

# ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE DECEMBER 2013

*Cedarville Area Historical Society*



## Society Christmas Party December 10

The Cedarville Area Historical Society will hold its free annual Christmas Sing Along party at the Cedarville Museum on Tuesday, December 10, starting with a social gathering at 6 p.m.

The hour-long social is a chance for visitors to sample refreshments provided by historical society members and Cedarville's Famous Fossil Winery. The sing-along, starting at 7 p.m., will feature the male barbershop quartet Cadence and Freeport's Carole Bertram at the keyboard.

The quartet of local area personnel sang at the museum to a full house in 2012 as

one of the three programs in the "Sounds of America" series. Mrs. Bertram has led the museum's Christmas sing-alongs several times and has performed several other times for historical society programs.

Like last year, the event will be held in the museum's second floor LeRoy Wilson Theater. For physically handicapped visitors, the room can be reached by using the museum's simple-to-operate elevator.

*Christmas and winter memories in Cedarville can be found on pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.*



*Carole  
Bertram*



*Cadence*

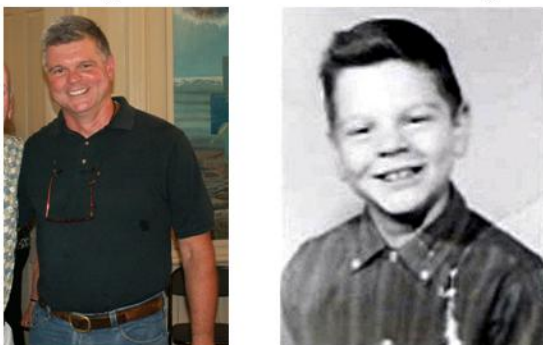
## A Cedarville Christmas Fifty Years Ago

*By Curt Wilson, former village resident*

I grew up in Cedarville in the 60's. My mother loved Christmas and Christmas Eve dinner was always at our house with her side of the family (Cramer/Richards). The relatives would start arriving in the late afternoon with arms full of presents and wonderful smelling dishes to pass. With a warm fire crackling in the fireplace, my mom would serve a mixture of old favorites and bizarre new dishes that she had discovered. These experiments were not always appreciated by everyone in attendance, but I always looked forward to them. This was Christmas. When else could you serve an onion pie?

After a Christmas Eve feast, my folks insisted that everyone bundle up and attend the candle-light service at the Methodist Church, another favorite memory. My family's life revolved around that church and I'm sure that service hasn't changed a bit over the years. (At least I hope not.) Singing *Silent Night* in a dark church on a snowy evening with a lighted candle in your hand and surrounded by family and friends is a wonderful Cedarville memory.

My mother was big on starting traditions. One year she insisted we fill paper bags with sand and insert a lighted candle creating a "luminary". These bags lined both sides of our driveway on



*Curt today and as a third or fourth grade Cedarville School student in 1962.*

Oak Ridge Drive and were used only on Christmas Eve. Over time the idea caught on with the neighbors and it was wonderful returning from the candle light service on Christmas Eve to a neighborhood with every driveway lit with the warm glow of luminaries. Occasionally the wind would blow the bags into the candle and we would have flaming luminaries.

Of course, as a kid, Christmas is all about presents and we couldn't wait to return from church to open the ones from the relatives. As the kids grew older and the families got larger, we all drew names in a secret ballot at Thanksgiving for



*Gayle and LeRoy Wilson, Curt's parents. His mother died in 2012; LeRoy in 2008.*

those Christmas Eve gatherings. Only the name of the gift recipient appeared on the wrapped package and one by one we all opened our gift with everyone else watching. It was always fun guessing who picked your name as the gifts became more interesting as we grew older. Since Santa Claus wasn't going to show up for hours, these Christmas Eve gatherings were all about gifts for my grandparents from all of us. My grandfather was one of the most expressive people I have ever met and I have wonderful memories of him opening up his presents. If it was clothes, he always modeled them in a comic way immediately.

I have wonderful memories of Christmas in Cedarville.



*Peggy and Harold*



*Peggy as student*



*Mary Lou as student*



*Peggy today*

## Twenty Years of Christmas in Cedarville

*By Peggy Schoonhoven, former village resident*

Christmas time in the "little village of Cedarville" was quaint and charming with a real pine tree, packages wrapped and ribboned and all of my school friends looking forward to the long Christmas vacation. We usually went caroling with a group from church and spent considerable time ice skating on Cedar Creek and sledding on special hills. When I couldn't feel my fingers and toes, I would head home for hot chocolate, cookies and Mom's homemade fudge.

Who can forget the poems and songs we had to learn for the Christmas programs at church when our minds could only think about getting home to open gifts?

One year I recall often, but my little sister, Mary Lou, always wanted to forget. She had told all of her friends she was getting a big doll for Christmas. Someone suggested we put a very tiny doll in a small box and then into graduated sized boxes, all nicely wrapped. We hid the big doll in a closet.

She furiously started pulling paper off each box and they all got smaller and smaller. She looked up at everyone laughing and observing her utter disappointment. Tears began to flow when she

saw the tiny doll on her lap. We knew it was time to bring out the big doll from the closet. By that time her patience was completely gone. She would not even look at the big doll and her "merry Christmas" had turned to "Bah, Humbug!" It took her the rest of the evening to open other gifts and accept the big doll. Whose idea was this? Fortunately, not mine!

The most memorable Christmas of all was in 1943. The love of my life, Harold Schoonhoven, had been waiting a year for me to graduate from high school so we could get married. I graduated in June and on December 5, 1943, we were married in the Cedarville Evangelical Congregational Church. Our "honeymoon plans" took us to Lancaster, Wisconsin, where my father and step mother were living. I can't say it was a very happy time because I was so anxious to get home to our little apartment above Strohm's store (*on the northeast corner of Mill and Cherry streets*), open our wedding gifts and plan for our first Christmas together. We enjoyed a lot of honeymoon trips during our almost 63 years of marriage.

I thank God for the 88 years He has given me and for the wonderful memories I have of my 20 plus years I lived in Cedarville.

# Let's All Sing Along with Johnny Mathis

By Rick Noble, former Cedarville resident

The blister on my finger still stung. That morning, Mom had assembled our spindly aluminum Christmas tree, sparsely decorated with red balls and illuminated by a spotlight the same wattage as those used to keep French fries warm in restaurants. I touched it out of curiosity only to recoil in pain as my skin instantly bubbled. Dad carefully examined my cooked flesh before rendering his considered medical opinion. "Well, I bet you won't do that again."

To add insult to injury, my older brother (*Mike*) decided that at seven-years-old, it was high time I understood some of life's mysteries and promptly massacred the Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny and Santa Claus in one fell swoop. (Of course, I immediately blabbed to my best friend, Matt Cronau, and ruined his Christmas as well. Sorry, Matt.) This was turning into a horrible holiday. Santa was dead and I wasn't feeling so good myself.

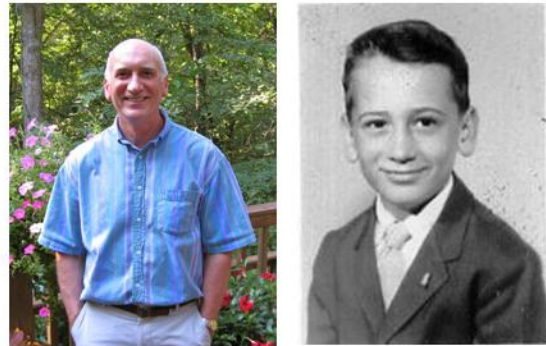
Then I heard it. It was so familiar and comforting that at first I thought it was just playing inside my head. Johnny Mathis was on TV and the syrupy strains of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" filled the air while Dad whistled along.

For some it's the twinkling lights, for others, the aroma of freshly-baked sugar cookies, but it's the music that puts me in the Christmas spirit. And oddly, it's not the music of my own generation.

Those endearing Christmas standards that my parents enjoyed are my direct link to Cedarville and to a time when loved ones watched over me. Most of those faithful friends and family who were dear to me are gone now, but Santa persevered. He made a remarkable recovery after my daughters were born and last year we welcomed him back with the arrival of my granddaughter. Sure hope she likes Johnny Mathis.



*Siblings: Rick, Mike and Jane*



*Rick in 2012 and as 1962 Cedarville student*



*Dick Noble, 84, Rick's dad, in 2012 photo.*

# Thanks, Mr. Bertram, for the Tallest Tree

By Moira Knowlton, Cedarville

The kickoff of the Christmas season for the Fenwick family began at Cedarville's Bertram Tree Farm.

We would take on the task of finding the best tree to take home. I must say we were never disappointed. Tom and I were always impressed how each tree was pruned to perfection, which made the selection that much more difficult.

However, one year we found the ultimate tree by all standards. I believe we found the tallest tree that Bertram's had to offer.

The challenge was securing this nine foot tree to the roof of our Honda hatchback.

Once Mr. Bertram finished roping the giant evergreen down, he ran inside to get Mrs. Bertram so she could see the sight. He also decided to take a picture for posterity.

Then, on our way we went with Tom walking slowly behind the car holding the tip of the tree to keep it in place.

What a jewel of a memory and it all took place in the wonderful village of Cedarville.



*February 26, 2008  
What a winter memory!!*

*Happy Holidays  
from our house on Mill Street  
Jim Bade, president,  
Cedarville Area Historical Society,  
his wife, Bonnie, and all members  
of the CAHS board of directors*

# A Happy Family Tale From Pine Hill

By Jane Goodspeed, former resident

Christmas at our house on Pine Hill at the edge of Cedarville was best when we had snow. Looking out the windows we saw a snowy Addams barn and an icy Cedar Creek. All around us the world was white.

We always had family with us. Grandparents came from Michigan and later our children living in St. Louis came to visit every Christmas, even if we were not there.

One year, after it had been snowing hard all day, we met my in-laws at the Land of Corn train in Freeport. We drove to the bottom of our hill, but there was no way we could get our car up the lane. After unloading their suitcases, we piled everything on sleds and walked through the snow. They delighted us with tales of their childhoods in Michigan and Minnesota as we worked our way up the hill on foot.

When the weather man threatened snow, it was always tricky to plan a Christmas party. One year we invited Cedarville friends to come for punch and "goodies" before the carol singing at the museum. (That was before the present day wine and appetizers were served at that holiday event.) Steve Glaze, who lives in the Addams homestead, offered to chauffeur folks up the hill from the museum and back in his 4 wheel drive van. Everyone

appreciated his generosity!

Several years before that event, we walked around Cedarville singing carols and gathering friends to come back to Pine Hill for cookies and cocoa. I realized we must have been pretty convincing in our invitation when I looked up and saw a boy at our dining room table that I'd never seen before! Thank goodness our children knew him.

*Jane Goodspeed as Marcet Halde-  
man-Julius in  
a 2008 Cedar-  
ville Museum  
program*



Being with our loved ones made every Christmas special. There was the time we made a tee pee for our grandson and the Christmas we gave our daughter a puppy that cried all night. Our son-in-law faithfully remembered to leave cookies for Santa and after everyone was in bed, he snuck downstairs, ate the sweets and arranged ashes in the shape of a footprint in front of the fireplace. There was always activity when we were together. We sang carols to the birds and left food for them. We rode sleds down the hills. We drank lots of cocoa and roasted marshmallows over a fire. All of this is dear to remember. Not sensational, just a happy family tale.

*Winter ice skating area on Cedar Creek as mentioned in Jane Goodspeed's memories of Christmas in Cedarville on preceding page.*



## Society Schedules Five Major Events for 2014

At its October meeting the Cedarville Area Historical Society board scheduled five events for 2014.

Sunday, February 2 — The annual soup, sandwich and salad lunch at the Jane Addams Community Center.

Monday, May 26 — Memorial Day parade and picnic at the museum.

June, July — Friday night free movies

Saturday, September 20 — Jane Addams Festival.

Tuesday, December 9 — Christmas party and sing-along

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*The society is recognized as a non-profit organization by Illinois and the U.S. government and has been designated as eligible for tax deductible gifts under IRS tax code regulation 501 (c) (3).*



***It's New!!***  
*The basement entrance to the museum needed replacement. In less than three days, CAHS treasurer Galen Bertram and his son Alex replaced it at an estimated labor savings of more than \$1000.*

