

# THE CENTER PIECE



**Brandon History Center, 105 Holmes Avenue, P. O. Box 514, Brandon, MN 56315**  
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## Fundraising Event—2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Chili Cook-Off—February 11

The historic Brandon Auditorium will again be the site of our 2011 winter fundraising event—our second annual Chili Cook-off. On Friday, February 11, 2011, from 5 to 9 p.m., we can again sample many kinds of chili prepared by local individuals businesses, and associations. Proceeds from the Cook-off will be used for Phase II of the Auditorium Restoration Project.

Last year's Chili Cook-off was a huge success, with no one going away hungry. The Judges gave the best chili award to Gardonville/Brandon Communications, Team #1. The Brandon Lions won the People's Choice Award. The event provided an opportunity for our community to socialize and contribute to Phase I of our auditorium project.

Registration forms and copies of the cook-off rules can be obtained from Chris Korkowski (320-834-4505) or Marcia Bolin (320-524-2174).

## Fundraising News to Date- Phase II

Phase II of the auditorium restoration, which will include heating and air conditioning, is scheduled to begin this spring, with an estimated cost of \$249,000. Therefore, fundraising is a continuing effort to cover the costs of the project.

The city of Brandon has applied for and been awarded a \$100,000 matching grant from the state of Minnesota. Two additional grants are being sought by the History Center and the City in an effort to match the state grant. Results of those

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**Gardonville/Brandon Communications, Team #1  
 2010 Chili Cook-off Winners**

applications won't be known until this spring.

A donation of \$500 for the Auditorium Restoration has been received from the Millerville Fire Department. Many thanks to our sister city fire fighters!

Additional donations are needed and welcome! The chili cook-off is a community effort in the overall fundraising process. The "Grand Old Hall" needs our support! See you there!

## Veterans' Corner



### *Winston Johnson*

L. Winston Johnson was born in Brandon, MN, on November 14, 1918. He was drafted into the Regular Army during World War II on February 14, 1943. After basic training, he volunteered to train with the Air Corps to become a bombardier. His job was to sit in the nose of a B29 Flying Fortress and release the bombs on target.

After receiving his training, the war ended before he was shipped overseas. He was honorably discharged from active duty on December 20,

*On August 6, 1945, the B-29 Enola Gay dropped the first nuclear bomb on the city of Hiroshima, followed three days later by a second bomb dropped by the B-29 Bock's Car on Nagasaki. The Japanese surrendered a week later.*



*B-29 Bomber similar to Winston Johnson's assigned plane*

1945. His rank at the time of discharge was Second Lieutenant. He was a member of the Brandon Legion Post.

He returned to Brandon where he and his wife Elda (nee Ostlund) raised their family. He owned and operated the Brandon Lumber Yard until his retirement. He died on May 7, 2007.



## Veterans' Corner



***Wilbur Hopfner***

Wilbur Hopfner was born on May 8, 1914, in Beaulieu. He joined the United States Army July 15, 1941, and served until November of 1945.

Wilbur served as a medic and was in charge of a hospital surgical ward and operating room. He also cut hair during his time in the medical corps.

Upon his honorable discharge in November of 1945, Wilbur and his wife, Leona (nee Wilken), moved to Brandon where they raised their two children. Wilbur purchased the Barber Shop, which he owned and operated for 50 years, retiring at the age of 80. He was a member of the Brandon Legion Post. Wilbur was a talented saxophone player and played with the Jolly Dutchmen, Don and the Blue Knights, and the Toot N' Gramps.

Wilbur died at the age of 96 on December 13, 2010.

## Millerville Legion Member Donates Uniform to History Center



***Thank you to Philip Lund of Millerville Legion Post 527 who donated his WWII army uniform to the Brandon History Center.***





## From the Past . . . . Fran Fuller

We all remember Fran Fuller, who for most of his life was a resident of Brandon. He was a valued member of the community who volunteered in many ways, including being a member of the Brandon Lions. He was the “go-to person” when microphones and public announcement systems were needed for community events. He and his wife Bernice raised their three children in Brandon.

Fran was an employee of Ottertail Power Company from 1943 until he retired in 1975. One would see him climbing utility poles and doing maintenance on power lines in the Brandon Community.

Fran was a very creative guy as can be seen from the picture at the right. He built a merry-go-round for his children on top of a cable spool. Fran is pictured with two of his children, Kevin and Charlie.

Also pictured at right is Fran standing next to his first Ottertail Power pickup.



*In 2009, Otter Tail Power Company celebrated 100 years of service.*



## Thank You's

Thank you to REA Roundup for the \$250.00 donation to the History Center. It will be used for proper storage containers for old documents and memorabilia. Ruth Plaster and Janet Nelson picked up the check; they are in the recipients' picture located to the right.

Also \$200 was received in memory of L. Winston & Elda Johnson; and \$200.00 was received in memory of the Gabe & Irene Schwegler family. These memorials are greatly appreciated!

Thank you to Duane Lorsung who donated \$250 in honor of Lester & Nel Anderson.

James Schwegler has become a lifetime member of the History Center. Thank you, Jim.



*History Center Board Members Janet Nelson and Ruth Plaster are pictured in front row.*

## Our Mission Statement

To collect, preserve and display articles, pictures and memorabilia from Brandon, Millerville, and the surrounding area for future generations.

To assist in the preservation of the Historic Brandon Auditorium and other local historic sites

## About Our Organization...

The Brandon History Center changed from a dream to a reality on August 28, 2007, when it became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Because we are non-profit, contributions are tax-deductible.

Consider making a contribution of \$100 or more. Your gift will be recognized by name on our contributor plaques. Also make use of our three membership options: Individual or family one-year or single life memberships.

*"With the historian it is an article of faith that knowledge of the past is a key to understanding the present."*  
**Kenneth Stampp.**

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**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Hilda Bettermann  
Florence Bitzan  
Marcia Bolin  
Christella Korkowski  
Janet Nelson  
Ruth Plaster  
Karen Thoennes

*We're on the Web! Visit us at:*

[www.brandonmn.com](http://www.brandonmn.com)

**Viet Nam War Virtual Wall**

Using the website below, you will get to a virtual wall showing names of all those lost during the Vietnam war. The website contains the names, biographies, and other information about our lost heroes.

Those who remember that time frame, or perhaps lost friends or family, can look them up on this site. Pass the link on to others, as they should be able to find relatives or friends whose names are listed.

When you get to the website, click on a state. When it opens, scroll down to the city; and the names will appear. Then click on a name. You should see a picture of the person, or at least his biography and medals.

<http://www.virtualwall.org/iStates.htm>

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