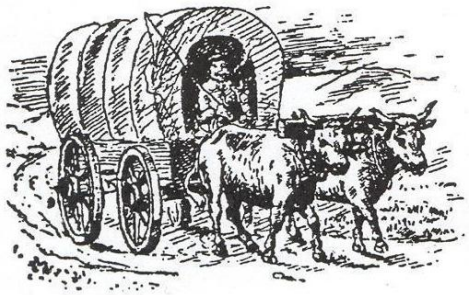
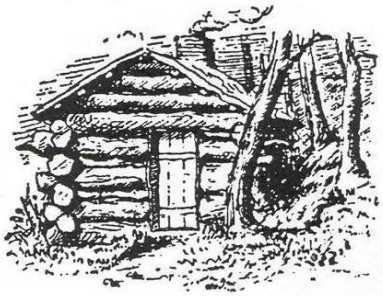


JUNIOR PIONEERS
OF NEW ULM AND VICINITY



Vol. 40 / No. 1 JUNIOR PIONEERS NEWSLETTER Winter 2026

Junior Pioneers Winter Social
Friday, February 27, 2026
New Ulm Country Club

5:30 pm – Social Hour
6:00 pm – Hearty Appetizer Buffet

chicken option, meatballs, meat sliders,
fruit, vegetables
dessert
coffee and water included
cash bar available

$35.00/person

Featured Speaker:
To Be Announced
(Awaiting confirmation from potential speaker.)

Reservations are due –February 20, 2026.

Complete and mail in the form on the following page, along with your payment for the meal and your 2026 dues, *if you have not yet paid them.*

If you are concerned about meeting the mail deadline, you may call Pam Kitzberger at 507-276-2610 with the number attending and pay the night of the event.

Even if you're unable to attend the Winter Social, use this form to send in your 2026 membership dues.

2026 Winter Social and 2026 Annual Membership *(if not yet paid)*

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Banquet $35/person	$35	_____
Single Membership	$25	_____
Joint Dues (*Husband & Wife both qualify for membership*)	$35	_____
Surviving Spouse	$25	_____
Additional Donation for _____	$	_____
TOTAL	**$**	_____

Send this completed form and check to: Junior Pioneers, PO Box 22, New Ulm, MN 56073
Questions? Abigail (Saffert) Hawthorne at 507-304-3709 or email juniorpioneersnu@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES and CLARIFICATIONS

When an application is received, verification of ancestry is completed prior to membership being granted. This can sometimes take a little time. If an email is provided on the application, an email confirmation that the application was received will be sent out.

Once an application has been vetted, the applicant will be notified, and membership dues will be payable at that time.

We are looking into the logistics of online payments for new and renewal memberships.

Dues are currently 25.00 for an individual and have been at that rate for many years. As the cost of printing, postage and maintaining the park increases, we are, unfortunately, forced to raise our dues.

Dues for 2026 will remain at the current rates noted above, but will increase for 2027 dues, which will be payable beginning in October 2026. New rates will be as follows:

Individual $30.00 Joint $40.00 Surviving Spouse $30.00

Junior Pioneer Annual Meeting October 17, 2025 New Ulm Turner Hall

Meeting was called to order by President Jeff Gulden at 7:00 pm.

Meeting minutes from the 2024 annual meeting were provided to all members in attendance by Secretary Abigail Saffert. After review, there were no changes, recommendations or corrections offered from the floor. On a motion by John Luepke and second by John Fritsche, the motion was carried.

Treasurer's report was presented by Mary Ellen Schanus. General checking account balance as of 9/30/25 was $19,373.56. Certificate of Deposit was $20,652.66. The shelter account balance was $12,775.29. The Endowment fund balance was $7.54 because a new Certificate of Deposit now holds the remaining Endowment funds with a value of $11,570. A note was made that, for last year's annual meeting, checks were deposited immediately, causing the income/expense lines of the checkbook to look different. Going forward, checks will be deposited after the annual meeting. President Gulden added that Junior Pioneers do not make money on annual meeting but rather hope to break even. A note was also made by President Gulden that upcoming shelter expenses are expected to further deplete shelter account. A note was also made that the $7.54 was left in the endowment to keep the account from closing. A comment from the membership about the endowment being meant for future generations with the hope that it will grow. No further questions or discussion was brought forward. On a motion by John Fritsche and a second by Darla Gebhard motion to accept the treasurer's report was carried.

President Gulden thanked departing board member Gordy Palmer, who has put in many years of service. Current board members were introduced.

The nominating committee presented Jeff Gulden and Rebecca Fliszar for renewal of their positions for a second term as well as Darla Gebhard as a new board member.

President Gulden called for further nominees from the floor; after three calls with no further nominees, a motion was made by John Luepke and second by Lynn Henle to install those nominees brought forward. Motion carried, with one opposed.

President Gulden provided a shelter project update and thanked Paul and Mary Ellen Schanus for their work maintaining the park and to the volunteer committee. A QR code is available in the park to use for rental; fees are currently set at $100 for members and $150 for non-members. President Gulden then provided an update on Phase 2 for 2026, which will include sidewalks, concrete pads, water, and tree planting. Water will temporarily be from the hydrant, with the intention to tap into city water in the future. A question came from the floor about enclosing the shelter, and at this time the intention is not to enclose. There was discussion around the topic regarding: whether to poll membership, costs, insurance, grass trimming and maintenance, number of rentals in 2025, feedback from rentals, ravine management, old cabin restoration, and publicity. An informal poll was taken of those present about enclosing, with the membership showing as not in favor of enclosing at this time.

President Gulden made a request for members to serve on the nominating committee for 2026. George Downs and Jim Kretsch volunteered.

With no further questions or topics from the floor, a motion was made by John Fritsche and seconded by Marilyn Hesse to adjourn. Motion to adjourn carried at 7:30 pm.

Submitted by Abigail Saffert, JP Secretary

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIY
available at the Kiesling House

The Historic Kiesling House was constructed in 1861. It survived the US-Dakota War of 1862. Consider supporting the Brown County Historical Society as they provide a variety of experiences scheduled at various times throughout the summer season.

As Junior Pioneer members, this is a way to "keep green the memory of the pioneers who settled in New Ulm and the vicinity: and to preserve as much as possible the usages and customs, language, and ideals of the early settlers."

When asked what inspired a current volunteer, she explained that she has always had a deep love of history, and with New Ulm's rich historical background, the Kiesling House felt like the perfect place to spend her time. She especially enjoys the opportunity to meet visitors from all over, never failing to ask where they are traveling from, which often leads to meaningful conversations and connections.

Another current volunteer found a perfect fit in the Kiesling House garden. A lifelong gardener, he was excited to bring his passion and ideas to the space. What he enjoys most, though, are the people he meets while tending the garden - he loves hearing where visitors are from and learning their stories.

Location: 220 North Minnesota Street, New Ulm, Minnesota
Open Fridays & Saturdays: May 1st – August 29th
2026 Hours: Friday & Saturday, 11:00am to 3:00pm

Volunteer when it fits your schedule! If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or learning more, please contact Heidi Brandes at the Brown County Historical Society at 507-233-2616.

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We are always open to ideas for newsletter articles.
Do you have a topic that may be of interest to fellow members?

Consider writing or sharing an article for a future edition of the newsletter.
Please keep articles to 1-3 pages and photos are welcome.

Please send questions or submissions to Jyneal McCrea at jynealmccrea@gmail.com

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*__New Members__

Name	***Ancestor***
Gregg Albrecht	Albrecht
Scott Keisling	Keisling
Mitchell Minnaert	Priesinger/Bender
John Patrick (JP) Strate	Dambach/Fesenmaier

* __Memorials & Donations__

Amy & Terry Britton	In Memory of Mary Schneider McClennan
Cheryl Buck	In Memory of Frank Brust
Jerry & Charlene Dannheim	In Memory of Harvey Feldman (a tree will be planted at the Junior Pioneers park)
Emily Potter	In Honor of Howard Schmidt

Thomas & Kathleen Berg (Laboratory Instrument Leasing, Inc)

Robert & Norma Dempsey	Bill & Eileen Furth
Alan Gag	Dan & Mary Groebner
Jeff & Lisa Gulden	Keith & Tammy Henle
Lynn Henle	Susan Kolbinger
Alyce Konz	Steven Marti
Ted & Jodi Marti	Lori & Bill Otis
Jerry Weldy	

***__Deceased Members__**

Arnold Albrecht, descendant of Pfaender
Robert “Butch” Domeier, descendant of Hillesheim
Richard B. Heymann, descendant of Heymann
Thomas Nehls, descendant of Schlumpberger
Richard Niemann, descendant of Oswald/Schell
Kathleen Zuckerman, descendant of Alwin

**If we have forgotten or miscredited anyone concerning Memorials & Donations, Deceased Members or New Members, please notify Jyneal McCrea (newsletter editor) at jynealmccrea@gmail.com or 507-202-6299 or any Board Member and we will correct it in the next edition.*

Contact us:

Email: juniorpioneersnu@gmail.com
Address: PO Box 22; New Ulm, MN 56073
Website: jrpioneers.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/JuniorPioneersofNewUlm

PARK UPDATES

Remember that the Junior Pioneers Park is open for the enjoyment of both members and the general public, as determined by the founding members. Anyone may visit the park at any time.

The park shelter is available for rental from May 1 – September 30, 10:00 am – 10:00 pm. Renting the park shelter GUARANTEES availability of the park shelter for a specific day. Reservations and payments are completed online at jrpioneers.com.

2026 Rental Rates

Members (new this year!): **FREE** rental, $100.00 damage deposit
Non-members: $150.00 rental, $150.00 damage deposit

Cold water will be available this season!

Please consider receiving future newsletters via email.

This saves our organization considerable funds in printing and mailing costs.

BONUS – Photos are in color when you opt for email delivery.

Please forward your email address to Lynn Henle at l.henle@comcast.net

PLEASE NOTE

Sometimes the email version of newsletter goes to people's Spam or Junk folders.

This seems to have something to do with large group emails.
To help minimize this, the list of 230 Junior Pioneers contacts has been divided into smaller groups of 25.

When you receive your newsletter (whether by email or USPS), ask your fellow members if they have received their copy. If they have not, remind them to check their Spam or Junk folder.

The newsletter will come from the email jynealmccrea@gmail.com

In addition, an email WITHOUT the newsletter attached will go out just prior to sending the newsletter.

2026 Junior Pioneer Board Members	
Pam Kitzberger, President	Daniel Juni, Vice President & Park Committee
Abigail (Saffert) Hawthorne, Secretary	Mary Ellen Schanus, Treasurer
Rebecca Flizsar	Darla Gebhard
Brian Gramentz, Park Committee	Jeff Gulden, Park Committee
Lynn Henle, Membership	Alyce Konz
John Luepke	Jyneal McCrea, Newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER PICNIC AT THE PARK

Thursday
June 11, 2026

5:30 p.m.

Junior Pioneers will provide hamburgers, hotdogs and utensils.
Members bring a dish to pass and their own beverages.

SPRING CLEAN UP AT THE PARK

Thursday, April 23, 2026
5:00 pm

bring rakes and shovels
hot dogs provided
BYOB and dessert of choice

ANNUAL MEETING

Turner Hall

Friday
October 16, 2026

5:30 pm

Junior Pioneers
P.O. Box 22
New Ulm, MN 56073
(Address Service Requested)