

# **ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE**

**December 2016**

*Cedarville Area Historical Society*



## *Society Christmas Party December 13*

The Cedarville Area Historical Society will hold its free annual Christmas Sing Along party at the Cedarville Museum on Tuesday, December 13, starting with a social gathering at 6 p.m.

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

Carole Bertram at the keyboard leading the audience in a musical celebration of the season. Yes, Santa is expected.

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

For more information call 815-563-4485.

## **Membership Renewals Due; Gifts Up**

Annual renewal of memberships in the Cedarville Area Historical Society and Museum opened with a strong early response by the end of November.

Four weeks after annual renewal notices were mailed eighty six of the current 149 members responded with renewals for 2017. That's 58 percent of the membership. The society normally retains 98 percent of its current members.

Also, 56 percent of the 86 included a

year end contribution in addition to the renewal fee. By the end of November the extra contributions totaled \$3,252, up from \$2,975 from the same renewals last year. The average amount from the 49 who contributed was \$66. This year's early renewals strongly indicate total year end contributions will reach \$4,000.

Also, each year more choose to receive the monthly newsletter by e-mail rather than by regular mail. Currently it is 80, an annual postage savings of \$451.

## When the TV Beast Arrived in Cedarville

(Rick Noble, former Cedarville Mill Street resident now living in Wisconsin, recalls when television invaded the village.)

“Channel 13!” was all I heard above the cacophony of canned laughter. Like thoroughbreds rearing up at the starting gate, both of my older siblings managed to scoot back in a fraction of a second, leaving me inches closer to the TV set than either of them. This meant, according to house rules, that I was technically the closest and therefore obliged to get up and change the channel at Dad’s command.

Those were the halcyon days of TV before cable or satellite or even remote controls. And Dad liked his TV. So much so that when he built the house in the hollow at the end of Mill Street, instead of opting for a cozy brick fireplace in the living room, Dad invested the money erecting a 75 foot galvanized steel tower, crowned with a motorized antenna, so he could receive all three available stations.

Changing the channel was just part of the prescribed duties. I also had to tweak the rotor to eliminate ghosts and adjust the hue (which was a challenge because I’m color blind), all while squeezed off to one side like a matador presenting a cape, since I “made a better door than a window.” Dad spent a few moments scrutinizing the program for color, clarity and content before shouting out “Channel 39” and I had to repeat the entire process for the next channel.

I remember seeing large farm families occupying an entire pew at church on Sundays because, as Dad would explain, it takes a lot of hands to run a farm. I couldn’t help thinking our half-pew family of four siblings existed solely for the purpose of TV management. Had two society-changing inventions, the TV remote and the birth control pill, debuted in the ‘50s rather than the ‘60s, I might not be here.

We were not the first family in Cedarville to own a color TV in 1965. That honor went

to Don and Dorothy Mullarkey who, as luck would have it, lived only a few doors down from Grandpa Fink. It’s hard to imagine this nowadays, but neighbors used to “drop by” the Mullarkeys for a visit during one of the handful of shows broadcast in color just to catch a glimpse of this electronic novelty. We became most sociable with the Mullarkeys during *Disney’s Wonderful World of Color*, which was essentially an hour long commercial for Disneyland. The opening fireworks were amazing, almost surreal. In fact, everything seemed surreal since color adjustment wasn’t automatic, so most early adapters cranked the color saturation to the limit, turning skies a garish indigo and making people’s flesh glow with an unearthly radioactive tint. But when you were paying the equivalent of a month’s wages on a TV that promises color, you wanted your money’s worth.

Dad bought our Zenith console when the prices dropped to around \$500 and by then, they were deemed less of an extravagance. Our set was a substantial piece of furniture, carved out of mahogany, with a round picture tube, squared off at the top and bottom. It squatted in a small space to the left of our living room picture window so that passersby would be treated to the sight of our entire family lined up on the couch wearing similar vacant expressions, staring vaguely out the window at them. We looked like zombies only less animated.

Dad anchored the spot on the couch closest to the end table which was conveniently outfitted with a beer coaster and ashtray, ready for him to resume his tv dictatorship that began precisely at 8:00 p.m. most evenings. He was up early for work each day and put in long, grueling hours as an auto mechanic. So by the time he settled into position to enjoy, say, *Tuesday Night at the Movies*, he was stripped down to his boxers, beer and cigarette in hand, ready to unwind. Dad had this nervous habit of twisting his hair while he smoked, pounded down beers, worked a cross-



Christmas 1970 couch lineup to watch television in the Noble household: Jen, Jane, Mike, Rick

word puzzle, knotted up licorice whips before ingestion, and took in the show. He was a multitasker long before the term was vogue. My older sister got as skittish as a squirrel crossing the freeway whenever a boy came by to pick her up for a date past 8:00. She’d perk up at the sight of headlights approaching, sit down, cock her head, hear the sound of gravel crunching under tires in our driveway and then bolt out the front door, tossing obligatory “goodbyes” to the wind. I guess she didn’t want any of her friends to get a load of Dad in his natural habitat.

By 9:30 he was sound asleep. I’d see TV dads come home from the office, shed their suits and ties and bum around the house in stylish Cardigans and color-coordinated slacks. Then I’d pan over to my dad sprawled on the couch in his underwear, snoring freely, his cowlick twisted up like alfalfa’s and holding a cigarette with an impossible three inch long ash burned down to his fingertips. “Reality” and “TV” were two words that were never used together back then.

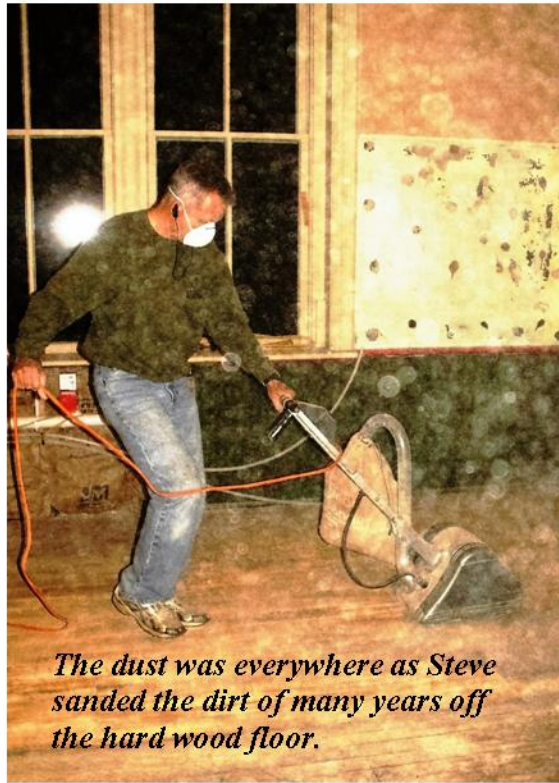
His snoring was legendary and ruined every program, conversation or thought process, for that matter. Apnea added drama. He’d be sawing away just fine for a spell when the racket would abruptly subside, as would all respiration. A din of silence would cast a pall over everyone as seconds dragged on and on. Nervous glances

were exchanged. But the instant before anybody lunged for the phone to summon the paramedics, he’d snort a lungful of air and resume snoring, twice as loud as before.

Finally, Mom would poke him and say, “Wake up, Dick! Go to bed, you’re snoring.” He’d jack his jaw a couple of times and without opening his eyes he’d mumble, “I’m up!” Mom would wrangle him upstairs to bed in a sometimes successful attempt to save the movie for the rest of us. (On one occasion Mom couldn’t roust him up to bed before 10:00 and he slept all through the news and half way into Johnny Carson’s monologue before she tried again. He awoke agitated and looked at his watch. “Jeesh, Dody”, he barked. “Why’d you let me stay up so late?”)

I inherited Dad’s TV watching gene. I’d watch anything, including the test pattern. With only one TV and three channels, we kids had to learn patience. Network sponsors supported shows that appealed to a broad range of ages and tastes. Before seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan for the first time, we had to suffer through a magician, a group of comedic acrobats and a Broadway musical number. Dramas took time to unfold. Comedies took seasons for their characters to develop. These days, quick edits and shaky cameras have heightened expectations and triggered a sort of attention deficit in viewers. Kids today can’t

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*The dust was everywhere as Steve sanded the dirt of many years off the hard wood floor.*



*Galen installs the first section of the cabinets.*



*...and the next ...*



*The original blackboards were missing in this room so Steve fabricated replacements from quarter inch Masonite that will be painted with chalkboard paint.*



*After the sanding came stain and finally a hard floor finish.*



*... and the counter*

### ***Museum Mini Kitchen Takes Shape***

Board members Steve Myers and Galen Bertram and Galen's son Alex worked many nights during November to get the museum's second floor mini kitchen ready for the December 13 Christmas party. Although there was still work to be done by the end of the month, the three promised the facility would be fully operational in time for the holiday festivities.



*The board is cut to size ...*



*and installed.*

## Another View of Judge Kryder's Tall Hat

(After publication last month of a story about the eighteenth century hat of Judge Kryder, I received an interesting e-mail from Steve Phillips, a CAHS member in Versailles, France. Her is part of Steve's letter. Ed.)

Concerning your investigation of Judge Jacob Krider's top hat, I became intrigued by the possibility that a top hat was part of a Federal Judge's "uniform."

Of course, the internet is only interested in money, so at this moment, I only learned that I can buy one (height to be specified) for about \$800. Fortunately, I already have an 'exotic' hat (a bowler worn but once by an ancestor of my wife). That's quite enough. As for the price in Judge Krieder's day, I read that "In 1830, a wool felt top hat cost from \$2 to \$4. But a top hat made from beaver or animal fur could cost up to \$20. Furthermore, the bell-crown top hat was "a very popular style from 1820 to 1850". Do you have the standard or the deluxe model? Is the crown height above or below 12 inches? (7 inches, editor)

I did pick up two interesting "hat facts" which I had failed to learn in earlier decades: Abe Lincoln's "stovepipe" was actually a "chimney pot". It had a 14 inch high crown and was bigger than a stovepipe.

The second fact took me back to the dis-



*Judge Kryder's hat*

covery of *Alice in Wonderland*. The Mad Hatter simply illustrated a common perception.

Hatters had an occupational hazard for removing fur from animal skins to create felt that involved nitrated mercury whose vapors made them "Mad as a hatter", a common expression in England well before the book was published.

(The editor thanks Steve for his insightful comments about top hats and for bringing to my attention the historical background relative to one of the world's best known children's stories.)

## LENA AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOUR JUNE 24, 2017

Travel to Kenosha, Wisconsin, to the Civil War Museum on the shores of Lake Michigan. It is like no other museum in the country. No current museum explores the war as seen and experienced on the home front nor the connection between home front and the battlefield. Through life-sized dioramas, state of the art technology and interactive engaging exhibits you will travel back in history to the social, political and economic influences that contributed to the Civil War.

You will have time to enjoy the beautiful scenery and the farmers market adjacent to the museum complex. Vendors offer fresh produce, flowers, crafts and delectable sandwiches and desserts.

The cost of the day trip is \$75 for LAHS members and \$80 for all others. This includes bus transportation from the Lena museum or the Stephenson County Visitor Center, brunch, entrance and guided tour of the Civil War Museum and gratuity for the driver.

The bus will depart Lena at 8 a.m and return to Lena by 6 p.m. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. For information contact Karen Dammann at 815-369-4094 or [g.dammann@mchsi.com](mailto:g.dammann@mchsi.com).

Send reservations to: Lena Area Historical Society  
P. O. Box 620  
Lea, IL 61048

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Pick up location: Lena \_\_\_\_\_ Freeport \_\_\_\_\_

# *When the TV Beast Arrived in Cedarville*

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even learn how to count to ten without considerable fanfare. I blame *Sesame Street*.

While Dad liked westerns, I was drawn to science fiction. But the one show Dad and I could agree on was *The Andy Griffith Show*. It featured a widower sheriff of the small town, Mayberry, and his boy, Opie, who was exactly my age. Critics argue that Mayberry represents a time and place that never existed. I disagree. While it's true the episodes ignore divorce and alcoholism and a war that was going on at the time, those things were part of the grownups' world. I was a kid and my happiness was being looked after. The Cedarville of my childhood was exactly like Mayberry because it was predictable, easy to understand and safe. And now that I'm older, I appreciate why Dad liked it too. It reminded him of growing up in Orangeville in the 1930s.

Each episode opens with Andy and Opie strolling to the fishing hole, poles in hand. The boy breaks away to snag a rock and skips it across the pond. The dad gives an exaggerated wink and a smile as if to say, "That's quite an arm you've got there, Son. I'm proud of you." They join hands and continue to the pond.

What better way to portray the special bond between a father and son? But then again, watching that scene with

your dad, his big arm unconsciously draped over your shoulder while he whistled along with the theme song, was pretty special too. What I wouldn't give to see Dad assume his command position one more time and share an old black and white *Andy Griffith* episode (ironically, the best ones).

I wouldn't even mind getting up to change the channel.

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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).*