

# Long Grove Times

Long Grove Historical Society's Quarterly Newsletter

September 2009

## Trivially Speaking...

You are probably familiar with the Halloween tradition of a carved pumpkin... but did you know that the tradition started with a turnip rather than a pumpkin?

It all traces back to an old Irish folk tale involving a coal ember in a hallowed out turnip. In the U.S., the Irish population had a hard time finding turnips, so they took to using a pumpkin instead.

## Mark Your Calendars

- **Sep. 16**, General Meeting and Program—All About Herbs, 11am at Long Grove Village Hall
- **Sep. 28**, “*The Commoner*” Breakfast and Book Review, 9am at The Arboretum Club in Buffalo Grove
- **Oct. 23**, Long Grove Lurid Legends program, 7:30pm at Kildeer School in downtown Long Grove
- **Nov. 18**, General Meeting and Program—Fireside Chat With Long Time Residents, 11am at the Reed Turner Nature Center

## Long Grove Lurid Legends

Ever wonder what we do when we come across a story that's just too juicy to be contained to the limited space we have in this newsletter? Ever wonder if there are tales that got left out of the “official” history books because they were just too “unfit to print”? Satisfy your curiosity and join us for an evening of campy fun as we explore a few of the darker corners of Long Grove's past. The show is an original program that

will run between 45 minutes and an hour in length. We'll keep it at a PG rating—not too graphic or intense. The tales slated for exploration include “The Stump That Ate Long Grove”, “The Midnight Raiders”, “The Corpse That Spoke” and “The Ghost of Cuba Road”. Admission is free. And, no, it's not a coincidence that the date is within a week of Halloween.

THE GHOST  
OF CUBA ROAD



Local tales of ghosts, murder & mayhem  
Friday Evening, October 23rd

7:30 pm

Kildeer School Auditorium

3100 Old McHenry Road, Long Grove

# From the President's Desk

Comments from Society President Angie Underwood

## Why do you live in Long Grove?

There are many answers to this question. Maybe you grew up in the area or have family nearby. Perhaps the community is a close commute to your job. Our top-notch schools are a draw for many families. The large lots, open spaces, conservancy areas and rural feeling certainly make our town attractive to those who appreciate nature. One of the first things that appealed to my husband and I when we discovered Long Grove in 1985 was the historic downtown and unique character of the Village. It reminded us of the small town in Central Illinois where we both grew up.

Long Grove's historic character is not just a happy accident. The residents who came before us were careful planners, and worked hard to save our downtown crossroads and rural farms from the typical urban sprawl. The Long Grove Historical Society was formed in 1974 to save many buildings and artifacts that are part of the quaint village that we now enjoy. Our history is more than just a collection of charming downtown shops. No one "owns" Long Grove's history. We, the current residents, are only the caretakers of it. And I am writing to you today to urge you to become a more active caretaker in our local heritage.

Our new board has been hard at work this summer developing several novel programs that we hope you will consider attending. In this newsletter you will find more information on our Barbara Rinella book review, September Herb Garden program, and spine-tingling "Lurid Legends" oral presentation.



We encourage you to visit

our farmhouse for a tour during Octoberfest, or stop by when the children are visiting Archer School for a look at education, pioneer-style. We are always looking for volunteer docents to help with these fun activities.

I first became involved with the Historical Society after my son attended a field trip to our one-room schoolhouse, barn, and herb garden. I was so impressed with the program that I volunteered as a docent ten years ago and have enjoyed teaching inquisitive 3rd graders ever since!

I would also like to invite you to share your special talents and resources with us. Do you have experience in Marketing, Event planning, Publishing, Finances, Gardening or Home Repairs? Would you like to get involved in the strategic planning of the Society? Are you curious about our archives and interested in working in that area? Please join us by becoming a member of the Long Grove Historical Society.

If you are unable to participate, we could still use your support financially. We are a 501c3 Non-Profit organization, and we do not receive funding from the Village or any taxing body. All money raised by the Long Grove Historical Society goes to the maintenance and upkeep of our historic buildings, and the running of our educational programs.

The time is now to join or renew your membership with the Historical Society. A membership form is included in this newsletter. Please consider sharing your talents with us! Whether you support us with your time or your donation, I promise that you will be enriched with a sense of ownership in your own history and your community.

*Angie*

# All About Herbs

## Join us for our September General Meeting!

Gabrielle Castrejon of Wauconda will do a free "walk and talk " program in the Historical Society's herb garden on Wednesday, September 16 at 11 AM. She will share some of the historical uses, identify herbs used in cooking, herbs used in potpourri, storage and drying techniques. The walk will be about 30 minutes with an additional 15 minutes of questions and answers. The herb garden is located adjacent to the Long Grove Village Hall parking lot (behind Kildeer School).

FREE PROGRAM -  
YOU'RE INVITED!



Pictured to the left are volunteers Maryann Ostrem, Tina Mall, and Helen Young. During the summer months, a group of our volunteers meet weekly to spend an hour tending to our Herb Garden.

## ARTIFACT EXPLORED

One of the items you'll find in our herb garden is known as Woolly Woundwort, or more commonly called Lamb's Ear. It's called lamb's ear, because... well it feels as soft as a lamb's ear. It's pretty absorbant and actually has a few antiseptic qualities. Pioneers figured this out and used it to

bandage moderate cuts. Herb Docent and Hand Model Tina Mall is pictured to the right, applying a leaf of Lamb's ear to a scrape she received while tending the garden. This herb is a "downgraded" herb—it has no modern uses, other than as a living history artifact in historical gardens.

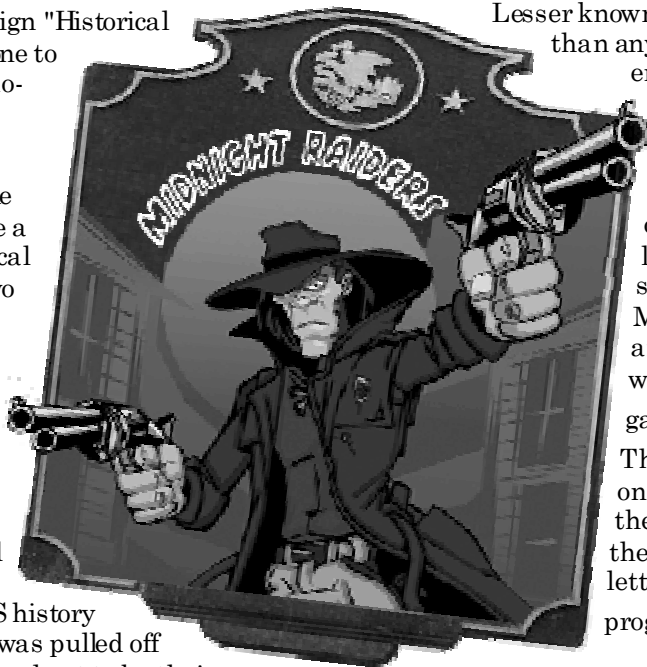


# Out and About

We've all seen the occasional sign "Historical Marker Ahead" that beckons one to stop and take in a historical moment.

Anyone can erect an official marker, provided they have the \$2000 application fee and have a "not commonly known" historical fact supported with at least two sources.

The closest historical marker to Long Grove is... (drumroll)... in Rondout. Rondout is an unincorporated place north on I94, near "Lambs Farm". Back in the 1920's, Rondout had a railroad station, and it was there that the largest train robbery in US history occurred. The nighttime heist was pulled off by the "Newton Gang" and turned out to be their undoing. During the robbery, one of the robbers mistook a fellow gang member for a train security guard and shot him. While they successfully completed the robbery,



the subsequent doctor's visit to treat the wounds gave away their location and within the year they were all in jail.

Lesser known, but perhaps more successful than any other train robbery gangs, they enjoyed some fame later in life.

Joe Newton had a memorable appearance on the Johnny Carson show in the early 1980's and they were the subject of a major motion picture in the late 1990's - "The Newton Boys", starring Matthew McConaughey, Ethan Hawke, and Dwight Yoakam. Joe Newton was the last surviving member of gang and he passed away in 1989.

There's more to this story... it's one of the tales we're planning for the Lurid Legends program—see the front or back page of this newsletter for more information on this program.



## S N A P S H O T S

Docent Kathy Carlson is pictured at left demonstrating a discipline tool, known as "the switch", during one of our Archer School programs. The school was built in 1849 on the Southwest corner of Route 53 and Hicks Road. It is a classic "one room" school house, and has been restored using our records of what would have

looked like in the late 1870's. In 1900 it was replaced with a more modern structure, and began a second career as a local farmer's garage. When it was discovered to still be in existence in the 1970's, it was acquired and restored by our society. Thus began it's third career— a "field trip destination" for today's school children. Thousands of children are entertained and educated each year by our team of Archer School docents. For more information on becoming a volunteer docent please contact Kathy at 847-726-1503.

Did you know... that our own Archer School was featured in the 1984 film, "A Matter of Principle", starring Alan Arkin?

# THE COMMONER

Our annual book dramatization and breakfast this year is *The Commoner*, by John Burnham Schwartz. This event is scheduled

for September 28th at the Arboretum Club, Route 22 & Buffalo Grove Road, in Buffalo Grove, beginning at 9:00am. A tasty buffet breakfast will also be served. This fascinating fictional novel is based on the real life story of Empress Michiko, the current Empress of Japan. Barbara Rinella will be performing the dramatization again for us this year—in full kimono! Also this year we will feature music on the Japanese Koto by Historical Society member Takako Bassett. Suprises await... raffle baskets, origami, and more!



Advance reservation and payment of \$27/person is required by Friday, September 18th. To secure your spot, either use the form enclosed in

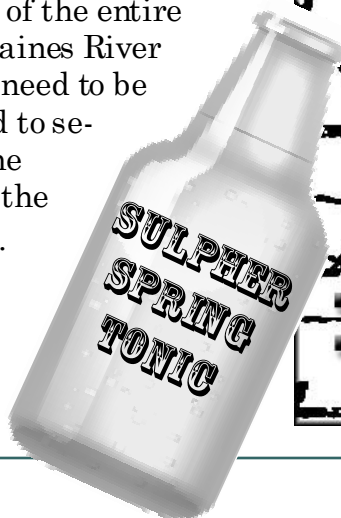
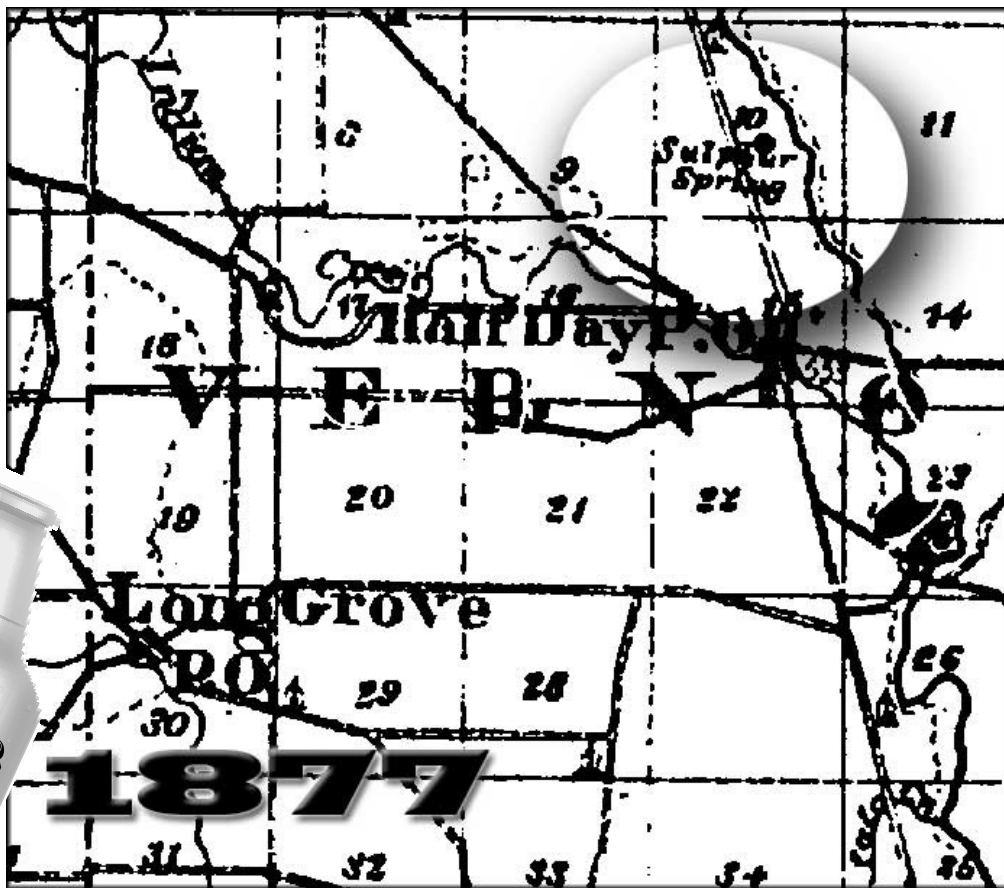
## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

this newsletter, visit our

# TREASURE MAPS

An 1877 area map shows just how sparse our area was then. Aside from the villages of Half Day and Long Grove, and the major waterways in the area

(Des Plaines River & Indian Creek), the only other feature of note is Sulphur Spring. Never heard of Sulphur Spring? It flows out of the bank of the Des Plaines, near the Rockland Road bridge, which is southeast of the modern day intersection of 176 and Milwaukee Ave. The spring and was said to have been popular with local Indians for it's medicinal qualities. In the early 1900's there were plans to develop the site and it's water into a commercial spa. Those plans fell through when it was determined that the course of the entire Des Plaines River would need to be altered to secure the site of the spring.



## Back in the Day...

For many years in the 1980's and 1990's Long Grove resident Gwen Berg published an "In Retrospect" column in "The Bridge" - the Long Grove Village

Newsletter. Gwen's stories always featured some interesting aspect of our local history. Through some volunteer effort on the part of Gwen, her husband Tony, Barbara Turner, and Bob Jenkins, we think we've managed to get a complete set of all these articles, and are currently exploring making them available to the public in book form. Stay tuned for more details... For now, we'll give you a small snippet from Gwen, first published in 1987:

Do you ever wonder what recreational facilities were provided in the Long Grove area in days past? Mrs. Ritzenthaler used to tell of the young people coasting down the hill on which Twin Orchard Country Club now stands. The four local schools would get together for socials and gather around the piano for sings. There were also local baseball teams competing with surrounding communities.

In 1900 a dance hall (which cost \$2,500) was erected in Long Grove on the site next to Kildeer School. A share of stock in the hall was sold for \$10 and one old-timer remembered that dividends went as high as \$32 per share during the most prosperous period. Dances were held upstairs and refreshments served downstairs. There was a room to check coats and horse blankets. Most people remembered the hall in terms of pleasure and not for the dividends. One Buffalo Grove native recalled they always went dancing the Monday after Easter. Having fasted so much during Lent they really looked forward to that first dance after Lent was over.

With the coming of the automobile Half Day gained prominence as a recreation center. Clybourn Park was established and besides the people driving out from Chicago on weekends, the train ran a special excursion to the park, which included a roller coaster, bowling alley, ferris wheel, race track, ball park, dance hall, two hot dog stands and at least four beer stands.

- Gwen Berg, In Retrospect



We're online! Visit:

[www.LongGroveHistory.org](http://www.LongGroveHistory.org)

to get the latest schedule of our public programs and see some interesting pictures from time to time. You can also email us suggestions and requests at:

[admin@LongGroveHistory.org](mailto:admin@LongGroveHistory.org)

Long Grove Historical Society

**PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

All About Herbs 9-16

The Cammerer 9-28

10-23 Livid Legends

**ABOUT US**

Join Our eMail List

Learn About Us

Become A Member

Contact Us

**SNAPSHOT**

Back to School...Back in Time! Our fall one-room school house experience for area children kicks off this month. Kids get to learn from a 1st Grade Reader and an old-fashioned writing slate.

# Pay Your Dues

It's that time of year—time to join up again for another year of membership. The Long Grove Historical Society is a 501C3 non-profit organization whose purpose is to preserve and disseminate the history of the Long Grove area. If you have any special interests, skills, or talents, be sure to let us know that as well.

Please complete the form below, cut along the dotted line, enclose a check made payable to Long Grove Historical Society, and mail back to:

Long Grove Historical Society  
C/O Georgia Cawley  
4509 RFD  
Long Grove, IL 60047

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Individual Membership  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family Membership  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Patron Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Other Membership    |  |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

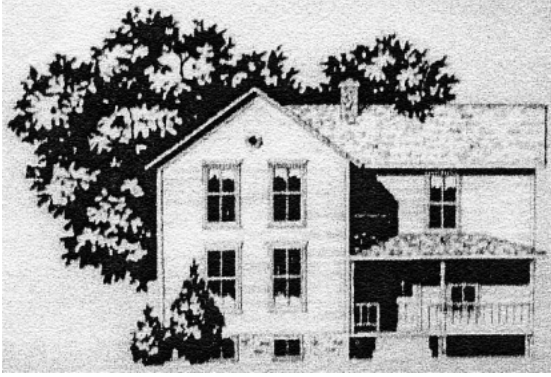
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank You For Your Support!

## FARMHOUSE UNDER ATTACK!

Squirrels, Ants, and Woodpeckers joined forces this past year to do some serious damage to our 1840's Farmhouse. It appears the squirrels began the assault, compromising the wood around some of the windows which allowed a wave of ants to invade. Support from the air came via a few woodpeckers who opened up several holes in the siding to get at the invading ants. In the end, however, they were no match for our Maintenance General—Bob Borg who coordinated a staunch defense and repelled the invaders. So all is well, now, after a few thousand dollars in repairs... perhaps a good example of why we need your continued support—these old buildings don't maintain themselves!





Long Grove Historical Society  
Long Grove Times Quarterly Newsletter  
Aaron Underwood, Newsletter Editor  
338 Old McHenry Road  
Long Grove, IL 60047  
(847) 634-6155  
admin@LongGroveHistory.org  
www.LongGroveHistory.org

(mailing label goes here)

LONG GROVE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PRESENTS

**Long Grove  
Spooky Legends**

FEATURING...

**THE  
CORPSE  
THAT SPOKE**

AND OTHER TALES OF AREA GHOSTS,  
MURDER AND MAYHEM

FRIDAY EVENING OCTOBER 23RD, 7:30PM  
FREE ADMISSION  
KILDEER SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
3100 OLD MCHENRY RD

WWW.LONGGROVEHISTORY.ORG