



The Little White Paper

The Monthly Newsletter of the Golden Valley Historical Society

7800 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, Minnesota 55427

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Don Anderson, Editor

763-588-8578

e-mail: maryanddon3030@aol.com

John Mitchell, first black member of Golden Valley City Council, dies at home in Texas

John Mitchell, a leader in civic affairs for many years and the first black member of the Golden Valley City Council, died at his home in Mission, Texas, on July 24, 2009.

Mitchell ran for city council in 1979, and served from 1980-84. He chose not to run for a second term, but served for many years on Golden Valley's Human Rights Commission, one of the earliest suburban human rights commissions in the metro area.

In the summer of 1982, Councilman Mitchell, along with the African American Cultural Center, began formulating plans that would later develop



GOLDENVALLEY CITY COUNCIL meeting circa 1980. Left to right: City Council members Ray Stockman, Mary Anderson, Mayor Rosemary Thorson, John Mitchell, Gloria Johnson, City Manager Jeff Sweet, City Attorney Alan Barnard.

into the country's first city-wide effort to celebrate Black History Month.

Mitchell was one of the founders of the Rotary Club of Golden Valley in 1973, and became its first president. He was employed by Honeywell and

was assistant to the president for several years.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah, several children and grandchildren. Services have not been announced yet as this newsletter goes to press. We offer our sympathy to his family.

Gardner kicks off new season of Society programs

Thursday, September 10, 2009, will be the kick off of another Society fiscal year. The program will feature Denis P. Gardner, who is a historian, writer, and photographer who has documented properties for the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic American Engineering Record. He has also written articles for *Minnesota History* magazine and *Hennepin History* magazine and is the author of the award-winning *Minnesota Treasures: Stories Behind the State's Historic Places*. His most recent book is *Wood, Concrete,*

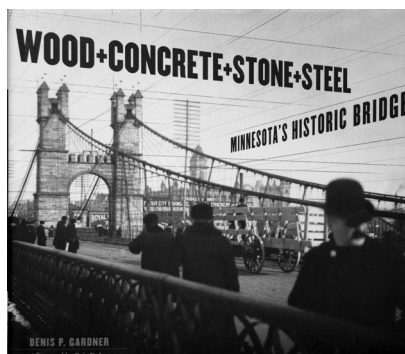
Stone, and Steel: Minnesota's Historic Bridges.

Gardner lives in Crystal, Minnesota. Election of officers and directors will precede the program.

Thursday, October 8, the program presenter will be Al Zdon, state editor of the American Legion newspaper, with his program, "Kilroy Was Here."

All the programs will be held at the Historic Church at 6731 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley,

Minn. 55427, at 7:00 p.m., and are open to the public. No reservations are needed.



Former caddy, Hirschhoff tees it up at Golden Valley GCC



photo by Justin Horton

Otto Hirschhoff hit a fairway iron at the Golden Valley Country Club.

On Monday, June 29, 2009, former Golden Valley resident, Otto Hirschhoff, age 95, had the opportunity to play a nostalgic game of golf at the Golden

Valley Golf and Country Club. This unusual event was arranged by his family members and the Golf Club's general manager, John Swaney. Otto was a caddy

Board members recognized for service

The 35th fiscal year of the Golden Valley Historical Society comes at the end of August, 2009. The board of directors, who are the policy makers and key volunteers of the organization, should be recognized for their service. The current members of the board of directors are:

President Kenneth Huber; Vice President Nancy Azzam; Secretary Don Anderson; Treasurer Joanie Clausen.

Directors: John Colwell, Gloria Johnson, Robert Provost, Cathy Waldhauser, Jerry Breth, Betty Crews, Donald Minor, Jon Horkey, Leone Johnson, Iona Schuller, and Mike Freiberg

Director Chester (Jack) Schultz died in November, 2008.

Mike Freiberg, the Golden Valley City Council representative, is appointed by the city council.

Thank you, board members, for your services and support of our organization.

Did you know?

"By the skin of one's teeth" -- The modern American expression and its meaning did not appear until approximately the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its use is always in respect to some calamity that has been avoided by so narrow a margin as to be measurable by the lining of a tooth. And thus this newsletter has ended "by the skin of one's tooth."

at the club in the "old days" and was a good golfer in his day. He has been invited back in the next couple of weeks by general manager Swaney to play the back nine holes of golf, have lunch, and do an interview with the GVGCC historian.

In Memoriam

Willard D. Curtis died in July 2009, at the age of 87. He was among a group of Golden Valley citizens honored by the Society for their long time residence in the city. He is survived by three children, six grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren.

From the archives...

First village officers elected in 1887, liquor sale approved

The first village officers of Golden Valley, elected on Monday, January 3, 1887, were: Uriah Wilson, president, John Scheid, Michael Rey, James Sweeney, William H. Varner, Jr., and William H. Varner, Sr. Their term ended just three months later, but the same officers were re-elected for the year beginning April 1, 1887. The question of the sale of liquor was also voted on for the first time in this election and approved by the voters 45 to 4. The liquor question was not an issue at another annual election until 1910 when a vote for licensing the sale of liquor was approved 101 to 17.