

## **VILLAGE PEOPLE 2009 PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Sometimes before we look forward we need to look back. A closer look at the steps where we've traveled usually gives us a better sense of the direction in which we're headed.

Seven years ago I had taken a promotion with the River Valley Newspaper Group to become publisher of our weekly papers. Along with that responsibility was the task to build a new office building and consolidate three of our offices.

It was during our search for a location that I first became acquainted with the *Village People*, who helped to convince us that the perfect place for our new office was in West Salem. The building later became a reality when the Village and Union State Bank agreed to sell us land, and our wonderful facility at Leonard and Hamilton Streets opened in January, 2004.

I then made the decision to become involved with the *Village People* because I believed in West Salem, its future, and the spirit of revitalizing the downtown. I remain amazed and inspired by the tireless work done by our group's longtime members. One needs only to look at the splendid bike shelter downtown and the wildly successful Boys and Girls Club.

Behind these projects is a determination to roll up the sleeves and get the job done. That's exactly what's happened over these many years as the downtown streetscaping and design project went from application process to approval. It didn't happen overnight, but it happened because a group of people cared enough to keep rolling the ball up the hill, determined not to quit.

It's been a personal pleasure to work with all of you these past few years. You've managed to overcome my shortcomings as your president for the past four years and still succeed. But it's

time for me to move on as my home has moved out of the village as well as has my main office.

Thank you for allowing me to serve and to help make a difference in this community. I hope that some of you who have taken a passive role of support become more active if you are able. We need others to step forth and help continue with the mission of making West Salem a better place in which to live.

Chris Hardie

### New Committee Members

Three new members have joined the Village People Oversight Committee: Steven Zeman, president of Union State Bank; Anne Loomis, an independent marketing consultant; and Shelly Servais, owner of EZ Print and Copy of West Salem. They have joined this committee which is the working group for the Village People.

Steve came to Union State Bank in June 2004 after 29 years of working in three other community banks in western Wisconsin. He has been president of the bank for the past two years. Steve is a member of the West Salem Lions, St. Leo's Catholic Church, and the West Salem School District 21st Century Skills Advisory Board. He's also the District 3 board member for the Community Bankers of Wisconsin. His past experiences include ten years on a school board, nine years on a village board, 17 years as a Rotarian, and 25 years as a volunteer firefighter. Steve and his wife Karla have lived in West Salem for four years and have three married daughters and two grandsons.

Anne has lived in West Salem since 2006. She holds an MBA from the University of Southern California with an emphasis in strategy and has spent 22 years in marketing and advertising positions. She has worked as an international product manager and as a global strategic planner and also worked for the mayor, city manager, and the parks and recreation department for the city of Santa Ana. Anne hopes to bring her knowledge of historic preservation, community involvement, and revitalization efforts to West Salem. Anne is currently doing independent projects, writing presentations, developing marketing plans, and researching issues. She has extensive experience with non-profit and community-based volunteer work. She teaches CCD at St. Leo's and volunteers at the elementary school. Anne's husband Richard is originally from La Crosse. The couple met when he was an officer in the Navy stationed in San Diego. They have two daughters, 14 and 10.

Shelly grew up in West Salem and is a graduate of West High School. She has been married to Tom for 24 years and was a dairy farmer until 2000, active in the Farm Bureau and other farm organizations. Shelly worked part-time at Franciscan Skemp while farming and, after selling the cows in 2000, worked in a La Crosse print shop for six years. She purchased EZ Print and Copy in January 2006 and is happy to be back in her hometown. Shelly is active with the La Crosse Tavern League, performing the bookkeeping for the Safe Ride Home program. She volunteers at many other community functions. Shelly and Tom have three children. Shanna and Michael have graduated from West Salem High School and Jacob is a freshman.

***Welcome Steve, Anne, and Shelly!***



## **Pathways Update**

**Pathways**, West Salem's downtown streetscape enhancement project is getting closer to being a reality. The project is in a stage where design and engineering firms have been contacted for submission of their qualifications to the Village's Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC). It is very rewarding that over a period of eight years the *Village People* not only initiated but also fostered **Pathways** where it is at today. The *Village People* Appearance Committee played an integral and significant part in the conceptual design and the design and construction estimates. This work by the *Village People* provided the basis for the application process and the success of the application.

### **Pathways Highlights:**

- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Local Transportation Enhancement Program (TE)
- A landscaping and beautification project for downtown West Salem
- Enhances existing and creates community connectivity in the Village and with other bicycle pathways and routes with adjoining municipalities
- Provides impetus for reinvestment and growth in the downtown district
- Creates a warm and inviting avenue into our Village through aesthetically pleasing amenities (ex. decorative energy-efficient lighting, green space)

- Provides safety for multimodal users in the downtown area
- Benefits bicyclists, pedestrians, the elderly, the disabled, tourists, and downtown and business employees
- Provides a “sense of place” or focus in our Village
- Provides logical, high connectivity to and around the downtown
- Promotes walking and bicycling for work and recreation

With public, business, residence, and Village support, *Pathways* is our path to an enhanced and vital downtown and Village.

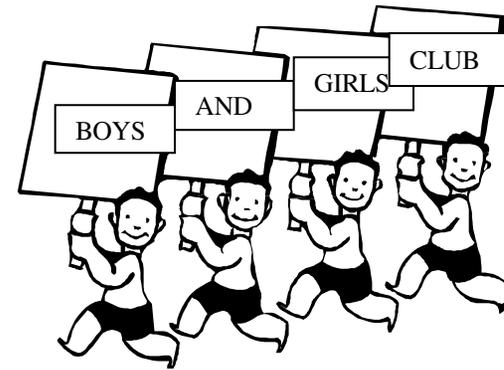


### *Farmer's Market*

Once again this summer, area residents have been able to experience a local Farmer's Market. Since June, there have been up to six vendors set up by the downtown bike shelter from 3:00 to 6:30 p.m. every Wednesday. In addition to fresh homegrown produce, at times unique jewelry and wood furniture were also available. Shopper Laura Jesse reflected on the Farmer's Market stating, "It's fun. I love it!"

Besides the vendors and shoppers, an important part of the success of the market is all who put signs in their yards promoting it. A big "Thank You" goes to Errol Kindschy, Denise Jones, Judy Morzinski, Brenengen Chevrolet, Carol Unser, Sharon Cullmann, Beth Hagedorn, Union State Bank, Family Tree Floral, and the Cenex Truck Stop for taking the time every week to do this!

Plans are to have the Farmer's Market again next summer. Be sure to check it out!



### *Update: Boys & Girls Club of West Salem*

The *Village People* is happy to report that the Boys & Girls Club continues to be busy carrying out the mission of serving the youth of the West Salem area. The summer passed quickly with the added fun of outdoor activities and field trips that were well-attended and enjoyed by all. Examples included Fort McCoy Beach, La Crosse Archery, Lake Neshonoc for “Take Me Fishing”, Wild Winds Horse Ranch, and Chula Vista Water Park in Wisconsin Dells! All trips were very affordable for the children with only a few over \$10.

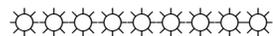
The Coulee Region Humane Society also made a terrific contribution to the Club by keeping our kids reading over the summer months with a program called “Read to Rover”. Every Monday afternoon three therapy dogs, accompanied by their trainers, eagerly arrived for an hour of listening to young readers. Each time they visited, twelve to fifteen club members were assigned a time slot, found cozy spots on a blanket, and read to the patient dogs. Research has shown, when children read to therapy dogs their reading skills improve, confidence is built, and they learn to enjoy reading. THANKS, COULEE REGION HUMANE SOCIETY THERAPY DOGS and TRAINERS!

School is now in full swing, and new programs have begun as well. A collaborative program sponsored by 4-H called “Food, Fun and Fitness Fridays” is rolling along as well as the beginning of

Self Defense Classes! This program, through Northwoods Martial Arts, is being taught by George Baldwin. The Club and the community are fortunate and grateful for these collaborative efforts in providing quality time for our children.

The *Village People* wants to thank the more than 70 generous individuals and business sponsors, committed volunteers and supportive families who attended FAMILY FUN NIGHT on September 10, 2009. The wonderful weather made the Lions Shelter the perfect venue for the fun outdoor games, food, and activities. Principal Mark Carlson acted as DJ and Police Chief Charles Ashbeck was a great sport in the “Pie in the Face” contest! Jennifer Carlaw, raffle winner of a special quilt made by Boys & Girls Club members, was very gracious in re-donating the quilt back to the Club! A special thank you to Vicki Miller who was the inspiration and did the “leg work” behind this fun afternoon, as well as the rest of the W.S. B&GC Advisory Board for assisting her with this fundraising event. Many great comments were passed on to the board, and over \$2,500.00 was raised for the club. GREAT JOB, COMMUNITY OF WEST SALEM!

For a more in-depth look at the B&CGWS check out the website at: [www.BGCWS.ORG](http://www.BGCWS.ORG)



Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew.

They're what make the instrument stretch – what make you go beyond the norm.

Cicely Tyson  
American Film Star

**La Crosse County University of Wisconsin**  
**Extension Office**  
**“Revitalizing Wisconsin’s Downtown Webinar Series” Provides Valuable Information for West Salem Downtown Merchants**

Throughout Wisconsin, small rural communities are rediscovering the value of their downtowns as the focal point for shopping, dining out, and simply visiting with friends and neighbors.

During the past year, the University of Wisconsin Extension has been helping local downtown directors and local economic development professionals play a proactive role supporting local businesses during tough economic times. The Revitalizing Wisconsin’s Downtown Webinar Series has offered free, live, interactive web-based seminars. The webinars allowed participants to gather at a regional site and interact with presenters and other participants around the state.

The goal of the year-long series of web conferences was, “to create a relevant series of interactions that allowed speakers from across the country to share their expertise on downtown shopping and gathering centers,” says Karl Green, La Crosse County UWEX Community Resource Development Educator.

Speaker topics included those such as “Downtowns in the Current Economy”, “Creating an Entrepreneurial Climate Downtown”, “Downtown Imaging and Branding”, and “Low Cost/High Impact Designs for Downtowns” – just to name a few.

These presentations have provided valuable, relevant information for businesses that face the reality of staying profitable in a downtown district – especially in a down economy. The speakers addressed real issues such as renegotiating leases, improving access for shoppers, and developing merchandise floor plans for increased sales.

The series also addressed the bigger picture providing background and examples of downtown branding, design standards, signage programs, and façade improvement. These elements were discussed by presenters as a way to brand an overall downtown and create a destination experience.

During the coming year, the *Village People* has identified as its priority an effort to support and enhance the efforts of the downtown district. In cooperation with the West Salem Business Association, the *Village People* hopes to help enhance the downtown as a shopping and destination area. The information from the webinar series will provide a valuable resource for meeting the needs and objective of the downtown merchants.

**Revitalizing Wisconsin's Downtown Webinar Series**  
La Crosse County University of Wisconsin Extension

March 19	Creating an Entrepreneurial Climate Downtown
April 16	Downtown Image and Branding
May 21	Business Recruitment
June 18	Low Cost/High Impact Design for Downtowns
September 17	Use of Technology to Promote Downtown
October 15	Green and Sustainable Downtowns
November 19	Working with Big Box Retailers
December 17	Understanding the Potential of the Downtown Office Worker

Sponsored by: La Crosse County UW Extension, City of Onalaska, Downtown Main Street, City of La Crosse, Village of Holmen, Village of West Salem

*Open to the Public, Call to Register – UW Extension Office at 608 785 9593*

*West Salem Village  
People Annual Meeting*

When: Tuesday, November 17

Where: Westview Inn

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Please join us as we elect two new board officers, review our finances and look ahead to an exciting 2010!



# Spread the WORD

The Village People always appreciates your tax-deductible contribution to our work.

Your financial support plays a vital role in "Working Today for West Salem's Tomorrow".

Please send your contribution to :  
The Village People  
P.O. Box 10  
West Salem, WI 54669

The world has a lot of starters but very few finishers.

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There are many fine things that you mean to do someday, under what you think will be more favorable circumstances. But the only time that is surely yours is the present, so this is the time to speak the word of appreciation and sympathy, to do the generous deed, to forgive the fault of a thoughtless friend, to sacrifice a little more for others.

Today is the day to express your noblest qualities of mind and heart, to do at least one worthy thing that you have long postponed. Today you can make your life significant and worthwhile. The present is yours to do with as you will.

Grenville Kleiser,  
American Writer

*The mission of the Village People is to engage the community in identifying and facilitating projects for growth and development, beautification, historic preservation, and community awareness of the benefits of proactive planning. Our primary focus is on the revitalization of downtown, capturing the spirit and uniqueness of the past, present, and future of our community.*

*The quickest way to change the attitudes of those workers who are negative is to talk about what's good about the place, how pleased customers are, how confident you are in the future. Let people know that you have confidence in them. Give a number of reasons - as many as you can think of - for how the workers benefit by being efficient, running a profitable business, satisfying customers, and delivering good products on a timely basis.*

*Report the good things that outsiders say about your company to your employees. Distribute complimentary letters, especially those that compliment specific individuals. Avoid being negative, cynical, and punitive. Sow the seeds of team effort.*