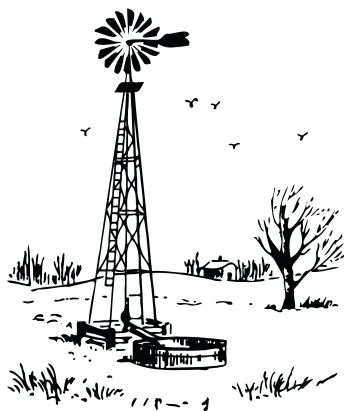




Upcoming Events

**Tentative
Museum Reopening**
(61st tornado anniversary)

May 9, 2026

Fridley 49er Days

July 16-18, 2026

Pasta Dinner

October 3, 2026

Kindergarten Art Fair

December 12, 2026

*Thank
you!*

FridleyHistoricalSociety.org

✉ FHS1949@outlook.com

Officers

President: Mark Bonesteel 763-331-1885

Vice President: Mary Ann Hoffman 763-780-5911

Past President: Dorothy Gargaro 612-709-2840

Secretary (Interim): Rachel Westhoff

Treasurer: Dave Linton 763-843-3415

The Record

Kindergarten Art Fair Recap

The Kindergarten Art fair was held at our museum on Saturday, December 13. Once again it was a huge success despite the temperature not rising above 0! Nearly 175 visitors toured our museum and participated in the Art Fair. Students were greeted by their teachers Laura Charles and Lindsie Faber. Students showed their artwork to their family and friends. Santa made an appearance and passed out delicious candy canes.

A decorated Christmas Tree greeted our visitors in our basement display room. Kathy Taylor helped students make their own small Christmas ornament and snacks and drinks were provided. There was also a Holiday Market for our visitors to peruse through!

The Kindergarten Art Fair is our Society's largest event of the year. It has grown nearly every year and the feedback we receive is fantastic. The 2026 Art Fair will take place on December 12.



Thank you to the Friends of Fridley Education Foundation!

Your generous gift is greatly appreciated by our Society, and we look forward to providing additional educational efforts as our Society grows. Thank you so much!

Other Board Members

Archives & Communications Chair: Rob Zelenak robzelenak1993@gmail.com

Programs and Events Chair: Mary Sue Meyers 763-717-7987

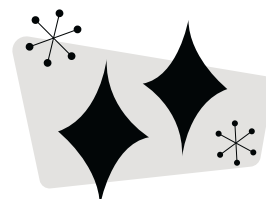
Grants Chair: Mary Ann Hoffman 763-780-5911

Maintenance Chair: Al Taylor 763-422-3878

Membership Chair Interim: Mark Bonesteel

Newsletter Chair: Rachel Westhoff rachel.westhoff@gmail.com

Social Media Chair: Pat Barrett pat.barrett@fridley.k12.mn.us





Highlights from the 2025 Kindergarten Art Fair



Big Changes to Fridley 49er Days!

by Mark Bonesteel, President

The annual Fridley 49er Days celebration is making some big changes in 2026! Many details are still being planned but one major change will be the event being moved from June to July. For the past few years, several events have had to be canceled due to rain and other inclement weather. After considerable discussion, it was decided that the 2026 49er Days Celebration will take place July 16 to 18.

Fridley 49er Days will kick off this year's event on July 16 with pre parade activities at Commons Park followed by the Fun Run and Parade. The Fridley Historical Society will once again have a vehicle in the parade. The FHS museum will also be open special hours on July 16.

On Friday, July 17, a classic car show is being planned off site from Commons Park. Family-friendly events including music, food trucks, and a movie are also currently being planned. With new emphasis on family-friendly events, it was decided that this year's 49er Days events would all be alcohol free.

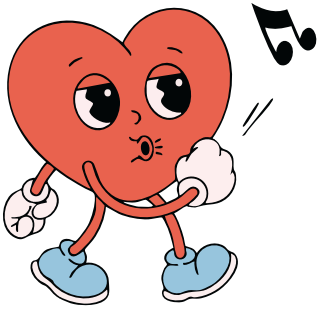
On Saturday, July 18, there will be music during the afternoon, and many events designed for kids and families throughout the day. The event will wrap up around 6 p.m. There will be no fireworks this year.

The Fridley 49er Days Committee is still actively finalizing additional events to add to this year's celebration. Volunteers are needed as well. Please check out the Fridley 49er Days page on the City of Fridley website for more information. A final schedule of events will be posted on that page as well as the City Newsletter in the next couple of months. FHS will also post the finalized schedule of events in our Spring and Summer newsletter.



Valentine's Bingo to be Rescheduled

by Mark Bonesteel, President



The February Valentine's Bingo event will be rescheduled to later this year. The Historical Society is working on improving the air quality in the museum. Unfortunately, several rooms in the basement area of the building need to be emptied so we can have some mold and mildew issues addressed. Our normal bingo area will not be available. This event will be rescheduled to later in the year as this has always been a very fun and popular society event! Thank you for your understanding.

Special Newsletter Update

If you would like to receive your newsletter via email, please send an email request to:

FHS1949@outlook.com

Your newsletter will be sent by email, rather than a hard copy sent through the mail.

Please remember to check your junk/spam folder if you haven't received your newsletter in a while.

Upcoming Hall of Fame Nominations Needed

Do you know of someone who has contributed to the growth and success of the City of Fridley? We are now accepting nominations for the October 2027 Hall of Fame. Application packets can be picked up at the museum.

In Memoriam

by Mark Bonesteel, President

The Fridley Historical Society is sad to announce that long-time member **Rosemary Frauly** passed away on December 28, 2025 at age 81. Rosemary was a long-time Fridley resident and had just moved out of Fridley in the past year.

Rosemary frequently visited our museum and attended many FHS events over the years.

Rosemary often shared stories about her life and raising her two children, Bill and Charlotte. Please keep the Frauly family in your thoughts and prayers.



Grant Update

by Mary Ann Hoffman, VP and Grants Chair

In December, the Fridley Historical Society received some excellent and exciting news. Our grant proposal to access money from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund was approved!

The grant work will commence on January 1, 2026 and must be completed by January 1, 2027. Our contractor, Steve Boyd-Smith, with whom we worked on our previous grant, will work with us to design a permanent exhibit in our museum that will interpret the transformation of Fridley from a rural farming community to a post-war inner ring suburb, roughly covering the years from the late 1930s to the late 1960s. A further goal of the project is to engage newer residents of Fridley, in part to show the demographic changes that have occurred in the last 25 years or so.

If the work on this grant is successful, we will propose an additional grant, which will be used to install the exhibit. This will conceivably occur in 2027. It is a long process but we expect the result will be a thorough and engaging interpretation of an important era in Fridley history.

Below is another example of the interviews conducted in 2012 to document the midcentury suburban growth of Fridley.

Connie Samuelson

by Mary Ann Hoffman, VP and Grants Chair

When Connie Pearson married Lenny Samuelson in 1949, little did she know that he would eventually suggest their family move into a farmhouse in Fridley, and she was none too happy about it.

Connie's response was, "Not me! I've never heard of Fridley. I was an Edina girl."

However, she consented to look at the house and, to her surprise, "it was just beautiful and we decided, oh, we'll be up here for a few years and then we'll move back, that's fine."

And then Connie quickly added, "Of course, 41 years later, we are still there and you get involved with your community and liking it." The Samuelson family moved into the farmhouse on the former J.W. Craig farm in northwestern Fridley, which they had purchased. According to Connie, the Craig farm "was his showplace and he had barns and he raised prized cattle on it and he had caretakers."

Lenny and Connie's dad then began developing the farmland, building mostly ramblers on 139 lots. The newly developed area was named Pearson's Craigway Estates; you've probably seen the sign along East River Road.

Connie and her family quickly assimilated into the community. They joined Redeemer Lutheran Church and, although she still shopped downtown at Dayton's and at Southdale, she also shopped at Penny's grocery



Samuelson continued...

store in Holly Center and at Bob's Produce Ranch. She belonged to the Riverwood School PTA and she and Lenny joined the Fridley Dancers. Lenny was on several planning commissions, as well as the city council. She shared that, "I'm just grateful that we raised our children there. It was a wonderful community then, and we had great fellowship with all the neighbors and the church. We had wonderful growing-up years." She also stated that, "the children, we could let them play and we knew where they were, who their friends were—everybody took care of everybody's children."

Nevertheless, she had to take some ribbing. When asked by the interviewer, "When you moved from Edina to Fridley, what did your family think?" She laughingly recalled, "They thought we had moved to Timbaktu! One of my relatives who lived in Kenwood said to me, 'When are you going to move back to civilization?'"

Lenny and Connie lived in the Fridley farmhouse until 2000, when Lenny's health began to fail. He passed away in 2004, and Connie passed away in 2017. Meanwhile, the farmhouse Connie was initially reluctant to call home still stands on Pearson Way.



Check us out on our socials!



Fridley Historical Society



YouTube Fridley Historical Society Videos

Fridley Historical Society Board Minutes Summary (Dec 2025)

Kindergarten Art Fair Discussion: A plan was decided on who would bring what for the treats and refreshments table. The Society's 40th birthday celebration was supposed to be held during this year's art fair, but it was decided that it would be postponed till Spring.

Maintenance: An exterminator is coming out Dec 10. Mold will get checked out early 2026. Tom Gams reported to the Board that the door that was ordered is too short. He offered suggestions on getting a replacement door for the replacement door.

Grant Update: No news yet receiving the grant yet, but Mary Ann is suspecting that there might be conditions for possible grant acceptance. A research plan and annotated bibliography will be needed.

49er Committee Update: The committee has asked FHS to put together something that explains the 49er history. We will look into another standing retractable banner to display this information.

Archives and Media Update: Rob reported that a lady dropped off 1980s Fridley middle school year books. A baby buggy was offered and we declined. Also, Tom (last name unknown) wants to donate old items from FMC.

Please visit our website for detailed board meeting minutes.

→ fridleyhistoricalsociety.org/board-meeting-minutes/

Important Membership Update

by Mark Bonesteel, President

The Fridley Historical Society currently has 131 paid members. Membership currently runs from the day you join for one year. Because people join at varying times during the years, it is sometimes difficult to remember when your membership is about to expire.

Effective immediately, if the address label on your newsletter has a yellow line on it, your membership has expired! We will send out one additional newsletter after expiration. We will try to contact you via phone or email only if we have not heard from you.

If you would like to receive a digital copy of our newsletter instead of having a newsletter sent to you, please let us know. You can email the museum with your request at FHS1949@outlook.com. Please also let us know about any address change so we can update our files.

Please consider renewing your membership as we truly value each and every one of you. As you are aware, we are not publicly funded. Our entire society operates on the memberships and donations from our generous members, visitors, and civic organizations. Thank you!