



# Westphalia Historical Society

Volume 40 | December 2018

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## 2018 Light Parade & Tree Lighting Recap

Where to begin?! We have so many people to thank, especially since it ended up raining most of the day. Our Protector from above parted some of the large bands of rain and allowed the parade to proceed. Unfortunately, because of the inclement weather we didn't have the PW Marching Band join us, but we still had 25 other entries!

Thank yous go to:

Erin Smith, our 2018 tree lighter. You did a great job!

Brian & Deanna Theis who donated the tree; they offered us a really nice one, but we didn't have the heart to cut it down. We selected a different tree instead and with lights and decorations it turned out great.

The Village maintenance crew, Steve and Alex, who helped decorate the tree.

Our announcer, Jim Thelen, and Taylor Feldpausch, who loaned us the sound equipment.

The Building Trades Class at Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility in Ionia under the direction of Andy Hengesbach for the terrific toy castle we raffled off.

Tony Hengesbach and family for the use of their antique one-horse sleigh that carried St. Nick (aka Ted Hengesbach). The sleigh, by the way, was owned and used by his mother's parents - Albert and Helen Fedewa many years ago.

St. Mary's for allowing us to post announcements in their bulletin for us prior to the parade.

Local businesses for all their support, including providing entries in the parade.

I'll omit the names of our Historical Society members who work behind the scenes since we sort of enjoy the behind scenes kind of work anyway (we are always looking for new members to join in the fun!).

And last but not least to all of YOU who braved the elements to support our parade and tree lighting.

As an aside...congratulations to Jack Wirth for winning the castle playhouse!

Another aside ... you may be wondering why the parade had a larger than usual gap during it. Well, the 1989 Ford Country Squire station wagon quit and did not want to start. Because of the great effort put into the "Griswald family" float, parade goers would have been short changed if it hadn't shown up at all. With the help of a battery charger setting on the hood and hooked up to the generator, the Laurie Kowatch family was able to get their "Christmas Vacation" entry up and running and in the parade after all. If you're a fan of the movie, it seems like the float, dead battery and all, turned out just like Clark built it himself. We hope to see the Griswalds again.

May all of you have a blessed and happy Christmas! ~Leo Pohl, President.



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## Red Light

After the last newsletter we received a nice comment about the stop light at the four corners from a former resident of Westphalia, Gene Geller, who now resides in Texas. For the senior members of the community, rumor has it that the "stars" of the following story were the infamous Bush Martin bachelor brothers, Frank and Charlie, who used to live in the Bush (woods) on Hanses Road. Whether the story is true or not, it's worth enjoying.

"The article in the newsletter was very interesting. I believe if you go back before the red light you should find pictures of some sort of structure made of stone or earth on the main corner. It should have a post with a sign attached.

Story has it that two brothers were headed home after a night of drinking. Somehow they drove their car onto this mound and rolled on its side. After climbing out of the car uninjured, on brother said to the other, "as long as it's on its side it would be a good time to grease it." True or not, the story is still pretty funny" -- Gene Geller

There you have it! We wonder if anyone has a picture of this "structure" that Gene talks about or another story about the four corners to share. We sure like hearing them!

## T-Shirts For Sale

If you're still hoping to get your hands on a bright orange 2016 Oktoberfest tshirt, we have them available in all sizes for \$1.00. We also have a few XL brown Cruise-In shirts for \$5.00. Whatever we don't sell, we will donate to the Veteran's Hospital.

Watch  
our website  
and Facebook page  
this winter for  
pictures of our 2018  
events!

## The 2018 Exhibit is Closed

Many thanks to Dan Arens and Ann Nurenberg for coordinating this year's exhibit of works done by our local artists. We received many favorable comments about the display and special thanks to those who displayed their crafts. It showcased the amazing talent our community has.

It looks like next year's exhibit will be weddings: dresses, suits, pictures, attire, etc. Margie Wirth and Carol Simon will be coordinators for that exhibit. There will be more information to follow in the February newsletter.

We will continue to keep part of the museum dedicated to our village and local history.

## The Soap Box Derby is Back!

Steve Hanses reported at the November meeting that the Soap Box Derby, which was very popular in the 1950s and 1960s, is making a comeback!

There will be a race June 16, 2019 in St. Johns.

Westphalia used to have many kids involved in this sport. Below is a picture from page 150 in our "blue book". People traveled far and wide for this. Look for more information to follow. And check out the page dedicated to all the winners over the years from the Westphalia area.

Allan Smith,  
1964



## Christmas in Germany

In Germany, the Christmas gifts are brought by the Christ Child, not by Santa Claus.

On the evening of December 24, the adults of the family decorate the Christmas tree in a room where the door has been locked so that the children may not enter.

When the tree is decorated a crib (chrippia) is placed under or near the tree. The gifts are under the tree if they are not too big, otherwise they are on a table nearby.

When all is ready and no children are around, a little bell rings and suddenly the door is unlocked.

The joy is big when the children come in and see all the beautiful things and the gifts. The children are told that the Christ Child has been there and now they may open their gifts. Then the whole family sings Christmas songs. This is followed by a good meal of potato salad with sausage and other delicious food.

In recent years, the Midnight Mass is celebrated at 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening. A festive Mass is celebrated on Christmas morning.

On Christmas day, family members come together at one of their homes for a good traditional meal of roasted goose with potato dumplings and red cabbage. The family members also bring gifts and receive gifts on that day.

This is how the families in Germany celebrate Christmas: by honoring the Christ Child and with good food and drinks.

This information is from Herber Engler of Morschied, Germany. Morscheid is a small village in the district of Trier. If your family name is Naumes, Meyers, Trierweiler or Petsch, your ancestors emigrated from this district.

~submitted by Karen Spitzley from an acquaintance in Germany

*Fröhliche Weihnachten*

