first recognized in 1972, shortly after the entire community of Mineral Point was listed as a District on the National Register of Historic Places. The city ordinance of 1972 was strengthened in 1987, when the Historic Preservation Commission was created, with the declaration, "it is a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical interest or value is a public necessity, and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people."

Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code details the composition and duties of the HPC. As this chapter runs to 13 pages, only three of its sections are summarized here. For the full text of the ordinance, contact Betty Horne, City Clerk/Treasurer.

**28.03(1) Composition.** The Historic Preservation Commission shall consist of seven members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council and shall be a registered architect, an historian qualified in the field of historic preservation, a licensed real estate broker, an alderman, and three citizen members. Each shall have to the highest extent practicable a known interest in historic preservation. Should no one in the community possess the required qualifications, arrangements will be made to secure such expertise on an as needed basis, with such resources identified ahead of time.

### **28.03(3)(b) Regulation of Construction and Alteration.**

Any alteration or modification to structures within the historic district of the City shall first require a certificate of appropriateness from the Commission. This includes any improvements to the exterior of a building as well as out-buildings, fences, walls and "other such visible incidentals" (such as signs)

regardless of the cost of the project. Without such a certificate, a zoning permit shall not be issued and the proposed alteration or modification shall not be permitted.

The Commission is to grant a certificate of appropriateness based on 10 general and 8 specific review criteria.

The general criteria state that reasonable efforts shall be made to use a property for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use; that the distinguishing original qualities or character of a building not be destroyed; that the removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided.

Alterations that have no historical basis and seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged; changes that have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the building and may have acquired significance in their own right, which shall be recognized and respected; distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building shall be treated with sensitivity.

Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible; if replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the previous material in composition, design, color and texture; repair or replacement of missing features should be based on historic, physical or pictorial evidence, rather than conjecture;

Surface cleaning shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible; archaeological resources affected by or adjacent to the project shall be protected and preserved;

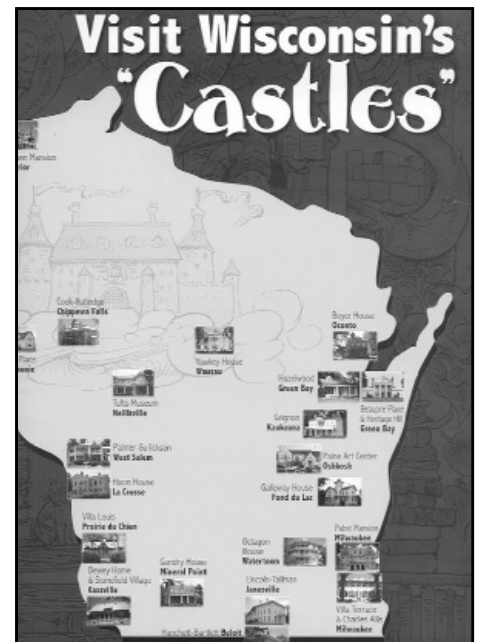
Contemporary designs for alterations or additions shall not be discouraged if they do not destroy significant features and if they are compatible with other aspects of the character of the property and neighborhood; new additions and alterations shall be done in such a way

that they could be removed in the future and the essential form and integrity of the structure would not be impaired.

The specific criteria cover height, proportions of windows and doors, relationship of building masses and spaces, roof shape, landscaping, scale, directional expression, and architectural details.

### **28.06 Maintenance of Landmarks, Landmark Sites and Historic Districts.**

This section requires owners of buildings in an historic district to keep them in good repair and specifically states that this provision is in addition to all other laws requiring improvements to be kept in good repair. 1



Orchard Lawn is one of Wisconsin's "Castles"! Participants in a state wide children's reading program receive free admission to 22 historic houses around the state this summer. Others in the area are Villa Louis in Prairie du Chien, the Hixon House in La Crosse, and the Dewey Home and Stonefield Village in Cassville. We are proud to be identified as one of the Castles. 1

## About the Post Office Photo Last Time

Mark Speltz says the woman's sleeves suggest this was taken in the early 1890s. Both Mark and **Jim Stroschein** point out the electric light fixture just in front of the gas light; since electricity came to Mineral Point in 1891, the picture was taken after that. Mark also found that from 1870 until at least 1908, the post office was on High Street, in the Louisa Miner building, now the home of **Auction Specialists** and **All American Realty**.



# Notes from the President

By Jim Kackley, President, Mineral Point Historical Society

Our June 30th event kicked off the “public” part of the Phase 2 campaign for the restoration of Orchard Lawn, and what a delightful evening it was! The house looked terrific, the gardens were magnificent, the music enchanting, and **Tom Jeffris’** remarks uplifting (how about that for a string of superlatives?).

Seriously, my thanks go out to **Jim Stroschein** and his team for a marvelous event. Most importantly, we’ve now raised \$117,000 toward our \$155,000 goal, to match the gift from the Jeffris Family Foundation. I hope all of you will add your support and take us “over the top.”

In that regard, for several newsletters now I’ve been encouraging you to use Orchard Lawn — inside and outside — for your events or for groups you belong to. I’m pleased to report that we have 31 events scheduled from July to the end of the year — weddings, receptions, rehearsal dinners, dinner parties, reunions, church picnics and a variety of public events. Please keep adding to that number. We really want to be “the Living Room of Mineral Point! It’s another reason why Phase 2 work is so important.

As you’ve seen elsewhere in this newsletter, **Therese Hess** has joined us as Executive Director. She has excellent credentials and is a Mineral Point native, and we know Therese will be an outstanding addition to the MPHS team.

I’d also like to publicly thank **Jennifer Turkington**, who served as Manager for the last two years. Jennifer organized some wonderful events — especially the weddings — and will now be spending more time with her young family. **Amie Witzman** stepped in as Interim Manager and was very effective as she opened this season’s tours and managed the facility.

Finally, a special thanks to **Tim Marr**, who recently stepped down from the Board after nearly fifteen years of service. A tireless worker, Tim was Chairman of our House Committee and oversaw the care of our marvelous estate. He also played a key role in beginning the restoration process in the late 1990’s. His firm handled the Phase 1 construction and built and donated to the gazebo that graces our garden. Tim, we owe you a great debt of appreciation.

By the way, check out the July 18th Local page of the *State Journal* for a great article about Orchard Lawn.

Come see us often! 1

### 2005 MPHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jim Kackley**, President, Treasurer  
**Jim Stroschein**, Vice President  
**Phyllis Bennett**, Secretary

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#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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## Mineral Point Historical Society Membership Form

January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005

All members receive the newsletter  
and free tours of Orchard Lawn.

#### Please check one:

- Individual (\$15.00)  
 Family (\$25.00)  
 Supporting (\$50.00)  
 Business (\$50.00)  
 Patron (\$100.00)  
*includes print of Orchard lawn*

Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the  
Mineral Point Historical Society  
and return this form to:

Mineral Point Historical Society  
P.O. Box 188  
Mineral Point, WI 53565

## *From the MPHS Photo Collection*

*Does anyone know who these stylish ladies might be? Or the skeptical lad on the running board? Or the workman up on the roof? Any ideas as to where this stately brick home is? Or was? Let us know if you have any solid leads. Wild guesses are also accepted.*



*Mineral Point*  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
Dedicated to Preserving the Unique History of Mineral Point

P.O. Box 188 • 234 Madison Street  
Mineral Point, WI 53565