



Old Tyme Chronicle

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BWAHS Officers and Trustees Serving in 2024

President Rick Helwig was elected last year and is serving the second year of his term. The Vice President's chair is empty.

Originally three Trustees were each elected for three year terms. Due to unfilled seats and trustees switching with officers the election process is a bit confusing.

Chad Neeper's term expires the end on March 2024. Alice Lacher, Roger Roberts are serving terms which expire the end of December 2024.

Mike Wise was elected to fill a term ending in December 2025. He joins Brad Orndorf whose term also ends in 2025. A third seat is vacant.

Board of Trustees serving terms from January 2024 thru December 2026 are Dave Martin, Mel Meyers and Chip Welch.

In summary, we need a Vice President and two more Trustees. If you are just bashful and have not come forward, give it some thought let us know. The Board meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. just before the Program Meeting at 7:30.

Christmas-On-The-Square

The 2023 version of our traditional holiday celebration was a big success. From the Chamber moving the starting time of the parade, to Mike Wise as his Civil War ancestor marching in front of the museum, to the Brass Band of OSU grads playing on the front porch, our door keeper came up with the number of 551 guests through the Myers Inn Museum. Civil War Santa gave out over 220 treats. Thanks to all who decorated, baked, served, and led tours!



ORNDORF CONSTRUCTION TO THE RESCUE AGAIN!

By Damon Bower

Once again, Orndorf Construction completed a difficult repair —this time resetting the railing facing the square from the second floor porch. Hopefully this concludes a nightmare situation that began in October of 2022, involving major repair to two end columns, minor repair to five upstairs columns and now replacement of the last railing that had to be removed to reset the end column.

None of this work could have been accomplished without the skills and dedication of Marion Ackerman and Brad Orndorf, who performed all the work without payment. They have gone a long way in keeping our historical building sound and within its original appearance.

THANKS GENTLEMEN!

Learn more about this project on Page 3

From the President's Desk . . .

New Year's Day in Civil War

By Rick Helwig

As we begin another year, I thought it might be interesting to see how a soldier in the Civil War spent his New Year's Day 160 years ago.

Below is an excerpt from the diary of Charles E. Smith. Charles E. Smith was a farmer and school teacher from Berlin Twp. At the time of his enlistment, he was 25 years old. Smith served in the 32nd OVI Co. I from September 1861 – July 1865 and rose to the rank of Corporal. On January 1st, 1864 he was stationed near Vicksburg, MS.

JANUARY, 1864

Friday, 1st - The morning was exceedingly cold and the Chaplain and I laid abed rather late. The ground was frozen quite hard, and there was snow enough to make it look gray. The weather was clear, but wind blew strongly and was very keen and cold. The sutler treated the regiment to beer and apples. Brother Chauncey was over and expects to reenlist for the veteran service. I did not advise him to do so, but hoped that he would not. I don't wish to be to blame for anyone reenlisting. I sold my new boots to Mr. Moore of Company D, 20th Ohio because they were too large for me. Got of six dollars and fifty cents. Sold several miniature books made of oak. We had dress parade in the evening. Chaplain

offered prayer. An order was read stating that the four hundred two dollar bounty would not be paid after the fifth of January. Evening very cool and still. Brother Chauncey reenlisted in the veteran service. My weight 172.

* * *

May you all enjoy a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

See you at the Inn,

Rick

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 9 at 6 p.m. B.W.A.H.S. Trustees meet in Myers Inn.
No Program in January

Myers Inn Museum
OPEN 10-3 on Saturdays
To Arrange a Tour at another time,
Call 740-965-3582.

Leave a message with your phone number and you will be called to arrange a time and date

Joining BWAHS is Easy

Circle One:

**Individual \$20, Family \$35, Business 10 or fewer employees \$50,
Business 11-99 employees \$75, Business 100 or more employees \$100,
Patron \$100, Other ?**

Name _____

Address or P. O. Box _____

Town _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Email Address _____

Send with check for dues to BWAHS

**P.O. Box 362
Sunbury, OH 43074**

Big Walnut Area Historical Society

OFFICERS

Rick Helwig, President

Vice President to be selected

Damon Bower, Secretary

Bill Kavage, Treasurer

TRUSTEES

Alice Lacher

Brad Orndorf

Chad Neeper

Chip Welch

Chris Killeya

David Martin

Mel Meyers

Michael Wise

Roger Roberts

Polly Horn, Curator, Webmaster
and Editor of Newsletter

For Information Call 740-965-1154

leave a message or

email Info@BigWalnutHistory.org

Preserving History . . .

By Polly Horn

Preserving history is not a quick fix. It takes someone to know what is historical and what is not, someone to know if it is worth fixing or should be recycled or pitched, and someone to be willing to sacrifice time and money to make the necessary fixes. Patience is necessary.



In September 2022, while installing our Little Free Library near the front porch, it was noticed the north pillar on the front porch had shifted 3 inches on the base. Damon Bower, our facilities chairman, began what would be over a year of preservation on our picturesque porch and balcony.

Brad Orndorf (owner of Orndorf Construction and a BWAHS Trustee) braced the porch so the balcony would not fall while repairs were made.

I think the original wood pillars were added by Jeduthan Skeels who owned the building from 1864 to 1902. A major remodeling happened when the value of the building dropped to \$40 in 1871 but went back up to \$870 in 1881. This is probably the addition of the second floor on the north side of the building and the balcony.

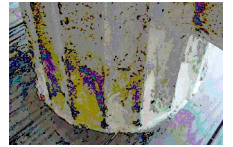
Marion Ackerman was consulted because he was hired by the library in 1983 to replaced the brick pillars put on by Hosea Hopkins (when a drunk driver hit the south pillar and broke it off) with wooden ones to match those on the building in 1936 when I. T. Frary featured this building in "Early Homes in Ohio."

A custom made pillar could be purchased but it would not match the others, and would cost a fortune to make and ship to Ohio. Ackerman studied the pillar and offered to cut off the damaged part and make a new piece to fit. He borrowed a plane to make the 20 flutes around the pillar. Orndorf installed the repaired pillar.



**Rebuilt Pillar
Base - 2023**

Our joy did not last long because we discovered the bases of the pillars on the second floor were rotting. Bower and Orndorf repaired them with a resin compound. However the south pillar which supported the corner railings was too badly damaged to use that method. It must come out. Orndorf and Bower remove it.



Repaired base



**Orndorf Bracing
Corner**

First they braced the overhang so it would be supported with out the pillar. Even with the railing removed, they could not budge the pillar. Orndorf sat on the floor and kicked the bottom of the pillar enough for it to fall to the ground. It fell without further damage to it or anything on the ground.

Once again Ackerman came to the rescue. He recruited his Woodworkers Club member Paul Pennock and friend Alan Curtis to help him. Because this pillar was solid, it was very heavy so they cut the damaged part off and moved the rest to Ackerman's workshop. He glued pieces of red wood together to make the solid pillar. They took the solid piece to Paul's workshop so he could round it on his lathe. "It is much easier to plane flutes in a round piece," noted Ackerman.



**Paul Pennock using
his lathe to shape it**



Work in Progress

When the piece was round it was returned to Ackerman's to make the flutes. "Usually there is an even number around the pillar but this time there were 21. I had to do some math," quipped Ackerman.



Ackerman making flutes

Using a a hand plane he borrowed from his friend Don Wood, Ackerman carefully made the flutes and the new piece was crafted.

Membership Committee Report . . .

Business Memberships On the Rise!

By Damon Bower, Chad Neeper & Mel Meyers

2023 has been a very good year for local businesses to become new members. They join our existing business members who have supported us for many years.

Below you will find a list of our long-standing business members and a list of new members this year:

Long Standing Members

Anthony Dental Care

Bry-Air, Inc.

Deck Masters

Devore Snyder Funeral Homes, Inc.

Firestone, Brehm, Wolf, & Whitney

(Attorneys-at- Law)

Forman Realtors, Inc.

Optec, Inc.

Payne & Brown Insurance

Sunbury Chiropractic Center

Sunbury Plumbing & Heating

New Businesses in 2023

Big Walnut Family Physical Therapy

Big Walnut Grill

Creekside Counseling and Wellness, LLC

Gossing Construction

Hayes Refrigeration Service

Homestead Acres

Leaves For Wildlife Native Plant Nursery

McComas Builders

Orndorf Construction

Rest Easy Roofing LLC

Survivor Electric LLC

Wandle & Associates Inc.

BREAKING NEWS— Employees of all old and new businesses can join the society for one year at half cost for individual or family memberships—plus these businesses can rent the meeting room at a reduced price.

We will feature a new business member a month during 2024 in our Newsletter as space allows.

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR
LOCAL BUSINESS MEMBERS**



Making sure the flutes align.

When anything is handmade especially with handtools, it is impossible to make everything exactly the same. Ackerman knew the flutes would not align unless they were fit in the right way. He made sure this would happen by using a type of mortise and tenon joint



Looks good!



Top of bottom piece



Bottom of the top

to fit the two together. Since the square could be fit in several ways, he added black lines which also needed to align. After a trial fit, Orndorf applied adhesive to both pieces.



They were aligned and clamped and allowed to set before Orndorf and his crew installed

the restored pillar as seen on the front page. Many thanks to all who made this happen and the photographer who sent the photos.

Damon Bower will paint the pillar when the weather warms.

Hopefully the pillar will last 150 years!

