



# GUNFLINT TIMES

THE GUNFLINT TRAIL  
*Historical Society*

VOLUME V

GUNFLINT TRAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010

## IT WAS A DAY TO REMEMBER, AND A DAY TO CELEBRATE



On the morning of July 4, 2010, 50 volunteers were awake early full of anticipation and excitement for the big event: The Grand Opening of Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center on the Gunflint Trail. Would the sun shine? Would it rain? Would it be hot and humid? They began gathering at Chik-Wauk by 10AM to direct cars to parking areas and drive the shuttle vehicles, to be sure all the tents, tables, chairs and displays were in place.

350 other people were also making plans. What time should we leave for Chik-Wauk? Where will we park? Shall we take a picnic? Can we hike the nature trails? Who will win the quilt? I can't wait to see the museum! Let's go!

When we were all gathered under the big tent and listening to the delightful music of Gerald Thilmany, the Master of Ceremonies, Fred Smith, opened the festivities. Fred donned a dress shirt and tie, a rare sight on the Trail, welcomed all eloquently and introduced the special guests. He then asked that anyone who had contributed with physical work or artifacts or gifts of money please stand.

It seemed the entire audience stood and we applauded each other.

Dennis Neitzke, District Ranger, Grand Marais, introduced the keynote speaker, Jim Sanders, Forest Supervisor; both are from the Superior National Forest Unit of the United States Forest Service. Mr. Sanders gave a fine tribute to

the people of the Gunflint Trail, past, present, and future.

Following the speeches, a drawing for door prizes was held, followed by the drawing of the winning ticket for the beautiful quilt, "Along the Gunflint Trail", created and donated by Melissa Anderson. The lucky winners were Ken Fortenberry and Kristine Hammerstrand from Urbana, Illinois. They bought their winning ticket at the 2009 Taste of the Gunflint event at Chik-Wauk and then picked up their quilt at the 2010 Taste of the Gunflint. Kristine has been collecting signatures in her Taste of the Gunflint cookbook over the course of several "Taste" events. Kristine now has signatures from almost all the authors as well as several business owners.

Then came the official opening. Betty Hemstad and Sue Kerfoot held the bright green ribbon as Dennis Neitzke gave the formal cut to welcome the attendees into the museum. The event ended with refreshments and much conversation regarding the outstanding display of exhibits, artifacts, memorabilia, and history.

*Judy Edlund, Special Events Chair*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with great pleasure that I accept the responsibility of leading this splendid organization. I am humbled to be following Betty Hemstad and Sue Kerfoot, leaders that have cast a die of excellence during our first five years.

As an organization, we set lofty goals toward a mission that some may have doubted the ability to accomplish. Obviously, those that may have questioned did not have a good grasp of the type of folks that had committed to the cause. We dreamed big...and made things come true!

As we reflect on the history of people that helped shape this special place in the universe, it is evident that many wonderful folks of the Gunflint Community have the same character and grit of our historical predecessors.

It has been such a joy to not only see, but also be a part of the journey to this magical place at the end of the Trail. Everyone that contributed to the Chik-Wauk venture should be very proud. The part you played has come to fruition in stunning fashion...this is your museum and all are to be congratulated!

So I take up carrying the torch as the GTHS heads off into the next chapter of our Society and Trail history. We now enter into the museum presentation business energized by what we have accomplished...and charged to never let the lights in the granite jewel on Saganaga go dim. I look forward to working with all of the Gunflint Community as the Gunflint Trail Historical Society extends preservation of the Gunflint past.

*Frederick Smith, President*

*Thanks to Dennis Chick for the above left photo of the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony*

## 300-FOOT BOARDWALK ACROSS NATURE CENTER LOWLAND AREA

It started out a bit like pieces of a giant Erector Set with some squared off Lincoln Logs to put on top. There are also several boxes of screws, some long legs, some short legs and numerous boards. It was delivered to the parking lot at Chik-Wauk and with our trusty volunteers and hopefully some cooperative fall weather installation should take a couple of weekends. Then "it" will then be transformed into a wonderful boardwalk along the marshy edge of the back bay at Chik-Wauk. This will probably turn out to be one of the more frequently used parts of our Nature Center because of both the truly handicap accessibility of this trail, and also the great intrigue that walking easily through an interesting wet land can bring. We are so fortunate to be able to install this right here in our own backyard! We owe a huge thank you to every person who has supported this project and helped to make it happen.

All the trails got a good work out this summer and appear to be handling it well thanks to volunteers who have been there to take off downed trees, keep the grass at bay and weed whack on occasion. Special thanks go to Les Edinger and his amazing, much coveted, wheelbarrow for moving wood chips and gravel. Michael Valentini and crew and Dave Tuttle's Gunflint Trail Excavating have pitched in as well. George Humphrey Contracting generously donated a load of crushed gravel to use on the driveway and parking area.

The Conservation Core of Minnesota crew worked on the Big Sag Trail in August and greatly improved the tread way. They



rearranged rocks, created steps and moved stumps and logs around to make a much smoother tread way. It is still a steep trail and should be labeled as difficult, but it is much more user friendly now. The crew thought the end of that trail should be better defined so they fashioned a quite nice log bench out of a nearby downed tree. The view down "mighty Saganaga Lake" is impressive. There is a possibility that we can get them back again next year. That trail also produced a mother load of blueberries this summer.

We had so many pleasant comments on our various pots and pans of flowers this summer. It truly was amazing how well they flourished and I'm sure it was because of all the loving care they received each day from the people on duty. Again I offer a huge thank you to all involved in the watering, weeding and care in general.

We learned a lot this summer and enjoyed it immensely. Stay tuned and at the risk of sounding like a broken record: Thank you!

*Kathy Lande, Grounds Chair*

## TEMPORARY EXHIBIT UPDATE

Now that our first year is over, it is time to start thinking about a new temporary exhibit for the museum. Linda Henrickson's exhibit on building the Gunflint Trail will be hard to replace. We have all seen museum guests reading the material she assembled for us. The model of a corduroy road answered, I am sure, many questions from people who always wondered what that term meant.

With Linda and Fred's help, I have been in contact with Rick Anderson. For many years Rick's mother, Lou Anderson, collected artifacts in the county from prehistoric peoples. As he grew up, Rick collected with his mother. Everything they did was surface findings so there was no digging involved. It is one of the finest collections in Cook County. The National Park Service at Grand Portage has received a grant to catalog the entire collection this winter.

Rick has generously offered to share some of his collection with the Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center for our temporary exhibit next summer. It is hard to tell exactly what specific pieces will be involved in the exhibit. At this point the only sure thing is that it will be spectacular. So look forward to seeing this exhibit next summer.

*Sue Kerfoot, Museum Chair*



## ONLINE FORMAT COMING FOR GUNFLINT TIMES

To save on postage, the Gunflint Trail Historical Society is changing to an online newsletter format in the spring of 2011.

The newsletter is available online at <http://gunflintrailhistoricalsociety.org/>.

To request an email reminder when current newsletters are posted to the website (and if you are not already on the

email notification list), please sign up at <http://gunflintrailhistoricalsociety.org/signup.html>.

Printed copies of newsletters will be available in limited quantities. If you do not receive email and wish to receive a printed newsletter, please let us know.

## GUNFLINT TRAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The first week of July was not only marked by the historical moment of the Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center grand opening, it also was noted by a changing of the guard in GTHS Leadership.

Terms of service expired for a number of Trustees as specified in the organizations articles. Cheryl Daily, Kathy Lande, Tom Schank, Barbara Tuttle, Lee Zopff and Sue Kerfoot served the GTHS in extraordinary fashion from 2008 through 2010. They are to be congratulated and thanked for their service and commitment as leaders of this great association.

Joining our carry-over Trustees Bill Boissenin, Judy Edlund, Martha James, Michael Valentini, Suzanne Weber and Fred Smith are Bonnie Schudy, Bob Baker Sr., Roma Luety, Kate Kelberger, Alice Weck and Bud Darling.

The new Trustees were elected by the membership at the annual meeting on June 28th.

From the ranks of the Trustees, the following executive officers were elected: Bob Baker Sr., Vice President; Alice Weck, Secretary, and Bud Darling, Treasurer. Fred Smith ascends to President succeeding Sue Kerfoot who becomes Past-President and Museum/Nature Center Committee Chairperson.

Leadership terms for the new Trustees and officers will extend from 2010 through 2012. All are thanked for their willingness to serve.



Additionally, shortly after the grand opening in July, a meeting with USFS Heritage Resources personnel and Museum Committee Chair Sue Kerfoot, President Fred Smith and Grounds Chair Kathy Lande set the wheels in motion to consider what might come next to continue the Chik-Wauk journey.

It was decided to formalize this process and a Long Range Planning Committee was formed. Bob Baker Sr. will be the Chairman, and he will coordinate planning with TGTHS Board of Trustees, the USFS, and the USFS Heritage Division.

*Frederick Smith, President*

## MEET THE NEW GTHS LEADERS

**Museum/Nature Center Committee Chair:** Sue Kerfoot

**Building Chair:** Michael Valentini

**Grounds Chair:** Kathy Lande

**Marketing:** Suzanne Weber

**Museum Shop:** Bruce Kerfoot & Ada Igoe

**Special Events:** Judy Edlund

**Temporary Exhibit:** Linda Hendrickson

**Budget & Finance:** Bud Darling

**Long-Range Planning Chair:** Bob Baker Sr.

**Long-Range Planning Members:** Michael Valentini, Suzanne Weber, Alice Weck

**Long-Range Planning Consultants:** Sue Kerfoot, Kathy Lande, Fred Smith

**Budget Committee Chair:** Bill Boissenin

**Budget Committee Members:** Martha James, Bob Baker Sr., Bud Darling, Barb Tuttle

**Budget Committee Consultant:** Fred Smith

*As you plan your end-of-year charitable bequests, please consider a donation to Chik-Wauk Museum and The Gunflint Trail Historical Society. Contact Bud Darling or Fred Smith for more information. Thank you.*

## LONG-RANGE PLANNING UPDATE

The Museum is up and running, but the work is far from done. The Board of Trustees has identified several projects to further enhance the Chik Wauk experience for our visitors. A Long Range Planning Committee has been appointed with the assignment of construction planning, cost analysis, developing timelines and project management for future projects.

A couple of projects are already in the works. A replica of the original flag-pole will soon be erected just outside the museum and a 300-foot boardwalk to be placed across a lowlands area within the nature center has been ordered and will be in place this fall weather permitting.

Approval by the proper authorities has been requested to resurrect one of the original Chik Wauk log cabins on its former site. Funding is being requested with hopes of completing this project in 2011. The GTHS and USFS are working together to select and develop a site for the construction of a multi purpose pavillion on the property. Other projects being considered include the construction of a utility building and a boat shelter.

As with the museum project, volunteer labor will be an important part of these projects as we strive to be cost effective and a call for help will go out as we proceed forward.

*Bob Baker Sr., Vice President and Long-Range Planning Chair*



THE GUNFLINT TRAIL HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
201 SOUTH GUNFLINT LAKE RD. • GRAND MARAIS, MN 55604  
(218) 388-0876

[WWW.GUNFLINTTRAILHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.GUNFLINTTRAILHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG)



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201 S. GUNFLINT LAKE  
GRAND MARAIS, MN 55604

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## NOTES FROM ADA IGOE, CHIK-WAUK MANAGER

When 350 people showed up for Grand Opening festivities on July 4, we assumed the outpouring of community interest was a bit of a fluke. But as Chik-Wauk's first season progressed, it became clear that Chik-Wauk was a "must-see" attraction along the Gunflint Trail for nearly every Cook County visitor and resident this summer. When Chik-Wauk closed its door for the season on October 17, 2010, a total of 10,914 people had visited, making for an average of more than 100 daily visitors.

The fantastic attendance translated into excellent admissions and gift shops sales. Chik-Wauk took in \$14,750.00 in admissions, while the gift shop grossed more than \$27,500.00.

Throughout the summer, Chik-Wauk partnered with the "Becoming a Boundary Waters Family" program to host a series of presentations held by USFS Rangers on Chik-Wauk's front porch each Thursday afternoon. The talks were well attended and it is hoped that Chik-Wauk will continue to expand its naturalist offerings in coming years.



Chik-Wauk was honored with 2010 Preservation Award for "Community Effort" from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota in September. The GTHS also received a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grant from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund this summer. The grant will fund continued work over the winter on conducting, transcribing, and organizing oral history interviews with longtime Gunflint Trail residents.

As the leaves turned, attendance began to slow down at Chik-Wauk, but the museum continued to be a busy place. Despite rainy, cool weather, the museum hosted a very successful open house and pie and ice cream social as part of the "Taste of the Gunflint Trail" event on September 11th. Chik-Wauk also hosted two school field trips: one group of 16 five to eight year-olds from the Great Expectation Charter school and another group of 66 4th and 5th graders from Sawtooth Elementary School.

A round of applause in order for all who helped Chik-Wauk achieve this first season, especially for the 50 volunteers who donated their time to assist with Chik-Wauk daily operations.

*Ada Igoe, Museum Manager*



*Betty Hemstad accepting  
2010 MN Preservation Award*



*Quilt winners Ken Fortenberry and  
Kristine Hammerstrand*