



# Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

August 2015

Volume 20

## Our Recent Donors

Susan Droman  
Bruno Thelen Family  
Dan & Jennifer Pohl  
John & Janet Dailey  
John Luttig Estate

If you would like to make a donation, please send it to Westphalia Historical Society  
P.O. Box 163, Westphalia, Michigan  
48894-0163



We would like to express our sincere thanks to Fr. Eric for celebrating our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary Mass, renewal of our vows with a special blessing and blessing our rings.

Thanks also to our children, grand and great grandchildren for a memorable party, for the many cards, flowers and well wishes we received.

God bless our family, friends, and neighbors, especially our priests and deacons.

Stan & Rose Schafer

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**A TREE WILL BE PLANTED  
IN MEMORY OF  
HANK KNOOP  
August 15, 2015 at 10 a.m.  
Ionia County Historical Society  
John C. Blanchard House  
251 E. Main St., Ionia  
(Family & friends welcome)**

## Cemetery Walk

On Sunday, September 13<sup>h</sup> (rain date Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>) at 2 o'clock we invite you to St. Mary's Cemetery where we will take you on a walk through history to 6 gravesites for a 10-minute talk about the person buried there. The presenters will be dressed in period clothing and will portray that person. Light refreshments will be served. Admission is free. Donations, however, will be gladly accepted.

Notable ancestors to be portrayed:

**Dorothy Platte:** The successful owner of Platte's Candy Store.

**Eberhard Platte:** The man who made that famous walk with Fr. Kopp in 1836.

**John Fink:** Westphalia's well-known band director, merchant, and beekeeper.

**Anthony Arens:** Civil War soldier who fought with Generals Grant and Sherman.

**Rev. Fr. Edward Gutha:** St. Mary's Pastor from 1932-1942...a man of many talents.

**Herman and Estelle Geller:** Herman, Westphalia's funeral director and Estelle, a teacher.

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## 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Wishes!!

Revella Hanses Smith, August 9<sup>th</sup>  
Esther Rademacher Brown, August 13<sup>th</sup>  
Tony Fedewa, August 29<sup>th</sup>  
Lucille Pung Bohr, August 31<sup>st</sup>  
And  
Melvin "Muff" Smith,  
**97!** on August 14<sup>th</sup>!

## A Tribute to John Luttig

At our July meeting it was noted that The John Luttig Trust had given our historical society \$28,938.47 following his untimely death. The money could not have come at a better time since we just spent \$18,000.00 for a new roof. We are also in need of window blinds to limit the damaging UV light rays from coming into the building and also to limit heat loss during the winter months. In addition to the money he left us, the family donated some of his personal items for our building. One of the more interesting items was a 37"x26" framed picture of John Goodman, his great uncle. He had the ink drawing commissioned by Andy Anderson from Prairie Village, Kansas.

John had just retired and moved back to the area he loved best. He had a real interest in local history. While I (Leo Pohl) never personally met John, we did talk one evening by phone for about an hour. He said he was preparing his trust and wanted to know the formal name of our Historical Society and the address. Little did I know he would pass away a short time later. While we talked on the phone it became very obvious he was highly interested in our local heritage and history. He was especially interested at that time in the local brewery north of town. We had just done an article about the brewery in one of our recent newsletters. John also had a strong interest in his German ancestry and following his father's journey during WWII. His father, Norman, was a decorated soldier who served under the famous General Patton during the War. We asked Janice (Sam) Simmon, his sister, to put together a short biography of her brother which now follows.....

Our beloved "Uncle Johnson" as he wanted to be called was a nickname from a co-worker's son Truman, in Overland Park, Kansas. He was born June 6, 1949 and lived his young life in Fowler. He loved spending time with his great Aunt and Uncles (Mary, John & Louis Goodman). Mary would always give row boat rides down Stoney Creek followed by warm homemade sour cream cookies. Maybe a little cider in the basement with all the Uncles. HA HA! He served as a Mass server in Fowler for many years, including High School from which he graduated in the Top 10. He graduated college at Lawrence Tech in Wixom, Michigan with an Architecture Degree. Worked in Lansing for Warren Holmes, onto Indianapolis, Indiana and retired in Kansas City, Missouri as Architect of US Postal Service.

He went to Germany thirteen times following his father's footsteps from WWII and his ancestry which was very important to him. He created the Norman and Rosaline Luttig Scholarship Foundation after his parents passed on. He also started a college scholarship foundation in his own name, John Leo Luttig. He was a very "generous man," giving many of his co-workers' children money for college. He donated to many art museums, Fowler's Most Holy Trinity Church and the R.E. Olds Museum. We are very proud to call him "Uncle Johnson," our beloved Uncle and brother.

**SUPPORT  
OUR  
WESTPHALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**With the purchase of a hand-crafted  
CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT**

**Featuring the  
Nativity stained-glass window  
“THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH”  
From  
St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Westphalia, Michigan**

**Only a limited number available  
For \$15 each**

The ornaments will be available October 3<sup>rd</sup> (during Oktoberfest)

**At the  
WESTPHALIA AREA  
HISTORICAL CENTER AND MUSEUM  
120 W. Main Street, Westphalia, Michigan**



**(The Westphalia Historical Society is partnering with the local Knights of Columbus to present  
Oktoberfest 2015 on October 3<sup>rd</sup> in downtown Westphalia. For more information Contact us:  
[westphalia1836@gmail.com](mailto:westphalia1836@gmail.com) )**

## *The family genealogist...*

### *Foreword*

*We are the chosen. My feelings are that in each family there is one who seems called to find the ancestors: to put flesh on their bones and make them live again – to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. To me, doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts, but instead, breathing life into all who have gone before.*

*We are the storytellers of the tribe. All tribes have one. We have been called, as it were, by our genes. Those who have gone before cry out to us: tell our story. So, we do. In finding them, we somehow find ourselves.*

*How many graves have I stood before and cried? I have lost count. How many times have I told the ancestors, “you have a wonderful family, you would be proud of us”?*

*How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow there was love there for me? I cannot say. It goes beyond just documenting facts. It goes to who I am and why I do the things I do. It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying “I can’t let this happen.”*

*The bones are the bones of my bone and flesh of my flesh. It goes to doing something about it. It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish -- how they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their hardships and losses, their never giving in or giving up, their resoluteness to go on and build a life for their family.*

*It goes to deep pride that they fought to make and keep us a Nation. It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us, that we might be born who we are, that we might remember them.*

*So we do, with love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence, because we are they and they are us. So, as a scribe called, I tell the story of my family. It is up to that one called in the next generation to answer the call and take their place in the long line of family storytellers.*

*That is why I do my family genealogy and that is what calls those young and old to “step up and put flesh on the bones.”*

*Author Unknown...*

*(Article received from Ted & Rose Marie Hengesbach)*