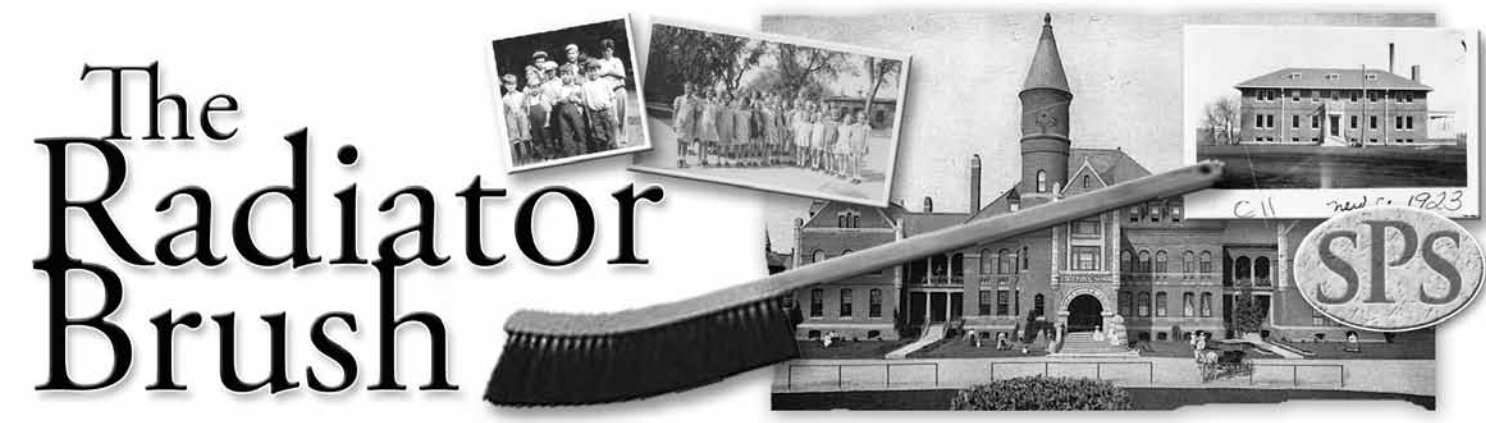




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Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum & Historic Cottage 11 Boys' Dormitory  
 ~ Summer 2012 Newsletter Edition ~

### 2012 TOURISM AWARD GIVEN TO MAXINE RONGLIEN, STATE SCHOOL ORPHANAGE MUSEUM



Maxine Ronglien and Lisa Havlecek, Board member and Owatonna Chamber

- The Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum was founded to remember the Children. Minnesota's only state-run orphanage (1886 - 1945) is today listed on the National Register of Historic Places and averages around 7,000 visitors annually through guided and self-guided tours.
- Visitors can watch videos and see photos and artifacts which tell the story of the children who lived this history. Explore the campus by following the 6-station Outdoor Audio Tours which leads to historic sites such as Cottage 11, the Children's Cemetery, Root Cellar, Flag Pole Plaza, Rock Garden and 1898 School Monument.

Without one woman and her husband none of this would be possible today! After retiring from Federated Insurance, Maxine Ronglien and her husband Harvey began the campaign to restore the history of West Hills in the early 1990's.

Harvey was an orphan at the institution for 11 years. He not only offered a wealth of information, but was also truly passionate about restoring the State School. However as Harvey says, he is only half a pair of scissors without Maxine, the organizing force!

The initial restoration efforts were headed by the reactivated West Hills Commission, a mayoral appointed body. Maxine served as Chairperson of the Commission

for several years.  
 In 1999 the Orphanage Museum officially incorporated and Maxine served as Chairperson and Chief of Operations Officer from then until her recent retirement on June 14, 2011. Maxine continues to hold a position on the Board of Directors for the Orphanage Museum.

To start off the celebration of Maxine's award, Happy Birthday was sung to Harvey in commemoration of his birthday. The Owatonna Chamber of Commerce & Tourism formally thanked Maxine for her passion and more than two decades of dedication and preservation of the State School Orphanage Museum by presenting her with the 2012 Tourism Award.

Congratulations Maxine for everything you and Harvey have done for the State School Orphanage Museum!

### Return Service Requested

If you plan to change your address please let us know as each returned newsletter costs the museum \$0.41 plus \$0.41 to re-send. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and helps us to save \$\$\$.

Interested in purchasing "The Children Remember" or a board on the Memorial Boardwalk? How about purchasing an "apple" for the Apple Giving Tree for C-11? Please fill in the form below. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I'd like to order a copy of The Children Remember documentary video at \$10.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping/handling.

Yes, I'd like to order a copy of The Children Remember documentary DVD at \$25.00 plus \$5.00 for shipping/handling.

Yes, I'd like to order \_\_\_ lush State School afghans at \$49.95 each plus \$7.95 shipping/handling.

Yes, I'd like to purchase \_\_\_ board(s) at \$35.00 each.

Yes, I'd like to make a tax-deductible donation of \_\_\_\_\_. (Please check one:  Donation for C-11  Non-specified)

If you wish to purchase a board, please print clearly the words you wish to have inscribed.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail your check, along with this form to: MN State School Orphanage Museum, 540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna, MN 55060. Checks should be written out to: MN State School Orphanage Museum.

Minnesota State Public School Orphanage Museum & Historic Cottage 11 Boy's Dormitory  
 540 West Hills Circle, Owatonna, MN 55060 | phone: 507-774-7369 | e-mail: museum@ci.owatonna.mn.us | www.orphanagemuseum.com

Important: To ensure receiving future Newsletters, please inform us of any address change.

## 85 BY MAY 5 KICK STARTS ORPHANAGE LEGACY TRUST DRIVE!

**85 BY MAY 5!**

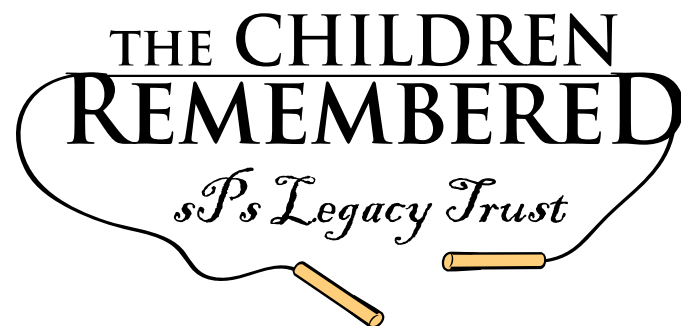
To kick-start *The Children Remembered - Orphanage Legacy Trust*, we are challenging you to help us get the first 85 donations of \$85 by May 5!

Why? On May 5, 2012, Harvey Ronglien, one of the driving forces over the past 20 years in remembering the 10,635 children placed in the State Public School for Dependent and Neglected Children, will turn 85!

This Trust has been established to preserve the legacy Harvey and Maxine Ronglien have created; to help ensure the grounds, buildings and stories of these children—this national treasure—exist for future generations. Watch your mail and our website for more details and opportunities for giving!

**PLEASE SEND YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO:**  
State School Orphanage Museum  
"Legacy Trust Fund"  
540 West Hills Circle  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
or [www.orphanagemuseum.com](http://www.orphanagemuseum.com)

Thank you for the tremendous outpouring of support for the kick-start of our Legacy Trust! Many cards and kind notes were also received. For that, Harvey sends a big "thank you!" Please continue to think of us as we grow our fund. As the future comes, so will the need for the State School **to again be a self-sustaining institution.** We need your help to fund the Trust so that we can staff the museum in the future, and keep the stories of these Children alive.



## A NOTE FROM HARVEY...

Back in the 1980s, before Harvey Ronglien spearheaded the State School restoration, he was a "Press Contributor" for the Owatonna People's Press. One of his favorite subjects was writing about State School history. Following is a column Harvey wrote May 10, 1988, yet remains insightful today...24 years later.



*A photo taken on the stairs of Cottage 11, around 1937. C11 boys and an Assistant Matron, Harvey on far left.*

### TREATED AS ONE

I have a picture in front of me taken about 1937 on the steps of C-11 at the State School. There are 26 children in this picture. I only know what happened to 11 of them and it's tragic. Two prison suicides, one murdered, one shot by police after prison escape, one serving a life sentence for murder, two alcoholics, two have mental problems, one insane, and one who refuses to talk about the past.

Why should this small group turn out so tragically? Were they born bad? Of course not. We're all born with the capacity for strong self-esteem, but somewhere along the line it's programmed out of us.

The school was an institution of 500 children from babies to 18 years of age. Let's just focus in real close on these 11 boys. What made them tick? What got inside **of them to so affect their later lives?**

The circumstances varied and through no fault of their own, each must have gone through a traumatic experience to even end up at the school. Every one of these boys were at the school at least six years, most up to 11-12 years. Consequently, everyone in this group was institutionalized. I know, I'M ONE OF THEM.

Webster's definition of institutionalized: "To accustom so firmly to the care and supervised routine of an institution as to make incapable of managing a life outside."

Let's be realistic - life itself and the unwritten rules were very similar to prison life. We didn't snitch, show weakness, think for ourselves, or cross authority. You knew your place in the pecking order, the strong ruled. If we could get away with it, it wasn't wrong. No individual identity - we even dressed alike. We worked, played, slept, ate, fought, laughed, and cried shoulder-to-shoulder. Privacy? Come on now - apologize for even thinking it! Rather, these boys were continually reminded that they should be thankful to be fed, clothed and sheltered. Lack of emotional nourishment gave them an orphan's sensibility. Justice to them was spelled, "Just us!"

Children aren't meant to be warehoused. They are human beings, each with their own identity. Yes, we were all unique, yet in the institution we did not enjoy that luxury. We were all treated as one. A value system that is quite different from a normal family.

Without question, this institutional mentality had a profound effect on these 11 boys' future. Studies show that when there is no mother or mother substitute, there is no possibility of a normal child. In the forgotten mists of childhood, events that are long-forgotten have a tendency to leave scars.

When these 11 left the confines of the school and entered the mainstream of society, they had to play the cards they were dealt. In their formative years their characters were NOT built on the foundation of love, patience, and understanding. Rather, they were forged on the bedrock of cunning, conning, and fists.

You don't have to have a degree in child psychology to realize that love and all it entails was the number one ingredient missing in these boys' lives. Psychologist Alfred Adler, an authority on child behavior in the '30s made this remark: "Even in a model orphanage, the children live like inmates. Emotional starvation is inseparable from institutional life." He warned, "There is danger ahead."

The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be loved and appreciated. Love is a simple and beautiful word - probably the most significant word in the history of mankind. Unfortunately these boys never received love. When they left the school they were physically strong, but unbeknown to them, emotionally handicapped. Therein lies the tragedy of these 11 boys.



*71 years later Harvey Ronglien cutting the ribbon, opening Cottage 11 as a restored historic site. Also pictured are his wife Maxine along with Mayor Tim Kuntz. May 14, 2009*

Certainly there were success stories, too, but we have focused on all 11 boys who grew up together in C-11. And speaking on the positive side, in a study on the behavior of orphans as adults, I found it interesting that in the final analysis, orphans in general have a striking lack of self-pity, anger or bitterness. Rather, they have strong feelings of compassion for others and gratitude for their own good fortune. In that spirit, I share these thoughts with you.

## GREAT NEWS FOR OUR CONTINUED RESTORATION...

Many of you are familiar with our documentary, "The Children Remember." Those of you who own or have seen this feature length film can certainly attest to the stirring content. In the process of creating this film, 13 former State School children were interviewed in 2002 in the former Administration Building.

Indeed it would be difficult to say anything against this award-winning documentary, but one thing that might be said is, "it is too bad it is not longer." In fact nearly 25 hours of footage were shot for this film, and at a ninety minute finished length, it seems clear that there is a wealth of knowledge in those unused portions of interviews.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to make that footage available for researchers and the families of former State Schoolers? Just think of all that we might learn from that footage. The unfortunate dilemma is that the movie was shot on Beta Max film, and Beta players are prohibitively expensive. To make matters worse, those tapes are fragile. The more they age and the more they are played, the more likely it is that one will fail. History could be lost!

Earlier this year, in an effort to further preserve the history of the State School, a grant application was submitted to the Minnesota Legacy Amendment Commission. As a result, the Orphanage Museum has been awarded a grant in the sum of \$6,498.00. This money will afford the purchase of a much needed, up-to-date computer system capable of converting this footage to a digital format. Additionally, the grant will allow the Museum to hire a part-time employee to operate the equipment.

Once digitized, this wealth of knowledge will be available in our research archives (located at Cottage 11) along with the other information we have gathered. It can be written to DVD to provide a backup, and we

hope to use parts of this footage to create other short videos and presentations. Like all the things we do, we do this in the hope that we can all learn from this history, and remember the children.

## MEET OUR NEWEST TOUR GUIDES, KATHY FORCE AND BARRY GROSNECK.

### Kathy Force

Kathy could not have begun her time as a tour guide on a better date; her first day on the team was the day of our reunion, September 4, 2011. Previous to this date Kathy had visited the museum, she said that she was so impressed, that when fellow volunteer Wanda McLagan mentioned the opportunity, she decided immediately to give it a try.

Kathy was raised in Illinois, graduating from Illinois State University with a degree in elementary education. She later moved to Owatonna in 1968 where she worked at Federated Insurance and in the school district. She relates that her parents grew up in the 1930's and that both were orphaned. Her father was taken in at a Catholic orphanage in Chicago, while her mother was raised by Kathy's great-grandmother.

Today Kathy works as a substitute teacher, volunteers at the Orphanage Museum and Owatonna Hospital, enjoys crossword puzzles, sewing and going to garage sales.

### Barry Grosneck

Barry is our newest tour guide and archivist, having started in October 2011. On Barry's days in the cottage, when there are no guests, you can find him hard at work cataloging the Museum's many photographs. When examining his work, one can hardly believe that he only just began using the computer seriously 5 months ago. What an accomplishment.

Barry is also a transplant to our community, growing up in Wisconsin, Barry moved to Owatonna in \_\_\_\_\_

I AM STILL WAITING FOR THIS FROM BARRY...  
WILL GET THIS IN ASAP.

## WORD OF DECEASED

Louise Olson  
Floyd Rand  
Alice May Robinson  
Elna "Sally" Lorraine Traxler  
Stuart M Minks  
Charlotte (Vought) Marx  
James Gulbrandson  
Alice (Kochevar) Crotty

## DONORS – THROUGH 3-27-2012

Jerry Robinson  
Jeff Springborg  
United Methodist Church  
Deloyce Anderson  
Elaine Ferlaak  
Michael & Debra Newman  
Fred Herr  
Donald & Diane Matejcek  
Nina Zak  
Victor Laskowske  
Harriet Sola  
Russell W Gross  
Summer Ratcliff  
John & Joyce Winters

Lorene Rand – this was a memorial... to whom? More research needed.  
Faye Alger  
Holtman Family  
Shirley Fulmer  
Jan Dusek  
Joan Paulson

## MEMORIALS

Harriet Grunklee  
Raymond Dusek  
Harriet E Paulson

## GRATEFUL FOR RESTORATION

"Hello! I'm so grateful this school orphanage has been 'kept' in repair for all of the descendants to come and visit. I cried to see where Grandpa had to live and so glad he was OK with all of his life. He worked from the orphanage for farmers and said he got a good education. He tried to run away once. Three of his brothers were also there, separated, and a sister was with an uncle. He later reunited with his father and siblings. His mother passed away when he was about 4 years old. He was born in 1892, and was sent at about 4 – 5 years." Faye Alger, Iowa City, Iowa

Why not come visit this summer, stand on the steps of C11 (where these boys once stood), come inside and see how these boys lived, and connect with this history.

## RECENT QUOTES FROM VISITORS IN C11...

Thank you Harvey!! Priceless.

Eye opening

Thank you so much Harvey, you were great to talk to.

Recent quotes from visitors to the Museum...

This wonderful museum is an education in itself and a unique walk back in time. – Miller Family, Ham Lake, MN.

I was here before and had to come back. – Becker Family, Sauk Rapids, MN.

It's good to remember. – Dixon Family, Shakopee, MN.