



Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

December 2015

Volume 22

As 2015 is winding down to just days, and the New Year is rapidly approaching, it is a great time to look back and re-evaluate past events in the history of the Westphalia Historical Society.

The Society took a giant leap forward after the celebration of Westphalia's 175th anniversary. The celebrations and historical artifact displays really pulled me and many others, into wanting to help preserve our community's history, as well as our German heritage. After that celebration our visions grew for things we would like to do for our community.

Whether it was fate or divine intervention, we were able to purchase our present building from Lori Pung in early 2014. We never could have accomplished the renovations to the building without the amazing volunteer help from so many of our local talented workers. The work progressed through the summer of last year and we hosted a thank you open house in November for all those wonderful workers. During those early months we worked our way through the endless paper work to achieve our goal of getting our 501c3 status. Both of these were huge milestones for us. By early December our building was decked out for Christmas and we had our official grand opening. The building was blessed by Fr. Eric and we had a wonderful visit by St. Nicholas.

Throughout 2015 we have hosted numerous speakers who have spoken on subjects from breweries in the community, country schools in the county, to Indian artifacts found in the area. We also invited in antique and quilt experts who did free appraisals for those who brought in items to find out their value.

We are very proud of the bigger events we have sponsored to bring our community together; the two wonderful Cemetery Walks that people from far and wide came to experience, the Oktoberfest that the Knights of Columbus so generously helped us host, and most recently our bright and festive Christmas parade and tree lighting. We have so very much to be thankful for, most importantly we are thankful for the outpouring of support, both financial and physical that we have received from the people of our community.

The year 2016 will bring more technology and other innovations into our group. As we strive to bring new and interesting events to our community I encourage you to

think about joining the Society. We really have a great group of people and we have so much fun doing these events. The more people involved, the more the ideas flow and the easier the workload is on everyone.

Here's to a bright & wonderful New Year for Westphalia.
Maggie Upson, President

Light Parade & Christmas Tree Lighting

Our recent light parade and tree lighting was a great success and we look forward to your joining us for our 2nd annual light parade and tree lighting event on December 3rd 2016. Jim Thelen's patience with our sound system was appreciated and Jim, *it will be fixed for next year!*

We had 33 entries. The most common remark from those who submitted entries was, "If you think this was good, wait till next year!" The event couldn't have happened without the help of our light parade committee and others from the community. Special thanks to our tree donors, Theis brothers Bob, Brian and Andy, the tree cut-down and set-up crew of Leon Theis, Phil Schafer, Russ Snitgen, Walt Thelen and, the Village crew of Jim Bierstetel and Steve Miller. With the careful eye of Bernie Thelen the tree was decorated beautifully!

Thanks to Bryce Thelen for his help in lining up the parade entries and to Kevin Lenneman and his group "Parts Unlimited" who kept us entertained with their holiday singing. Special thanks also goes to Grace Simon who pushed the button to light the tree!

Due to the large number in attendance, many were not able to see our mayor, Dean Kohagen, present St. Nick with a key to the Village so he could get into the homes that evening to deliver his St. Nick treats.

Leo Pohl, Vice President

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## Thank You!

It's time to say thank you to my family, friends and members of the Westphalia Historical Society and especially to Karen and Margie for a wonderful birthday party. Yes, it was a surprise party! Now I'm 90 years old. And like my nephew Roger Freund and his wife Carol wrote, "We're not old, we've just been young for so many years." It was a great party—now a great memory, I'll store away in my heart.

Evelyn Weiland, Past President

**Military Display:** Its time to start thinking about our next display. When we re-open in the spring our focus will be on our military and veterans & we are looking for items to use in this display. Some suggestion: uniforms and other clothing, headgear, general supplies, medals & awards, artifacts, photos, posters, newspaper articles, etc. If you have anything we could use, please call Bernie Thelen, 989 587-6885.

***Thank You!!***

Glenn Fink at his own expense made 175 beautiful Christmas ornaments which were sold for \$15 each for our Historical Society, thus contributing over \$2,600 this year. He already has the prototype for 2016 and it is awesome!! Thank you Glenn.

Also, let's extend a thank-you to Larry Schafer for his donation of a toolbox with tools and several reels for storing our Christmas lights. Thank you Larry. And, thank you Wanda and Randy Zenk for donating a display case to the Historical Society.

Thank you to P-W Pirate & Fowler Eagle Construction II RESA students who under the leadership of Ross Pope are giving a facelift to our Historical Society Building. Eli Becker, Glenn Becker and Corey Esch are the guys from Fowler. Ashton Fedewa and Nick Heckman are students from P-W. If you know any of these guys, please take a minute to thank them for their great work.

Do you use any of the following?

Our website: [www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com](http://www.westphaliahistory.weebly.com)

Our email address: [westphalia1836@gmail.com](mailto:westphalia1836@gmail.com)

Facebook link: [www.facebook.com/westphalia1836](http://www.facebook.com/westphalia1836)

These are the work of member Debbie Hengesbach who set them up & maintains them as her contribution to the Historical Society. And again, if you get a chance to do so, please take time to thank her for her contribution.



Wishing everyone a Merry & Blessed Christmas and a Great New Year!