On March 22nd the crocus flowers popped through the snow and bloomed. The first flowers to bloom in Battle Lake marked the start of yard work at the museum. We were picking sticks up all over the place, repairing rabbit damage on the hedge, cutting back the pink spirea and hydrangea, pruning trees and bushes, and, if possible, making some new improvements and additions.

Thanks to our excellent volunteers and master gardeners, the grounds look more spectacular every year! (I did enjoy doing some of it myself.) We also removed a couple of large “weed trees” that obstructed the view of the Prospect House and are gradually clearing away the brush by the highway. Big job, but it needs to be done. It looks better all the time.

Our next large yard project will be to provide steps from the sidewalk on the street to our walk to the museum...any volunteers?

Our yard is open to visitors through our “Walking Tour.” We also plan to erect an open tent to have some things on display and provide the telling of Cap’s Civil War story on request. We will, of course, abide by COVID-19 safety standards!

Stay safe, stay well, and please support this historic landmark and its collections.

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ABBY BIZZETT-JOHNSON RETIRES

Excerpted from an article in the Battle Lake Review by Reba Gilliland.

It is with a heavy heart that we must announce that Abby Bizzett-Johnson is retiring after a decade with the museum. She carried out many functions, including fundraising, organizing and overseeing operations. Abby worked tirelessly, writing grants, and approaching businesses, service organizations, and corporate sponsors as potential donors. She worked with the board to get the museum listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to have a historical marker installed on Lake Avenue in Battle Lake. Her accomplishments are too numerous to mention but suffice it to say that the museum would not be where it is today without her devotion and hard work.

Abby is proud of what she has helped Jay achieve and says “I have had 10 years into PHM of love and labor, and I’m proud I could be part of that. Some call PHM my ‘baby.’ In many ways that is true.” But she is also looking forward to retirement where she can rest and do the things she’s been unable to do for a while — enjoy life, and like all of us, hopes she will have the years to do it.

Perhaps it is Jay who best sums up PHM’s last 10 years:

“I made the Prospect House into a museum; Abby made it work.”

GIVE CAMPAIGN

By Valerie Clark

To say that times are tough is probably the understatement of the year. We at the Prospect House recognize that this virus is hurting all of us in one way or another — from the small business owner who had to close up shop, to those individuals who are unable to visit their loved ones — this pandemic has certainly taken its toll. That is why we are so grateful to everyone who has donated to our museum during this difficult time.

These past few weeks, we’ve seen tremendous generosity from our community. Together, our friends have helped us raise over $2,100 in relief funding for the museum. Also, thanks to contributions made to our two online giving campaigns, #GiveTuesdayNow and Give At Home MN, over $1400 of proceeds are eligible for matching funds!

The museum relies heavily on ticket sales from our tours and events to cover basic operating costs. Since we are currently unable to offer either of these activities, our main source of income is gone. Although we will continue to seek government relief funding, you, our donors, are our best hope for aid at this time. That is why I want to thank you all who have already given! It is your support that will help all of us at the museum continue to work on new digital programming and a strategy to safely reopen. Watch a short thank you video from Jay. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQz8vd67Brg]

Thank you!