



# WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

December 2016

Volume 28

## Recent Donors

Dan and Kathy Keilen  
Harry Baker



Also, we would like to thank all who participated in the light parade. Another thank you goes to Glen Fink for once again designing and making another beautiful Christmas ornament. They can be purchased at the Little Flower Market.

## Donor Tree

In the approximately three years since our building opened, one of our major goals has been to have a donor tree located in our building to recognize all the generous donations that have helped make our museum the success that it is. We have not taken this project lightly; there have been many road trips checking out what other organizations have done to recognize their donors. We have very high standards for our tree and wanted something impressive and unique for our donors.

Our search is over due to the amazing work of Charlie Volk. We talked to him about our search for something special, and he created an amazing tree trunk and branches using his chainsaw skills. Our tree will need leaves; these will be engraved with our donors' names. While we are closed in the winter months, we will order the leaves and assemble the tree. The tree should be complete when we reopen in the spring of 2017.

Not only did Charlie carve the tree for us....he DONATED it to the museum. If you see him, be sure to thank him for his generosity. We are sure everyone will love his work.

## Light Parade & Christmas Tree Lighting

What makes a successful Light Parade? The sounds of music from the P-W band? The barbershop quartet and the carolers? The announcing of the different float entries? Or is it the store fronts offering hot dogs, gravy burgers, hot chocolate, baked goods and even roasted chestnuts? The 2016 Light Parade offered all of this! Each bright entry provided excitement for children and adults as they passed by. The fire trucks, horses, golf carts, and farm equipment were each beautifully decorated. Ted Hengesbach, our beloved Saint Nikolaus, was once again an outstanding feature. The lighting of the Christmas tree by Dalton Cook and the singing of the carolers was the end of a perfect night.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to each and every one who made it possible.



## Speaking of Saint Nikolaus

"Nikolaustag – 6. Dezember

On the night of December 5 (in some places, the evening of Dec. 6), in small communities in the Catholic regions of Germany, a man dressed as St. Nicholas, who resembles a bishop and carries a staff, goes from house to house to bring small gifts to the children. Accompanying him is a ragged looking, devil-like Krampus, who carries a stick and mildly scares the children. Krampus only teases the children with it, while St. Nicholas hands out small gifts to the children... In some places, children still leave their shoes by the window or the door on the night of Dec. 5. They awaken the next day (Dec. 6) to discover small gifts and goodies stuffed into the *shoes*." (credit H. Flippo & Sons Publishing, Germanway.com)

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*One of the traditional sayings around the season goes as follows:*

*"Ist die Weihnacht hell und klar,  
hofft man auf ein fruchtbar Jahr.  
Steckt die Krähe zu Weihnacht im Klee,  
sitzt sie zu Ostern oft im Schnee."*

OR

"If Christmas is bright and clear, one hopes for an abundant year. If the crow is standing in clover at Christmas, She'll be sitting in snow at Easter."

- Traditional Bauernregel  
("farmer's/country saying")

*Feeling cold in your home? Evidently it could be a German thing. It's customary to wear Hausschuhe (slippers) around home and even offer extra pairs to guests.*

### Festival of Trees

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One of the many things going on during the Light Parade was the Little Flower Market's Festival of Trees. Like last year, a penny gave a tree a vote. Because of the many beautiful options (PW Bands, PW Elementary, PW Cross Country, CASA, and St. Mary's Breast Cancer Group) the voting was too close to call at first. It ended in a tie between PW Elementary and PW Cross Country. Each group won \$100.00 in addition to the pennies from the voting. Congratulations to all!

## New Year's Memories

As I remember, it was customary in our neighborhood for my parents, Bernard and Lena Pohl, the Arnold Weilands and the Harold Plattes to gather for the celebration of New Year's Eve. They would have plenty of cider and doughnuts for this festive and joyous celebration. Playing cards would go on till midnight, when the fathers of each home would go out into the snowy and crisp midnight air with their shotguns and shoot in the New Year—singing of the traditional New Year's Eve song—*Neujahr Anschiesen*—would begin. This was a New Year's announcement to all household members—the father and mother, sons and daughters, hired man and maid, the dog and cat, rats and mice—all of whom supposedly were in the homes.

This traditional song also extended a Happy New Year to all of the barnyard animals—the cows and horses, swine and sheep, chickens and geese.

You can believe this if you want to—one of the men shot off a telephone wire one New Year's Eve.

Each New Year's Eve was celebrated in the customary tradition as it was brought to this country by our German ancestors.

Carl N. Pohl

This is an excerpt from *Of Pilgrimage, Prayer, and Promise...The Story of St. Mary's Westphalia 1836-1986*.

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Guten Morgen, guten Morgen,  
guten Morgen in diesem Haus!  
Euch wurschen wir,  
Wir wunschen Euch ein  
Gluck—seliges neues Jahr,  
Ein gluck seliges neues Jahr

English

Good morning, good morning,  
Good morning in this house!  
Your wishes ours,  
Our wishes yours, a very  
Happy New Year!

## Westphalia's "Senior" Senior Citizen!



Her great-grandchildren call her the "Cookie Grandma". Dora Pung's sugar cookies are the best, they say.

Dora Mary Fedewa Pung was born on 25 January 1918 in the Fedewa home on Jason Road west of Grange Road. She's one of eight children born to Albert Fedewa and Helen Klein. In her 98 (almost 99) years she has stored up many memories. Dora tells us:

"I went to St. Mary's Grade School. The Sisters of Christian Charity taught all of the students. I walked to school. I had to be there in time for Mass at 8 o'clock in the morning. If the weather was bad, my father took us kids to school with a horse and buggy. I think he stabled the horse at the Bohr's place west of town.

When I was in 4th grade I learned the Litany of the Blessed Mother by heart. Sister Conradine was my teacher. If Sister would be watching the children on the playground, we would run up to her and recite the Litany.

My father helped my mother with the washing. As I remember, the machine had a rounded bottom. He would rock the machine back and forth so the clothes would get clean. He would rub the clothes on a board. All the clothes went through two rinses and through a ringer that was hand-cranked. And finally, the clothes were hung outside on lines to dry.

My mother was a big help with the farm work. She chopped thistles with a hoe in the cornfields. She milked cows while Marcella, Marie, Laura, Helen and I washed the dishes. She baked a lot of cookies and all the bread. In those first years she used a woodstove and then later a combination wood and electric stove. My brother Charles still has that stove. The butter we ate was homemade and so was the cheese, especially the "Stink Kase." I believe my mother could do any kind of work. She drove a horse and buggy to her parents' home—John and Anna Schmitt Klein. Coming back home, my mother knew she was within one mile of her home when Nellie, the horse made sounds telling her "we're almost home."

My mother, some called her Helena, was very religious. We were never late for Sunday Mass and never missed Mass on First Fridays. On Christmas Eve, we children had to go upstairs and pray. It

seemed like we prayed and prayed. At last our parents called us downstairs. Santa had been there and left presents in the living room. Our presents were mostly clothes. One year Marie and I got a guitar. Marie wasn't interested, so I started to play it. I played the guitar with one of the Hoppes boys at a house dance. In those days people would go from one home to the next and dance, maybe in the living room or parlor.

When I was 17 years old I got a job in the shirt factory in Portland. I sewed patches on shirt sleeves using a sewing machine. My sister Marcella also worked there.

When I was 25 years old I married Joe Pung. We were married in St. Mary's Church in Westphalia. Joe was the son of William Pung and Theresia Martin. Many of you may remember William as Buffalo Bill; he was a very capable stonemason. The vault in St. Mary's Cemetery is a good example of William Pung's masonry.

Joe's and my home was the Pung Homestead on Clintonia Road. There was no electricity in the house, so there was no radio, no electric lights, no television, no vacuum sweeper. We had a woodstove in the kitchen and one in the living room. Later on, my brother Norman wired the house for electricity and George and Dora Klein gave us an electric stove. Life was easier now. I helped Joe with the chores—the milking, chopping down weeds with a hoe and the many other works a farm wife had to do. Joe's brother helped us many times.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1944 our first daughter, Joan was born, followed by Theresa, Ann Marie, Vernon, Donna, and Paul. They were all born at Mrs. Gensterblum's home in Portland, except Paul who was born in a hospital in Lansing.

My Joe died when he was 77 years old. And now, I'm 98 years old and still living here on the Pung Homestead. I have 15 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. These days I spend my time working on my quilts and embroidering the baptismal stoles. And yes, I do like a good game of cards! I'm very thankful for the many blessings God has given me and the many years."

*Thank you Dora for sharing your memories and a special thanks to Diane George, one of Dora's nurses.*

A question for our readers: What was the name of the shirt factory in Portland?

#### And Another Question:

We need your help! The picture on the next page is of the St. Mary's graduates of 1933 at their 50<sup>th</sup> Class Reunion in 1983. Two men and six women have not been identified. We know that one of the women is Rita Baker McGrain, but we are not sure which one. If you know who **any** of the unidentified are, please contact Evelyn Weiland at [westphalia1836@gmail.com](mailto:westphalia1836@gmail.com) or send information to WHS P.O. Box 163, Westphalia, MI 48894.

Class of 1933: 50th Class Reunion



|                                       |                         |                             |                            |                                 |                        |                          |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 (back row left)                     | 2                       | 3                           | 4                          | 5                               | 6                      | 7                        |
| 8 Dora Fedewa-Pung                    | 9 Gladys Pung-Stump     | 10 Elmer Redenraher         | 11                         | 12 Adelaide Spitzley-Wirth      | 13 Marie Weber-Smith   | 14 Josepha Weber-Klein   |
| 15 Rita Weiland Smith-Miller          | 16 Romilda Bohr-Manning | 17 Mary Schmitt-Spitzley    | 18 Keen Spitzley           | 19 (middle row left) Ota Thelen | 20 Mary Kaip           | 21 Walter Thelen         |
| 22 John Belen                         | 23                      | 24 Margeret Kloecker-Massar | 25                         | 26 Rosemary Wieber Tiedt        | 27 Marian Simon-Wieber | 28 Gertrude Bohr-Manning |
| 29 (front row left) Cora Fedewa-Simon | 30 Geneva Fedewa-Thelen | 31 Mark Schrabben           | 32 Anna Zimmerman Spitzley | 33                              | 34                     | 35                       |

Rita Baker McGrain No. ?