

Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 3,
Issue 4
October 2015

MUSEUM NEWS

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Our biggest fund raiser during each year is the Festival of Trees and we hope you will attend. Dates for FOT this year are

November 27, 28, and 29. Your participation in the Festival of Trees fundraiser has direct impact on keeping our doors open. Other major donations come from the City of Morris and from Grundy County. Due to the State of Illinois finances, or lack thereof, we expect the donations from the city and county to drop. So, your financial support during FOT is critical. However, if you wish to support us without participating in the Festival of Trees, your donation via membership or other financial gift is greatly appreciated.

We started decorating trees, wreaths, and centerpieces at the end of September so Festival of Trees is not that far in our future. Please plan on coming to the Museum to bid on a beautifully decorated tree, or wreath, or centerpiece in your holiday plans. If you have visitors, bring your guests with you. In the last couple of years a South Carolina family have managed to bid on and win trees and other items and squeezed them into their full size van to take home. Many smaller sized trees, perfect for gifts to people in hospitals, nursing homes, or small apartments, will also be available.

Help make this year's Festival of Trees a fundraising success. We thank you for your support!

JOINING TOGETHER WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND THE GRUNDY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Grundy County Chambers Women in Business (WIB) program met the ladies of the Grundy County Historical Society's Festival of Trees who walked the WIB through making fall wreaths and centerpieces as a social activity for the group. Sue Cunnea, Sandi Dransfeldt, Jan Hibler, JoEllyn



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Facebook: Museum of the Grundy County Historical Society-Illinois

Museum Hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Group Tours by Appointment—Call for Appointment

The Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter is published four times a year. It is distributed to members of record free of charge via e-mail and USPS. Subscriptions to the Society start at \$10 for students annually. Applications can be downloaded from our website, <http://www.grundycountyhs.org> or write to us care of the address above.

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Johnson, and Karen Zelko of the Festival of Trees committee were patient teachers as they assisted WIB members in tying ribbons and encouraging creativity.

In addition to the wreath-making lesson, the WIB participants were able to get an up-close view of the Historical Society's museum and a chance to learn more about the upcoming Festival of Trees, our Historical Society fundraiser, where beautifully decorated trees, wreaths, and centerpieces are auctioned off. The Festival of Trees will be held during Morris's annual *Home for the Holiday* events starting the day after Thanksgiving. The trees will be on display at the Museum, 510 Illinois Avenue, in Morris.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE WOMEN IN BUSINESS celebrated the *Morris Herald News*'s Women of Distinction luncheon on October 7th. WIB is proud to be honoring this year's three winners—Lori Cora, Janine Petric, and the Historical Society's Board member Sandi Dransfeldt.

Congratulations to all three winners and we especially are proud of Sandi who is one of our board members.

GRUNDY COUNTY TRIVIA

Can you name year that the first Corn Festival was held in Morris? Find the answer elsewhere in this newsletter.

CORN FESTIVAL PARADE

We hope all of you enjoyed the parade. Perhaps you noticed that the Museum was represented in the parade by a 1973 Lincoln Continental Mark IV with Ken Sereno riding shot gun.



This was the first time we have been able to participate in the parade to make the presence of the Museum more public. The car is owned by Russell Rogers and was driven by Ray Rogers, Jr. They volunteered their time and vehicle for the parade. It is hard to realize for some of us that a 1973 car is OLD because we were actively young at that time.

CABOOSE

We have been lucky to have a volunteer at our Caboose all this summer. From our first Cruise Night in June when we both looked at the lightening storm and decided that a metal caboose was not the place to be and we left to the next Cruise Night on July 12th when it was storming and there were only 11 visitors, to August with 360 visitors, then the Corn Festival open house with 48 visitors. Zack Hajduk, a Chamber of Commerce member, has been our interpreter whenever weather has permitted. He likes the Caboose and has even met someone who actually worked on that particular caboose. Zack is the owner of Zack's Holiday Lighting. We are happy to have him as a volunteer.

NEW DONATIONS

The museum has received a donation of a restored, rare coal burning stove, a Royal Acorn No. 47 from Jerry and Kathy Sidenstick of Diamond. They donated the stove in memory of their daughter Gerri Lynn, who passed away in 2011. The stove had belonged to Jerry's father Howard, who did the restoration back in the 1960s. The stove is now on display in our schoolroom area, which is appropriate, as wood and coal burning stoves once heated many one room schoolhouses. Come see this fantastic piece of industrial history.



MODEL AIRPLANE LANDS AT MUSEUM FROM ARKANSAS

A Ford Tri-motor model airplane built by Ralph Yedinak of Morris in 1934 when he was 19 years old, is now back home.



It was rebuilt and repainted in 1978 when Ralph retired to Cherokee Village, Arkansas. In 1984 he donated it to the Ralph Foster Museum on the campus of the College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri, since there was no museum facility in Grundy County at the time.

In 2015, his family decided to bring it back home to our Museum. Luckily a friend of the Ralph Foster Museum was coming near here for a family visit and was happy to drop the plane off at its new home, our Museum. We are delighted to have added this plane to our exhibits. The plane has been hung from our ceiling as if it were soaring through the air above us to be enjoyed by all. The plane has a wing spread of 39 inches and the fuselage is made from 4x4 white pine wood. It has a built-in cabin for passengers and a cabin for pilot and co-pilot. The motors are made from wood pegs glued to the motor frame.

Ralph and his wife Margaret had three daughters and one son, Kathy Duffy of Pontiac, Illinois; Jan Hibler of Minooka, Illinois, Sandi Dransfeldt of Morris, Illinois, and Bernie Yedinak of Modesto, California. All are pleased that the plane has come back home.

UPCOMING TOUR

The Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will hold one of their upcoming meeting here at the Museum. Part of their meeting will include a tour of our exhibits.

LOOKING AHEAD—UPCOMING MEETINGS

We will be hosting the following lectures this Fall and next Spring. All lectures are in our meeting room beginning at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise announced.

October 27: Heritage Farms presented by Pete Kodat, Noreen Dollinger, and Marion Gore

November 27-29: Festival of Trees (see articles elsewhere in this issue)

March 22, 2016: Somerville Planes presented by Jim Chambers

April 26, 2016: History of Channahon and Minooka presented by Michelle Houchins

May 17, 2016: Annual meeting. Entertainment and location to be determined.

BILL WALSH BOOK

Bill Walsh has finally published his book, *Sharpshooter: The Untold Story of Hamilton Cobb Peterson*. He was a larger than life character from Verona, who became a Texas Ranger in the 1860's. The Historical Society will be hosting a book signing at the Morris Library, tentatively planned for the first part of December.

TOURS

Troop 466 Den 6 boy scout group and members of their families came to the Museum for a tour on October 3rd. There were 17 people in their group.



Another group that came for a visit and tour was the Antique Chevrolet Club, on August 9th. These visitors drove their classic cars to the Museum. It was quite a treat to see their vintage vehicles parked in our parking lot.



LOOKING UP

Photos of Morris, supplied by the museum, have now been featured in 24 issues of the *Morris Herald News*. We are now going to provide the paper with photos of architectural features from other Grundy County cities, including Coal City and Gardner. Watch for them in upcoming issues of the newspaper.

DISPLAY CASE BONANZA

The museum has purchased two display cases, and oh my goodness, we actually found room for them!



These new cases now showcase a variety of Grundy County commemorative plates, plus a Masonic Display that includes Herb Weitz' uniform and the silver plated coffee urn given to Lewis Lott, a charter member of the Blanery Commandery, who died in 1885, the year the Morris chapter was founded.

RADIO



The Museum is on the radio the first Monday of every month. Tune in and listen to "People Are Talking," WCSJ, 103.1 on your FM dial, from approximately 9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

FACEBOOK



Don't forget to visit our facebook page, kept up-to-date by Dorothy Cunnea. Lots of Grundy County historical information and events are showcased there. If you wish to access the Museum's facebook page, request a friendship from Museum of the Grundy County Historical Society-Illinois. We welcome all comers. As of this printing, we have 425 followers.

NEW MEMBERS

The following folks have joined the membership of the Grundy County Historical Society. We thank you for your support of the Society and the Museum!

Susan Hippler, Houston, TX
 First Midwest Bank, Morris, IL
 Richard Lee Helland, Treasure Island, FL
 Fraternal Order of Eagles #1024, Morris, IL
 Karen Zelko, Morris, IL

YEARBOOK

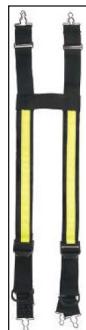
Our new Yearbook was published and distributed to our membership in September. Please, if you find an error in your listing, let us know so we can update our records so next year's Yearbook will be correct.

FOR SALE

We have a limited number of past years' Corn Festival Buttons available for purchase. These are duplicates from our collection and are offered at \$4.00 each.

SUSPENDERS

Larry King's suspenders officially retired December 16, 2010, when the veteran broadcaster hosted his last episode of *Larry King Live*. Often red, sometimes blue—once even a blinding yellow—they have been his trademark ever since 1987, when he needed something to hold up his pants following some serious post-heart surgery weight loss.



From left to right: H-back, X-back, and Y-back suspenders.



Examples of Lederhosen suspenders.



Two different styles of firemen's suspenders.

The first suspenders can be traced to Eighteenth Century France, where they were basically strips of ribbon attached to the buttonholes of trousers. Benjamin Franklin is said to have worn them—although it's probably best not to ask how historians know that. Back then suspenders were considered an undergarment, and therefore should never be seen in public. In fact, visible suspenders were considered risqué as recently as 1938, when a town in Long Island, New York, tried to ban gentlemen from wearing them without a coat, calling it "sartorial indecency." The ban was later overturned after residents complained.

In the early 1820s, British designer Albert Thurston began to manufacture the first known modern day suspenders, known as *braces* in Britain. The fashion of the day dictated that men wear high-waisted pants—so high-waisted, in fact, that a belt could not actually be used to hold them up. Thurston's suspenders attached via leather loops and the company still sells them today.

Original designs show suspender straps made of a tightly woven wool known as boxcloth and attaching as an *H-back*, meaning they joined together to make what looks like an uppercase H. This was later replaced by the *X-back*, which in turn morphed into the *Y-back*. Today, all three models are available—although, unless you’re a United States firefighter, *H-back* suspenders are pretty rare.

One of the first US patents for suspenders was issued in 1871 to Samuel Clemens, better known as the author Mark Twain, for “Adjustable and Detachable Straps for Garments,” that attached to everything from underpants to women’s corsets and were designed as an alternative to suspenders, which Clemens reportedly found uncomfortable. Metal clasps were invented in 1894 so that suspenders could be clipped on rather than buttoned on, meaning that pants no longer had to come with buttons sewn in the waist, as they commonly did at the time.

Suspenders fell out of favor in the early Twentieth Century, when lower-sitting pants no longer made them a necessity. But suspenders didn’t disappear completely. Doctors even recommended suspenders to patients with extended bellies. “There are more big stomachs caused by the wearing of a belt than any other one thing I know of,” said a Chicago doctor named Dr. V. S. Cheney in 1928, urging people instead to practice “posture, exercise, and the wearing of suspenders.” Actor Humphrey Bogart wore them in many of his movies, as did British actor Ralph Richardson, who liked his suspenders

so much that when World War II broke out, he ran out and bought six pairs in anticipation of fabric rationing.

In the 1960s, British skinheads adopted suspenders as part of their working-class look—often attaching them to tight blue jeans that didn’t really need help staying in place. One of pop culture’s most famous hooligans, Alex DeLarge, portrayed by actor Malcolm MacDowell, wore them in *A Clockwork Orange*.

Working women—or those who simply wanted to dress like them—adopted suspenders as part of the *Annie Hall* unisex look in the 1970s. A 1986 *People* magazine article recommended that fashion-forward teens let their suspenders hang from their waist, arguing that drooping suspenders were very sensual. The following year, suspenders became associated with obnoxious wealth through Michael Douglas’s portrayal of ultra-capitalist Gordon Gekko in Oliver Stone’s *Wall Street*. Two years later, uber-nerd Steve Urkel from the TV sitcom *Family Matters* gave the fashion accessory a completely different vibe.

Suspenders were largely absent from people’s closets in the 1990s and early 2000s—that is, until hip-hop style icon Fonzerworth Bentley popularized the preppy dandy look. Recent years have seen a fascination with early Twentieth Century culture—think: speakeasy-themed bars, mustaches, fedoras—amongst a certain subset of people, usually young and living in major cities, who like to dress the part.

Grundy County



Historical Society

Grundy County Historical Society
and Museum
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