

THE LARSMONT LINE

Larsmont Community Club • Summer 2020

Annual Fun Day Canceled for 2020



Home of the
Little Red Schoolhouse
Established 1914

If you are a resident of Larsmont, full time or visit part time, we invite you to get more involved in the community and meet your neighbors. Join the Larsmont Community Club for only \$15 per year. Paid members get one free use of the Little Red Schoolhouse during the year.

Visit the
Community
Website at:
www.Larsmont.org

- Community News
- Calendar of Events
- Links to Resources
- Story Contributions

Help keep the website active.

Color versions of this and past newsletters are located on the Larsmont Website



The annual Larsmont Community Fun Day picnic will not be held this year at the Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally held in August, the organizers are unable to put the total plans for the event together.



“We usually go out soliciting for silent auction items for our annual fun day in June,” says Marlys Wisch, secretary/treasurer of the Larsmont Community Club. “We are not comfortable with doing [it this year]. We’d rather that people patronize our local businesses, who always have been so generous with their support in the past.”

A silent auction of donated items is normally held, with proceeds benefitting maintenance of the Schoolhouse.

The Fun Day is open to the entire community and surrounding area, but presenting food, games and entertainment would be difficult due to social distancing standards. Organizers hope that all restrictions will be off and allow the annual event to be held again in 2021.

Visitors enjoy the Larsmont Community Fun Day in August, which helps support maintenance of the Little Red Schoolhouse.

A President's Vision for the Schoolhouse

by Bill Tranah
President, Larsmont Community Club

One of the good things that has come out of these troubled times is I have had the time to think back to the many changes/improvements which have taken place to the Larsmont School over the years. I first became involved back in the early 1970s when we were known as the Larsmont Volunteer Fire Department. Our schoolhouse may have looked similar to what it does now, but let me assure you, many changes have taken place over the years.

The school actually sat on wooden posts at that time and these were not dug into the

ground very far because of the ledge rock just under the surface. That, along with the fact that the building wasn't heated all winter, meant that there was a lot of shifting and movement taking place. The building was badly out of level and the plaster walls inside were badly cracked. It was decided that many of the wood posts were rotten and needed to be replaced. These were cut off and cement pads were poured and concrete blocks replaced the bad posts. There also was an attempt to level the building at that time, which probably resulted in more cracking of plaster. A company was hired to remove the blackboards and sheetrock and paint the main room of the school. For some

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A New LITTLE Schoolhouse is On Site



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It started as a simple idea, but has become a global literacy movement. The first Little Free Library book-sharing box was built in 2009 in Wisconsin. Today there are more than 100,000 registered Little Free Libraries (LFL) in all 50 states and 108 countries, from Argentina to Zambia.

The Little Free Library nonprofit organization is at the heart of this phenomenon. The growing network shares a mission to inspire a love of reading, build community and provide book access for all.

In 2019, it was suggested that the Larsmont Community Club participate in the Little Free Library program. All it took was a mention, and president Bill Tranah's imagination was off and running. Before long, he had built the LCC's own distinctive version of the Little Free Library. It is now residing in front of the Little Red Schoolhouse in the heart of the community.

"It's an exact (not really) rendition of the large Schoolhouse," Bill says, with tongue in cheek. "Actually, it's painted with the actual paint that's on the Schoolhouse and I used the same shingles for the roof, with metal trim to keep it dry."

The premise is simple: Take a Book, Leave a Book ... and it's free. With a small stash of initial books, all varieties, the Schoolhouse Library is open and ready to accept donations of books. There's no charge to take a book, even if you don't have one to contribute right away. (See sidebar for a hint on donating older books.) Over time, the library's inventory will increase.

The Little Free Library organization says that more than 165 million books have been shared through registered Little Free Libraries worldwide, profoundly increasing book access for readers of all ages and backgrounds. The Larsmont Little Free Library is registered as #100108.



Bill Tranah, president of the Larsmont Community Club, built this Little Free Library to mimic the Larsmont Schoolhouse. It stands in front of the Larsmont Schoolhouse on Larsmont Road. Anyone wishing to donate books can drop them off at the Schoolhouse.

The Little Free Library organization has received recognition from the Library of Congress, the National Book Foundation and others for its dedication to expanding book access for all. We hope that all will be able to participate in this program.



Take a Book - Leave A Book

Do you have some old books that you'd like to donate, but you think they may be "too old," meaning they may smell a bit musty or have that older feeling? We found a way to refresh older books. It involves isolating them in a box or covered bucket for about a week along with baking soda, cat litter, newspaper and/or dryer sheets. Here's a link to Lakeside Collection for the remedy that may work for you:

www.lakeside.com/browse/5-Ways-To-Get-The-Musty-Smell-Out-Of-Books

No Annual Meeting This Year - But ...

The Annual Board Meeting of the Larsmont Community Club was not held in May, as is normal, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, on May 19, 2020, a few members of the board were able to meet informally at the Schoolhouse to discuss some pending matters. These are the minutes of that short meeting.

Attendees: Bill Tranah, Paul Hayden, David Glass (for Margaret), Marlys Wisch. There was a general discussion around the concerns of the local small businesses in the Larsmont area.

The business owners are concerned that they are losing business because of LCC's two weekend-a-month craft shows held at the schoolhouse. They believe we draw buyers away from them. We brainstormed some ideas on what we could do to alleviate their concerns. We will not cancel any of the crafters shows and/or refuse to allow them to use the schoolhouse. If the crafters cancel that is their decision. The crafters are members and pay a rental fee to use the building. It is the belief of those present that having the crafters at the

schoolhouse draws people into the area, which can enhance the small businesses since they will see more buyers.

To support area food services, we will inform the crafters they will not be allowed to sell refreshments at their shows. We will also ask the crafters to set up their tents only in the area owned by the Schoolhouse.

In an effort to support all Larsmont businesses, we will contact each small business in the Larsmont area and let them know we would like to promote their business with a sign on the inside of the schoolhouse. Folks will be able to read the signs when shopping at the craft shows, and then go visit the other businesses. The signs, about 8" X 12", will be designed by the business and we will display nicely in the hallway area of the schoolhouse. An attempt will be made to complete this project before the first craft show this year.

Also discussed: a new more prominent sign for the memorial garden, Marlys will contact John of John's Signs to design one for us. We will place it on the side of the bell tower that faces the Scenic Highway.

It will say: Memorial Garden. Cost to be about \$150.

Bill volunteered to mow the grass since D.A.C. is temporarily not available to do the work, due to the Coronavirus.

The final item: the floor of the Schoolhouse needs to be refinished – clean it, buff it, do a thorough wax job. Bill will search for a company to do it.

Notes taken by Bill for Marlys. Respectfully submitted Marlys Wisch, Secretary/Treasurer.

UPDATES

- D.A.C. has communicated that it is now able to mow the grass.
- The original June craft show was canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Several other scheduled events may be canceled due to the pandemic. Watch the website for updates.

Please address any questions/concerns to Marlys Wisch
mwisch@lakeconnections.net

Larsmont Calendar What's Happening at the Little Red Schoolhouse

– July 2020 –

Rummage Sale

Friday & Saturday, July 3-4, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Rummage Sale

Friday & Saturday, July 10-11, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items

Friday & Saturday, July 17 & 18, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– August 2020 –

Agate Bay Crafters

Friday-Saturday, August 7-8, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Primary Election Day – Voting

Tuesday, August 11, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items

Friday-Saturday, August 21-22, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– September 2020 –

Agate Bay Crafters

Friday-Saturday, September 4-5, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items

Friday-Saturday, September 18-19, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

20/20 Art Show

Friday-Saturday, September 25-26, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– October 2020 –

Agate Bay Crafters

Friday-Saturday, October 9-10, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items

Friday-Saturday, October 16-17, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– November 2020 –

General Election Day – Voting

Tuesday, November 3, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items

Friday-Saturday, November 20-21, 9 a.m.
Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

– December 2020 –

Scenic 61 Crafters – Homemade craft items

Friday-Saturday, December 4-5, 9 a.m.
In conjunction with Julebyen

Larsmont Little Red Schoolhouse

Julebyen Christmas Village

Friday-Sunday, December 4-6
(more info at www.julebyen.us)
Knife River, Minnesota

North Shore Scenic Railroad A Top Area Attraction AND a Working Railroad



The North Shore Scenic Railroad stores inactive coal, tank, rock and hopper cars in the off season. **Counterclockwise from top:** On May 30, close to 150 cars moved back into service; cars are separated for crossings, like the one at Penmaralter; up to three tracks of cars are stored near Sonju and Earthwood Inn; spring's first batch of cars bids farewell to Larsmont (officially Milepost 22).



If they ever wanted to make a movie about Larsmont, perhaps a suitable title would be "A Railroad Runs Through It." It seems that there's always been a rail line running parallel to Highway 61 as far back as anyone can remember, but once the ownership of the railroad was assumed by the St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority, it made certain that the tracks would be used for tourism on a regular basis by the North Shore Scenic Railroad.

In a normal year (remember those), the North Shore Scenic Railroad welcomes more than 100,000 guests/passengers. That's a number that has increased three fold in the last decade because of new popular attractions like their Elegant Dinner Trains, Murder Mystery Trains, family oriented Music & Pizza Trains, Thomas the Tank Engine and Christmas City Express.

The Railroad is associated with the Lake Superior Railroad Museum at the St. Louis County Depot in Duluth.

With only a small paid staff the Museum and Railroad are fortunate to have hardworking volunteers who run the trains and do restoration of artifacts in the collection.

After the bright fall colors fade and fall, when the tourist

season winds down, the North Shore Scenic Railroad transforms itself into a commercial freight hauler using its tracks to store

surplus coal, tank, rock and hopper cars. There's a seasonality to products shipped by rail. In winter, without air conditioners running, there's less need for coal at generating stations. NSSR stores those empty coal cars on their line and obtains a small daily fee per car to help support their operation.

Hopper cars from Mexico, empty tank cars from across the U.S and rock cars make up the remainder of the customer base for the Railroad in winter.

Winter railroading is not for the faint of heart. It's difficult work and, like the summer trains, volunteers step up to keep the traffic moving.

"We appreciate our neighbors along the line," says General Manager Ken Buehler. "That's why under normal circumstances we try to break the string of cars in convenient places to accommodate pathways and vistas whenever possible. We were unable to do that with our most recent influx of cars brought about by the rapid COVID19 shutdown of the economy. The cars just came in too fast."

Buehler says neighbors who wish accommodations such as he mentioned should feel free to contact him and discuss what possibilities exist (kenbuehler@lsm.org).

The money raised by the switching fees goes to the North Shore Scenic Railroad to support the work of the Train Museum. Daily storage charges revert to the owner of the line, the St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority, and that helps keep property taxes lower.



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Larsmont History Pictures from an Old Photo Album

We received an envelope from Mary Anne Bennett, Brainerd, Minnesota. "I have been going through some of my mother's (Florence Isackson Keitzscher) photo albums," she said. "The main album has a zillion photos of Larsmont, the lake and so forth."

Two of the pictures are of the Larsmont Schoolhouse, year uncertain. "The schoolhouse photo is one of the few that are labeled," she said.

One image is of a group of students and adults standing in front of the south side door of the schoolhouse. When local schools today use the Schoolhouse as a pioneer classroom, they try to emulate the clothing of old. This photo definitely shows the way children went to school in the early part of the 20th century.

The second picture shows the original decoration of the Larsmont Schoolhouse with its original paint scheme, light gray sides and darker trim.

"Curious, when was the Schoolhouse red?" Mary Anne asked.

These days, in keeping with the stereotypic image of an old one-room schoolhouse, we sport a brilliant Red siding. But alas, it isn't like the original, which went through many changes over the years.

"I found a 'flyer' titled 'Let's Paint The Fire Hall Red,'" says LCC secretary Marlys



Wisch. "It is not fancy, just typed. The building was always a light gray before that. The date to do the painting was September 24, 1966. I could swear the schoolhouse was red before that, but I could not find anything to prove that."

We'd love to hear from anyone who might have a recollection of the colors of the building over the years.

Photos courtesy Mary Ann Bennett



Larsmont - A Great Place to Visit

As a demonstration of our support of the local business community, the Larsmont Community Club has developed a complimentary message board for display within the Little Red Schoolhouse that will hold messages from each participating merchant within the Larsmont boundaries. Our intent is for this message to be displayed year-round so any visitors to the Schoolhouse will see it. We hope that visitors will visit and/or stay in the area and patronize local businesses. After all, there's more to Larsmont than our Little Red Schoolhouse.

Larsmont Cottages on Lake Superior	Burton's Forge & Gallery	Breezy Point Cabins on Lake Superior
Mocha Moose Coffee Café	Lake County Veterinary Clinics	
BE Nelson Design Silversmith	Bob's Cabins on Lake Superior	Penmarallter Campsite
Earthwood Inn, Restaurant & Bar	Sonju Two Harbors	

Come Visit Larsmont

A President's Vision for the Schoolhouse

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reason the blackboards were never put back up and ended up going missing.

Through the years, Dick Murphy would try to keep the outside looking nice by painting one side of the building each year. He took it on to buy the paint himself and work by himself, so every four years the whole school would have a new paint job. That old siding really needed it. It finally became clear that we needed to replace the siding, so we approached Louisiana Pacific and they donated all the materials for the current siding and trim. We wanted the new siding to replicate what was originally used. We always had to be careful with any work we did so as to not change the appearance of the school too much, since it is a registered Historic Site.

The outhouse has been replaced with a nice two holer (men and women separate) with knotty pine interiors. A new garage door on the "fire hall" now replaces the old one. A new front porch with stairs and a ramp makes our building accessible. The back porch and stairs were replaced about 15 years ago, but the roof from two different directions form a valley which meet right above the porch dropping a great deal of water on it every time it rains. We could never get the paint to stick to it, so the deck and treads were replaced with composite decking two years ago. Also, a rain trough was installed to divert the rain water.

The windows needed new caulking around the glass, so a company was hired to remove them and take them to their shop to work on them. Great care needed to be taken so as to not break any of the original window panes. They did a great job, but said we needed to have storm windows made to protect them from the elements. So one of our volunteers made storms and screens for the windows.

We purchased a large school bell and one of our volunteers was going to build a cupola for it on the roof. Before we started, I thought we needed to check with the Historic Site people to make sure this would be okay with them. It was fortunate that I did because they said, "No!" Their reasoning was, "Even though many schools from that time period had school bells in a cupola on the roof, this school did not, and to put one on there now would change the historical picture of what our school was really like." I asked if we could install it on a stand in the yard and they said that would be fine. We can do anything we wanted to on

the grounds. It's only the school building itself that is protected under the Historic Site rules. So a stand was built and a raised Memorial garden built around it. An auto sprinkler system was installed to water the garden.

Other recent projects include an updated Electrical Service Entrance Panel and updated outlets in the classroom and kitchen. A new gas furnace along with new shingles on the roof of the school and the garage were installed. Sheetrock has been put up in the kitchen.

In 2017, we hired a building inspector to go over the entire building to tell us what needed to be done in addition to what had already been done. Most of the things that he suggested have been done now.

The first was to tuck point the chimney. We hired a young man from Duluth, who had a good reputation, to do it for us. He was very excited about the project. He said the original builder probably just went down to the shore of Lake Superior to get his gravel for the cement because it had such beautiful reds and blues that showed in the mortar. He said he would do the same thing so the new would more closely match the old. He was also very impressed with how hard the old mortar was when he tried to grind it out of the joints. He also extended the metal stove pipe up the chimney from the heater and made a new chimney cap to accommodate this change. Now we are in compliance with code.

Another nice addition is the return of the blackboards. A few years ago, when they were going to tear down the old high school in Two Harbors, we were able to salvage some of the blackboards from the building before they started tearing it down. These were installed on one wall in our school with cork board on each end and along the top.

We also had foam board insulation installed under the floor and additional cross bracing between the floor joists. Also the ceiling of the school has been insulated with 6" fiberglass insulation. Until this work was done, there was no insulation in the school, anywhere. It made for some pretty cold days for voting in November.

That's most of what I can remember. I'm sure there has been much more. Things like lots of painting, cleaning and brushing taking place each summer on the annual Project Day. And we have some larger projects on the burner, so thanks again for your time and monetary donations to the LCC. They help keep the building running and useful to the community. I'm proud to lead the group in all of these endeavors.



Bill Tranah
President, Larsmont Community Club

www.larsmont.org

Donations to the Building Fund and Club

Larsmont Community Club

President

Bill Tranah

Vice President

Margaret Glass

Secretary/Treasurer

Marlys Wisch

218-834-5988

mwisch@lakeconnections.net

Building/Grounds

David Falk

Flag Tender

Dale Isackson

Newsletter Editor

Paul L. Hayden

The Larsmont Community Club established the Building Maintenance Fund in 2006 to accept donations from members to be used toward repairs and upkeep of the building and grounds. Donations to the Building Fund have always been one of the most important cash contributions to the club. These funds are always needed. Those who donate are recognized through small certificates displayed in the Schoolhouse.

In addition to the Building Fund, each year members of the club renew their memberships and donate time and materials for the upkeep of the structure and grounds. There is no cash value to these donated hours, however these, too, are some of the most valuable ways support can be given to the endeavors of the LCC.

The board of the Larsmont Community Club continually expresses thanks to all who give of their time and dollars to make sure that Larsmont has a figurehead worthy of praise and admiration.

Cash donations in 2019 were received from

- Judy & Len Beardsley
- Mary Anne Bennett
- Ken Buehler

- Gaye DeBenedetti
- David & Kathleen Falk
- Patrick & Mary Gannon
- Margaret & David Glass
- Rosemary & Tim Guiney
- Charles & Carol Gunder
- Bob Guse
- Steven & Karin Harris
- Paul & Cindy Hayden
- Ronald & Mary Holm
- Dale Isackson
- Ralph & Ruth Anne Jacobson
- Kerry & Warren Jessen
- Wayne Johnson
- Michael Kennedy & Amy Renne
- Duane Madison
- Bill Mohar & Marcia Nieman
- J. Roger Nelson
- Neil & Barbara Normandin
- James Ortman
- Karen & Steven Smith
- Earl & Julie Stewart

Anyone who lives in, visits or even thinks about Larsmont can be a member. You can send your \$15 dues or make donations specifically to the Building Fund through

Always Waving the Flag

One of the distinctive features of the Little Red Schoolhouse is the lighted American Flag that flies day and night over the building. The official Flag Tender is Dale Isackson, who has been responsible for the display for many years. He instituted the shining light and periodically changes flags to new banners if the old one becomes worn. Thanks for all that you do, Dale.



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Larsmont, MN 55616