



*The Researcher* is the official newsletter of the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.

It is published six times per year in August, October, December, February, April and June.

The Research Center is the local history archive for Sheboygan County and surrounding areas. It is a repository for documents and images.

### **SCHRC Board of Directors**

Joseph Zagozen,  
President

Terri Yoho,  
Vice President

Dr. James Kuplic,  
Secretary

Kevin Widder,  
Treasurer

Tony Gentine  
Angela Miller

William Reiss

Steven Schmitt

Bridgitt Zielke

### **SCHRC Staff**

Steven Rogstad,  
Executive Director &  
Editor-In-Chief

Mary Parrish,  
Administrative Assistant

Katie Reilly, Lead Researcher

Michele Barry, Researcher



Visit [schrc.org](http://schrc.org)!



View our  
online media!

## **Welcome New Members**

Shirley Bartelt — Dixon, IL

Viki Davis — Sheboygan



## **Program Schedule**

See [schrc.org](http://schrc.org) or Facebook for more details.

### **Gravestone Cleaning Workshops**

*Please call (920) 467-4667 to register.*

Saturday, September 20 – Waldo Cemetery, Waldo from 9 to 10 am

Saturday, October 4 – Union Cemetery, Plymouth from 9 to 10 am

### **Taproom History**

*at Racer's Hall, W4408 County Road C, Plymouth — 6:30 pm*

*Meet regional authors who will discuss their new books.*

August 21 – Richard A. Dykstra will tell what it was like growing up in rural Wisconsin.

### **Book Club**

*at 517 Monroe Street, Sheboygan Falls — 1 to 2:30 pm*

*Please call (920) 467-4667 to register.*

Thursday, September 18 – *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism* (2009) by Barbara Weisberg

### **Annual Meeting**

*at The Wade House, W7965 State Highway 23, Greenbush, WI 53026*

*11 am to 1 pm*

Friday, October 10 – Steve Michaels presents “*Sheboygan County's Last Union Veteran*”

### **Lincoln Seminar**

*at Racer's Hall, W4408 County Road C, Plymouth — 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm*

*Steven Rogstad presents 4 sessions on the “Lincoln Douglas Debates”*

This year's Lincoln Seminar examines the political context for the debates, identify who the Illinois voters were, discuss the various topics both candidates introduced in the debates, and study the rhetorical ploys utilized by both candidates to further their political positions. Many persons maintain that the ideas expressed by Lincoln before and during the debates foreshadowed the American Civil War and threatened American social order. Learn what is true about the debates, and what is not.

October 7

October 14

October 21

October 28

# Let's Develop Our Center

As we approach the end of summer, it is amazing how fast this year is moving along. There are still several programs and activities scheduled for this fall, including book club, gravestone cleaning workshops, the 2025 Annual Meeting, and the Lincoln Seminar.

This year the Seminar will focus on the Lincoln–Douglas senatorial debates of 1858. They traditionally have been held up as a stellar example of what campaign debating should be in American politics. It may be surprising to learn that some of the rhetoric and behavior of the candidates did not meet that expectation. In fact, Lincoln and Douglas were so contentious that fights broke out, name–calling occurred, and conspiracy theories were leveled at each other. I hope you will consider attending to learn about the very first American political debates that were transcribed and published in newspapers across the nation.



Details about the four sessions are listed on page 2 of the newsletter.

The annual Membership Drive occurs next month. Revenue raised from renewals represents 10% of the Center's operating budget. Therefore, it is necessary for the SCHRC to retain its members, and continually add new ones to the roster. Renewing your membership says that you identify with the organization's mission and support its collections, programming, community activities, educational outreach, and research services. Each of these areas require adequate funding for long–term sustainability. Please renew your membership this year and consider a higher level of membership. You can also help by sponsoring others for membership and expand the reach of the SCHRC.

This year has seen an increase in large–scale scanning projects that bring revenue into the organization. We are currently digitizing records for Sheboygan County, but recently have been approached by two other large organizations to assist with possibly digitizing their archives. We need volunteers who are willing to scan records. It is very easy work and we do thorough training. A description of the work is found on page 9. This may be a perfect project for an individual or group.

We still could use a handyman that would be able to volunteer a few hours on an as–needed basis for light maintenance and repair of buildings. We are now in three buildings and we could use an individual that would be willing to perform some scraping, caulking, painting, watering plants, weeding, and light repair and maintenance work. Perhaps you are a retired custodian, or know someone who is. As occupants in the Cole Historic District, we need to keep our buildings in great shape!

We are also looking for a person who may be willing to do some research connected with questions and queries we receive on a regular basis. If you enjoy looking for answers to questions, solving riddles, or delving into the past, this work might be something you would enjoy.

I look forward to seeing you at our programs and events this fall.

Keep checking the SCHRC website – [www.schrc.org](http://www.schrc.org) – for updates.

As always, thank you for all you do to support and help develop our Research Center!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Rogstad". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Steven K. Rogstad  
Executive Director  
[steverogstad@schrc.org](mailto:steverogstad@schrc.org)



*SS Ancon, the first ship through the newly opened Panama Canal in 1914, (U.S. Army Core of Engineers image) public domain*

Beginning in 1901, a series of rapid-fire events led to the creation of what was once called “one of the seven wonders of the modern world.” After the assassination of President William McKinley, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt entered the White House and quickly declared his support for an isthmus canal.

In 1903, Panama declared independence from Columbia. The United States formally recognized the Republic of Panama two days later, and deployed Navy ships to protect the new country’s autonomy. The Canal Treaty was signed in November of 1903, giving the United States rights to build a canal for an annual payment of \$250,000.

On March 3, 1904, the United States Army Core of Engineers arrived in Panama with President Roosevelt giving them orders to “make the dirt fly.”

As the largest engineering project of its time, the Panama Canal was an intricate system of locks, dams, lakes, and excavations. Designed to lift ships through Panama’s rugged

mountains and lower them into shallow coastal bays, it stretched from Atlantic to Pacific and across the continental divide.

A project of this magnitude needed hundreds of smart, well-trained engineers, and Edward F. Sinz, a native of Glenbeulah, was

one such talent.

Born in 1883, Sinz studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin where he crafted a plan to drain and develop the Sheboygan Marsh, an experience which would later serve him well.

Beginning about 1905, and over the next three years, Ed wandered back and forth between Panama



*Edward F. Sinz, native of Glenbeulah, Wisconsin and engineer on the Panama Canal project. (SCHRC Collection)*

and Sheboygan County working on the “Big Ditch.” He even brought his new bride, Agnes, to live in the Canal Zone where they enjoyed the lifestyle of the skilled workers; lives filled with pleasant social and cultural events, good medical facilities and multiple amenities, a world apart from those available for the common West Indian worker.

Ed and Agnes left Panama for good in September 1908 returning to the U.S. for a brief time where Sinz formed a partnership with Jerry Donohue and his engineering and surveying company.

But, soon after the Sinz family left for Cuba, where he worked on the Cuba Eastern Railroad (now the Guantanamo and Western). Following the Spanish American War, many railroads, including the Cuba Eastern, were built in Cuba with money from American investors. The family returned again to the United States in January 1911.

This time (1912) Sinz did a bit of surveying in the county with, once again, with his associate, Jerry Donohue. His work is on file at the Sheboygan County Surveyor’s office. Never one to stay anywhere for too long, Sinz left the Donohue Company in 1913 and moved to Central Aruirre, Puerto Rico, about twenty miles south of San Juan. There, he worked at a sugar refinery for many years.

One last move came in the 1930s when Sinz retired to Crystal River, Florida, where he lived for the next thirty years. He died there on October 29, 1968, at 85.

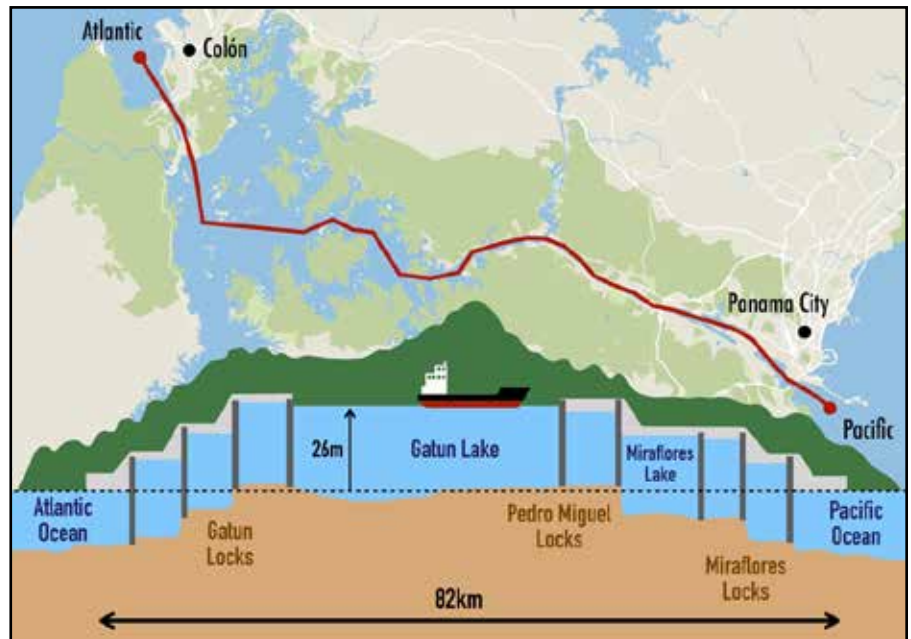


American involvement in the construction of the Panama Canal lasted ten years from 1904 to 1914 and cost American taxpayers \$352,000,000.00. After years of wrangling, control of the canal was transferred back to Panama in December 1999, but, it was an accomplishment that turned America into a global superpower. And one young man from the wilds of Glenbeulah had a hand in its creation. 🍀

Left: U.S. Army Core at the bottom of the Culebra Cut, the continental divide. (U.S. Army Core of Engineers image) public domain

### Panama Canal Facts

- Ships traveling between New York and San Francisco save 7,872 miles by using the Panama Canal instead of going around Cape Horn.
- The Atlantic entrance to the Canal is 22-1/2 miles west of the Pacific entrance.
- Due to the reclining “S” shape of the Isthmus of Panama, the sun rises from the Pacific and sets in the Atlantic Ocean.
- On August 23, 1928, Richard Halliburton swam through the Canal, paying a toll of 36 cents since his weight was 150 pounds.
- The cruise ship Rhapsody of the Sea established a toll record in 1997 when it paid \$153,662.66 to cross the waterway.
- In 1963, the Panama Canal for the first time starts operating 24 hours, thanks to the introduction of high mass fluorescent lighting



A schematic of the Panama Canal, illustrating the sequence of locks and passages. Courtesy of <https://www.havefunwithhistory.com/facts-about-the-panama-canal/>

- An expansion of the Panama Canal completed in 2016 aimed to address the growing demands of global trade by accommodating larger vessels known as “New Panamax” ships.
- More than 60,000,000 pounds of dynamite was used to excavate and construct the Panama Canal.
- The average transit time for a vessel passing through the Panama Canal is approximately 8 to 10 hours, although this can vary depending on various factors such as vessel size, traffic congestion, and weather conditions.
- Roughly 40 ships transit the canal every day. February 29, 1968, saw the highest number of transits, with 65 ships crossing.
- The entire canal stretches 48 miles.

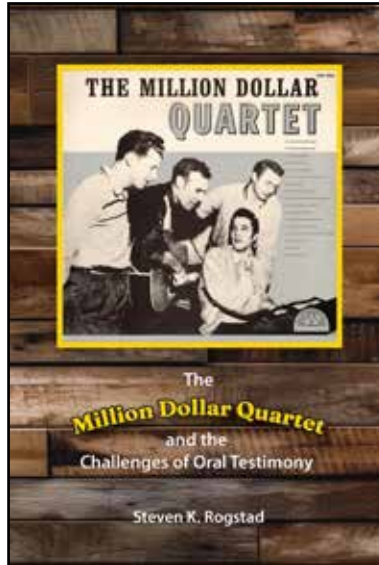
## Using Reminiscence in Research

By Steven K. Rogstad

I initially envisioned my new book, *The Million Dollar Quartet and the Challenges of Oral Testimony*, as an essay about what occurred when Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, and Jerry Lee Lewis sang harmony for a few hours in Memphis in late 1956. A cursory review of the general facts led me to believe that the story would lend itself to a case study about how to analyze reminiscence when conducting historical research.

Proceeding forward with that idea in mind, I initiated a systematic study into available recollections left to us by people who were actually in the studio when the quartet gathered. What I uncovered is what I describe in the book as “a confusing jumble of fragmented reminiscences given long after the fact that have led to a mishmash of a story that has been patchworked together in hodgepodge fashion.” I soon found that the episode merited a longer examination that resulted in a book-length treatment not only about the episode itself, but how reminiscence can be used when you have nothing else to work with.

Like primary documents (i.e., letters, journals, diaries, emails, video/audio interviews, newspapers), recollections have to be compared and reconciled, if possible, with other evidence and known facts. They should not be accepted at face value. The noted Wisconsin historian William B. Hesseltine instructed his students to inspect *every* document as if it is intended to *deceive*. Therefore, every document, audio, or video that contains



first-hand recollections should be corroborated or verified whenever possible for factual accuracy before being accepted as correct or true.

Here are some tips for using reminiscence:

- Note the timing of the recollection. Is it given near an anniversary of an event? If so, remember that an interviewer always wants new pieces of information that has not been revealed before, and that it is an opportunity for a person to have their fifteen minutes of fame. If it is new information, why was it withheld until now? Does the information agree with other previously-known facts about the event? If the person supplying the recollection has provided information in the past, why wasn't this new information included at that time?

- Be aware of timelines. How long after the event were the reminiscences given? Memories do not improve with time. Recollections offered soon after

an event are usually far more trustworthy. Memories offered decades after an event need to be viewed with caution.

- Identify reasons for the recollection. Why are the memories being offered? Are they part of an interview, autobiography, or biography. People will generally make themselves look far more favorable or important in these works, so public and self-image often becomes a deterrent to accuracy. Always remember that a person is telling you what *they* want you to believe.

- Look for patterns. If other persons are mentioned in a reminiscence, look up their dates of death. It is common that a person will provide information only after the people mentioned in it are deceased. Why? Very often it is because there are no survivors to refute or challenge their recollections.

- Understand relationships. Find out if the people mentioned in recollections are friends, relatives, critics, or enemies. Each category can carry with it reasons why it is being offered. Again, you may find that a memory is offered only after a friend or critic has died because that friend had a different opinion or perspective. Making the recollection public during their lifetime may have jeopardized a friendship or caused unwanted controversy with people who had a different story to tell.

These are just a few important aspects of using and analyzing reminiscence. A researcher wants

to arrive as close to the truth about a historical episode, person, or family history. Whether researching for biography, genealogy, the history of a building, or recapturing history for a large-scale study, reminiscence provides color and human interest where documents often do not. They allow us to understand the psychologies of the principle players in a drama.

However, those psychologies can often be inadvertently incorrect

or intentionally deceptive. Researchers must be continually aware that informants will exaggerate their importance, inflate their participation, make themselves appear more superior at the expense of making others appear less credible, overtly distort the truth, and even lie.

The goal for scholars is to arrive as close to the truth of a subject as possible by objectively reviewing facts, critically

analyzing reminiscence, and exposing lies, distortions, and wrongful conclusions along the way. Question everything. Be suspicious of every document and recollection. Remove yourself emotionally from the subject. Information should be viewed objectively, without bias. Play no favorites. Every person is a suspect for deceit.

Above all, question, question, question. 🍀



# Happy RETIREMENT

Richard Stoelb retired from his staff position as Researcher on July 31. He started as a volunteer many years ago and was added to the staff in 2019. His regular work has included answering research quests, writing articles for this newsletter, and authoring books. Dick became somewhat of a staff writer for the newsletter. He wrote stories about a myriad of local subjects, including Sheboygan connections to World War 2 and Korean War. He authored the book, *Sheboygan County's Unforgotten: A Story of Our Korean War Soldiers*. He has been a beloved researcher by people who lived far away and relied on him to provide answers to genealogical and investigative questions. He has been a stalwart member of the SCHRC staff, whose knowledge and research abilities will be sorely missed. Thank you, Dick, for your great work and help in moving the organization forward. Congratulations and enjoy retirement! 🍀



Left: Time to celebrate!

Center: Dick with volunteer Marge Giesen.

Right: Dick with SCHRC board president Joe Zagozen and vice-president Terri Yoho.

## Genealogical Journey: Honoring a Revolutionary Legacy

By Mary B. Parrish

In July 2024, Jarret Parrish, son of SCHRC Administrative Assistant Mary Parrish, traveled to New York to conduct genealogical research on the Meigs and Maltby family lines. His efforts led him to the Half-Shire Historical Society in Richland, New York, where he collaborated with its president, Shawn P. Doyle. Through Doyle's support, Jarret connected with extended relatives and resolved several long-standing family mysteries. Notably, he identified numerous previously unknown photographs in the Society's archive.

During his visit, Jarret traveled to Barnard Cemetery, located north of Pulaski, New York, to pay respects at the burial site of his sixth great-grandfather, Dr. Jesse Meigs. Although Jesse's final resting place was confirmed, a gravestone was absent.

Jesse Meigs, born on March 7, 1763, in Connecticut, was the



Jarret Parrish and his fourth cousin, twice removed, Margaret (Hollis) Kastler. Jarret was able to identify numerous photos for her.

youngest child of Dr. John and Rebecca (Clark) Meigs. He married Hannah Pritchard on February 6, 1782, in Bethlehem, Connecticut, and together they had eight children. A respected physician in Litchfield County, Connecticut, Jesse's service in the Revolutionary War is documented in *Connecticut Men in the Revolution*, where he is listed as a member of Captain David Leavenworth's Company in Colonel Mosley's Regiment, stationed at Horseneck. By 1807, he had relocated to Richland Township, Oswego County, New York, where he remained until his death on April 22, 1838.

Jesse's grandson, John Decraso Parrish, immigrated to Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, in 1844. John was among the early settlers with ties to Oswego County. Other pioneering families from Oswego and nearby Jefferson County that settled in Sheboygan County include Carpenter, Harmon, Underhill, Bemis, Eastman, Curtiss, and Thackray.



John Decraso Parrish, grandson of Jesse Meigs, was a pioneer of Sheboygan County.

In April 2025, Doyle informed Jarret that the Half-Shire Historical Society had secured a gravestone for Jesse Meigs, with a dedication

ceremony planned by the Sons of the American Revolution for July 5. Jarret and Mary returned to New York to attend the event and commemorate Jesse's contributions.

During their visit, they met Pulaski Mayor Jan Tighe. Interestingly, her parents, Norbert and Norma Schell, resided in Sheboygan for 38 years, with Norbert serving as an administrator at Lakeshore Technical Institute (now Lakeshore College). The trip also provided further opportunities to connect with distant cousins and local historians, deepening the Parrish family's rich historical narrative. 🍀



Jarret and Mary Parrish pose with the newly dedicated gravestone of Pvt. Jesse Meigs.

We're seeking enthusiastic volunteers to assist with large-scale scanning projects that will help preserve and organize important documents and photographs. Whether you're tech-savvy or simply eager to contribute, your time and support will make a meaningful impact. Here is what you can expect:



- Flatbed scanning and/or document-fed scanning.
- Editing and organizing files.
- Training will be provided.
- Flexible shifts are available to accommodate different schedules.
- Enhances your depth of knowledge of Sheboygan County history.
- Raises revenue for the Research Center.

If you're interested in being part of this valuable initiative, we'd love to hear from you today! Call Mary at (920) 467-4667.



## SCHRC Book Club

If you are interested in history - whether it is local, regional, or national history - the Center has an exciting and fun activity. The SCHRC is hosting a book club that will have historical themes.



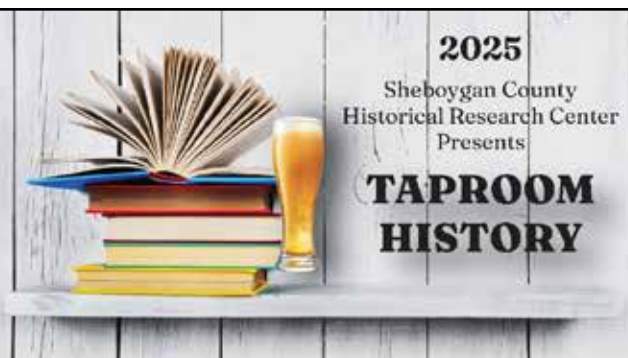
We will examine *Talking to the Dead: Kate and Maggie Fox and the Rise of Spiritualism* (2009) by Barbara Weisberg. Participants are responsible for obtaining their own books.

**Thursday, September 18  
1 to 2:30 pm**



**Register today!**

The Book Club will be held at 517 Monroe Street, Sheboygan Falls, in the lower level meeting room. Park in the back parking lot.



**2025**  
Sheboygan County  
Historical Research Center  
Presents  
**TAPROOM HISTORY**

### AUGUST 21

MEET AUTHOR RICHARD A. DYKSTRA  
Join author and motivational speaker Richard Dykstra as he tells what it was like growing up in rural Wisconsin. He operated his own engineering firm, had dozens of technical papers and books published, and was an inaugural member of the Cedar Grove-Belgium High School Hall of Fame.



**Program begins at 6:30 pm**

EVENT LOCATION



W4408 County Road C  
Plymouth

HOSTED BY

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTER

GENEROUSLY  
SPONSORED BY



H.C. Denison Co.  
Serving Investors Since 1928

# Volunteer Spotlight

**Marge Giesen**  
Sheboygan, WI



## **Tell us a little about yourself.**

I grew up in southern Minnesota and moved to Sheboygan in 1972 where I started a job at The Sheboygan Clinic as a med tech in the laboratory. I met my wonderful husband Andy there and we stayed put in Sheboygan. I was able to retire in 2011.

## **How long have you been volunteering at the Center?**

I have been a volunteer at the Center since 2022.

## **What prompted you to volunteer?**

My husband passed away in 2018 and I began looking for volunteer opportunities. I am interested in history and genealogy and the Center sounded like it would be a good fit for me. I had met Steve Rogstad on the SCHRC bus trip to Springfield. We connected again when Steve asked me to help with the Tremendous Event held in 2022.

## **What are your favorite projects to work on at the Center?**

I enjoy scanning photos and other documents. I have scanned photos from the Sheboygan Press archives. Volunteer Ken Richter and I are currently working on the huge scanning project for the Sheboygan County

Clerk's office. Board of Supervisor proceedings from as far back as 1872 have been scanned so far.

## **Tell us about why you enjoy genealogy?**

I enjoy genealogy because of the satisfaction it gives to be able to find that missing link that connects you to your ancestors and the past. My own maiden name was very usual and my paternal grandfather never spoke about his parents or childhood. Through Ancestry I was able to connect with the grandchildren of one of his sisters and finally make a connection to his past.

## **What do you think is the value of preserving and sharing local history?**

It provides invaluable lessons and perspectives on the human experience. Harry S. Truman was quoted as saying, "The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know." Preserving local history highlights the idea that understanding the past is crucial for comprehending the present.

## **Is there a particular historical figure or event you feel personally connected to?**

I guess I would say WWII as both of my parents served in the military at that time.

# Collection Spotlight



The *Plymouth Post*, a weekly newspaper in the German Language and printed by Wandersleben & Schmidt in Plymouth, was in existence for just shy of 54 years. It was located at 402 Main Street (now Plymouth Glass). The paper was founded by brothers Charles and Henry Wandersleben on October 2, 1886. The paper was set up by hand, letter by letter, and printing was done on an old Washington hand press. Charles' grandson, Karl Schmidt took over Henry's share in 1937. The paper suspended service in October of 1940.

Did you know that the Research Center holds perhaps the only surviving copies of the Plymouth Post German Newspaper? Volunteers John Dees and Peter Fetterer rescued the bundled, soot covered papers from an attic space above the forge in a blacksmith shop in Plymouth. The original papers were painstakingly translated to English by a group of dedicated volunteers and indexed for efficient, easy research. Obituaries, marriages, and property transfers were indexed individually and in separate binders. We did not receive the first six years of the paper, so our holdings include papers from 1892–1940.



Sheboygan County  
Historical Research Center  
518 Water Street  
Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #19  
SHEBOYGAN FALLS, WI 53085

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**THE RESEARCH CENTER  
WILL BE CLOSED FOR**

**ARCHIVING**

**September 15 – 26**

