

Gebhardt, Thomsen among recipients of City of Quincy Arts Awards

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When asked how much time he has devoted to the Friends of the Log Cabins, John Gebhardt chuckled.

"A lot," he said. "It's hard to put into a number, because there are so many issues that have to be dealt with, and now that we're getting into full-fledged restoration, it's actually consuming more time."

His work to save, restore and promote the utilization of the six log cabins and other Lincoln-era structures on Quinsippi Island was recognized Friday during an Exchange Club luncheon at America's Best Value Inn when the 2011 City of Quincy Arts Awards were handed out. The awards were handed out by Mayor John Spring, and they were sponsored by WGEM-TV/AM-FM/CGEM, The Quincy Herald-Whig, the Oakley-Lindsay Foundation and the Quincy Society of Fine Arts.



Other City of Quincy Arts Awards were presented to:

- * Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County, arts organization;
- * Media Development and ETC Computerland, business leadership;
- * Brandon Thomsen, individual artist/teacher.

Gebhardt, who was recognized for his volunteer leadership, became involved with the log cabin association when it was created in 2007.

"I was concerned about the log cabin village when I was on the (Quincy Park District) board (from 1997-2001)," he said. "I tried to find an organization willing to assume responsibility for the village, and I couldn't find any."

His interest in preserving the structures is simple.

"This is a very unique village, and it's rare to see this many original cabins in one location that you can historically document back to the original owners," he said. "Quincy needs to preserve that for future generations."

As an RSVP volunteer, Gebhardt logged more than 830 hours of volunteer community service last year. He is the secretary for the Spring Valley Trails Arboretum Association, secretary/treasurer for the Reserve Officers Association (which supports the development of the All Wars



Museum), a past president of the Mississippi Valley Historic Auto Club, a 23-year member of the Gem City "Breakfast" Kiwanis Club, a member of Friends of the Library, served as a guardian on the May Honor Flight for World War II veterans and serves as assistant adjunct for the local American Legion Post 37.

Asked how he balances it all, Gebhardt said, "It's a matter of deciding where you want to volunteer your time. (The log cabins are) one of the major issues I've chosen to put my emphasis on."

Thomsen, a native of Watertown, Wis., the individual artist/teacher award winner, has been the director of student theater for the Quincy Community Theatre since 2006.

Thomsen annually creates, develops and implements an educational and theatre enrichment program, including workshops and acting classes, for grades K-12. He also directs four student theatre productions for QCT. He created "QCT on the Road," which takes a full production to schools and libraries, and he was a co-creator of the Triple Threat Boot Camp and continues to organize and direct a musical theatre camp each summer.



The business leadership award went to Media Development and ETC Computerland.

QSFA marketing chairman Carlos Fernandez, vice president and general manager of WGEM, led a group working to develop Quincy's cultural tourism by updating QSFA arts commercials and website.

Susan Pierson, president of Media Development, and her staff created the tagline, "Arts Quincy, It's for You," and designed the new Arts/Quincy web site and produced accompanying 30-second television spots. Media Development has donated time and creative talent to many organizations, including the Quincy Notre Dame Foundation, Quincy Catholic Schools, the Quincy Humane Society, Cheerful Home and QUANADA. The agency will celebrate its 30th year in business in July. Other staff members are Frank Cann, Tim McClelland, Brandy Blickhan and Danette Koyer.

Eric Thomas, president of ETC Computerland, and his staff donated hundreds of hours to put the new website on the internet. Thomas is on the board of directors of the JWCC Foundation, the Quincy Chamber of Commerce, and Cornerstone: Foundations for Families, and several other employees are members of other area organizations. ETC Computerland also is proud of its GiFT program which has donated more than 60 computers to area non-profit organizations since 2005.



WGEM was a winner of the City of Quincy Arts Award in 1998.

The arts organization award went to the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County. Reg Ankrom is the executive director.



Last month, nearly 1,000 people toured the 177-year-old John Wood Mansion, a gallery of artworks and pieces that reflect the culture of Quincy in the 19th century. A virtual tour of the mansion and a two-story log cabin built in the same year can be seen on the society's website.

The Historical Society recently opened its new Lincoln Gallery to display part of its collection of rare artifacts that connect Quincy to President Lincoln. It also brought to Quincy the Abraham Lincoln Presidential

Library and Museum's acclaimed "Lincoln in Illinois" exhibit. It has created partnerships to renew a history column in The Herald-Whig, and it hosted a day-long tour of the arts and artifacts in six Quincy museums and historic sites related to "Quincy's Entry into the Civil War." The Historical Society will open a new exhibit in April on Shiloh, featuring Quincy artifacts of the first major battle of the Civil War and the role of Quincy's Gen. Benjamin Prentiss and the Quincy soldiers he led.

Each winner received original prints created by students in Vicky Sandercock's art classes at Quincy Junior High School. Students were Bryslin Powell, Mekia Gay, Alyssa Daggett, Erin Norris and Deven Smith.

The awards date to 1981.

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