



SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER



Henderson, Minnesota 56044 Ph: (507)248-3434

SEPTEMBER 2013

Volume 18, Issue 3

COUNTRY SCHOOL PROJECT

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Our group is led by Dorothy Petersen, who is busy getting everything on the computer, Eldrene Ebert who is busy contacting people and writing articles, and Ruth Ann Buck who is busy contacting people and scanning newspapers; and we can't forget Rommie Petersen who does the scanning of pictures when they are brought to the museum. He's not so busy. They have taken on a huge task of collecting information on the 80 school districts that once covered Sibley County, plus about a dozen parochial schools. Arlene Busse has shared much of her book compiling skills with us. And the focus of all this information is the publishing of a book about Sibley County Country Schools to be finished in mid-2014.

the trick is to find the right person from each district that is willing to

share their memories and more importantly to share pictures from their school days, whether it is of the school or the students that went there. When we find the right people they are eager to talk about the "good old days" like it was yesterday, yet most of these schools have been closed for 60 years or more.

We have had many interviews with former students; some by phone, some in person, and some were groups that were videotaped. Some of the interviews which were conducted by Dorothy, Eldrene, Ruth Ann and Mary Petersen with Rommie doing the recording, were at the Fairfax Country



There is much information out there;

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Calendar of Events

Check our website for 2013 programs.

- Sept. 24, 7PM at All Seasons Park, Arlington, Brickyard 301 First Ave. History by Dwight Grabske plus short business meeting
- Possible Antiques Program
- Check Website for details
- If you have suggestions or comments on upcoming events Contact Judy Loewe 507-248-3345 **Calendar Subject to Change.**



The Prez Sez

by Jerome Petersen

Are you ever at a loss for words? Me neither! There is the joke; My wife and I had words. But I didn't get to use mine.

On with the show... I want to talk about Judy's programs. She keeps outdoing herself with interesting presentations and trips. In June Mike Noack, local Arlington dentist, gave a presentation on his family's business that operated for many years, Noack Locker Plant and Hatchery. When I was a kid they picked up eggs at our farm. They were involved in different kinds of farm produce and had a successful operation over the years. While overseas during WWII some Arlington GIs ran into their products in military rations.

Our summer tour was to the Minnesota Historical Society and the State Capitol. This year Judy arranged for us to take the air conditioned

bus, and "leave the driving to us." One of the feature exhibits at MNHS is "If These Walls Could Talk", which is now ending. The interactive display is about a house in east St. Paul and the families that lived there in the last 100+ years. The first family to live there was from Henderson. Arlene Busse helped the MNHS staff get information on the Schumacher Family. She provided photos, high school graduation lists and other information. That family is in the first part of many. When you open drawers, photos pop up, there were videos on the dinner table plates, open oven and a voice tells of making chicken for a wedding party. Many families lived in the house; ethnic, families of color, immigrants. It was converted to a duplex, then triplex. Another display at MNHS is about the Civil War. A son is writing (speaking) to his mother. The mother is

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writing (speaking) to her son. Another section is about the *Greatest Generation*. It is a very interesting place to spend a day. But we didn't have a day. After lunch at MNHS, we were off to the Capitol. We walked around the Capitol Approach area, Vietnam Memorial and other monuments before touring inside. Bradley Klukas, who grew up in Gibbon, was killed in Viet Nam and his name is inscribed in stone. I worked with his dad at the elevator in Gibbon. Judy had arranged for us to have a guided tour. Our guide told of the construction, how



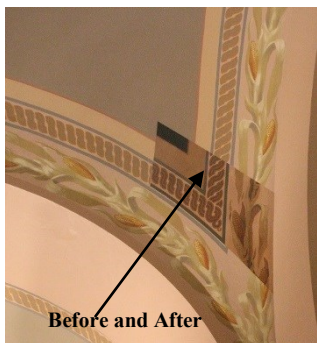
stained from cigar and cigarette smoke. We were taken into the Governor's ante room where several great paintings hang, depicting Minnesota's part in Civil War Battles. Because we were a very special group and it was a very special day, we were taken to the roof where we stood next to the Quadriga, the 4 horses covered with gold leaf. We had a magnificent



view of downtown St. Paul, St. Paul's Cathedral and even the Minneapolis skyline. Then we were turned loose and we were free to wander around the place. We went to the basement where we got this information; there is a tunnel connecting all the State buildings, and it is a one mile walk, which many employees do for exercise in the winter. We were told there were stables for horses in the capitol cellar. Another said that was



architect Cass Gilbert was involved in every aspect of the construction – down to the paint colors, stencils and 1600 tables and benches. While we were waiting I asked when were the walls last painted. 1905! Gilbert designed the stenciling. Do you think he was married? They have begun restoring the paint on the 3rd floor. The old dark part is



not true. I like that, so I pass it on to you. In the rest room there were directions, 5 steps, for washing your hands; wet hands, put on soap, rub vigorously... I am so glad I went in and was able to get that information. And I remembered that our elected politicians go there too so it would be helpful for them to have this information. I followed the steps carefully knowing there might be a law it has to be done that way, and I could be observed with a security camera. My next mission was to find the portrait of Governor John Lind. More about him later. Anyway, it was such a beautiful day that Judy picked. How does she do that??? And several months in advance.

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**Official Portrait of Governor
John Lind**

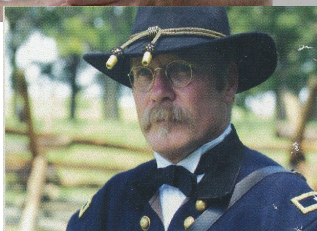
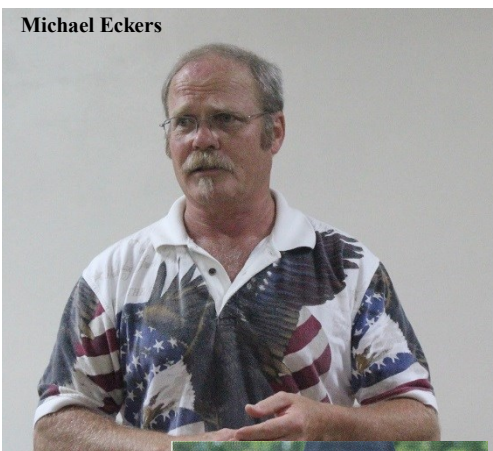
Our Tour Group

Al Rostberg, Marlys Gaucher,
Diane Rostberg, Marie Main,
RuthAnn Buck, Arlene Busse,
Bruce Polzin, Dick Gardner,
Carol Reiter, Sharon Haggen-
miller Mary Ann Buck, War-
ren Felix, Joyce Gardner,
Judy Loewe, Rommie Petersen



The August program was a movie depicting soldiers involved in the Civil War from Wasioja Minnesota, a very small town near Rochester. This was a professional production. After the movie Michael Eckers discussed Wasioja, the Civil War and had a Q & A session. We learned a third of the deaths were from battle, the rest from disease. The film follows the young recruits as they start their army life in Fort Snelling as the Second Minnesota Company C. Then the Battle of Mill Springs, The battle of Chickamauga, the march to Atlanta and General Sherman's March to the Sea, the routing of South Carolina and the Grand March in Washington at wars end. The film then follows these brave men as they mustered out at Fort Snelling. It was presented in the church basement of St. Paul United Church of Christ. It was the hottest most humid day in weeks, and they have NO air conditioning at that church. Anyway, it was such a terrible day that Judy picked. How does she do that??? And several months in advance. I told Mary we want to sit in back so we can duck out before we expire. When I opened the basement door I was met with a cool blast of air. Was it air conditioned? Nope, it just stays that cool. I stayed. It was a superb presentation. I will give Judy credit for picking the wrong day but the right place.

Michael Eckers



Also Michael Eckers



know that he taught school in District 57 in Severance Township? He was born in Sweden. He was the first Swedish American elected to congress. He had many accomplishments. His campaign slogan could have been "I will not have my hands in your pockets like other politicians". You see he lost his left hand in an accident. And another tidbit of trivia we learned when we were interviewing school KIDS from District 56, 93 year old SCHS member Wallace Johnson of New Ulm said his father was a cousin of Governor Lind. The Historic Lind House is on the National Register and open for public tours. It was built in 1887, almost the same age as our SCHS house. (Photo on page 5)

Some more trivia. I went to the State Fair as I have done every year for 64 years missing only 3 or 4 years.

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I had heard my neighbor, Merlon Lagerstedt, had a bench on the grounds with his name on it. There are many, many benches

part up!) Do you think their education was lacking in any way being in a one room school with many other kids in 7 other grades each day? I don't think so! You should see the tests



with names there. While I checked out the John Deere equipment lot, Mary waited on the curb. I know what you are thinking, how could ANYONE sit on the curb when they could be looking over the Long Green John Deere line. When I went to retrieve her, she pointed out the Lagerstedt Bench! Merlon, a longtime member passed away this year at age 96. He was still an active farmer. The Lagerstedt family goes back in Severance history nearly 150 years. His late wife, Jenny, taught school in Severance, and Donna Meyer's uncle Dan Messerli, was a student of hers. He had high praise for Jenny. He was interviewed by phone last winter when Charles and Donna visited the museum. He is in his 90s and lives in Illinois. Can you see that it is hard for me to stay on track?

Have you heard we are working on a book about Country Schools? Dorothy, RuthAnn and Mary ask the questions and I have been doing the video-taping. Once the discussion starts, lots of memories begin to pop up. We heard of some boys who were a tough bunch. They tipped the outhouse over when the county superintendent was inside! One kid put a gopher in the teacher's desk drawer. One rang the school bell outside and then hid. One found a frog in the drinking water. Another started a fire in the outhouse pit. These 70, 80 and 90 year old KIDS enjoy sharing their experiences. There are always lots of laughs. Many had great admiration for their teacher. There was no electricity, running water, telephones, central heat or indoor toilets for those that attended in the 30s and earlier. No iPods, iPhones or iPads. No calculators or ball point pens. They did have rulers, which were used for measuring and sometimes for discipline! And just about all the kids walked to school. Some kids came to school barefoot. And as you all know, it was always up hill, both going to school and coming home. They had to carry those heavy books, and if they didn't have anything else, their parents made them carry a cement block. (I made that



Melroy Ruschmeyer

...but what District??



they had to complete to graduate from the 8th grade. Melvin Ruschmeyer still had his State Board Exams from the early 30s and is letting us have copies for our upcoming book.

The Sibley County Fair was a successful event for SCHS again, with many visitors. We had numerous guesses on our mystery items. Several got them correct, and we drew a winner from them. Our draw gave a one year family membership to



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Kristine Kernz of Winthrop. I have to mention this; Dorothy's granddaughter, Megan Wickenhauser, won grand champion in the 4-H photography division and a trip to the State Fair.... where she also won grand champion! Congratulations to that young lady!

There! My space is more than filled! *Rommie*



Historic John Lind House in New Ulm

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DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE.

IF YOU MUST WRITE SOMETHING USE THE SPACE ON THE RIGHT

Ostrom Project News

by Becky Briggs

A new series of unknown photos will soon be appearing in the newspaper. For the next year or so, the photos will have an S- prefix, instead of the familiar N- prefix. Most are wedding photos, but there are also a few photos of family groups.

Quite a few photos continue to be identified through the newspaper. Thank you to the many observant newspaper subscribers! SCHS appreciates each and every identification sent to the museum.

Ruth Klossner continues to be our coordinator with participating newspapers. Many thanks, Ruth!

Website Update

By Steve Briggs

Be sure to check out our ever changing, growing, expanding, evolvingwebsite. If you are planning a visit to the museum, go to our **Home** page to read our brochure. Also on our **Home** page are SCHS contacts for major projects and activities – feel free to toss your questions and comments their way. If you have friends or relatives not yet members of SCHS, they can complete our user-friendly membership form at **Obtain a Membership** page. Be sure to read **How the Museum Began** – there won't be a quiz. Have you misplaced old SCHS Newsletters? Many newsletters are available on our **SCHS Newsletter** page – FREE OF CHARGE! Staff members continue to work on the **Country School Project** and we have several web pages dedicated to it. Our **Family History Books** page should be referenced by all genealogists. If you donate your own family history book, we'll add to the website listing! Our **2013 Events** page needs to be visited regularly! There are events and other notices that get added throughout the year as they get scheduled. A recent page added was **2013 Sibley County Fair photos**. Are you in any of the

THIS SPACE CAN BE USE FOR WRITING SOMETHING. DO NOT USE OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE OR MAKE ANY POLITICAL STATEMENTS OR RELIGIOUS COMMENTS. IF YOU ARE WRITING IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE THAN ENGLISH PRESS ONE. DO NOT FOLD, SPINDLE OR MUTILATE. KEEP COMMENTS LESS THAN 100 WORDS. PLEASE USE A #2 PENCIL.



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View Estates with people that attended Moltke's # 62 and St. Peter's Parochial school. Another interview was done at St. John's Lutheran Church, Arlington with some area people. One was in Gibbon with students from Cornish # 72, at Golden Hearts in Arlington, at the assisted living in Le Sueur with students and a teacher from District # 7, residents from Oak Terrace in Gaylord just to name a few. Plus we had a good response at the Fair.

We are still looking for information and pictures, we will take anything from all the districts, but we really need information from the following;

Faxon School Districts 21, 22, 23, and 42

Henderson Districts 3, 4 and 5

Arlington Districts 14 and 15

Jessenland Districts 11, 13 and 43

Green Isle Districts 32, 45 and St. Paul's Lutheran

Dryden Districts 17 and 18

Bismarck District 70 and 77

Alfsborg District 46, 54, 68

Grafton District 67 and 79

Moltke District 24 and 75

New Auburn District 74

Severance District 78

Transit District 39 and 44

So if you went to any of these school districts or know of someone that did, let us know.

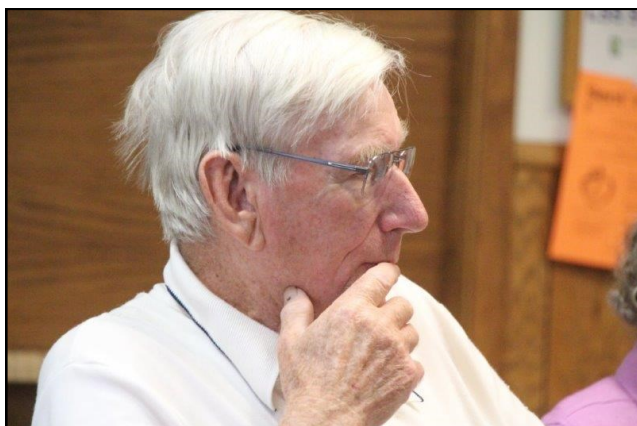
The end of July we got a very descriptive book of memories from Amy Renneke Coury, who went to Sibley District # 53 which really made our job easy for that district.

We also have a mystery teacher, we have a couple of great pictures of Margaret Frauendienst, we think she may have taught in the Green Isle or New Auburn area, but we would like to know what school district for sure.



These are former students of District 72 in Cornish Township. LEFT; Edmond Larson, Ann Totman, Harvey Totman BELOW RIGHT; Harvey, James Mayer and Janice Isakson. BELOW; Orville Larson.

I have to note here the ages of the Larson brothers. Orville is 93 and Edmond is 98! We are very fortunate to have these people willing to participate in our project. I think Edmond is the oldest person we have interviewed. We have had many in their 90s. The 70s group are kids!





SOME MORE OF PARTICIPANTS IN OUR COUNTRY SCHOOL GROUP INTERVIEWS

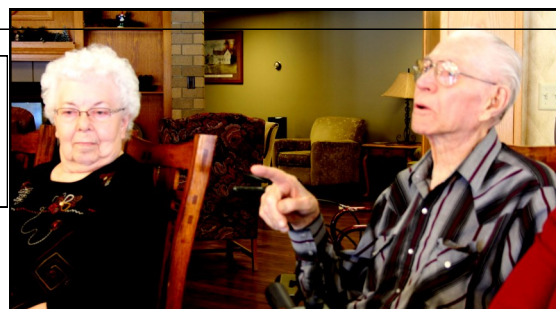


Jim Pfarr, Myrtle Jentz, Evon Bachaus, Carol Jackson, Lawrence Johnson, Don Pfarr, Linda Sinell, Lois Ahntholz, Teacher Helen Sinell
The Rush River group, District 7 Kelso



Hobart Anderson, Clarence Maidl, Wallace Johnson, Darlene Schmidt, Darrel Schmidt, Kenny Eckstrand, Arden DeBoer
District 56 Cornish

These photos are a group who attended St. Peter's in Moltke and District 62
Below; Myrtle Jaus, Diane Isakson, Lyla Baur. Right; Irene Luehring, Elton Vorwerk.
Below Right; Verna Schroeder, Helen Podratz





Successful Fair

An event such as our County Fair “booth” is made successful by those who work hard to make it happen. Our dedicated workers who made phone calls, prepared advertising for local newspapers, built our display and all our other efforts to encourage people to come and meet us at the fair, paid off in a good number of people who visited, signed our guest book, made guesses at mystery items and enjoyed the array of “Country School” pictures and artifacts we had available. We especially want to say thanks to Eldrene Ebert for her wonderful map of Sibley County showing which schools we have pictures of and which are still needed. It was quite an eye opener for us to see all those blank spots and know how much work we still have to do on this project.

Several people stopped in for an interview, more brought pictures to be scanned and to tell us memories of your country school. We even had our very own country school bell that we rang at 9 and 4 each day (and sometimes in between). It was on loan to us from Ross Jakobitz of Buffalo Lake. His father purchased the bell when the school items were sold at auction back in the 1950's when schools were consolidated. Ross tells us there was a bit of family friction when his mother found out that his dad paid over \$10 for the bell when usually they sold at auction at that time for around \$1.50. We found Ross to be a good source of Grafton Township history. Thanks Ross! Oh yes, we also found out that Sibley County can be found on eBay. Mark Overson of Gaylord brought us some interesting items to scan that he had gotten on eBay from several of our Sibley County districts. Thanks to Mr. Overson for sharing those.

We had 3 mystery items this year. One was a “kids” item, which was an abacus. Not many kids knew what it was



Taxi Service at the Fair

THANKS FOR THESE GIFTS...

Thanks for donations and memorials; The Henderson United Charity Fund, from Rich Nagel honoring Gail and Don Nuesemeier for the 50th Anniversary, a memorial for Ardina Hed by Carol E. Jackson and a gift by Holly Harjes honoring Judy Loewe. Thanks to all for your generosity.

but most adults did. SCHS President Rommie Petersen had an unusual item that had been given to him a few years ago and he did not know what it was so he offered it as a mystery item so that we could find out its origin. We had a couple of people that guessed it was a type of can opener, which was the correct answer. We later were able to find it in one of our manuals at the museum to verify that. Our third item

was pretty easy for anyone who ever attended a country school. It was donated to the museum by Earl Renneke and it was a bubbler from an old water fountain used in schools in the “good old days”. We drew a name from the group of people that had correct guesses and the name drawn was that of Kristine Kernz of Winthrop; she will receive a one-year free family membership to SCHS. Kristine was very excited to hear that she was our winner.

Thanks to all who stopped to visit. **YOU MADE OUR DAY!**

We interviewed Roman Jaus (left) and Lester Schaefer at the Fair.



**NEW* AND RENEWED MEMBERS**

Shirley & Charles Supplee*	Bloomington MN	Elden Egesdal*	Gaylord MN
Linda L Cancio	Sacramento CA	Joan Keating	Oconomowoc WI
Anthony Vos*	Henderson MN	Janet & Charles Lundgren	Gibbon MN
Shirley Kloempken*	Gaylord MN	Tom & Patricia McCarthy	Winthrop MN
Marie & David Main	Gaylord MN	Public Library Allen Co	Fort Wayne IN
Doug & Iris Parrott	Gaylord MN	Harold & Bonita Pettis	Gibbon MN
Steve Kleist	Richfield MN	Bernice V Hanson	New Brighton MN
Blair Sander*	Minnetonka MN	J M Ducharme	Henderson MN
Karen Helfert	Rockville MN	Janet L Mackenthun	Glencoe MN
Carol Jackson	Eden Prairie MN	Viola J Lang	Winthrop MN
Wayne Jarvis	Cedar Falls IA	Eugene & Jeanette Bening	Hutchinson MN
Esther Grischkowsky	Rochester MN	George Doheny	Prior Lake MN
Dayle & Harriet Troidahl	Gaylord MN	Judy Loewe	Henderson MN
Charles Woehler	Arlington MN	Wayne & Louise Quast	Arlington MN
Roseann Schauer	Isle MN	Clara Heberle	Hooper Co
Charlotte Doudell	San Jose CA	Jim Mueller	Clearwater MN
L & P Crawford	Gaylord MN	Robert Fahey*	Belle Plaine MN
John & Dorothy Johnson	Gibbon MN	Allie & Geri Weber*	Arlington MN
David & Diane Laabs	Gaylord MN	Vernetta Brinkmann*	Arlington MN
Bert & Arline Karels	Henderson MN	Karl & Evelyn Lieske*	Pequot Lakes MN
Roman Jaus	Winthrop MN	Bonnie Anderson	Shawnee KS
Jos eph & Yvonne Mullen	Minneapolis MN	Coletta Wiersen*	Excelsior MN
Mary L Brenke	Albert Lea MN	Joe & Logan Kistner*	Arlington MN
Harold & Lorraine Steeber	Palatine IL		

Membership Form

I would like to become a member of the Sibley County Historical Society.

NAME _____ SCHS TREASURER

ADDRESS _____ 49858 316 ST

_____ Winthrop MN 55396-2038

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Individual--\$20, Family-- \$25, Business-- \$50 Send to:

Check your due date on the mailing label. Membership dues are as stated on the form. Please use it to renew your subscription or pass it along to anyone who is interested.



Regular meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month, March thru November at the museum in Henderson. The public is invited. The museum is open to the public for tours on Sundays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. June thru October and by appointment.

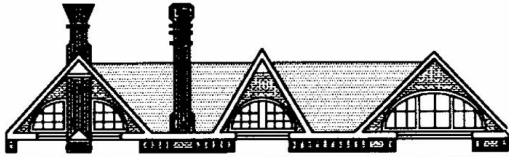
Send articles, announcements, photos and comments to the SCHS Newsletter, P.O. Box 407, Henderson, MN 56044 or Email: schs1@frontiernet.net



ACHTUNG! ACHTUNG!

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

<http://sibleycountyhistoricalmuseum.com/>



SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

700 Main Street

P.O. Box 407

Henderson, MN 56044

Phone: 507-248-3434

Email: schs1@frontiernet.net

SIBLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD

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HENDERSON HERITAGE DAYS

SEPTEMBER 21 AND 22, 2013

IF HOUSES COULD TALK TOUR;

SATURDAY 10AM TO 4 PM

JOIN US ON A 2 1/2 HOUR TOUR OF 10 HISTORIC HOUSES IN HENDERSON

1900 SCHOOL BUILDING, ALDRICH, DETERMANN, KLINE, HEALTHCARE ACADEMY, HENDERSON BED
AND BREAKFAST, HORNAMANN, SCHUETTE, SIBLEY COUNTY MUSEUM, SWENSON

TOURS LEAVE EVERY HALF HOUR FROM POSTOFFICE CORNER—FIRST TOUR IS AT 10AM
LAST LEAVES AT 2 PM

ADULTS \$10

KIDS \$5 12-5

KIDS UNDER 4 FREE

IF CHURCHES COULD TALK

A CHURCH SERVICE

AT BENDER PARK

SUNDAY 11:15



ON MAIN STREET

FOOD VENDORS AND VENDOR FAIR

STREET ACTORS

JOSEPH R BROWN MN RIVER CENTER

OPEN

SIBLEY COUNTY MUSEUM OPEN

\$2 ADMISSIONS

POLKA MASS



SATURDAY 5 PM,
CASSEROLE SUPPER
5:30—7:30
ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC
CHURCH