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WHS MUSEUM NEWS

Another year has come to a close as we look back at another successful year for the Westphalia Historical Society: Cemetery Walk, Museum Display, the Shipshewana Bus Trip and the Light Parade & Tree Lighting.

MEMBERSHIP: As we look forward to a new year we need new members. Many of us are now becoming historic ourselves and if the community wants to continue to have these events some newer younger members are needed. The Historical Society is financially sound thanks to the support of the community. Our annual dues are only \$5.00 per year.

MEETINGS: Our meetings are suspended for the winter as we hunker down until spring.

EXHIBIT: The current display will stay up for one more year. Many people have said they forget when we are open so we are making a sandwich board to set up at the four corners as a reminder of our Sunday and hours. People who have visited the museum to see the sports display thoroughly enjoyed the variety of exhibits, and number of exhibits

LIBRARY: Thanks to the work of Judy Thelen, we have a library of genealogy that many Museums would be envious of.

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Light Parade Success!

Thank you to those who attended the Light Parade; we think most would agree it was very successful. We've even heard it was maybe the best yet!

We have many people to thank for our tree lighting and parade. The tree was donated, cut and delivered by Gary Lenneman.

The village people, Steve Miller and Alex Hanses, again set the tree with help from Walt Thelen and Russ Snitgen. Bernie Thelen hung the garland around the building as well as wrapping the presents under the tree.

The tree lighters were Nolan and Colin, children of Scott and Shelly Piggott-Napierla.

A younger St. Nick again made his appearance aka Warren Hengesbach.

John Nobach, photographer, and Luke Spitzley, aka Santa made a generous donation to the Dane VanElls benefit, and Diana's Restaurant donated the proceeds from the hot chocolate sales. What generous spirit!

The raffle winners were Margie Wirth for the quilt, Dean Kohagen for the barn, and Reece Hanses for the jewelry chest.

Most importantly we have you the people who braved the cold to watch and enjoy the parade.

More Thank You's go out to the many people who put together an entry. We had many great entries - it was a good variety from local businesses, farmers, schools, WTFD and townspeople. Maybe something you saw will inspire you to create an entry next year!

See Page 2 for a few pictures

DANCES: A DIFFERENT SOCIAL NETWORK

A couple of newsletters ago Judy Thelen did an article on wedding dances in the Spitzley Hall. This brings to mind the social importance of dances of yesteryear vs social media for today's generation. Dances then were a place where people would meet. Pavilions and halls were very common during the 1900s. I will attempt to list some of them and hopefully it will bring back happy memories for us historic people.

In the early 1900s one of the most famous pavilion's was Electric Park which was located by Weber Dam. Believe it or not there was a pavilion by Muskrat lake on Jason Road called Merle Beach. Do you remember the Palladium on Crystal Lake? How about on Round Lake by DeWitt, which in later years was known as Club Roma. The Dell's by Lake Lansing or the Music Box by Houghton Lake? All these places are long gone.

Another place while, not near water, was the Olive Grange on DeWitt Road between St. Johns and DeWitt. One building still standing is Bingham Grange at the corner of Taft Road and US 27. The Opera House in Fowler is still standing and now houses Becker Furniture.

One of my all time favorites was the New Year's Eve dance at the Czech and Slovak hall in Bannister for pure polka and waltz music. Back in the 50s and 60s high school dances were usually held after all football and basketball games. These were usually sponsored by various clubs, groups or classes. These dances would be hosted by local radio station disc jockeys.

New Year's Eve dances used to be held at St. Therese in Lansing and here at St Mary's among many other places. These dances all had live music. Some groups that many would remember are Frannie Fink and the Swingsters, Thelen's, The Harmonaires, the Royal Ramblers, the Bent Scepter and the Mello Tones. Thanks to Bill Platte the museum has copies of some of these groups for listening enjoyment. There is something quite magical about hearing Greg Thelen calling a square dance that many younger people would not know how to do. So if you ever want to reminisce stop by the Museum some time when we are open, and ask to listen to those great sounds.

Hope your 2023 goes well, and our community stays active and involved so we can continue to enjoy all the activities we have enjoyed in the past.



See our [Blog](#) on the website or [Facebook](#) for more pictures.