
Burlington Historian

Spring 2022

A publication of the Burlington Historical Society
232 N. Perkins Blvd., Burlington, WI 53105
burlingtonhistory.org / burlingtonhistory@gmail.com

Calendar

July 2022
30

“Hidden History Hunt”
1:00 p.m., Wehmhoff Square

October 2022
9

“Stories in Stone”
1:00 p.m., Burlington Cemetery

December 2022

2

“Christmas at Pioneer Cabin”
5:00 p.m., Wehmhoff Square

Burlington Historical Society Board of Directors

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Burlington Lost a “Great One”

It is with great sadness to us that Don Vande Sand passed away peacefully at his home on January 17, 2022. Don had a love of Burlington History and donated his time and talents to the Society for over 30 years. His obituary, written by his brother, is as follows:

Don was born on May 15, 1939 and was preceded in death by his parents, Aloysius John and Henrietta Katherine (Mangold), and his brother Gene and Joan (Markofski, Groleau) Vande Sand. He is survived by brothers and sisters; James (the late Kay Pearce) and Sharon (Potter, Fell) Vande Sand of Elkhorn; Eileen and John Brown of Arlington Heights, IL; Marge and (the late Leonard) Kitkowski of Fond du Lac; John and Jo Ann (Ehlen) of Providence Forge, VA; and Annette Vande Sand of Appleton.



Don's passions in life were his family and his religion. He attended his nieces' and nephews' graduations and sporting events and beamed with pride at each of their academic, sporting, and professional accomplishments. Don himself was a talented high school basketball and baseball player. He continued his love of sports by playing in both Men and Coed softball leagues for many years in the Washington D.C. area. His best sport, however, was bowling which he had to give up when a few years ago his knees screamed “Enough”.

Don was educated at St. Charles Grade School, Burlington High School, and the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater. He was employed by the U.S. General Accounting Office, now the U. S. Government Accountability Office, for 35 years as a senior supervisory auditor. He reviewed government programs for the U.S. Congress and authored dozens of reports that identified waste and abuse and made recommendations to make government run more efficiently, economically, and effectively. Don also served in the U.S. Air Force reserve. The highlight of his short military career was marching in President John F. Kennedy's Funeral Parade.

Don's third passion in life began when he retired from the federal government and moved back home to Burlington in the early 1990's. He immediately took up the challenge to continue recording all the births, marriages, and deaths of Burlington residents that our father had started for the Burlington Historical Society, and then continued by our mother, after our father passed away.

Don had a keen analytical mind and an encyclopedic brain for detail. He could recall details and events from times long gone by. But most importantly, he knew how to share his gift with those he came into contact with. His preferred means of communication was one on one or with just a small group of people.

Don was humble and never sought praise. But as a testament to his personality and talent, praise found him. His past awards included "Burlington Lions Club Man of the Year" and the "Burlington Rotary Club Man of the Year." True to his nature, Don said he would only accept those awards if he did not have to stand at a podium and say anything while accepting the awards!

But the next day, and in fact, most days after those awards were bestowed on Don, he was back at the Burlington Historical Society Museum, on North Perkins Boulevard, sitting at his desk on the second floor, ready to inform and entertain anybody and everybody who climbed the stairs to talk to him, or who called on the phone, by sharing what he knew about the residents both living, and those not lost to memory, who had graced Burlington's streets and the surrounding area.

In turn, he was truly appreciative of each and every person he met and the historical artifacts and knowledge of Burlington gone by that people shared with the Burlington Historical Society.

A favorite story of one such encounter occurred when he received a phone call and was asked to research the caller's relative who had lived in the late 19th century. Don called back after a few days and said "I have some good news for you and some bad news. Which one would you like me to share with you?" The caller responded, "Give me the good news". Don replied, "I found some information on your relative." The caller then said, "Well, what's the bad news?" Don responded, "He was a horse thief."

They both shared a good laugh and Don went on to say that the caller's relative had been accused, and found guilty, of stealing a horse and had to serve a short time in jail. Maybe it was a misunderstanding as a result of a poker game gone awry. The truth is probably lost to history.

As the word spread of Don's passing, tributes began pouring into the Burlington Historical Society website and the Facebook group "Growing Up In Burlington." A former Burlington mayor wrote: "As individuals hear of his passing, what Don meant to them is being expressed throughout our community. He truly was an honorable man and gave so much to make sure history of Burlington lived on."

Another tribute said: "I have lost a good friend...the (Burlington Historical) Society has lost a treasure with (his) passing... His knowledge of the history of Burlington, its' residents and businesses, will be very difficult to replace."

Another said: "Don was an amazing person. So dignified, so kind, and so funny. His incredible breadth of knowledge and treasure trove of local lore was such a gift to this community.... He will be missed by so many."

And finally: "If anyone could ever be known as Mr. Burlington, it was Don!"

The family thanks everyone for their kind and moving words about our brother and uncle. It is reassuring to us that Don touched so many lives in such a meaningful way and he will be surely missed. We are overwhelmed by the out pouring of tributes to Don and his knowledge, dedication, and ability to connect with so many people by sharing his love of Burlington.

We will miss Don deeply but are comforted to know that his legacy is a lasting gift to all of us, both his family and everyone who knew him. But perhaps most importantly, in the scheme of history, Don's gift was to the future generations who will seek to know



the true history of Burlington, Wisconsin. We are sure it was Don's unstated hope that his groundwork laid the foundation for future generations to experience a revealing, interesting, and satisfying journey through the historical pages of Burlington, Wisconsin.

A private funeral service, followed by a burial interment at St. Charles Cemetery, will be held for Don's immediate family. A public celebration of Don's life will be scheduled when the threat of Covid diminishes and spring arrives. It promises to be a big celebration. Hope all of you can attend!

Contributions in Don's memory can be made to St. Charles Church and the Burlington Historical Society.

Rest in peace brother, uncle, and friend. We have all been enriched by having known you.

Recent Donations to the Burlington Historical Society in Memory of Don Vande Sand

- Chris and Laurie Miller
Burlington, WI
- Edward and Julie VonBergen
Chicago, IL
- Michael Brooks
Newport Beach, CA
- William Grigg
Spring Grove, IL
- Germaine Hesiak
Palatine, IL
- Anthony Wolosz
Burlington, WI
- Burlington Baseball Hall of Fame
Burlington, WI
- Rochester Historical Society
Rochester, WI
- Deb Bluett
Delavan, WI
- Burlington Genealogical Society
Burlington, WI

Thank you for honoring Don's memory and allowing us to continue his passion for Burlington's history!

PIONEER CABIN TO OPEN

May 5th is the opening date.

The robins have arrived and the days are getting longer. It is time to look forward to the Pioneer Cabin 2022 Season.



Visitors are welcome to visit the 1850's Log Cabin in Wehmoff Park Thursday nights from 3 - 7 PM in conjunction with the Farmers' Market and

on Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM weather permitting. The season runs through October.

Step back in time as our friendly docents share the history of a much simpler time which was filled with hard work and joy as the pioneers lived out their dreams of a new life in a strange new land.

If you would like to join in the fun of sharing Burlington's History with those who visit us please call Jackie Heiligenthal at 262-661-4272 to volunteer.

Volunteers are always needed.

Welcome New Members

*Mary Block, Burlington, WI
William & Lisbeth Ann Breuer, Lakewood, CO
Tamara Brever, Burlington, WI
Steven Durnford, Burlington, WI
Paul Hankavaara, Clovis, CA
Melinda Mitchell, Burlington, WI
Charles Roy, Burlington, WI
Marian McCarthy, Burlington, WI
John & Kathryn Swanson, Burlington, WI*

Grant Received

Thank you to the Burlington Rotary Rescue Squad Fund for awarding the Historical Society \$3,000. The funds will be used to purchase filing cabinets for the Research Center.

Julie O'Neill and Jackie Heiligenthal recently attended the Rotary luncheon to accept the funds and give an update on activities of the Historical Society.

Thank you Rotary for your support!



“Don Vande Sand Historical Research Center”

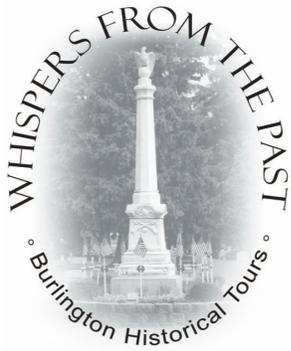
The Board of Directors unanimously approved the creation of a historical research center in honor of Don. It will be located at the History Museum and be available for the public to search the many records Don created.

We believe the best way to honor Don's life and work is to preserve his research and make it accessible to the public.

Over the summer we will be organizing Don's notes, folders, etc. A grant of \$3,000 was awarded by the Burlington Rotary Rescue Squad Fund. These funds will allow us to purchase filing cabinets for this research information.

We plan on having an Open House in the fall.

Watch for more details!



HIDDEN HISTORY HUNT

When: Saturday, July 30, 2022 at 1-4 p.m.

Where: Begin at Wehmhoff Square (next to Burlington Library)

Who: Families and Individuals

Cost: \$5 per person or \$10 per family/groups

Historic sites? In Burlington? Where? Solve clues and complete puzzles to discover your home town's history. Explore downtown Burlington like you never have before!

Turn in completed forms and become eligible for door prizes.



**Postcards Recently Donated to
Burlington Historical Society**
circa 1910-1915



Burlington Historical Society
232 N. Perkins Boulevard
Burlington, WI 53105

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Please check the "Membership paid thru:" line at the top of the mailing label. If your membership has expired or is due for renewal, please consider renewing it at this time. Those whose labels show "Final notice" will be removed from our mailing list unless membership is renewed. Dues are in two classifications: general - \$10 and contributing - \$25. Additional tax-deductible donations are always welcome.

Dues are a significant source of income for the operational expenses of the Museum, Pioneer Cabin, Whitman School, Rooker Cemetery, and the storage building. We appreciate your attention to this matter. To pay your dues, please clip the coupon below and mail with your check directly to the Museum, whose address is on the coupon. Thank You.

Become a member of the Burlington Historical Society or renew your current membership. It's easy . . .

General Membership - \$10.00 **Contributing Membership - \$25.00**

I'd like to make an extra donation \$ _____

Name: _____ **Telephone:** _____

Address: _____

Street City State Zip

I can help: _____

Send with your check to: Burlington Historical Society, 232 N. Perkins Blvd., Burlington, WI 53105