

# ECHOES OF CEDARVILLE FEBRUARY 2014

*Cedarville Area Historical Society*



## *Society Receives \$10,000 Bequest*

The Cedarville Area Historical Society has received \$10,000 from the estate of Cathryn Hartman Lydon who died in October 2013.

Mrs. Lydon, 59, was a former resident of Cedarville and owner and CEO of Hartman Beverage Company of Freeport. The family owned wholesale beverage distribution business was started by her father in 1945 and purchased by Mrs. Lydon in 1986.

At the time of her death, she lived near Orangeville with her husband Martin. Survivors besides her husband include three brothers, two step-daughters, three grandchildren and many other relatives and friends.

Cathy, as she was known, was a member of the Freeport High School swimming team and became a certified life guard. She was graduated from high school with  
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*Annual lunch now; Super Bowl later. More photos page 8*

## From Revenge Rage to Absolute Joy

By Rick Noble

*(Rick, now a resident of Oregon, WI., eight miles south of Madison, lived in Cedarville from 1954 until 1972. He loves to tell tales about his Cedarville School experiences during the 1960s. Here's another one. Editor)*

I never saw it coming. I vaguely remember the thud and the pain exploding behind my left ear. With half my face buried in a snowdrift, my wide-open eyes weren't registering much daylight as the cold sapped the warmth from my cheek and seeped into my bones.

A gauzy form stooped to pick up something near my head, paused, threw me a glance and then darted away. As the veil of unconsciousness fell away, the stubble of a snow swept cornfield in the distance slowly came into focus accompanied by the shrieks and laughter of children immersed in play.

I was eleven years old and had just been knocked out cold by a snowball lovingly stored in Ron Fransen's freezer for three days. That blurry figure I'd seen was Ron picking up the iceball, none the worse for wear, determined to bean some other unsuspecting victim. Snowball fights were completely legal at Cedarville Elementary in 1965, providing you crossed, even briefly, the black, creosoted logs that marked the end of the parking lot and beginning of the lawless

frontier known as the "Battlefield."

I was helped, rubber legged and sluggish, to our principal, Miriam Conner, whose timeless pageboy haircut reminded me, in my delirium, of a WW II German helmet. She gingerly fingered the goose egg growing on the back of my head and then poked it so hard I jumped. "You were in the Battlefield," she said flatly. It was an accusation, not a question.



"I was on the log," I explained, looking for a technicality.

"Close enough," she snapped. "Put some ice on it." "Ice on it?" I shivered.



"Ron's dead," I thought as I stumbled up the basement stairs to class *(The principal's office and the school's only phone was in the east side of the basement. The kindergarten was also in the basement. Editor)* The guy wasn't particularly strong or skilled at fighting, which was good because neither was I. Most important, he didn't have an older brother to back him up. The sad part was that Ron



was one of my better friends, which says something about my popularity back then. Even sadder, it's entirely possible I was the one who suggested, "Someone ought to put one in the freezer." after that first good packing snowfall.

The knot on my head was prominent from a side angle, but if I combed my hair just so and maintained eye contact, I figured I could get past Mom with no questions asked. I needn't have worried. With four kids and Christmas coming on, she wouldn't have noticed a flaming arrow shot through my eye socket. Mom was busy at the kitchen table, her hair up



*Miriam Conner, first floor first grade teacher and basement principal from 1961 to 1965. Obviously in this photo she is missing her WWII German helmet pageboy hiardo.*

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in curlers, squinting hard to ward off the thin tendril of smoke wafting from a *Salem Menthol* clenched tightly in her lips. She was engrossed in the annual task of signing Christmas cards which she was accomplishing with machine-like efficiency. Mom had recently been prescribed diet pills, amphetamines that general practitioners in the '60s were handing out like candy at a parade. We kids used to joke that we knew when Mom was on "pep pills" because she folded the laundry before she put it in the hamper.

I retreated to my bedroom to plot my revenge. The plan was a good one, but it was a two-man job. Oh, yes, Ron Fransen was ripe for a DWI, a Depants and Wedgie with Icing. A DWI consisted of one assailant sneaking up behind the prey and pulling his pants down around his ankles while an accomplice administered a full waistband-to-the-shoulders wedgie and simultaneously stuffed a handful of snow down the victim's neck. Having been on the receiving end of a DWI, I can tell you they're brutal.

(When asked for a laymen's explanation of a "wedgie", Rick quoted Merriam-Webster: "the condition of having one's clothing wedged between the buttocks usually from having one's pants or underpants yanked up from behind as a prank.")

I reasoned I could enlist the help of my

older brother, Mike. He'd been in a pretty good mood lately, ever since he'd discovered a nearly full pack of smokes hidden in the ammo bin of the Cedarville Cemetery cannon. Plus, I hadn't ratted him out for stealing the chocolates out of our older sister's Advent calendar by hooking them through adjacent open doors. She thought it was an unfortunate quality control issue at the factory. (You ask Rick to explain the chocolate caper. Editor)



Mike Noble

Mike was down in the basement fiddling with the stereo again, trying to twist the volume knob past 10. A *Butterfield Blues Band* LP was blaring so loud it made my fillings rattle. I found him sitting, propped up against the wall, with his hands dangling between his knees.

He glowered at me with his steely blue eyes and before I could speak growled, "Beat it, loser."

Revenge is such a harsh mistress. I'd have to come up with Plan B.

The next morning I awoke to the muffled sound of snow shovels scraping concrete and the whine of spinning tires. Away to the windows I flew like a flash and beheld an unearthly world draped in a gleaming thick frosting of white, like something out of Dickens or H.R. Pufnstuf. This was no convenient weekend snowstorm either. It was Tuesday. The kitchen radio squawked as Mom tuned in WFRL announcing school closings. "... Lena, Orangeville, Pearl City, Cedarville..." Cedarville! My heart leapt for joy. School kids all over the Midwest were getting an early Christmas present. Snow Days back then were rare and precious. Schools didn't shut down just because it snowed; they shut down because the school buses were getting

stuck. They reasoned if a professional driver couldn't get a 12,000 lb. vehicle moving, most teachers in their rear wheel drive Pontiacs weren't going anywhere.

Within the hour, the gang and I were out of our school clothes and heading to Cedar Creek, the cold stinging our nostrils, the smell of pine invigorating our lungs and big wet flakes hugging our coats. Kids who had to be nagged into submission to shovel their parents' driveways were honing the ice with the precision of a Zamboni. It was a dull grey afternoon with temperatures in the low 20s, perfect for a pick-up game of hockey. Our equipment was largely worn-out sticks mended with layers of electrical tape, hand-me-down skates and a single puck.

We picked team captains, which was a lot like choosing the pope, only with more pomp and ritual, and were eventually divided into the Men from U.N.C.L.E. (my team) and T.H.R.US.H.

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How 375 Mill Street appeared in the 1960s when The Noble family lived there.

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The game went all morning and lasted into the early afternoon, with only occasional breaks to write our names in the snow. We were cold, wet, drippy and starting to lose feelings in our extremities, but the score was tied at 18 so we soldiered on. T.H.R.U.S.H.'s goalie, having stumbled over a stump in a valiant rescue of our prized puck from the rapids, went on injured reserve. T.H.R.U.S.H. was down one player when Ron Fransen took over as goalie. I came up from my defense position and asked DeWayne Sturtevant if I could switch with him at right wing. He gladly agreed. The socks wadded into the toes of his older brother's skates were killing him.



*DuWayne  
Sturtevant*

We won the face off and our center feigned right and then passed it up to our left wing, who immediately drew a crowd. Matt Cronau entered the fray, crosschecking as he went. All eyes, including Ron's, were riveted on the scrum (*scrummage: Editor*) as I drifted slowly backwards toward the goal. Matt caught a glimpse and furtively kicked the puck my way as he screamed and faked a charge. I wound up like a corkscrew and gave an adrenaline-pumped slap shot that lofted straight toward Ron's fat head.

It's said that revenge is best served cold, but I really don't remember if Ron ducked at the last minute or if we even scored. But it doesn't matter. The absolute freedom of blowing a whole day with my pals on a frozen creek in Cedarville lingers in my mind longer than just about any day at school ever did.



*Matt Cronau*

## **Cathryn Lydon Bequest**

(from page one)

honors in 1972.

Mrs. Lydon traveled extensively on Europe's railway system while studying at the University of Salzburg, Austria. Later she studied at the University of Americas in Puebla, Mexico, and Highland Community College. She earned a degree in business from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. She had numerous interests including birding, travel, music, art, genealogy and landscaping.



*Cathryn Hartman Lydon*

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**Joan Brown Potter, 81, a member and strong supporter of the historical society for more than ten years, died September 16, 2013 at her home in Ft. Worth, Tx. A retired teacher, she was born in Joplin, Mo., December 2, 1931.**

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).



*Members of the Lena Live Wires 4H sold home made pies. Above: Super salesmen Jacob, Tommy and Sarah Prieve. Below: The Merle and Ladona Wardlow family filled a table.*



*Ingrid and Don Heilman:  
Now who told the joke?*

**Cedarville celebrates Ground Hog Day, Super Bowl Sunday and the annual Cedarville Area Historical Society Soup, Sandwich, Salad and Dessert Lunch.**



*Three soups, chili, three servers and no waiting in line*



*Narcissa Engle sets a perfect dessert table*