



Westphalia Historical Society Newsletter

February 2017

Volume 29

New Building Sign

Walt Thelen designed our new sign. He then took it to John Hengesbach who in turn had his crew make it. Whenever we needed something, i.e. large prints, picture frames, cabinet advice, etc., it seems we always went to John for help. As always, he never charged for his company's services. At John's wake, his brother Glenn said it best, "when Harold Smith needed some help, he'd ask for John." The Historical Society is forever grateful for what both John and Harold have done for our building. God only knows what they are working on now! And we hope they keep us in mind and in their prayers.



And now for some questions following the Light Parade in December

Where did the tree come from?

The tree was donated by Brian and Deanna Theis, who now own the former Leo & Alberta Fedewa Park, which is now undergoing restoration. It will require lots of TLC in the years to come to make it as grand as Leo & Alberta had it. They are currently doing a lot of painting and restoring some of the attractions of the years gone by.

What kind of chestnuts were Jerry Wirth and Dale Simon roasting?

They are not the kind behind Westphalia Electric or by the funeral chapel. That variety is very bitter.

The edible, roasting type used were purchased and generously donated by Larry Hanses.

Where did the big reindeer come from?

The 14-foot deer was brought in and assembled by Brad Spitzley. He said he lived in the country where not many could see it and thought it might look nice in town. He couldn't pull it in the parade as it might have hit some wires along the way. Thanks to Glenn Hengesbach and Wendy Koenigsknecht for adding the spotlight. It made a great attraction for our village.

Where did the horses come from?

The Black Percheron show horses were bred, raised and are shown by Jim and Carmen Wiggins, who bought Walt & Bernie Thelen's farm. Carmen is the granddaughter of Norman & Catherine Thelen, Walt's parents. Did you notice that Carmen had painted their hooves silver and sprinkled glitter on them for the parade? Jim & Carmen offer horse-drawn hayrides; if interested, they can be reached at 517-647-4771.

A question from our last newsletter:

What was the name of the shirt factory in Portland? Salant & Salant, a New York shirt factory, moved there in 1934 from the Ionia Reformatory when a state law made it unlawful for a private business to operate within a state institution. They employed about 300 women, many of whom were from Westphalia. They moved to Tennessee in 1939 and the building then became the Barley-Earhart Corporation, which has since been torn down and replaced with condos.



Gary Arens Sculpture

Ben Heiden headed up a donation effort to buy the sculpture from Gary and donate it to the Fowler VFW. The money, \$3000.00+, was raised and it now sits on the porch of the VFW. Gary is happy, as well as the VFW. It has now found a permanent home. Thanks to Brian Smith for loading it and Wieber Lumber for unloading the 940 lb. sculpture.

THANK YOU, Ben, for spearheading this drive.



Upcoming Meetings

Monthly meetings will resume in March on the 3rd Tuesday, (March 21st) at 7:00 pm in our building.

In the meantime quilting and crocheting classes are on Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome from beginners to experts as we strive to keep the old crafts alive.

Update on Class of 1933 50th Reunion

Thanks to our readers we are able to identify these women: Loretta Smith Rademacher Thelen is No. 23; thank you, Richard Rademacher. Florence Lenneman Luna is No. 25; thank you, Linda Luna. And we must make a correction. Adelaide Spitzley is NOT No. 12. Thank you, Jeff Hicks, for that information. Adelaide was a member of the 1933 class, but when this picture was taken in 1983, she had already passed away.

But keep on reading. Thanks to Gladys Rademacher we know that No. 12 was an Addie. Remember Addie Patrick? She was Adeline Hengesbach who married Glen Patrick.

So take another look at the picture (on the following page). Remember most were born in 1917 & 1918 with at least one in 1919.

A bit of humor from Phil & Lisa Hengesbach!

Farm Kid writes home after joining the Marines:

Dear Ma and Pa:

I am well. Hope you are. Tell Brother Walt and Brother Elmer the Marine Corps beats working for old man Minch by a mile. Tell them to join up quick before all of the places are filled.

I was restless at first because you get to stay in bed till nearly 6 a.m. But I am getting so I like to sleep late. Tell Walt and Elmer all you do before breakfast is smooth your cot, and shine some things. No hogs to slop, feed to pitch, mash to mix, wood to split. Practically nothing.

Men got to shave but it is not so bad; there's warm water. Breakfast is strong on trimmings like fruit juice, cereal, eggs, bacon, etc., but kind of weak on chops, potatoes, ham, steak, fried eggplant, pie and other regular food, but tell Walt and Elmer you can always sit by the two city boys that live on coffee. Their food, plus yours, holds you until noon when you get fed again. It's no wonder these city boys can't walk much.

We go on "route marches," which the platoon sergeant says are long walks to harden us. If he thinks so, it's not my place to tell him different. A "route march" is about as far as to our mailbox at home. Then the city guys get sore feet and we all ride back in trucks.

The sergeant is like a school teacher. He nags a lot. The Captain is like the school board. Majors and colonels just ride around and frown. They don't bother you none.

This next will kill Walt and Elmer with laughing. I keep getting medals for shooting. I don't know why. The bulls-eye is near as big as a chipmunk head and don't move, and it ain't shooting at you like the Huggett boys at home. All you got to do is lie there all comfortable and hit it. You don't even load your own cartridges. They come in boxes.

Then we have what they call hand-to-hand combat training. You get to wrestle with them city boys. I have to be real careful though, they break real easy. It ain't like fighting with that ole bull at home. I'm about the best they got in this except for that Tug Jordan from over in Silver Lake. I only beat him once. He joined up the same time as me, but I'm only 5'6" and 130 pounds and he's 6'8" and near 300 pounds dry.

Be sure to tell Walt and Elmer to hurry and join before other fellers get onto this setup and come stampeding in.

Your loving daughter, Alice

Class of 1933: 50th Class Reunion



1 (back row left)	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dora Fedewa-Pang	John Simon	Julius Thelen		Melvin Smith	Leo Pohl	Joe Hafner
Rita Weiland	Gladys Stump	Elmer Rademacher	11	Adeline Hengespach Patrick	Margie Weber-Smith	Josefa Weber-Klein-Kinn
Smith-Miller	Romilla Bohr-Manning	Mary Schmitt-Spitzley	18 Keen Spitzley	Otto Thelen (middle row left)	Mary Kaip	Walter Thelen
John Belen	Loretta Smith Thelen	Margaret Kloecker-Masson	25 Florence Lenneman Luna	Rosemary Wieber Tiedt	Marian Simon-Wieber	Gertrude Bohr-Manning
29 (front row left) Korsetta Fedewa-Simon	30 Geneva Fedewa-Thelen	31 Mark Schrabben	32 Anna Zimmerman Spitzley	33	34	35

Rita Baker McGrain No ?