



RIPON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

“Wring Out the Old”



JOHN FAUSTMAN 1917-1952
FROM THE FAUSTMAN HOLIDAY CARD COLLECTION, 1940S
(MORE ABOUT JOHN ON PAGE 4)

Looking Back at 2025

2025 was a busy year for the Ripon Historical Society! Last spring, we had an exciting line up of guest speakers. Kurt Dietrich, retired professor of music, Ripon College, presented on jazz in Ripon and east central Wisconsin. Susan Apps-Bodilly presented on her book, “Timber,” written in collaboration with her father, Jerry Apps.

DECEMBER | 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

YEAR IN REVIEW
NEW EXHIBITS
IN REMEMBRANCE

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*FRIENDS OF THE
SOCIETY*

HY-VEE
ALLIANCE LAUNDRY

LOOKING BACK AT 2025

(continued from page 1)

Paul Porter, Rehabilitation Project Reviewer - Eastern District, presented about tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic homes and buildings in Wisconsin. Dr. Ann Gibney presented on Ripon's sister city, Ripon, Yorkshire, England. There was also a series of three genealogy workshops hosted by the Ripon Public Library, led by the Society's resident genealogist, Lara Grant.

In the fall, Professor of Art, Travis Nygard and Matt Koski hosted an heirloom appraisal event at the Society, where we saw some interesting antiques and collectibles. Also, Museum Director, Caron Sisko, and Professor of Art, Travis Nygard, presented on archaeologist Edward Clark and the Ripon College antiquities collection. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to handle artifacts over 2000 years old!

In October, about 40 people attended the Hillside Cemetery tour, *Grave Encounters & Hidden Stories*. Society interns from Ripon College, Gabrielle Allard and Brendan Kile, Director, Caron Sisko, and volunteers, Pat Grahn, Linda Budnick, and Travis Nygard served as tour guides for the event.

In November, over 100 2nd graders from Barlow Elementary School visited the Society for a tour of the Pickard House Museum, the barn, and the Lawson House.

The annual membership meeting was also held in November. This year, special guest, Susan Apps-Bodilly presented on her book, "Old Time Country Cookbook," that she wrote in collaboration with her father Jerry Apps. Members of the board and volunteers prepared recipes from the book for the event. Some of the dishes served were, baked ham, scalloped potatoes, rutabaga casserole, bean salad, apple caramel cake, and pumpkin pie.





New Exhibit: Gimme A Sign!

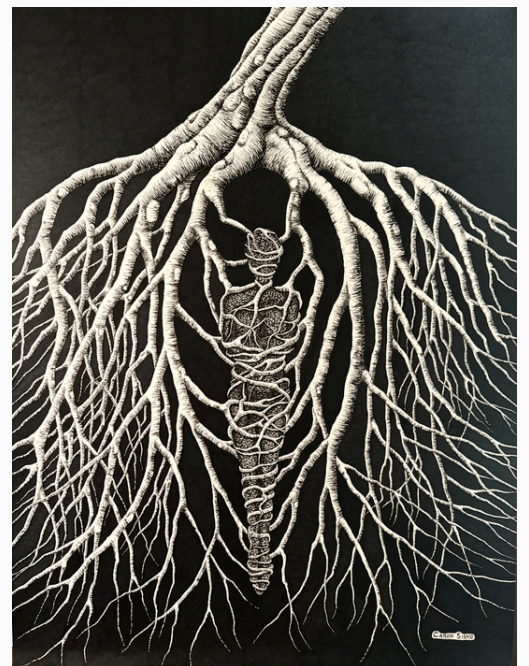
On November 6th, the Society's new annual exhibit "Gimme A Sign!" opened with a reception that was attended by about 40 visitors. The new exhibit is both art show and museum exhibit, featuring signs from the Society's collection and art created by the local artists of Art MidWisconsin. Museum Director, Caron Sisko, invited the local artist organization to create pieces based on a sign of their choosing for display in the exhibit. The art pieces are for sale and will remain in the exhibit until August of 2026. Participating artists offered up pieces in a variety of media such as digital photography, watercolor, paper, weaving, embroidery, pen & ink, and oil painting.

Local businesses loaned the Society signs for the exhibit, including Knuth Brewing, J's BBQ, Diedrich Jewelers, and Patina Vie.

Ripon College interns, Gabrielle Allard, Brendan Kile, and Johnathan Derrick worked with Sisko on the exhibit for about two months. They researched the artifacts and created labels. The interns used special cables to hang the heaviest signs that were purchased with grant money from the Webster Foundation.

BE SURE TO STOP BY THE SOCIETY DURING OPEN HOURS TO SEE THE NEW EXHIBIT AND PERHAPS PURCHASE SOME WONDERFUL ART BEFORE THEY ARE ALL SOLD OUT!

Right: Beverly Christ, "Hold Your Horses," (\$125) for J. H. Conlon Saddles. Karin Keeler, "The Rest of the Story," (\$225) for Ripon Lumber, and Caron Sisko, "Under Taker," (SOLD) for German Undertaking (Deutsche LeichenBestatter).



The Life and Work of “Johnny Faust”



A new mini exhibit is on display at the Society, featuring the marionettes of John Faustman, born in Ripon in 1917. He attended Ripon College and became a puppeteer known professionally as Johnny Faust. In 1938, he was employed for two seasons by Bill Baird, a nationally recognized puppeteer.

John was the son of Eve Faustman, the artist for all of Ripon's Heritage Prints. On August 31, 1947, John married Marion Stellmacher of Ripon.

In 1952, John died suddenly while doing a puppet show for the March of Dimes. Reportedly, the cause was a heart ailment. He was only 34.

In the late 1940s, John worked for Philco, maker of radios and televisions, and toured the country with his marionettes, performing “Alice in Philcoland” at mom and pop appliance stores. The “Alice in Philcoland” marionettes currently reside at the International Puppetry Museum in Pasadena, CA.

After John's death, Marian became an accomplished puppeteer in her own right. she remarried and became a member of the All Saints Episcopal Church in Appleton, WI. It was there that she formed the All Saints Marionettes troupe in the 1950s.

Last November, an angel marionette made under the supervision of Marian for the All Saints Marionettes was donated in memory of Marian Stellmacher Faustman Cowan by David Payne, Director of Fox Folks Marionettes & Friends.



Above: Angel marionette from the first show ever performed by the All Saints Marionettes in 1956.

Right: John Faustman's three little pigs marionettes and big bad wolf puppet.



REMEMBERING DAVID GRAY **AUGUST 27, 1935 — SEPTEMBER 16, 2025**



David Gray was mayor of Ripon from 1986-88 and served the community in many other ways including Jaycees, Rotary, the Board of Education, City Council, the Ripon Medical Center Board and Foundation, Ripon Historical Society, and delivering Meals on Wheels. Dave served in the United States Army Reserve from 1958-64. He worked at Ripon Community Printers from 1976-1999 and retired as President.

David was a lifetime member of the Society and presented on the history of Burnside and Gray's Drug Stores in 2015. As devoted garden enthusiasts, David and his wife, Judy, helped out with the gardens at the Society for the last five years.

Numerous memorials in David's name were received by the Society, and for that, the Society is profoundly grateful. A portion of the money received will go towards maintaining the Society's gardens.



FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY

The front page of our newsletters will now recognize Friends of the Society. We have launched a new initiative to connect with businesses and organizations who wish to support our mission. For more information about how an organization or business can become a Friend, follow this link: <https://riponhistory.org/become-a-friend/>

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Becoming a member or renewing your membership is now easier than ever! Subscribing online is the best way to stay up to date with your membership. Follow this link to subscribe: <https://riponhistory.org/become-a-member-of-the-ripon-historical-society/>

ONE TIME DONATION

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