# Starke County Historical Society THE PRIDE OF STARKE COUNTY

WINTER 2007 Newsletter

#### **Grant for the Museum**



A study grant was awarded to the Starke County Historical Society to help the society in developing guidelines and standards for their collections of materials at the museum. This program is called the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) and is made possible by the American Museums (AAM). Association of only AAM is the organization representing the nation's entire museum community and has been dedicated to promoting excellence within the museum field for over 100 years. With more than 17,000 museums in the United States, we feel fortunate to have been awarded this grant.

For several months, the Society will be using a self-study guidebook. The book asks very pointed questions about our organization and how we are handling our collections. The book asks about legal issues surrounding the stewardship of our collections and explores the governing authority's views on ethical issues. The Society's board of directors has been using the guidebook to help evaluate our collections policies.

After several months of selfevaluation, the grant provides an on-site evaluation by a museum professional. This professional will spend several days at the museum, discussing with the board of directors our present and future policies on collections.

"We congratulate the Starke County Museum on their participation in MAP," said Edward H. Able, Jr., president & CEO of AAM. "This process of self-reflection and improvement is designed to make an already high performing organization even stronger."

#### Swanson dollhouse

Lois Swanson donated her 10-room dollhouse to the Starke County Historical Society Museum. Her father had made the dollhouse in the early 1950's. It is complete with several people (dolls) along with the many furnishings of a 1950 home. It has been built on a 12:1 scale and has a high amount of detail in the rugs, pictures, plates, the beds, dressers, cabinets, chairs, tables and the beautiful staircase to the second floor. There is even real toilet paper in the bathroom.



The keyboard (88 keys) of the grand piano was made from an ivory top of a real piano key. Any

child (from 2 to 102) will love to see this piece of art. The Museum is open 12 - 4, Tuesday through Friday.

#### Mark Your Calendars

July 1, 2007

Ice Cream Social at the Museum November 15, 2007

Starke County Historical Society Annual Meeting at the Knox High School

December 2, 2007

**Christmas Open House at the Museum** 

### **Our Purpose**

The Starke County Historical Society's purpose is to foster an interest in local history and to preserve historical items of Starke County. If you have photographs that we can copy or other items of local historical interest that you would like to donate to the museum, call 772-5393.

#### **Annual Meeting**

This year, the program of the Starke County Historical Society's annual meeting was a tribute to Bass Lake. The year 2006 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bass Lake Beach and Camp Ground. The one hundred people attending were treated to a presentation by Marvin

Allen about the history of Bass Lake. They were taken on a virtual tour of the lake on the Majestic, one of the steamboats that



delivered passengers to the different hotels and landings around the lake in the early part of the twentieth century. Many people recognized the sites (and sometimes themselves) as more than 100 photographs were shown.



Dana Spiewak, manager of the Bass Lake Beach and Camp Ground excited the audience as she described the many

innovations and activities of her first year in charge of the beach and campground. She and her husband have a contract with the Starke County Commissioners for operating the beach and campground.

## **Starke County Historical Society dues:**

Individual ......\$ 5.00 Husband & Wife.....\$ 8.00

Board members: Marvin Allen, Peg Brettin, Marvin McLaughlin, Alice Dolezal, Wayne Emigh, Jim Hardesty, Ed Hasnerl, Joe Kingsbury, Helen McCarty, Doris Norman, Eli Roscka, Alan Selge, Denise Shearin, Ann Shearin, Jim Shilling, Mary Stiegal, Ruby Torok, and Clarabelle Troike.

#### **Stone walls**

Two sets of stone walls, each identifying the entrances to the Oak Park Cemetery on the south side of Knox, have stood strong and tall for many years. One set was at the west entrance of the cemetery on 350 East, and the other set was on U.S. 35. They were built in the 1930's by the government program called the WPA, and were similar in design to the entrance to Wythogan Park on the north side of Knox.



With the extension of Main Street in Knox, the little cemetery road, commonly called 150 South, was also widened and improved. The east set of stone walls had to be removed because of the narrow pathway between the two walls.

Since the walls have been a historic feature in Starke County for many years, the Historical Society worked with Knox city officials, and the walls were saved. They were moved a few hundred feet to the west and are now the entrance to the City Park north of the Nazarene Church.

## **New Starke County** web sites

If you haven't been on our Starke County web sites in the past couple of days, you need to check out the latest updates. Marvin Allen has been putting in extra hours perfecting these sites and it shows. He has updated the Library/Historical web site and added several more historical accounts about Starke County. There are many more photographs, a video, some recordings and newly found histories of Starke County.

http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/

http://home.earthlink.net/~starke
county/

## http://www.home.earthlink.net/~starkecountylinks/

The second site is a new home page for the Starke County Historical Society. It lists a few of the interesting items in the museum, plus activities and events of the Society.

The third site is an alphabetical list of sites for Starke County. If you would like your business or agency to be listed on this site, email the web master at the bottom of the site.

The Starke County Community Foundation symbol reminds us of the contributions made by many people during the past 10 years to benefit



local organizations. One of the Foundation's funds is the **Starke County Historical Society Fund**. The interest from this endowment is now providing the Society with a continuing source of income "forever". If you are thinking of giving to the Community Foundation, consider adding your gift to the **Starke County Historical Society's fund** by calling the Foundation at 574-772-3665.

Howmet Castings in LaPorte, a division of Alcoa, provided the Historical Society with a group of volunteers in November. They cleaned and polished areas of the Depot and the Museum for their contribution. Howmet also made a \$1,500 grant to the Starke County Historical Society.



Those helping were Mary Meyers, Mary Minix, Sue Greer, Brian Abner, Kathy Foster, Wanda Patrick, and Richard and Janet Lewis and are shown with Jim Shilling and Marvin Allen in this photo, taken in front of the caboose near the Depot.

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Howmet Castings --- No.2

Janet Lewis and Wanda Patrick also contributed to another project for the Museum, representing Howmet

Castings.

Several months ago *The Leader* donated stacks of old newspapers (1872-1978) to the Museum. From the 1892 – 1902 papers, Janet and Wanda have transcribed the obituaries, births, divorces, and marriages from these newspapers and placed them in a 2-inch thick binder. The records are also on a CD so they can be quickly searched by name or date.

Membership The Society's membership has been growing since 1974, when the Starke County Historical Society was formed. In 2006 our membership was 557 members from all across the United States. In addition to the towns in Starke County, we have members in 40 other towns in Indiana and dozens of members in 20 states. Some of these people have lived in Starke County, some have family in Starke County and some have been interested in the historical material that we have to offer.

Starke County has over 23,000 residents living within its borders. Can we raise our membership to 1000 in the next few years? When you have finished with this newsletter, perhaps you can share it with someone else who might be interested in Starke County history. Encourage a friend to become a member.

A Bass Lake exhibit is in the Henry F. Schricker Library in Knox. There is a CD player which plays a short narration about the history of Bass Lake. If you would like to have a reproduced 1925 directory of Bass

Lake, complete with a road map, call the Museum, 772-5393.



**Presentations** - We have made many presentations throughout the county during the past year. One of them was to the Hamlet Lions Club with a video "A walking tour of Hamlet" narrated by Jim Hardesty. The Lions were quite enthused about this video and the Town of Hamlet purchased some which can be borrowed. In the Clerk's office at the Hamlet Town Hall is a showcase with photos of Hamlet's history. Several people have asked us to produce a video history of 4-H and of the Starke County Co-op. If you have old photos or history that we could use, please contact Marvin Allen at 772-5936.

Another presentation was to the Center Township Extension Homemakers Club with old photos of Knox and Center Township. Those in attendance brought some new historical information to our attention.

In October, Marvin Allen made a presentation at the Henry F. Schricker Library, "Discover Your Community's History".



highlighted the various communities in the county, and showed photos and video clips of people from these areas. If you missed this presentation, he will be presenting the program again at the Library in Knox, Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> from 10 - 12. Check with the Library for more information.



Thanks to Paul Byer for lawn spraying at the Depot: Kurt and Toni Snearly for the flowers at the Museum and to Jim Hardesty for the lawn care he provided this summer for the Museum.

Thanks also to the dozens and dozens of other volunteers who have helped this past year, including the board members, exhibitors at the Ice Cream Social and the Christmas open house. Almost 100 volunteers help the Society each year. We are especially indebted to those who keep the Museum open Tuesday through Friday, 12 - 4, Ann Shearin, Marvin Allen, June Golding, Kiyo Ikeda, Glendon Wilke and Virginia Wireman-Duncan.

Other volunteers are tour guides for the groups of students (over 300) who come to the Museum each year.



Pictured are Kiyo Ikeda, June Golding, Betty Osterreicher, Ann Shearin, Marvin and Kathy Allen Virginia Wireman-Duncan. Others who have helped give tours, are Jim Shilling, Eli Roscka, Dan Roscka, Jim Hardesty, Wayne Emigh, Carol Blastic, Robyn Griffith, Beverly Feddeler, Joe & Ursula Smrt, Elizabeth Darda, Duane Snyder, Pat Atkinson, Bob & Judy Brooke and Peggy Fisher.



North Judson/San Pierre 3rd grade on a tour of the historical Courthouse.



Gleaners – The Ober Arbor Gleaners have met at the Museum several times. On one occasion, they hosted the Van

Norman bagpipe group. We provided tours of the Museum and historic programs. At one of these meetings, the Gleaners donated

\$1,200 for carpet on the Museum stairs and landings. Pictured below are Ron Singleton and Jim Falk

presenting Jim Shilling with a check for the carpet. We want thank the Gleaners for this generous gift.



While we are giving thanks, we thank the County Commissioners, the County Council, Community Schools and the City of Knox for their financial support of the Historical Society over the years. We also thank all of our members, not only for supporting the Society with their dues and volunteering, but also their generous contributions each year. We need these funds for the maintenance of the Museum, paying the utilities and developing programs. Again, thanks for your support. We really appreciate it.

#### The Ice Cream Social is

always enjoyed by all. It has been held on the first Sunday in July from 1-3pm, so mark your calendars for this year - July 1, 2007 1 - 3.

This past year, 20 friends of the Museum showed their interesting exhibits. There were arrowhead collections, antique autos, trucks and tractors. We even had a steam locomotive and a fire engine.

Ruth Kado with her 1880's dress is often at the Museum entrance greeting people, and

Kathy Jarrell beautiful provides background music on her dulcimer.



Wayne and Joann Emigh keep very busy dishing ice

cream to an estimated 250 - 280 people.

If you have a unique collection and would like to exhibit at next year's Ice Cream Social, call Jim Shilling at 772-

4311.





#### Christmas time - 2006



Sixty guests gathered together to sing Christmas carols and sip hot cider with homemade cookies on the first Sunday in December. Ed Hasnerl, Marilyn McCarty, Doris Michael, Diana Riddle, Sally Povilaitis and Kathy Allen led those gathered in familiar carols.

Also, Denise Shearin's collection of Santa Clauses was on display.

One of the beautiful Christmas trees in the Museum is traditionally "decked-out", not only



with garlands and ornaments, but also with candles. Years ago, before electricity, candles would be placed on Christmas trees as a symbol of

life and eternity. It wasn't until 1917 that electric lights were available to the general public. So it is fitting for the Museum to use candles. For safety, they are never lit.

Who dunit? Mary Geisel from the Henry F.



Schricker Library used the Museum as a staging area for a "who done it" mystery last summer. With the help of Betty Osterreicher and Robyn Griffith, she planted clues throughout the Museum and used the manikins for suspects. The children loved it and learned many new things about the history of Starke County.

Videos - During 2006, we have captured several events on film. These include the groundbreaking ceremonies of Toll Brothers and White Flyer companies at the Knox Industrial Park. Others were the Memorial Day services at the Court House and the Crown Hill Cemetery and the Knox/Center Firefighters Memorial dedication.

We have interviewed three Bass Lake residents, Mrs. Dorothy Bryant, Mrs. Vera Lorenz, and Mrs. Ruth Cox. Mrs. Lorenz and her Mother worked in the Centerview Hotel on the East side of Bass Lake. Mrs. Cox tells of her Grandparents' Chittick Hotel (later called the Woodlawn) on the Northwest side of the lake. Dorothy Bryant tells about her date with Charles Esposito, son of the famed gangster and resident of Bass Lake.

Another interview was with Frank Boilini from North Judson.

He owned and operated the North Judson Hardware for years and has been doing glass art design in his retirement.



Another interview was with Perry Lucas on the old site of the Muskrat Mill south of Toto. Some of the dam is still in place and Perry talks about his great-grandparents' operation of the mill.

Parts of these interviews have been incorporated in Marvin Allen's presentation, "Discover Your Community's History". He will be making this presentation again at the Henry F. Schricker Library in Knox, Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 10 - 12. Watch for news announcements.

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Remember, even if your ancestors moved to Starke County in the 1800's or if you just came here a week ago, you are part of Starke County History. Anything happening today is history tomorrow. If you have historic photos of family or scenes and events in Starke County that we can copy and put into our collection, call Marvin Allen at 772-5936.

Wanted – volunteers. We are in need of volunteers at the Museum and Depot. We need some with computer skills. We also need tour guides for the Depot, Museum and Courthouse. If you would like to show people some of the beautiful assets of Starke County, call Jim Shilling at 772-4311.

This newsletter has been sponsored by:

Starke County Farm Bureau Co-op



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