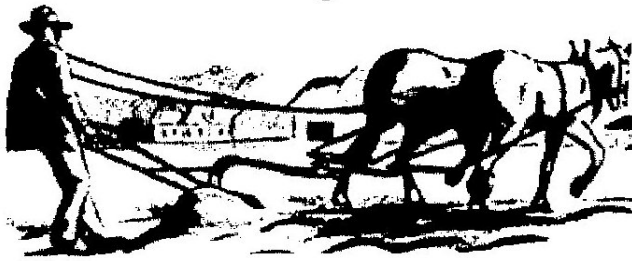


## Wheatland Plowing Match Association



FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR RURAL HERITAGE

Volume 16, No. 4

# Rural Heritage News

Fall 2006

## WPMA Annual Meeting

**7:00 p.m. Thursday  
November 9, 2006  
Naper Settlement**

It is time for the WPMA annual meeting. The meeting will be held in the basement of the Chapel at the Naper Settlement at 523 South Webster Street in Naperville.

If you have not been able to join any of the monthly meetings. This is the meeting to come to. Come hear what WPMA has accomplished this year. Give new ideas for the year 2007. Come and help us continue the tradition of the Wheatland Plowing Match Association. A handful of board members can-not do it alone.

At this time we do not need to elect new officers but if you would like to help out on any of the committees, please let us know, we are always looking for new faces and fresh ideas. Any time and help that you can give WPMA is greatly appreciated.

We have several goals and events in mind for 2007. In order for WPMA to succeed we need many volunteers. If you can't commit a lot of time, we understand. Just come share ideas and what time you can spare.

Please mark your calendars now for November 9<sup>th</sup>. Or this months meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup> both are at the chapel in Naper Settlement.

## 2006 WPMA Board Members!

### WPMA Officers

President, Jerry Feldott: 630-355-1174  
Vice-President, Ray Keller: 630-553-1973  
Treasurer, Donna Sagen: 630-961-1306  
Secretary, Louise Wiesbrook: 630-551-4779  
Correspondence, Karen Allen: 630-904-0667

### Board Members

Patrick Berthold, Tammy Brigel,  
Anita Drendel, Marty Keller

### Committee Chairman

Publicity, Tammy Brigel: 630-554-8114  
Membership, Marty Keller: 630-554-6628  
Historical, Ruth Hageman: 630-556-3435  
Nominating, Earl Meisinger: 630-904-0787  
Site Committee, Wilbert Hageman: 630-556-3435  
Scholarship, Anita Drendel: 630-553-5411  
Special Events, Stu Carstens: 630-393-2679  
By-Laws, Earl Meisinger: 630-904-0787  
Equipment, Ray Keller: 630-553-1973

Newsletter Coordinator, Tammy Brigel: 630-554-8114

## Scholarships Awarded!

The four college scholarship recipients were announced during the Farmer's Pork Chop and Chicken supper this August. Our president Jerry Feldott introduced each student and presented them with a certificate from WPMA.

Congratulations go to *Alyse Bensfield, Megan Garhan, Eric Rehn and Bridget Rowe.*

Two of their essays are in this issue the other two essays will be published in the next issue.

## Scholarship Report

It is customary for the WPMA to award two \$1,000 scholarships each year to high school graduates who demonstrate an interest in agriculture business or a related field. In 2005, we awarded scholarships to three qualified applicants.



This year once again we were able to award four \$1000 scholarships. We received quite a few applications this year from very qualified students. The WPMA scholarship committee had a very difficult time choosing the winners from the applicants. A lot of time and thought was given to each application. Everyone that applied met the qualifications and we would have liked to award a scholarship to all but unfortunately only four could be chosen. We would like to thank all of you for your hard work.

Advanced education is important no matter what career, and we are so happy that our fund-raising efforts provide so many scholarship opportunities. If you have any questions, please call me at 630-553-5411.

Anita Drendel  
Chairman, Scholarship Committee



## Now is the time to update your WPMA Membership!

Membership fees are \$10.00 for individual and \$20.00 for family. Remember to send in your dues. Please check your mailing label to see if you are current on your membership dues. If you do not have an "06" on your label, you will not be receiving the next Rural Heritage News. We value your membership and need your support.

Please make checks payable to: WPMA, P.O. Box 92, Plainfield, IL 60544



## WPMA Web Site

Visit the Wheatland Plowing Match Assoc. web site, [www.wheatlandplowing.org](http://www.wheatlandplowing.org) to check out activities and events, farm history, the history of WPMA and other topics of interest. The site also has links to agricultural sites for your quick reference to other farming topics.



## We are in need of farm history!! Do you have time to tell your farm history?

We are in desperate need of your family histories. Are you writing your family history? Is it ready to be highlighted in the next issue of the Rural Heritage News?

The Wheatland Plowing Match Association welcomes your family history for publication in this newsletter.

Our volunteers strive to publish your written histories without typographical errors, omissions or changes. Sometimes, however, because of limited space, we must edit to fit.

Please attempt to keep your submitted histories at 1000 words or less. If farm family historians can provide a hard copy as well as a copy on a computer disk, it would be greatly appreciated by our editors who must keystroke the information.

We also welcome longer, more detailed histories, letters and updated memories to keep on file for the web site.

Ruth Hageman  
Chairman, Historical Committee  
630-556-3435



## What do you know that we should know?

A listing of upcoming events appears in the newsletter. It needs your input. If you have news events, memorable poems or historical thoughts to share in this newsletter, please forward them to WPMA you can send them to the P.O. Box 92, Plainfield, Il 60544 or contact the newsletter coordinator Tammy Brigel at 630-554-8114.

## WPMA Meeting

Next meeting will be held on October 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the Naper Settlement.

**Alyse Bensfield** is a graduate of Naperville North High School. She will be attending the University of Illinois her major will be animal science she plans to be a Veterinarian.

## Still Standing

To some individuals, the state of Illinois is known as the “prairie state” or “the land of Lincoln.” Lately, we have begun to lose our prairie atmosphere that originally gave us our “prairie state” title as well as forget why we are so proud to be the hometown of one of our American presidents. The prairies and golden cornfields that one usually sees when in Illinois are diminishing by the day. They are being taken over by one million dollar houses and strip malls, particularly here, in DuPage County. It seems as though the people of Illinois do not understand that when each one of those houses is built, a small element of the past is shut away. It is so simple to cover up the past with a layer of brick, but the past will always be there. It is important to know the history of where we live considering that the past shapes who we are today. That is why it is essential that we, the citizens of Illinois, cherish and respect our historical landmarks. Here in DuPage County, there is an old water wheel grist mill that perfectly exemplifies one-hundred and fifty years of history as well as one of Illinois’s greatest moral codes. This historical icon is the Graue Mill.

The Graue Mill, located in Oak Brook, Illinois, was completely built by Frederick Graue in 1852 after five years of hard labor. Made out of clay, white oak timbers, and four one-ton burrstones, the mill was used to grind wheat, corn, and other grains produced by the neighboring farmers. Three generations of the Graue family managed the mill for sixty years until innovative milling techniques rendered the old mill archaic and the mill was soon forgotten. Back during the mill’s prime operating days, it was a chief center for economic life. Today, the mill acts as a bridge into the past giving the people of today, knowledge on previous generations of Illinois.

The Graue Mill profoundly symbolizes two aspects of Illinois. The fruitful land that Illinois once was and the freedom Illinois stood for at

that time and still stands for today. During the era of the Graue Mill, Illinois was rich in acres upon acres of crops. These crops, along with the Graue mill itself, represented the simplistic yet industrialized way of life of the Illinois residents. Back then, you could sincerely tell how hard a man worked by looking at his hands. Life revolved around farming, but that soon changed as the industrial revolution continued and machine began to take over the work of man. This surmount of machine work over man would continue and grow for many years to come. Although the Graue Mill was no match for the latest farming machines and became abandoned, the building eventually became in possession of the DuPage Graue Mill Corporation in 1950. It was this corporation that restored the mill and made clear to all DuPage County residents what else this old building portrays about Illinois. What many people didn’t know about Frederick Graue was that he helped hide runaway slaves on their journey to freedom in Canada. The Graue Mill was indeed a part of the Underground Railroad. The slaves of “passengers” would travel at night and through the use of secret codes, would stop at the houses of abolitionists (like Frederick Graue) where they’d receive food and transportation to their next “stop.” Almost all of DuPage County played a substantial role in this fundamental period in American history. In the 1800s, Glendale Heights, Wheaton, Glen Ellyn, Warrenville, West Chicago, Naperville, and Oak Brook all contained “stations” on the Underground Railroad. It is no wonder why President Lincoln, the man himself who passed the Emancipation Proclamation, was seen visiting the Graue Mill during a trip from Chicago to Springfield. This is something that gives the nickname “The Land of Lincoln” an added meaning. The Graue Mill is a symbol of freedom and brotherhood, something commonly seen here in Illinois.

Today there lays a museum next to the Graue Mill. This museum is meant to provide information to visitors on what the Graue Mill is and the reasons why it is important that it currently still stands. Just recently, the Graue Mill Museum added an exhibit titled, “The Graue Mill and the Road to Freedom.” This exhibit provides the visitor with hands-on material that informs them on the Underground Railroad and the vital part the

Graue Mill and the surrounding DuPage County areas had in supporting the fugitive slaves' escape to freedom. This enlightening museum is open to tours and includes fun activities for children and adults as well as presentations on how agriculture has changed throughout the years. Places like the Graue Mill and Museum are immensely important because they explain how remembering our past is essential to our future. Although DuPage County is growing into a completely different world than it was a few centuries ago, we'll always know that we owe this growth to our roots that lay within the cornfields and wheat fields that once were where houses now rest. Among these houses is the Graue Mill, still standing today – a true key into the past.

**Meghan Garhan** is a graduate of Naperville North High School. She also plans on attending the University of Illinois. Her major is Dietetics and Food Science. Her goal is to be a Dietician.

Millard Fuller once said, "For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other." Over the years there has been one family that the Wheatland Township can unquestionably call their own. Beginning with the first Fry to settle in the Wheatland area to those in the Fry family who are still helping our community today, the Fry family has given an amazing amount of support, money, and enthusiasm to the Wheatland Township community. Since 1854 the Fry family has been instrumental in shaping the Wheatland Township Community that we have come to appreciate today.

Hans Martin Fry immigrated to Philadelphia from the French province, Alsace. He arrived in 1765 and without further ado began his life as a farmer in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Hans Martin was the father of 13 children, 2 from his first marriage and 11 from his second. Hans Martin's third child, Henry Fry, was born in 1773 and took on the life of his father as a hardworking farmer. Henry married Catherine Snader and with her had 12 children. In 1816 Catherine delivered their fourth son, Jacob, who with his wife Catherine Grill moved to Wheatland Township 38 years later.

Jacob and Catherine Fry arrived in Wheatland Township without much money or guidance. Jacob did not have the capital to start a farm as he had planned on, so he began his life in Wheatland Township as a blacksmith. Slowly working his way up and saving his money, Jacob was able to invest in land and start his own farm. In the early 1880's, before developing had begun, the land that Jacob bought had grown into just under 1,000 acres and was arguably one of the most improved farms in the area. Jacob and Catherine were hard workers, but they still had time for the community. The couple helped found The German Lutheran Church of Wheatland Township. They were avid members of the congregation and always found time to participate in events.

Jacob and Catherine had six sons before his death in 1899. Their third son, Zacharias, was a community man who married Sophie Popenhagen, with whom he had a daughter and six sons. The couple lived with the Von Oven Family of Naperville after they moved there in 1907. Zacharias was a devoted Christian who attended the German Congregational Church. For a living he worked in the limestone quarries and built many of the stone buildings that stood on Plainfield road almost a century later. It was said that Zacharias and Sophie held their hands out to many in the community who were having trouble getting by. They would have 20 to 30 people over for dinner every Sunday, and when he died in 1926, they had to move the funeral to Grace Evangelical Church because their church couldn't accommodate the massive amounts of people who attended. He was a man who embraced the community and reached out to those who were less fortunate.

Zacharias' son, John, born in 1890 and married Mabel Rohrbaugh. Mabel served as a teacher at different schools in the area for 25 years. This is not including those years when married women weren't allowed to teach. She was an inspirational educator who loved what she did. John and Mabel worked through the Great Depression together and had five sons of their own. All five sons served in World War II and 4 of 5 of them graduated from college, yet all have been successful in their endeavors.

Their first son, John Eugene Fry was born in 1922 and grew up in Naperville. He went to Naperville Community High School and then North Central College where he was an avid Trombone player. John was selected as a member of the male octet that toured the Western United States and won him many contests and competitions. John was the DuPage County debate champion, as well. When he came back from the war, he finished out school at Cleary Business School. In 1953, he joined his brothers, Jim and Mark in the realty business and formed Fry Brothers Realty. John's first development of many was Hobson Homelands. Through out his career he developed many more subdivisions in the Wheatland Township area, where there are 2,000 families currently living. He has since passed his development business to his three sons, Gordon, Alan, and Larry. John's life wasn't all about his business, however, he did a lot for the community as well. He served as the president of the Naperville Council of Churches, as well as the Northern Illinois/Wisconsin District Board of the Church of the Brethren. He piloted a building campaign for the construction of the new Church of the Brethren of Naperville. John is also an active member of the Lions Club, which serves the community through various service projects. John continues his passion for music by participating as a charter member of The Naperville Men's Glee Club. Gordon Fry and his brothers continue to manage the thriving business their father, John Fry, left them. Fry Properties Incorporated is currently developing homes around the area in White Ash Farm, Stewart Ridge, Wilding Pointe and Sutton Place.

For the past 112 years that the Fry family has been involved in the community, Wheatland Township has gone from farmlands to developed homes, and the future is only looking brighter. The era of the Fry family has definitely left a mark on the community as a whole, whether it was just a dinner on a Sunday night, or a new subdivision; those in the Fry family never ceased to put the need for others in front of themselves. The time of the Fry family has exposed their generosity, will to serve the people and enthusiasm towards the community has surely shaped the community to what it is today.

#### Works Cited

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Fry, J. Alan. "Our Staff." Fry Properties Inc. May 29, 2006

[[http://fryproperties.com/john\\_fry.html#book](http://fryproperties.com/john_fry.html#book)]

Towsley, Genevieve. "The Fry Saga-Six Generations." The Naperville Sun, August 5, 1981

## Pedal Pull at the DuPage County Fair

On Sunday July 30<sup>th</sup> the Wheatland Plowing Match Association sponsored the Pedal Pull at the DuPage County Fair. There were 31 participants in the 3 weight classes. Trophies were awarded to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, & 3<sup>rd</sup>, places in each class.

### 35-45 lbs. Class

1<sup>st</sup> place: Cosmos Barraclough from Carol Stream

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Mark Froelich from Naperville

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Ray Black from Wheaton

### 46-60 lbs. Class

1<sup>st</sup> place: Brian Froelich from Naperville

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Matthew Liberg from West Chicago

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Zachery Fleisher from Carol Stream

### 61-75lbs Class

1<sup>st</sup> place: Mike Liberg from West Chicago

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Cordell Wiesbrook from Oswego

3<sup>rd</sup> place: Dennis Onken from Winfield

Cosmos, Brian, & Matthew all had full pulls of 24 feet. Brian and Matthew had more weight added for a second pull each with Brian pulling farther than Matthew.

Thank you to Bruce Kastle from Naperville for bringing the tractor & sled w/weights, his daughter Monica & friend, Tom Kuhn, Karl, Louise, Heather & Cordell Wiesbrook, Ken & Karen Allen for helping to make the event a great success.

## Elmer Staffeldt

As you know Elmer died on July 24, 2006 at the age of 94. In lieu of flowers, it was asked by Elmer and his family that memorials be directed to the Wheatland Plowing Match Association.

We would like to sincerely thank Elmer's daughters, Debbie and Mary Lou and their families for this very generous donation. Also thank you very much to everyone that made a donation in Elmer's memory.

We will dearly miss seeing Elmer at all our gatherings. He will always be in our hearts and of course all his stories will live on for all the generations to come.

Tammy Brigel

### *Dates to remember!*

#### October

Oct 17<sup>th</sup> - WPMA Monthly meeting

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> - Halloween at Lyon Farm on Rt 71

#### November

Nov 9<sup>th</sup> - WPMA ANNUAL MEETING

**Thank you to all our advertisers, past and present!**

Remember to check out the advertiser's and support our advertisers when you can—they welcome your business and your inquiries.

*To advertise in the next newsletter contact  
Tammy Brigel 630-554-8114*



Here are a few pictures from The Farmers' BBQ supper on 8/5/06. Thank you everyone for bringing your tractors and cars.



*Photos by Jessica Brigel*