



# Old Tyme Chronicle

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*Spring is Busy as Usual . . . .*

## Trustees Manned a Table at EXPO

On Thursday, April 27, Bill Kavage, Brad Orndorf, Damon Bower, Rick Helwig and Roger Roberts set up a table at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Expo to greet visitors, distribute handouts, chat about our mission to 'Preserve Today for Tomorrow,' recruit volunteers. Early photos and maps were available for newcomers to see.

## Souders 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders Visited

Friday, April 28, 71 students and their teachers as well as two parents per class were divided into groups to visit stations in the Myers Inn and barn to learn a some local history. It took 8 volunteers to present this program.

## B.W.M.S. Community Service Day

Students from Big Walnut Middle School have volunteered to help in the Myers Inn, Friday morning May 12<sup>th</sup>. Call Damon Bower ( if you can assist him.

## *Mother's Day Tea Sold Out*

Alice Lacher, chair of the tea, has reported the 30 person limit was reached last week. The event will begin at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 13, for those with reservations.

## GRE 4<sup>th</sup> Graders to Visit May 19<sup>th</sup>

Roger Roberts, Damon Bower and Polly Horn will do first person presentations for the students on the BWAHS grounds.

## Hawaiian Couple Searching for Relatives

Mr. and Mrs. James Howe of Kaneohe, Hawaii, visited us looking for descendants of Eber A. Howe who moved from Cayuga, N.Y. to Sunbury Township in the early 1800's. He is found in the 1820 census.

*Coming May 15 . . . .*

## *Accessing Our History on the Web*

At 7p.m. Monday May 15 Margaret Arnold, historian with the Community Library, will present the May program to the Historical Society on how to use Delaware County Memory website to obtain local history materials.

Started in 2005, Delaware County Memory is an ongoing collaborative project between libraries, governmental offices, local historical societies, and other local archives throughout Delaware County. The project is administered by Community Library and sponsored in part by the Community Library Foundation and the Delaware County Foundation. The goals of the project are to make county-wide local history materials accessible that support the information needs of historians and genealogists everywhere.

Delaware County Commissioners issued a resolution of support for the project in November 2010.

Margaret has a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from Drexel University in Philadelphia. She has been with Community Library since August 2002.

If you would like to make a donation, volunteer, or have items you would like to have included in Delaware County Memory, please email the library at [history@yourcl.org](mailto:history@yourcl.org) or call 740-965-3901.

## First Scholarship Awarded

Prior to the last meeting of the historical society, Alayna Boyer, a senior at Big Walnut High School gave an outstanding presentation to the group as the last requirement for our scholarship. Following her presentation, the Board of Trustees called a meeting to vote on awarding her the (Continued on page 2)



*Alayna Boyer*

*Scholarship Continued*  
the scholarship for 2023.

Board of Trustees voted last fall to use up to \$3000 of the end-of-year donations for a scholarship to a senior who demonstrated a love for volunteering. From scouts through Leo Club, Alayna is an excellent candidate.

Mindy Pyle, led the committee with Mel Meyers, Bill Kavage, Roger Roberts.

## Memorial Day Open House

Memorial Day is Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup> with the Veterans having the Memorial Day Service at J.R. Smith Park at 10 a.m. Myers Inn Museum and Gift Shop will be open from 9-3 for tours. Admission is by donation as usual.

Shifts for docents or guides are 9-12 and 12-3. Please let Polly (740-965-3582) know if you can take a shift that day.

If you have considered being a docent or guide but are not sure what they do, this is a good time to see what it involves.

In addition to memorabilia there are hundreds of local photos on display in the many video picture frames.

**Big Walnut Area Historical Society**  
**OFFICERS**  
 Rick Helwig, President  
 Vice President to be selected  
 Chip Welch, Secretary  
 Bill Kavage, Treasurer  
 Polly Horn, Curator,  
 Webmaster  
 and Editor of Newsletter  
**TRUSTEES**  
 Alice Lacher  
 Brad Orndorf  
 Chad Neeper  
 Damon Bower  
 David Martin  
 Mel Meyers  
 Roger Roberts  
 For Information Call  
 740-965-1154  
 leave a message or  
 email  
[Info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:Info@BigWalnutHistory.org)

## Calendar of Events

- May 9 - 6:00 Board of Trustees Meeting in Myers Inn
- May 11 - Clintonville Women’s Club tour on Inn.
- May 12 - BWMS Community Service students.
- May 13 - Mother’s Tea is Sold Out
- May 15 - 7:00 Program: “How to Use Delaware County Memory Website” presented by Margaret Arnold of Community Library. For more about free program see page 1.
- May 19 - 12:30 - GRE 4<sup>th</sup> graders visit Myers Inn.
- May 29 - Memorial Day 3 Myers Inn Museum and Gift Shop will be open 9-3

**Myers Inn Museum is open  
10-3 on Saturdays  
For Private Tours on other days. call 740-965-3582  
leave a message and your call will be returned**



Gift Shop features historic books and handmade items by local artists, including pot hooks crafted in our forge. There is a selection of children’s books and historically dressed paper dolls.

## *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**

# Why Do You Do What You Do?

*By Polly Horn*

A delightful group of senior men and women came to the Myers Inn Museum for a tour. When they were ready to leave, one of the gentlemen said to me, "I know why you do what you do!" I had to think about it.

When Harold McMillan suggested giving the Hopkins House to the Community Library I thought that was a generous idea. At the time, I worked about 13 hours a week as Children's Librarian and was in charge of all programs and the local history collection. How many times have I enjoyed an old house, a museum, a State or National Park? I had not had the opportunity to travel beyond Canada but I realized I rarely looked at new things when I traveled. It was the history that drew me. The Hopkins House is featured in "Early Homes in Ohio," a book by Frary. In 1978, in memory of his wife Mapledell, Mr. McMillan gave the building to the library with \$70,000 to renovate it. I was delighted!



*Harold McMillan,  
Eugenia Schwartz,  
Dobbie Gallagher*

The building needed a new roof and a furnace. The brick pillars were replaced like the original wooden ones. A covered wooden firescape was added and a big cottonwood tree leaning over the building was removed. Corrugated cardboard walls and pest infected plaster was removed. 1960's flooring was removed to expose the original flooring. A Thrift Shop was operated out of what is now the meeting room while the Teen Center was upstairs.

In 1982, my husband Jack Brehm died suddenly leaving me with three children, a part-time job and no health insurance. The library offered me full-time which gave us the needed insurance. Computers were the thing for any business so I took the first course with Columbus State's Len Weatherby in the Hopkins House and the library bought Texas Instruments TI computers for the Teen Center. I liked it so much I took the second course. For my second course, I wrote a payroll program in MS-Dos and the library bought an A.B. Dick computer to run it. My payroll was actually 5 programs chained together. It worked perfectly for 15 years.

State Library was trying to reduce funding to individual

libraries. Different legislators had submitted funding formulas. Community Library Director Rachel Edwards got copies of all the proposed formulas and challenged Din Milem and me to compare apples to apples and see which program was the best for small libraries. I remember one night we got stymied and called Len Weatherby at 2:30 in the morning for help. He came to the Myers Inn and got us over the problem. Library funding became based on the program we recommended which has served libraries very well.

Meanwhile work progressed on the Hopkins House. As soon as we were able to raise money, we spent it.



*Stewart ready to  
turn jack*

In 1986 the sill broke near the front door. It was determined the entire sill around the house was rotten and needed to be taken out and a new one put in. Charlie Stewart was hired to do the work.

The building was jacked up while the work was done then lowered onto a new sill. In theory it sounded easy but in reality it was a different story. When the building was being jacked up all the individual jacks around the building were turned 1/4 turn and the building was left to settle. The old sand glass windows popped out. We were no longer a restoration, we were a renovation. New windows and siding were installed. John Bland installed the new siding.



*Sill replaced, siding & windows next*

The library became too small to hold the collection so we rented the old Clark furniture store on Hartford Road. Twice a day a courier collected books from the boxes in the warehouse and brought them back to the library. The board began the process to raise money to build a new library next to the Hopkins House. We began retro conversion to get the collection automated.

In 1991, I became director of Community Library and was instructed to find a buyer for Hopkins House while getting a bond issue passed to build a new library on land we owned north of the Hopkins House and west to Evening Street. Our plea was we can't let the building

become a parking lot. Only people who desired to change it to a B&B wanted it. We had \$200,000 in it at that time and it was not useable so I knew it was still in danger of being torn down.

Just before we were to break ground for the new library, Schooley Caldwell discovered we did not own a 15 by 15 foot piece of land in the middle of our future building. Even the County Prosecutor could not clear the title. We drove all over the school district looking for land with utilities for the new library. The Miller farm was the only thing that would work. Ray Wirick and I went to town council and pleaded to have the farm changed to commercial knowing it had been turned down twice. We left thinking we lost but I was pleasantly surprised when my brother Duncan Whitney, the County Prosecutor, told me we had indeed won. It was back to the drawing boards for the library.

While I was giving a presentation to the Sunbury Lions Club about the proposed library, Dr. Paul Milem said he was opposed to the library being built as planned because school children would have to walk along St. Rt. 37 on the bridge over Prairie Run which was very dangerous. This brought on a big discussion and before I left the meeting, it was decided Dr. Milem from Lions and Ben Hart, president of the library board would get a bridge across Prairie Run. The next morning they got Mayor Bob Reed to join the committee and in 2 weeks time they raised \$15,000 for the bridge and the village moved sidewalks away from the road. There was enough money left to build the gazebo for the library.

Backed by library trustees, we formed the Big Walnut Area Historical Society (Area was in the name to avoid Big Walnut High School). In a short time over 100 people joined and dreamed of a museum. The name



1993 Polly Horn, Tammy Caudy, Jeannette Curren, Ben Hart, Sarah Doan, to Rick and Dick Helwig

In 1997, State Representative Joan Lawrence secured \$100,000 for the Myers Inn and Don Hoover of

was changed to Myers Inn when it was discovered the founder of the town had built the original structure to be a tavern or inn. In 1993 Community Library signed the Myers Inn over to the historical society.

Schooley Caldwell began plans for a museum.

In 2003, our Ohio Representative Jon Peterson got \$50,000 from the Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission to continue work on the facility.

Like many budding organizations we had growing pains. Everyone seemed to think they knew the best way to proceed. BWAHS Board meetings were often heated. I was busy with my library duties and often sat in the meetings with my mind somewhere else. One night there was a big flare up and many of the officers and trustees walked out. Ray Wirick, the treasurer, turned to me and said, "Polly, as the secretary, it looks like you are now the President." It was not a job I wanted but I called the next meeting to order and told those who remained I would serve as president if all of them would remain on the board until the building was finished. They did and I did. Roger Roberts and I are the two remaining board members.

Everyone volunteered every time they could. It took us 30 years to open our doors from the time Mr. McMillan gave the building to the Community Library in 1978. Not counting the money the library spent before, it cost the historical society \$650,000. Plus we were given free drywall installed, a grant for the ramp, and gifts of railings at steps.



Porter donates and installs drywall

Since McMillan's gift we have installed 2 furnaces (the last one is hanging to stay out of the water), and 2 roofs.

#### *First Board Meeting in Myers Inn March 2010*



Carol Wirick, Ken Crowl, Lyal Rodgers, Suzanne Allen, Janet MacKenzie, Eva Jane Williams, Roger Roberts, Joe Heibarger.

Every time I give a tour of the facility, or hear people repeat a historical tidbit, or ask about a historic legend,

## I know why I do what I do!