



Westphalia Historical Society

Volume 37 | June 2018

Upcoming Meetings

June 19, 7:00 PM

July 17, 7:00 PM

Reminder: You need not be a member to attend; however, we are always looking for new members to carry us down the road; we hope to see you there!

Museum Times

June 20, Wednesday, 5 - 8:00 PM

July 1, Sunday, 1 - 4:00 PM

Special Opening July 4, @12:30 PM

July 18, Wednesday, 5 - 8:00 PM

August 5, Sunday, 1 - 4:00 PM

August 15, Wednesday, 5 - 8:00 PM

Book Nooks

Have you noticed the little book nooks around town? There are four: by the funeral home, Village Office, the Growing Patch, and our building.

They were put up and stocked with children's books by Clinton County RESA.

The idea is to take a book...and leave a book! The obvious intent is to encourage kids to read, especially during the upcoming summer months.

Museum News

The museum is now open for the season! Our times are listed at left and you can find them on our website. We will also open by appointment for family gatherings or other occasions. We have an extra opening on July 4th when St. Mary's Parish hosts its annual festival; we'll be open for a couple hours after the parade.

Bernie Thelen and Malory Simon have reconfigured the Westphalia History exhibit, which is in the north portion of the building. Ann Nurenberg and Dan and Mary Lou Arens have spent a fair amount of time setting up exhibits for this year's theme: Talent of Our Local Artists. We have 72 entries from 24 artists. They vary from paintings, wood carvings, stained glass, needlework, photography and more.

Special thanks also goes to Andy Hengesbach and his woodworking team at the Department of Corrections in Ionia for making easels for us to use.

If you or anyone you know of would like to display their art, get in touch with Ann at (517) 285-7780 or Dan at (989) 292 - 0692. We always knew we had talented people in our community and this year's exhibit has proved it!

You can find a [sneak peak on our website](#), but we hope you stop in to see all the entries!

Cemetery Walk, September 16

The Cemetery Walk Committee has put together names for the 2018 walk. More information will follow as the event gets closer, but we hope you will put us on your calendar!

- Ron Spitzley, World War II fatality. You may recognize his name from our exhibit two years ago, which featured local veterans.
- Leo Bauer, local long time silo builder and builder of the fish pond in the cemetery.
- Bob Trierweiler, postmaster at the old post office.
- Elizabeth Hengesbach, mother of St. Nick (Ted Hengesbach).
- Maria Catherine and Adam Fedewa. Adam was the first Fedewa to emigrate to Westphalia.

CEMETERY WALK DVD: We still have Cemetery Walk DVDs (and other items) available in our museum. See us when we open this spring, or stop into the next meeting.



Memorial Plaque

The Johann Fuchs plaque was unveiled Memorial Day. We had 68 people in attendance, including Father Weber, who blessed the plaque. Norbert Fox, great grandson of Johann, unveiled the plaque.

Glenn Fink gave a short presentation on the history of Johann and his impact on our community; his letters to Germany encouraging people to immigrate led to 90 families settling in the Westphalia area.

Special thanks to Glenn Fink for designing and ordering the plaque and to the Johann Fuchs' descendants for the financial contributions to make it possible.

To see the plaque, go to the maintenance building and make left turn on the drive. It is on the right side of the drive.



From our friends in Westphalia, Texas, a short little story from their historical society's newsletter -- *Wedding Dress Theories*

"Visitors have asked why some brides wore black or other dark colored dresses for their wedding. For some brides, many had only one nice dress and it was used for all occasions. During the 1800s and 1900s, many women wore black after losing a parent or sibling as a sign of mourning for a period of time. So, wearing a dark wedding dress could be linked to a family member. Do you agree?"

Who Was Johnny Geller? More Stories

In our last newsletter Evelyn Weiland wrote a nice tribute to one of our notable people, Johnny Geller. Last Sunday I had the opportunity to sit on the porch with Don Schafer and pick up some more information about Johnny. He lived in what most people would call a shack. It had been a small shoe repair shop, which he bought for \$300. The shop sat between house numbers 216 and 220 on North Westphalia Street.

As Evelyn pointed out last issue, he was quite a jokester and enjoyed being around kids. One of the stories goes...he was in the cellar of one of the local's homes drinking cider. Some kids were there as well. He went over to the potato bin, pulled one out and cut it open. Then he pulled a coin from the potato and showed it to the kids. Later that day the kids came up missing ... care to guess where they found them? The potato bin!

On another occasion - a summer evening when Johnny was walking home from town and "feeling no pain" - he walked past the rectory where Father Miller was sitting on the porch. Johnny stated to him, "I guess I don't have to confess this one."

Another regular joke of his was to stand by the playground and put his fingers under his shoe, while hollering for help saying his fingers were stuck and he couldn't get them out. The kids would come and help him with his dilemma.

By the way, Don Schafer turned 92 on May 30th. If you see him on his porch - stop in and visit - it will be well worth your time.

-- President, Leo Pohl

For Fun (and June is Milk Month)

A little old lady from Wisconsin had worked in and around her family dairy farm since she was old enough to walk, with hours of hard work and little compensation.

When canned Carnation Milk became available in grocery stores in the 1940s, she read an advertisement offering \$5,000 for the best slogan. The producers wanted a rhyme beginning with "Carnation Milk is best of all..."

She thought to herself, I know everything there is to know about milk and dairy farms. I can do this! She sent in her entry, and several weeks later, a black car pulled up in front of her house.

A large man got out, knocked on her door and said, "Ma'am...The president of Carnation milk absolutely LOVED your entry...So much so, in fact, that we are here to award you \$1,000 even though we will not be able to use it in our advertisements." He did, however, have one printed up to hang on his office wall.

Here's her slogan ~

*Carnation Milk is the best of all,
No tits to pull, no hay to haul,
No buckets to wash, no shit to pitch,
Just poke a hole in the son-of-a-bitch.*

~~ printed by various sources, author unknown

