



Hibbing celebrated its 123rd birthday on Tuesday, August 9th. Once again, the weather cooperated for an evening of small town America at its best.

Honored this year was Sam Perrella, who started Hibbing's iconic Sammy's Pizza. Also honored were Bill and Norma Schleppegrell who worked for the betterment of our community and our country. Bill was a fighter pilot and POW in World War II and later an educator at Hibbing High School, teaching German. Norma began her career in 1968 as a secretary in Hibbing General Hospital's new psychiatric unit. She went on to become instrumental in improving mental health services both in our community and state-wide.

Once again, we were fortunate to have the Mid-Range Honor Guard present the colors. Thanks to the Hibbing City Band for serenading the audience with a wide variety of musical selections. Thanks also to Kelle Degnan, Steve and Mary Claire Koskovich, Erica Larson, Carol Moore and Linda Suihkonen for serving cake and punch. A very special thank you to Mary and Joe Keyes who organized this well-attended event.

To read the full biographies of these deserving honorees, check out Jack Lynch's articles in the Hibbing Daily Tribune, or visit their newly installed plaques at the Hibbing Historical Society museum.



## “Hibbing’s Big Pit”

What began as an underground mine has transformed into one of the biggest open-pit mines in the world. Nicknamed the “Grand Canyon of the North”, the Hull-Rust-Mahoning Mine in Hibbing, Minnesota, is actually the consolidation of some twenty-odd mining properties, both open pit and underground.

Several significant facts help to describe this iron mining colossus. While once deemed the largest open pit mine in the world, it now ranks sixth. In 2015, it measured a whopping 4 miles long, east to west with a north-south expansion of 2 miles at its widest point. It is over 500 feet deep. And it is still growing larger as mining operations continue. Since 1895, the mine has shipped more than 800 million tons of iron and removed more than 1.4 billion tons of earth.

The following information is taken from the files of the Hibbing Historical Society and was written in the late 1960s:

“Transporting this ore from mine to Lake Superior was an enormous job. If all ore cars used to do the job were modern 70-ton steel hopper cars, it would require approximately 8,600,000 carloads. And if these 24 foot ore cars could be placed end to end, they would stretch better than 39,000 miles, or over one and a half times the circumference of the Earth at the equator. Conveying the ore down the lakes to the furnaces would require over 46,000 trips by the average 600 foot ore carrier holding 13,000 tons of cargo. This hypothetical armada, if placed bow to stern in line, would stretch over 5,200 miles. Should all the ore from the Hull-Rust-Mahoning Pit be converted to finished steel, it would make over 200,000,000 tons...enough to fabricate 200,000,000 automobiles, one for every man, woman and child in the United States.

Hibbing’s “Big Pit”, therefore, has been Minnesota’s greatest single raw material contribution to the growth of our nation. With this and many other great natural ore bodies now depleted, the glamour of iron mining has been taken over by taconite. But the “Big Pit” remains a monument to Minnesota’s role in the building of America.”

To see new aerial videos of the Hull-Rust-Mahoning expansion toward the current Mine View, visit our Facebook page.



## Calendar of Events

Saturday, October 22nd: Annual Membership Luncheon (Please see insert.)

Thursday, November 17th: Give to the Max Day - a great way to support the Hibbing Historical Society. More info will be available at the Membership Luncheon. Or visit: [givemn.org](http://givemn.org)

Friday, December 9th: Christmas Open House (Separate mailing to follow.)

## Original Oliver Buildings

Early in the morning on August 29, 2016, the Brickyard Sports Bar and Grill sustained significant fire damage. The Brickyard was housed in one of the original Oliver Mining Company buildings, which were built in 1920. These buildings were constructed downtown by the mining company to convince people from North Hibbing to move south, allowing the company to mine the north Hibbing area. These building also make up part of the East Howard Street Commercial Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other original Oliver buildings include the Androy, the Elks Club Building, and what is now the Howard Court building.

*Photographs courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society*



## Board Member Spotlight

We welcome Peter Becchetti to the Society's Board of Governors. Peter was born and raised in Hibbing. He attended both Alice and Washington Elementary Schools and is a proud graduate of Hibbing High's Class of 1971.

Peter's grandparents, Giovanni Batista and Ernesta (Costanzi) Becchetti, were Italian immigrants, who settled in North Hibbing where they owned a market just a block from the Lincoln School. Peter's father, Steve, was an accountant and served on the Hibbing School Board and his mother, Helen, was a homemaker.

Peter spent the majority of his working career as a graphic artist. He has been active in the community for over 20 years. He served on the 1993 Centennial Celebration and All-Class Reunion committees. In 2001, he co-chaired the All-Class Reunion Committee with Holly Petroske. And in 2014, he was instrumental in gathering photos, historical information and sponsors for the All-Class Reunion booklet. Peter is also a past president of the Kiwanis Club.

Peter's role on the Board will include public relations and increasing the society's presence in the community.

## Wish List

If you are looking for a way to support the Historical Society, we are in need of the following items. Contact Erica @ 263-8522 or Linda @ 263-4916 if you have any questions.

- a 32" or 36" flat screen TV. This will allow visitors to view the museum's numerous DVD's and videos.
- a paper shredder.
- legal-sized hanging folders (standard green or brown in color).
- legal-sized hanging folders (bright green).
- blank, writable CDs.

## Museum contact information:

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Board members Linda Suihkonen and Pete Becchetti enjoy open skate at the Memorial Building this past winter.