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# MINNESOTA HISTORY Interpreter

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for county and local historical societies and heritage preservation commissions

Finland Minnesota Historical Society



Wilfred and Elina Bodie ran the Finland Cooperative Company store from 1932 to 1940. Oral history interviews for the local historical society by intern Julie Lindberg documented life at the co-op, founded 90 years ago in Finland, Minn.

## Summer help

### Internships stretch tight budgets, sow community seeds

For University of Minnesota student Julie Lindberg, from tiny Finland, Minn., summer jobs in her Lake County hometown were scarce. So she jumped at the chance last spring to land a paid internship with the Finland Minnesota Historical Society.

Her assignment: research the history of the Finland Cooperative Company store, conduct oral history

interviews with co-op members and former workers, and prepare an exhibit at the Finland Heritage Site. That's a tall order for one summer's work. But that's exactly the point of the internship program that made her job possible. Known as PIP, the Partners Internship Program is designed to provide students with significant job experiences at nonprofit organizations - experiences

that further their personal and educational growth.

### About PIP

Funded by the Otto Bremer Foundation, PIP was created in 1990. Ten years later it became a program of the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA), a group of 17 regional colleges and universities that for 30 years has offered students off-campus experiential learning opportunities.

PIP makes internship grants to nonprofit agencies in Minnesota, North Dakota and northwestern Wisconsin. Each recipient organization hires an undergraduate college student who manages a project designed by the organization.

"One of our goals is to help prepare a future workforce for nonprofit organizations," explains Jacquelyn Geier, HECUA's director of programs. "Most college students don't know very much about the nonprofit sector. These internships get them excited about doing that kind of work."

### Much to gain

Students aren't the only ones to benefit from PIP. Host organizations can tackle projects they wouldn't have time for without extra help. "Our staff is too small and too busy to concentrate on any one project," says Marlene Wisuri of the Carlton County Historical Society, which hired PIP intern Joe Malkovich in the summer of 2001 to survey the county's rural

Summer help continued on page 2

## Summer help *continued from page 1*

schools. A Cloquet native and history major at Gustavus Adolphus College, Malkovich conducted oral histories, developed a questionnaire to gather people's written recollections and mapped the locations of all the schools. As a result of his work countywide, donations to the society's collection of school photographs grew dramatically.

**"One of our goals is to prepare a future workforce for nonprofit organizations."**

*Jacquelyn Geier, HECUA*

PIP internships are particularly helpful to fledgling organizations such as the Probstfield Farm Living

History Foundation, established several years ago to rehabilitate the homestead of Clay County agricultural

pioneer Randolph Probstfield as an interpretive center. To help lay the groundwork for programming, the foundation in the summer of 2002 hired a forestry student to conduct a botanical inventory of trees on the site. The student's work served as the basis for a proposed nature walk for local students.

His project also put him in touch with the Clay County Historical

Society and Northwest Minnesota Historical Center for research, with Probstfield Elementary School in Moorhead for preparation of a teacher's handbook, and with River Keepers, a Red River area environmental organization. Such experience gave the student firsthand knowledge of how nonprofit groups network with other nonprofit and governmental organizations to meet their goals.

The Goodhue County Historical Society put its PIP intern, Gabriela Fosado from the College of St. Benedict, to good use developing the society's Multicultural Day Camps. Previously a one-week affair at the county

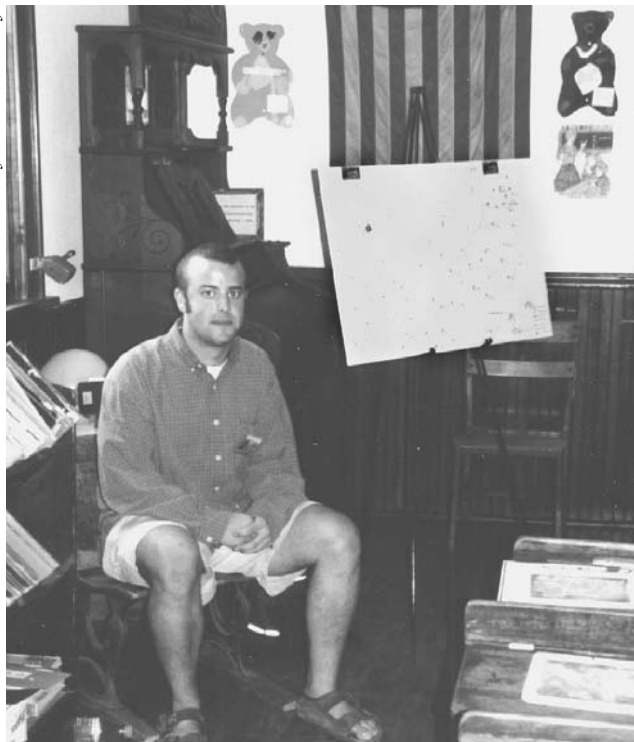


**Intern Gabriela Fosado (left) led Pine Island elementary students in a dance during a Multicultural Day Camp session on Goodhue County's German heritage.**

museum, the day camp program, with Fosado's help in the summer of 2001, went on the road for seven one-day sessions in six cities around the county. "It was a good way to raise our visibility in all corners of the county," says GCHS educator Johanna Grothe. "And Gaby made a lot of contacts with people who have become sources for other society programs."

### **Strengthening connections**

For Julie Lindberg, working on the Finland Co-op project meant more than helping to build a record of one of the community's key organizations. It meant sharing a family legacy: her grandmother had worked at the co-op store on and off over a period of 60 years. "Julie capitalized on her family ties in the area to set up her interviews," says Adrienne Falcón, who oversaw the project. "Because she knew many of them personally, she was able to make people feel that their stories were valuable, that they had something important to contribute. All her subjects found the experience very rewarding. As a result, they were very generous with donations to the exhibit. We got photos, posters,



**PIP intern Joe Malkovich, stationed at the Little Red School House during the Carlton County Fair in 2001, interviewed fairgoers about their rural school experiences.**

food containers, member shares, even co-op workers' uniforms."

Says HECUA's Geier, "These internships are a great way to get young people involved. For students working in their own hometowns, it's especially enriching. They get to know their communities in new ways. For host organizations, the internships provide a means for engaging a younger generation in their programs and services."

**How PIP works**

Each year PIP makes 20 internship grants to nonprofit agencies submitting project proposals. A committee of representatives from the nonprofit sector, higher education and the pool of past grant recipients makes the selection from more than 100 organizations that apply annually. The grant pays for the intern's full-time summer employment for a period of 10 weeks.

**"These internships are a great way to get young people involved."**

*Jacquelyn Geier, HECUA*

Every nonprofit grant recipient does its own recruitment, advertising the project position and interviewing



One of Julie Lindberg's best resources for her research on the Finland co-op was her grandmother, Lila Hangartner, who worked at the store over a period of 60 years.

candidates. Projects must be managed from development to implementation by the student intern. This gives all interns an opportunity to be in a position of leadership, demonstrate creativity and initiative, shape their own learning experience, and complete something tangible. Such project-oriented internships also aid the host organization in monitoring

the student's activities and, if necessary, restructuring the project as it unfolds.

The PIP coordinator is available to consult with grant applicants as they develop their organization's project. This feedback may be especially useful for first-time applicants. HECUA also provides ongoing communication and support for both interns and host organizations through pre- and post-internship seminars.

A series of informational luncheons in November will feature talks by former PIP interns and host organizations. Luncheons are planned for the Mankato-St. Peter, Fargo-Moorhead and Duluth-Superior areas. Check the HECUA web site at [www.hecua.org/pip](http://www.hecua.org/pip) for specific dates. For other information call Jacquelyn Geier, 651-287-3306 or toll-free 1-800-554-1089, or e-mail [pip@hecua.org](mailto:pip@hecua.org).

**PIP deadlines for 2003-4**

Dec. 5, 2003	Postmarked applications due in HECUA office.
Jan. 16, 2004	Notification of awards to organizations.
April 13	Student applications due to nonprofits.
April 30	Nonprofit hiring decisions completed, students notified.
Late May	Pre-internship seminar for all PIP interns and supervisors.
June-August	Ten-week, full-time internship.
August	Post-internship seminar for interns and supervisors.

# Taking stock

## Historical organizations cope with public funding cuts

by Timothy Glines, manager of outreach services

**B**udget problems faced by state governments nationwide have taken a toll on state agencies and state historical societies. In Minnesota, a cut of \$4.3 million for the Minnesota Historical Society this year led to well-publicized staff layoffs and reduced programs and services. But as county and local historical organizations know all too well, the state's financial problems will have far-reaching adverse effects on all levels of public funding.

Because the budgeting process for fiscal year 2004 was still underway when this issue of the *Interpreter* went to press, the full impact on

historical organizations is not yet known. Enough of a picture has emerged, however, to begin to see some patterns.

### Local aid reduced

In balancing its budget, the State of Minnesota substantially reduced Local Government Aid appropriations. This aid comes in the form of state general revenue funds transferred to county and local governments to help balance inherent differences in the ability of local governments to raise revenue through property taxes.

The impact of this reduction has already made itself felt. Because major

county and municipal services are mandated by law, reductions are being concentrated in areas where spending is discretionary. Unfortunately, support for historical organizations falls into the category of discretionary funding. Local Government Aid cuts are likely to have an even greater effect in 2004.

### A trend reversed

During the 1990s many county historical societies enjoyed a significant increase in county funding. Those days are fast becoming a distant memory. When the state government cut back the Local Government Aid program late last spring, some counties revised their existing budgets and reduced appropriations previously made to county historical societies.

Still, the news for 2003 is not entirely bad. So far there are slightly more county historical societies reporting increases in county funding than those reporting reductions. The prospects for 2004 are bleaker.

**Most societies are seeking ways to both lower expenses and increase revenue.**

### Situations vary

How individual county historical societies are affected by reductions in county funding depends on several factors. Some counties will experience a greater loss of state funding than others. And some historical organizations are more dependent than others on county support. For those of you who

Chippewa County Historical Society



Chippewa County Historical Society volunteers welcome visitors to last year's "Christmas in the Village" event. Strong volunteer support helped persuade county commissioners to reduce cuts in the society's annual appropriation.

receive most of your revenue from the county, coping with the loss of that income will be difficult indeed. For organizations that rely on county funds for a relatively small portion of their overall annual budget, the reduction will not be as painful.

Early reports from around the state vary. At one end of the spectrum are two or three county historical societies that may lose county funding altogether. Several societies say they could face reductions as high as 50 percent. Others have been told to expect reductions ranging from 15 to 25 percent. In light of these deep cuts, historical societies reporting either no reduction or a reduction of less than 10 percent count themselves among the lucky few.

## Successful organizations keep county officials involved.

### Making a strong case

Some organizations were able to stave off severe budget cuts by making a strong case for the value of their work. When it looked like the Chippewa County Historical Society was heading for a 25 percent cut in county funding, the group rallied its troops. Armed with compelling information about their programs and services, members of the board of directors contacted county commissioners.

“We’re in the middle of adding a Travel Welcome and Information Center to our Historic Chippewa Village in Montevideo,” explains June

Lynne, CCHS executive director. “It’s a project we undertook at the request of the county and city governments and the Montevideo Convention and Visitors Bureau. They chose us because the village is already open and staffed seven days a week.” The center will add 25 percent more space to the village and will increase operating costs accordingly. The proposed cut in the society’s county appropriation threatened its ability to manage the new center.

“We convinced our county commissioners that we, as a nonprofit organization with an extensive network of volunteers, could run the center at a relatively low cost to the public,” Lynne says. “If Chippewa County were to manage the facility, staffing and maintenance costs would be *much* higher.” Commissioners listened and responded, reducing cuts in the society’s appropriation to 10 percent.

### Communication is key

Why have some historical societies succeeded in making their case while others have not? The single most important reason may be regular communication with county officials. If elected and appointed officials hear



Community partnerships keep the Goodhue County Historical Society’s visibility high despite a shrinking staff. Educator Johanna Grothe adds a history component to river-focused programming for students aboard the Audubon Ark, a paddleboat sponsored by several environmental groups.

from your historical society only at budget time and have little other contact with your programs and services, they’re less likely to be sympathetic. Successful organizations keep county officials involved by sending them newsletters and annual reports, inviting them to events, keeping them informed about plans and goals, and, of course, thanking them for their continued support. Some societies also make room on their board of directors for one

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## Taking stock *continued from page 5*

commissioner as either a regular or a nonvoting member. That way the organization has a direct liaison with the county government.

It's especially important in lean economic times not to criticize county officials, who find themselves having to make difficult and unpopular decisions. Most elected officials enjoy funding popular programs like historical societies. "That's certainly the case in Clay County," says Lisa Vedaa, director of the Clay County Historical Society. "The county has always been generous to us. Funding our organization is one of the ways the commissioners can make a difference in the quality of life here. We're hopeful that once everyone gets through this budget crisis, they'll return to their previous level of support."

### Playing all the angles

Minnesota's historical organizations are coping with the budget cuts in a variety of ways. Staff have been laid off, hours are reduced and fixed expenses such as utilities are being strictly monitored. Most societies are seeking ways to both lower expenses and increase revenue.

### Develop strategies to focus on the things you do best.

"We're beginning to charge fees for our programs and services," says Vedaa. "Patrons will now pay for research assistance, with a discount for members. And we're charging admission to nonmembers for a lecture series this fall. We also need to start building relationships with major donors. One of the things we

## Planning ahead 2004 field workshops set

Addressing such issues as fundraising, budgeting and controlling costs, the 2004 Minnesota Historical Society field workshops are sure to speak to your organization's needs. Choose from the following dates and locations. The program will be repeated at each venue.

<b>March 26</b>	Anoka, Anoka County
<b>April 16</b>	Windom, Cottonwood County
<b>April 30</b>	Bemidji, Beltrami County
<b>May 14</b>	Rochester, Olmsted County

Watch for more information in the January-February Interpreter. Meanwhile, address questions to Tim Glines, manager of outreach services, at 651-296-5460 or [timothy.glines@mnhs.org](mailto:timothy.glines@mnhs.org), or David Grabitske, field programs assistant, at 651-297-4416 or [david.grabitske@mnhs.org](mailto:david.grabitske@mnhs.org).

want to do is establish a signature fundraising event, with our board leading the way."

Char Henn, director of the Goodhue County Historical Society, reports stepped-up efforts to raise the organization's countywide visibility, despite a shrinking staff. "From four full-time and five part-time employees, we'll be down to three full-time and one part-time positions as of January. We're definitely learning how to do more with less."

Every county commissioner is a member of the historical society, Henn says. "That helps us keep them informed about everything we do, including exhibits that travel to communities around the county. The commission recently asked us to create an exhibit at the government center for the 150th anniversary of the county. It will stretch our staff but we hope to gain in the long run from such goodwill gestures."

### Accentuate the positive

County and local governments are making decisions this fall about spending for 2004. Nearly all of them will have to reduce programs and services. Our best advice to historical organizations during these trying times? Stay positive. Develop strategies to focus on the things you do best. And communicate your worth. Those steps will help you take advantage of opportunities when they arise and position your organization for growth when public funding prospects are brighter.

For decades one of the strengths of the county and local history movement in Minnesota has been strong public support. Without a doubt, the last two years have been a setback. Let's not allow this temporary reversal of fortune to derail our important work of preserving and interpreting the state's history.

## Researching Ramsey County history

### Online resources offer a glimpse into the past

How do you spread the word about the rich resources available in your historical society library and archives? One of the best ways is through a web site that gives researchers a glimpse into your holdings.

Two new features of the Ramsey County Historical Society web site at [www.rchs.com](http://www.rchs.com) enable researchers to explore some of the many sources available in the society's Landmark Center library in St. Paul. And for those who can't visit in person, there's "Ask a Historian."

For 39 years the society has been publishing Ramsey County History magazine. A new online magazine index lets you peruse the contents of current and past issues via a chronological list of articles from 1964 through 2003. (Unfortunately, the list is not searchable.)

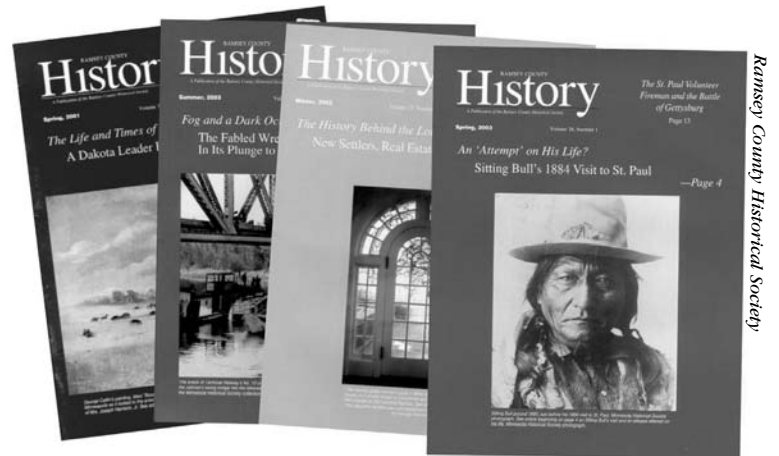
Another new online resource features neighborhood profiles taken

from the Ramsey County Historic Site Survey Report. Like surveys of other Minnesota counties completed in the 1970s and 1980s, this one documents

historic structures in the county. The report, along with survey forms for 5,000 properties, is accessible at the society library.

A popular new feature of the web site is "Ask a Historian," which gives brief online answers to some of the questions submitted by visitors. The always-changing site posts "This Week's Questions," which then move to an "Ask a Historian" archive page as new questions come in.

For more information on the web



site, call Maureen McGinn, RCHS membership marketing manager, at 651-222-0701 or e-mail [info@rchs.com](mailto:info@rchs.com).

## Commemorative books

- *Bits and Pieces of Sibley County History*. Honoring the county's sesquicentennial, this book from the Sibley County Recorder's Office includes a history of the county courthouse and city government buildings since 1855 as well as a reprint of a 1949 pamphlet, "Historical Facts of Sibley County." Another book, due out soon, features plat maps starting with the original 1855 surveyor's plat. For more information e-mail Sibley County Recorder Eldrene Elbert at [eldrene@co.sibley.mn.com](mailto:eldrene@co.sibley.mn.com).
- *Cokato's First Century, 1878-1978*. For the city's centennial in 1978, the Cokato Historical Society published a compilation of topical columns by newspaper editor Carlton Lee, illustrated with photos from the society's collections. Earlier this year the book was reissued, updated with additional photos and a chapter covering the past 25 years. To order (\$20 plus \$3 postage and handling), write the Cokato Historical Society, P.O. Box 686, Cokato, MN 55321-0686, or call 320-286-2427.

## Bookkeeping Basics

Need an introduction to bookkeeping? Look no further than *Bookkeeping Basics: What Every Nonprofit Bookkeeper Needs to Know*. Published by the Wilder Foundation, this handy guide takes you through the concepts and processes that every nonprofit organization should know:

- single- and double-entry bookkeeping
- cash v. accrual basis accounting
- creating financial statements
- establishing internal controls
- preparing for an annual audit
- closing out the fiscal year

The step-by-step instructions include examples, a glossary of accounting terms and reproducible forms. Paperback, 128 pages, \$22 plus \$4 shipping. For more information or to order, call 1-800-274-6024 or go to [www.wilder.org/pubs](http://www.wilder.org/pubs).

## Expressions of faith

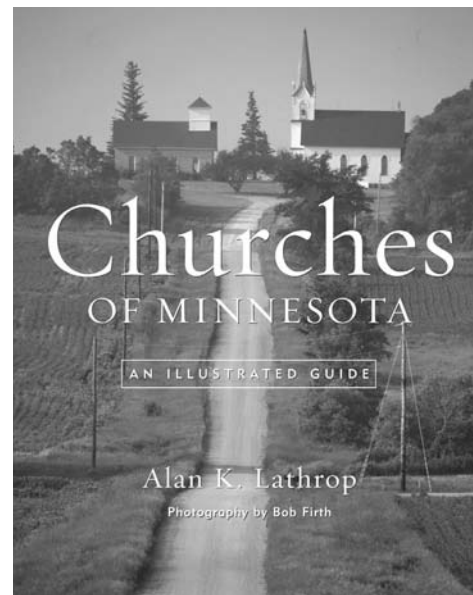
### Guide explores architecture of Minnesota churches

Whether elaborate or austere, traditional or modern, churches are expressions of faith, reflecting the heritage and beliefs of their congregations. In a new book titled *Churches of Minnesota: An Illustrated Guide*, author Alan K. Lathrop profiles more than 100 religious buildings across the state. This comprehensive view of church architectural styles is enlivened by the photography of Carver's Bob Firth.

Lathrop, curator of the University of Minnesota's Northwest Architectural Archives, explored every corner of the state to document a panorama of church designs in

settings both urban and rural. From the tiny, board-and-batten St. Mark's Episcopal Chapel in Annandale to the grand Cathedral of St. Paul, he reveals the character of each building. Along the way, he uncovers the stories of those connected to each church - the architects, the leaders and the parishioners.

To order *Churches of Minnesota* (ISBN 0-8166-2909-9, paper, 296 pages, 141 photographs, \$29.95 plus \$4.50 shipping), phone 1-800-621-2736, fax 1-800-621-8476 or write University of Minnesota Press, c/o Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 S. Langley Ave., Chicago, IL 60628. (When



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