



# WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 9 | Issue 5 | Number 51 | October 2020

## LIGHT PARADE & TREE LIGHTING

As most of you have probably already assumed there will be no light parade this year. A small group of us along with the help of Steve and Alex from the village will put up a Christmas tree again this year in front of the Museum. Sharon O'Brian has donated a tree that is now in her front yard.

## MEETINGS

We are continuing to hold off on meeting. We hope to pick it up again in the near future. In the meantime, stay safe, stay healthy.

## MUSEUM NEWS

A big "Thank You" goes out again this year to Walt Thelen. Walt keeps the lawn watered and mowed as well as planting and maintaining the flowers in front of the building. He does a great job.



## LIFE IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Who would have guessed what we have experienced so far this year? We hope the kids at school are writing down and documenting what has been going on so future generations will know what their parents and grandparents went through.

The virus has formally put an end to our 4th of July St. Mary Parish celebration. The July celebration with the parade and other activities has been going on as far back as anyone can remember. Some of us can remember the hot air balloon ascensions in the 1950s, the teen dances, and Marv Herzog bringing in his bus with the polka bands to the beer tent in the afternoons of the 4th. How about all the Bingo games played and the annual tractor pulls?

It's been harder to pull off this great event. We are now living in a time where everyone is "busy" during the summer months. The old 4th of July celebration took a lot of people to pull it off, that resulted in some not showing up for their shifts to work putting additional work on those who did show up. With covid canceling it this year, it led to a decision to change things up in 2021.

A committee has been formed to come up with a different type of family celebration in September of 2021. Hopefully people will be less "busy", and a simpler family celebration may require fewer workers.

One thing that has been re-purposed is the outdoor kitchen used during the 4th. It is now serving as our altar chapel for our outdoor Masses. We have been blessed with good weather this past summer and this enabled us to have the space outside for the Masses. Thank You, Father Weber and staff, for making this happen in Mother Nature's Cathedral that God created.

## Sister Ardeth Platte, OP (10 April 1936 - 30 September 2020)

Sister Ardeth Platte has died at the age of 84. She grew up here in Westphalia, and went on to Aquinas College in Grand Rapids. She started out as a Dominican nun as a teacher. She served as Principal and Director of Alternative Education at the former St. Joseph Educational Center in Saginaw.

She was urged to run for councilwoman in the Saginaw City council where she served from 1973 to 1985. She was also coordinator of Saginaw's Home for Peace and Justice for more than a decade. It was here that she began her antinuclear work and teamed up with Sister Carol Gilbert. The pair then moved to Baltimore.

### Want to read more about Sr. Ardeth?

"Life Story & Obituary," *Dominican Sisters of Grand Rapids*

"Ardeth Platte, Dominican nun and antinuclear activist, dies at 84," Patrick O'Neill, *Washington Post*

In 2002 she, Sister Carol and Sister Jackie Hudson, gained international attention when they dressed as weapons inspectors, entered and were arrested at a Minuteman III nuclear missile site in Colorado. Convicted of Federal felony charges the three nuns were sentenced to prison. She was released in 2005.

Throughout her life she was jailed numerous other times for following her activities protesting nuclear involvement by our nation. She was a woman with very strong convictions and was willing to accept the consequences of her behavior. She played an important role as a world peace advocate.

If any of you have seen the show "Orange is the new Black", the character, Sister Jane Ingalls, is modeled after Sister Ardeth.

*Articles Written by Leo Pohl*

## CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Looking for some unique gift ideas? How about items that reflect our heritage? Most of these items are available at The Little Flower Bakery here in Westphalia, right next door to the museum. Lori has been willing to sell our items for quite some time and we thank her for that.

- Our pride and joy is the book "Of Pilgrimage Prayer and Promise." We just had it reprinted. It is available again. It was an award winning book which would be of interest to anyone who enjoys genealogy. Our book is a book of memories with pictures of people and their deeds of the past and present of Westphalia. Listed are the veterans who served in the wars. Also listed is the family registry of Westphalia - current for 1986. The cost is \$35.00.
- "Quiet Heroism" is a book about the 87 young Westphalia women who entered the convent; the cost is \$5.00.
- "The Friends of Westphalia " is a picture-story book of the Friends who settled in Westphalia; the cost is \$5.00.
- Two kinds of Christmas tree ornaments are also available at \$15.00 each.
- DVD of our Cemetery Walks are \$15.00 each. They are from 2016 through 2019.
- The DVD of last year's "Westphalia's Weddings" display is \$15.00.
- We also have a few beer mugs and post card packets at the Museum if you are interested.

[www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com](http://www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com)  
[www.facebook.com/westphalia1836](https://www.facebook.com/westphalia1836)