



Old Tyme Chronicle

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Rick Helwig Named 2018 Heritage Day Honoree



*President Bill Comisford presents the Honoree Plaque to Helwig in the blacksmith's forge
(Photo by Damon Bower)*

At the annual Sunbury Heritage Day Festival on October 21st, Rick Helwig stopped his work in the forge to inspect his name on the honoree's plaque.

Rick grew up in a family steeped in local history in Auglaize County before his family moved back to the family farm on Johnnycake Road and became Charter
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Need Juice, Cookies, Workers For Christmas on the Square

Myers Inn Museum will be open 4-8 during the annual Christmas event on Saturday night, December 1. We want homemade cookies, 2 quart bottles of cran-apple juice and people in costume to serve as host during the event. Call Polly at 740-965-3582 if you can help.

2 Historical Society Members In Big Walnut Hall of Fame

Congratulations to BWAHS Trustee Suzanne Link Van Sickle Allen! She graduated from Big Walnut with the Class of 1955. She was nominated by Roger Roberts then inducted into the Hall of Fame on November 5.

While in high school, she was active in 11 organizations, served as class president and president of the FFA. Suzanne was also a State Homemaker.

After graduating from Ohio University, Suzanne came
(Continue on page 2)



*Trustee Suzanne Allen inducted in 2018, Don Edwards in 2017
(Photo by Linda Wehrle)*

(Hall of Fame continued from Page 1)

back to Big Walnut as a special needs teacher, serving from 1978 to 2003 where her passion for writing was passed on to her students. She taught them to express themselves verbally and in print by answering a series of questions about themselves and their families. Suzanne has personally written 10 books, three of which are about her own family THE PERFECTS and THE PERFECT LINK. These volumes cover a lot of family history in the area. She has also contributed to several cookbooks. Suzanne interviewed Big Walnut residents and has written two books about their family memories which are best sellers at the Big Walnut Area Historical Society gift shop. All the proceeds are donated to the BWAHS.

She also wrote the script and directed the Buffalo Bill re-enactment performed by 4H alumni and others in five bicentennial celebrations including Sunbury and Mt. Vernon.

Suzanne is a charter member of the Sunbury Halter and Saddle 4H Club serving 51 years as a leader. She is the chairperson for Ride One and historian for the Ohio Paint Club. For many years she was a familiar face riding her horse in many area parades.

Suzanne has served on several committees for the BWAHS including program planning, the Board of Trustees, and as a docent at the Myers Inn Museum. She has volunteered for the Delaware Historical-Genealogical Society as

Myers Inn Halls Are Decked Out for Holidays

Thanks to Bill Kavage and Damon Bower for collecting greenery, to Alice Lacher and her granddaughters, Mindy Pyle and her daughters, Amy Welch, Alice Chapan and Polly Horn the Inn is once again ready for Christmas on the Square.

Civil War Santa will have a treat for children in the Tavern Room of the Inn. Alice Lacher and Mindy Pyle have an ornament for children to make in the Ladies' Room, refreshments will be served in the 1816 House. Our Town Crier Roger Roberts will be all over the square announcing activities.

Be sure to stop in Saturday Evening between 4 and 8. Check out the Gift Shop for unique gifts.

(Rest of Hall of Fame Story)

recording secretary, helping people prove their ancestry in the Delaware County Pioneer Society. She has made a project to honor the graves of veterans in all local cemeteries. She and her helpers, which include students and adults, placed many markers on the graves of veterans and honored them with their military history.

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
 Bill Comisford, President
 Brian Moore, Vice President
 Damon Bower, Secretary
 Bill Kavage, Treasurer
 Polly Horn, Curator and Webmaster
TRUSTEES
 Alice Lacher
 Amy Welsh
 Charlotte McGowen
 Carol Wood
 Mel Meyers
 Mindy Pyle
 Roger Roberts
 Suzanne Allen
 For Information Call 740-965-1154
 leave a message or
 email Info@BigWalnutHistory.org

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families of the Big Walnut Area Historical Society. His mother was an Honoree in 2011 making Rick the first second-generation person to receive the honor.

Rick and his parents researched Ghost Towns in Ohio and the two men wrote books about those lost towns for each county. This business was featured on the front page of the Wall Street Journal. They were also designated keepers of Moon Rocks brought back by astronauts.

Rick and his father helped with fund raising for the Myers Inn. A booklet they wrote was on Joan Lawrence's desk when she retired which brought a hundred thousand dollars to the project. He and his father held an archeological dig in the side yard off the Inn and even relined the Tavern Room fireplace. Rick is an auctioneer and runs a school for auctioneers. He held appraisal fund raisers for BWAHS.

Rick helped organize the Rosecrans Headquarters Unit and the Sunbury Civil War reenactments. He engineered the building of the blacksmith's forge on the BWAHS property and serves as our blacksmith during local celebrations. Rick served as the town Santa Clause for 40 years at Christmas on the Square, and has served as the Civil War Santa the past few years in the Myers Inn.

Although Rick is employed by the Delaware County Board of Elections, he also does Civil War reenacting (both North and South), teaches artillery school and certifies those using cannons. He chairs the BWAHS's Civil War School Days for 4th and 8th graders, and presents programs to BWAHS. Presently he is the caregiver for his mother who is recovering from surgery.

**Myers Inn Museum &
Gift Shop**
OPEN
12-3 Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays
10-3 on Saturdays
facing southwest corner of Sunbury Square
740-965-1154
 <http://BigWalnutHistory.org>
Follow us on Facebook!

**WATCH
FOR
BWAHS
AD!**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1 Dec. 4pm - Christmas on the Square
Open House 4 to 8
 - 5 Dec. 1pm - BWAHS Board Meeting
 - 11 Dec. **NO BWAHS MEETING**
 - 2 Jan. 1pm - BWAHS Board Meeting
 - 5 Jan. Rental: Gentile & Robinson Wedding
 - 8 Jan. 7:30 - Program: "Story of Kilroy"
by Dick Doritty
 - 23 Jan. 7:00 Rental: Damon Bower Meeting
- ALL MEETINGS ARE IN THE MYERS INN**

Year- End Appeal Letters will be coming your way. Trustees have opted to keep the historical society membership fee low so it is affordable by most residents. The basic fee covers printing and postage on the newsletters. Our rental covers utilities. Much of the light maintenance and all of the museum coverage is covered by volunteers. Your donation helps cover the rest. Thanks for being generous.

Silent Night: I recently spent a week in Austria, a country smaller than Ohio. It is the home of Mozart, Beethoven, Handel, Gruber and Mohr. Enjoy!



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WONDER WHAT THE BIG WALNUT AREA LOOKED LIKE 25, 50 OR 100 YEARS AGO?
KNOW WHERE THE ABOVE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK IS LOCATED?

LEARN THE ANSWERS BY JOINING THE
BIG WALNUT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (BWAHS)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO

WWW.BIGWALNUTHISTORY.ORG, OUR FACEBOOK OR CALL 740-965-1154

WE WANT YOU!





“Silent Night” Carol

by Polly Horn

Franz Xaver Gruber

Franz Xaver Gruber was born November 1787 in the village of Hochburg-Ach, in Upper Austria, the son of linen weavers, Josef and Maria Gruber. Gruber worked as a weaver until the age of 18, then trained to become a school

teacher. He completed his music education studying with the church organist Georg Hartdobler of Burghausen. In 1807 Gruber became a schoolteacher in Arnsdorf. He also became the church caretaker and organist. In 1808 he married a widow, Maria Elisabeth Fischinger Engelsberger. They had two children, both of whom died young.

In 1816 Gruber took on the additional responsibilities of organist and choirmaster at St. Nicholas Church in the neighboring village of Oberndorf.



Priest Joseph Mohr

Joseph Mohr was born in Salzburg on December 11, 1792, to an unmarried embroiderer, Anna Schoiberin, and Franz Mohr, a mercenary soldier and deserter, who abandoned Joseph's mother

before the birth. As the parents were unmarried, Joseph received the name of his father, according to custom.

Johann Hiernle, vicar and leader of music at Salzburg Cathedral, enabled Mohr to have an education and encouraged him in music. As a boy, Mohr would serve simultaneously as a singer and violinist in the choirs of the University Church and at the Benedictine monastery church of St. Peter. From 1808 to 1810, Mohr studied at the Benedictine monastery of Kremsmünster in the province of Upper Austria. He then returned to Salzburg to attend the Lyceum school. Since he was of illegitimate birth, in 1811 he got a special dispensation so he could enter seminary. On August 21, 1815, Mohr graduated and was ordained as a priest. He provided temporary help in the village of Ramsau.

Mohr served as assistant priest in Mariapfarr (his father's hometown) for two years. It was during this time, in 1816, that he penned the words to "Silent

Night." Poor health forced him to return to Salzburg in the summer of 1817. After a short recuperation he began serving as an assistant priest at St. Nicholas in Oberndorf, where he made the acquaintance of Franz Gruber, schoolteacher in neighboring Arnsdorf.

On Christmas Eve in 1818, Mohr walked three kilometres (Sunbury to Galena) from his home in Oberndorf to visit his friend Franz Gruber in the Arnsdorf. Mohr brought with him the poem he had written two years earlier. He needed a carol for the Christmas Eve midnight Mass that was only a few hours away, and hoped his friend, the school teacher who served as the church's choir master and organist, could set his poem to music.

Gruber composed the melody for Mohr's "Stille Nacht" in just a few hours. The church organ was broken so Gruber produced the melody with guitar arrangement. The two men sang "Stille Nacht" at Christmas Mass in St. Nicholas Church while Mohr played guitar and the choir repeated the last two lines of each verse.

Soon arrangements of the carol appeared in churches in the Salzburg Archdiocese and folk singers from the Ziller Valley took the carol on tours around Europe.

St. Nicholas Church was damaged several times in the 1890s by flooding of the Salzach - especially by that of 1899, which destroyed a large part of the town and led to the conclusion that the whole of Oberndorf, including the parish church of St. Nicholas, needed to be rebuilt upstream. After the Silent Night Chapel was built in 1906, the old St. Nicholas Church was torn down in 1913.



Silent Night Chapel

After Gruber's wife died in 1825, he married a student and sired 10 children - only 4 lived to be adults. She died in 1841, and Gruber married again. He continued writing church music.

Mohr ended up in an Alpine parish in Wagrain. Here he set up a fund to allow poor to attend school and set up a system of care for the elderly. Mohr died at 55.

(Information from Wikipedia and travel folders)

