



DAN PATCH *Newsletter*

A Publication of the Dan Patch Historical Society

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www.danpatch.com



Dan Patch Days
2010 Button



Last Years Button
still available for sale

**For more information
about our organization,
visit our website
www.danpatch.com**

Dan Patch Days June 24-27, 2010

The city is buzzing with discussions of Dan Patch Days. Summer road construction is forcing Dan Patch Days Inc., the sponsoring group of Dan Patch Days, to cancel the Sunday parade with a promise of a bigger and better parade in 2011. All other plans for the annual event are moving ahead. The Dan Patch Historical Society has their annual button for sale for three dollars. These collector buttons enable the purchaser to participate in the drawing to win an intarsia (an art form of natural inlaid wood created of the button and donated by Savage artist, Jim Ryan.) Second place will receive a historic blanket. A button is also required to participate in the annual "Find the Horseshoe" Hunt. A specially marked horseshoe is hidden on city property and the interest is intense. Historic clues, written by our very own member cluemaster, appear weekly starting on May 28 on our website (www.danpatch.com) and in the Savage Pacer. Finder of the horseshoe receives \$100 cash. We have a booth at Community Park from 2-8 PM on Saturday June 26 where we display items relating to Dan Patch, M.W. Savage and the history of the city. Members are available to answer questions. We also will have information on the Scott County Historical Society. On the main stage we have a quiz show where we select members of the audience to answer questions about our history. Prizes are the book, "The Great Dan Patch and the Remarkable Mr. Savage", an ornament and memberships in the Dan Patch Historical Society.

Check the Dan Patch Days, Inc. website
(www.danpatchdays.org) for up to the minute details.

Mission Statement: The Dan Patch Historical Society was formed for the purpose of collection, preservation and dissemination of historical knowledge and artifacts about the horse, Dan Patch, and it's owner, M.W. Savage.

BUTTON COLLECTION COMPLETE



Dan Patch Days Button Collection

When the Heritage Room/Museum opened in 1997 we had our Dan Patch Days buttons placed here and there in the display cases. We finally decided to check to make sure that we had a complete collection and sought a better way to display them. Upon checking we realized that we were missing a few but were able to come up with a complete set that is now on display in one of our display cases. The first Dan Patch Days was in 1953 and lasted until 1976 when it was cancelled due to an unfortunate incident. (There was no Dan Patch Days in 1965 due to the flood.) The celebration was revived as Heritage Days with buttons in 1992 thru 1995 when the name was changed again to Dan Patch Days. Buttons from some of the previous years are still available for sale from the DPHS for \$3 each.



Lynda Bickett

Lynda Bickett, an employee of the Scott County Library System – Savage branch is retiring at the end of June. Lynda was hired in 1999 and one her duties has been to oversee the items in the Heritage Room files. She perused the newspapers for historic items to file and kept things in order. Lynda plans to spend more time with grandchildren and her husband who has already retired. When you are at the library, thank Lynda for the work that she has done to keep our Heritage Room up to date and in order.

DPHS TRIVIA

What were the names of Mr. Savage's two dogs?

The Heiress and Pat, they were constant companions of Minor Heir and Dan Patch

A FISH TALE

Dawn broke to sub freezing temperatures in Minneapolis on Monday January 5TH, 1903. The weather was just one concern for Robert "Fish" Jones who had been up for hours as he had not been sleeping well of late. He had recently developed a scalp condition brought on he thought by a new silk hat that had arrived last week, purchased from his favorite shop, Truly Yours in New York. He was treating his skin rash with a potion obtained from his long time friend M.W. Savage. Called Skin Remedy, it was produced by the Dr. Belding Medicine Company that Savage owned. Jones wondered if the remedy was doing any good as the rash seemed to be spreading.

Jones was also worried that he may have to get rid of his beloved pet bear. Jones owned a successful fish market on Hennepin Avenue that earned him the nickname he despised but could never shake. He kept the bear tethered out front of the market and over the weekend the bear had come dangerously close to mauling a rather rambunctious young boy. Jones also owned lions, cougars and other exotic animals that he kept in a zoo further east down Hennepin. The Minneapolis Tribune had commented on his eccentricities, which he didn't mind since it was good for business, but he had to be careful lest things get too out of hand. Last year Archbishop John Ireland had approached him about purchasing the land as a possible site for a new basilica. In light of the terrified young boy perhaps it made sense to relocate the animals and sell to the Archdiocese. After all, there were some nice plots available near Minnehaha Falls, a quieter less populated part of town.

Perhaps the biggest reason that "Fish" Jones could not sleep was that he was too excited. His years of back room negotiations and late night maneuverings were finally paying off. He had convinced M.W. Savage to purchase the great pacer Dan Patch for the unheard of sum of \$60,000. This nationally recognized standard bred was arriving at the Union Depot this morning and Jones himself would lead the parade down Nicollet Avenue towards the pacers winter home on Portland. Any decent racing fan knew the legend of Dan Patch and the amazing season he had completed the previous fall on the national circuit. Jones believed this sports superstar would singlehandedly revive his dream of making the Minnehaha racetrack that he managed successful. More fame and prestige could not be far behind.

Fish Jones was instrumental in starting up harness racing in Minneapolis. He was a born character, a promoter and editor and publisher of his own magazine the Northwestern Horseman and Stockman. In 1888 The Minnehaha Driving Park was built on a 56 acre site off of 36 TH Street and Minnehaha Avenue. The land was leased for a 15 year term from W.W. Hayward, and Jones served as secretary of the association. From the start the track did not live up to expectations as plans for a full season of racing materialized into only one big event every year. By 1891 the races were losing money and the association was declared insolvent and ordered to dissolve. In 1892 the dream was re-born as The Minneapolis Driving Club with Jones again as the secretary. Results were no better, there was still only one racing event a year and they scheduled other events such as University of Minnesota football games and Minneapolis Miller baseball games to try and stay solvent. By 1895 a vote was taken to cancel the season and then it was agreed that Fish Jones could solely manage the lease and the 'Ha-Ha facilities. After years of little to no activity, In 1900 Jones partnered with Savage, whose large profits from his International Stock Food Company was allowing him to be a major player in the sport. His previous big name purchase, Directum, had already run at the 'Ha-Ha with Harry Hersey up, in front of impressive crowds. Together Jones and Savage made major renovations to the track and reopened for a bigger better season, hoping this re-incarnation would be met with more success. *(cont. on page 4)*

A Fish Tale (Cont. from page 3)

To ensure the right amount of fanfare and the appropriate press coverage for Dan Patch's arrival, Jones scheduled the Newsboy Band of the Minneapolis Journal to lead the parade. The pacer would also be escorted by the Minneapolis Riding and Driving Club in stylish rigs and the best Minnesota had to offer in harness horses. When Jones arrived at the depot he was pleased to note a large crowd on hand. Dan arrived in his own personally outfitted rail car from Kansas City via the Omaha Road. When the whistle blew and the brakes hissed last, the majestic mahogany bay emerged to thousands pressing for a view. Amid hoots and hollers Jones gave his carefully planned speech welcoming Dan and heralding the business acumen of Mr. Savage. He then dropped a plug for the race track and introduced Savage and Dan's trainer Mr. Hersey. And as the 1200 pound champion clip clopped down Nicollet, Hennepin and Portland avenues he was cheered by many thousands more, an indication of future gate receipts Jones knew.

By the time the festivities concluded at Savage's turreted Queen Anne style mansion on Portland, it was mid afternoon and all parties were ready for the lavish dinner planned there to cap off the day. By the time Fish made it back to his own home after dusk, he was ready for a well deserved good night's rest. First he would treat his scalp with a new treatment Savage had given him after their dinner earlier in the evening. He had hopes this potion would work a little better. After a satisfying day Jones slept long and hard with peaceful dreams of success at his beloved track.

As fate would have it, Dan Patch never raced at the Minnehaha racetrack. Events conspired against Jones that were fatal to his dream. After suffering through economic depression and waning enthusiasm, the track could not survive suburban sprawl. The lease ran out two months later and was not renewed. The land was subdivided, the existing buildings were torn down and by 1905 neighborhood homes began appearing. Savage and Dan Patch went on to greater glory and Fish Jones turned his eccentric interests to other more successful endeavors. By the time of his death in 1930, at the site of his original zoo, now stands a beautiful basilica named St. Mary's. The zoo was re-located to Minnehaha Falls, where there now stands a beautiful home called Longfellow; and in 1936 the animals were sold to a great zoo named Como.

This article was researched and written by Jim Ross, lifelong resident of Savage, MN and Board member of DPHS. The inspiration for this article was from the Winterfest celebration in downtown Savage in Dec., 2009 when one of our members appeared there in character as Mr. "Fish" Jones looking for his friend, Mr. Savage.

Dan Patch Historical Society Membership Application

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____ E-Mail: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

ANNUAL DUES: Student (\$5) Individual (\$15) Family (\$25) Benefactor (\$50) Corporate (\$250 & more)

Please mail completed form and check to: Dan Patch Historical Society • P.O. Box 1:55 • Savage, MN 55378

New/Renewing Members

Wes Bowerstock (Bacyrus, OH)
 Robert Corll (Saxonburg, PA)
 Charles Couch (Kingdown, KS)
 Don Danielson (Savage, MN)
 Vivian Egan (Winter Park, FL)
 Greg Lind (Savage, MN)
 Lucille McDermott (Stillwater, MN)
 Virginia Odette (Elko New Market, MN)
 Jerry Sharpsteen (Burnsville, MN)
 Jonathan Wall (Lompac, CA)
 Jed & Jenny Williams (Savage, MN)



*Happy Birthday Dan Patch
 April 29, 1896*

Items for Sale

- 2008 Dan Patch Pewter 2 1/2" diameter Holiday Ornament.....\$20



- Dan Patch Postcard.....\$1
- 2010 Dan Patch Days Button.....\$3
 Previous years buttons also available
- M.W. Savage Storyboard.....\$75
- Dan Patch Storyboard.....\$75



- International Stock Food Farm Book.....\$25 (non-members).....\$15 (members)
- The Great Dan Patch and the Remarkable Mr. Savage Book....\$24.95
 DVD also available for \$10
- Dan Patch Electric Railroad Book...\$15 (non-members).....\$12 (members)

*Items available at The Razor's Edge Barbershop, through the website www.danpatch.com or call 952-890-1669. Shipping and handling fees apply.

From the President



On Sunday July 25, 2010, the City of Savage recreation department has scheduled a bus trip to the Running Aces Harness Park in Columbus, MN. This is a 5/8 mile state of the art purpose built harness racetrack. This style racing is what Dan Patch was famous for so we are encouraging people to sign up. Members of our group were there for the dedication when it opened and there is a huge mural of Dan Patch in the lobby. Round trip

cost from Savage is only \$12 and you need to register by July 16 by calling 952-224-3420 or check the website at www.cityofsavage.com. Invite your friends and family to join us.

I look forward to seeing you at Dan Patch Days again this year. I enjoy the suspense of the horseshoe hunt as we all try to figure out the clues. Be sure to visit our booth and don't forget to buy a button. The sales help support our activities. Thanks for your support.

Jens

**DAN PATCH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1:55
Savage, MN 55378**

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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**VISIT: Heritage Room/Museum
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