

# THE WAPSIPINICON

A newsletter published quarterly by the  
**TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
*Named "Volunteer Institution of the Year" in 2010  
by the Illinois Association of Museums*

**Volume 14** **September 2019** **Number 3**

### MUSEUM ON MAIN

Our collection includes more than 7,000 artifacts, displayed to preserve and interpret local history. Our museum is housed in an 1855 Illinois Historic Landmark building (the former Methodist Church) at 110 East Main Street, Tiskilwa.

**MUSEUM HOURS**  
**EVERY SATURDAY**  
**9:00 TO 2:00**

**Admission is free,**  
**and our volunteers**  
**will show you around.**

For private or group  
tours,  
call Ed Waca  
at 815.646.4016.

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Cecille Gerber

## FALL PROGRAMS TO FOCUS ON OUR HOMETOWN

Whew. Now THAT was an exciting summer for our little society! (See details and photos throughout this issue!) After three months chock-a-block with special events on out-of-the-ordinary days of the week, we're looking ahead to the fall line-up. We'll now resume our tradition of presenting our programs at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month in our Community Room in the upper level of our Museum on Main. The September 9th program will also serve as our Annual Meeting. This gives us the opportunity to thank outgoing board members, elect new ones, and present a brief financial report, as explained in an article on page 5.

**Monday, September 9:** Few Illinois cities can boast of a newspaper that has been in existence since 1856. But our little village of Tiskilwa can make that claim. To share this unusual history, the publishers of *Bureau Valley Chief*, **John and Ginger Murphy**, will present a program taking a glance at various names and forms of our town's newspaper over the decades. In addition, they'll share details and photos of the 50 years of changes since they began working at the *Chief* as newlyweds in 1969. At left, the circa 1956 photo shows **Alvira Brady Wyatt** (THS '23) and **Allen Murphy** at the *Tiskilwa Weekly*. Many a Tiskilwa native can [almost] quote the saying that runs below the masthead of each issue. Can you?



*"Printed where the Rainbow's end tickles the waving grass and the time-worn pot of gold bulges with untold treasure for all those of diligence and vision."*

**Monday, October 14:** The varied architecture of Tiskilwa has long fascinated visitors to our valley and this month's program will take a closer look at one of its loveliest homes which in its early years was known as the Kellogg House. Now The Tiskilwa Inn, this home was built in 1848 by John Stevens for his daughter Louisa. Most recently, it housed Bud and Cherry Ann Rosenquist's Country Lane Antiques. In a PowerPoint program displaying the history and architectural details of the gracious old home, innkeeper **Jeremy Gassen** will present a program of interest to an audience of all ages.

**Monday, November 11:** This year, our annual Salute to Veterans lands smack dab on Veterans Day. This coincidence is perfect, since 2019 is also the 100th anniversary of the formation of the **American Legion**. What's the big deal about this alignment of the stars? Well, it also marks the official Grand Opening of our **Gallery on Galena**, the northerly "annex" to our Museum on Main. Okay, so we've hosted two "As-Is" open houses as well as one "Almost There" preview during Pow Wow Days. But this is the real McCoy. We'll host the Grand Opening from 5:00 to 6:30 in our new Gallery on Galena, followed by **Mike Johnson's** program about our local World War I soldiers as well as America's noble, heartwarming efforts and energies to help rebuild the European countries devastated by the "War to end all wars."



**COMING ATTRACTION: Country Christmas on Saturday, December 7, 2019**

**TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

*Thank you to those listed here who recently joined or renewed!  
Added to names listed in the March and June issues,  
we're finishing 2019 with a record of 335 members and sponsors.  
(Members are from Tiskilwa unless otherwise noted.)*

**NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS**

◆ **INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES** ◆

- Linda Cundiff (Peoria)
- Roger Fredenhagen (Champaign)
- Brian & Lisa Padilla (Spring Valley)

**NEW AND RENEWED SPONSORS**

◆ **FRIENDS** ◆

- Susan Kauffman Cater (Princeton)
- Jan Lohaus (Putnam)

◆ **PROMOTER** ◆

- Clay & Ethel Hock (Oxford, OH)

◆ **BRONZE BENEFACTOR** ◆

- Chuck & Wanda Jurgensen (Honesdale, PA)

**REMINDERS:** If you are current or retired from or employed by a company with a **MATCHING GIFTS** Program, we'll cheerfully complete the paperwork!



On August 3, friends with "Classic Rides" joined in the fun and shared a glimpse of specialty vehicles, such as **Neva & Chuck Lucas's** 1922 Studebaker "Big Six." Above right, the guys gather 'round to discuss the merits and curiosities of their rides.



With almost 20 participants in our 2019 display, visitors enjoyed a big variety of vintage vehicles. Several motorcycles joined the fun this year. On right, board members **Julie Perry Sampson** THS '67 and **Betty Brokaw** set up shop outside to sell T-H-S booklets and T-shirts.



The "Smith Kids" – **Marty, Janet, Julie** – loaned us their family's legendary steer to grace our float, which was awarded second place. Check out page 3 for details of this hefty Hereford's claim to fame.

**THS ALUMNI BANQUET PLEASURES CROWD OF 175+**



(Above left) The crowd cheered in hearing the introduction of **Eunice Rediske Morris**, in pink dress, a member of the **80<sup>th</sup> (!)** anniversary class of 1939. She's seated with **Doris Schrock Bachman**, THS '44.

(Above right) **Joy Schertz**, THS '62, (center) stopped by for a visit with **Harriet West Bronson**, THS '53, and **Doris Travis Hamilton**, THS '50.



(Above left) Longtime friends, **Agnes McCauley Ross**, THS '48, **Melvina Underwood Lewis**, and **Elaine Burress Bowers**, THS '44, enjoyed the evening featuring THS coaches **Dennis Bull** and **Bob Prusator**.

(Above right) **Ed Waca**, THS '66 and vice prez of our Tiskilwa Historical Society, escorted his daughter, **Amy Waca Wedekind** to the festivities.

Lots and lots of smiling and visiting brightened the banquet room from the opening prayer to the final "Cha he cha ha!" We thought that **Keith Miller**, THS '69, got off one of the best one-liners of the evening when he noted that "1969 is remembered as the year that men walked on the moon, the Beatles released their *White Album*, and I drove my motorcycle through the gym."

With only one more 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary host class, now is the time for all good grads to come to the aid of their school to continue this 140-year tradition. That's right! The first THS class graduated in 1878 and the Alumni Association was formed the following year. Let's not allow our crowd-pleasing Alumni Banquet to become history!

Could you volunteer to be part of a rotating committee that can make it happen in the future? Think about this: two faithful THS '84 grads, **Sondra Compton Owens** and **Suzanne Ary**, have been organizing the banquet for TEN years now! So . . . no excuses, people! Sondra and Suzanne will help get things started, but it's clear that we need to form a new **THS Alumni Association**. Check Facebook at "Remember Tiskilwa" and Tiskilwa Historical Society for an announcement of a THS alumni "How-to" meeting date this fall. Startin' early, Homies.

*From the Collector's Corner*

*Suggested donations: T-shirt \$15 (navy or gray)  
Long-sleeved gray shirt \$20; Directory \$15  
Please add \$3 for postage.*

**ALUMNI DIRECTORY:** Reprint of 2009 booklet with listing of all THS graduates, plus a history of Tiskilwa grade and high schools and the Tiskilwa Alumni Association

**TISKILWA T-SHIRT** in navy or gray, as modeled here by our mascot, Lance. Shirts available in varied sizes, including Youth. But if we don't have the special size you want, we'll put it on our next order.

**LONG-SLEEVED GRAY SHIRT** with TISKILWA printed down the sleeve in black letters . . . just right when the fall weather hits!



## The Smith Hereford: The Stuff of Legend

When the TCA proclaimed the theme for this year's Pow Wow parade to be "Down on the Farm," someone suggested trying to locate "The Cow" for our historical society's float. Several Board members immediately started smiling, because that big hunk of fiberglass has a most colorful history in our little town – from the time it ended up on the roof of the high school (*Fact or Fiction?*) to . . . well, read on.

For lack of a better nickname, we'll call the big guy

"Smitty." He arrived in Tiskilwa by train sometime in the early 1960s, during the time that Lyman Smith was working with Bureau County Farm Bureau. This photo shows **Celia**



and **Lyman Smith's** darling towheads – **Marty, Janet, and Julie** – in 1964. Although Lyman had a notion that this steer would be a good promotion for making sales to farmers, Smitty instead became the stuff of myth and folklore for overlapping generations of Tiskilwa kids.



*Left: With a new look for every season at his Peoria home with **Mike & Janet Smith Simmons**, Smitty has become a neighborhood star. Right: **Randy & Christy Senneff** could just barely squeeze Medicare-aged Smitty into their van for transport from his place of honor in Peoria to ride on our society's Pow Wow Days parade float.*

In one of the more dramatic of Smitty hijackings, he ended up at the lower entrance to Mount Bloom Cemetery, just emerging from under the old gateway. Julie remembers hearing that unnamed perpetrators lurking nearby burst out laughing each time hot-rodders came roaring up (or down) Cemetery Hill and suddenly slammed on the brakes when they caught sight of a huge Hereford [apparently] rumbling down the path toward their precious jalopies!

The most complete and verifiable tale that we collected came from THS 1976 classmates Sally Ary Trumpinski and Susie Nordstrom. "In the spring of 1976, the GAA

dance was themed 'Down on the Farm' and the planning committee decided that the Smith Hereford would be a perfect photo backdrop.

**Susie Nordstrom** secured her father's green and white Chevy S10, and along with committee members **Jill Gustafson, Julie Smith** and **Sally Ary**, we set out to pick him up. First, we wrangled Smitty around to hoist him into the back of the truck and strap him down, and then we proceeded to parade down Main Street on the way to the high school. Direct route from Smiths to the school, right?

Two of our dads, **Ben Nordstrom** and **Fran Ary**, happened to see us pass by as they stood outside Bud and Dory's [Wyatt's Tap]. Jill may possibly have been aboard the cow at the time.

We set up the Hereford in his own "pen," complete with a picket fence – picture perfect! The Tronics (musicians from Ladd) rocked on the stage and we goaded them into playing 'Old MacDonald Had a Farm,' an unusual request that they remember to this day."



*Yearbook photo of five farm-girl beauties, (clockwise from left): Susie Nordstrom, Jill Gustafson, Sally Ary, Julie Smith, Sue Andriotis. Right: The cute girls: Sally Ary and Sue Andriotis; the handsome guys: Randy and Bruce Gingrich, imports from Western High School.*

A few unidentified THS grads chuckled to recall other legends of Smitty's magical appearances throughout the 1960s and '70s and into the '80s. One such time was his Christmastime materialization on Coach Bob Prusator's front lawn – complete with reindeer antlers and a jolly red nose. Another time, Randy Senneff admits to membership in a gang of scoundrels who plunked Smitty down by front steps of the old high school – possibly as a Homecoming prank – in the fall of 1970.



*We think Janet & Mike should publish a calendar: A Steer for All Seasons*

The Smith kids tell us that their dad tired of retrieving the steer and finally secured him to a telephone pole with a Yale lock and log chain. And Smitty, the mighty Hereford, ceased his fearless roaming.

**UPDATE ON GALLERY ON GALENA  
(FORMER AMERICAN LEGION HALL)**

One year after we officially received ownership of the old Legion Hall, 93 folks stopped by for an "Almost There!" open house and a glimpse of our new **Gallery on Galena** during Pow Wow Days.

Visitors sang the praises of each element of the transformation: the authentic look of the country schoolroom, the shiny restored floors (*Thanks again to **Mike Dittmer**, at right*) and knotty pine walls, the orderly display of uniforms and military memorabilia, and the list goes on! We were thrilled to have everything in place, with the help of a dozen volunteers who assisted in the move and set-up earlier that week.



Our efforts to obtain the property began in early 2017, when former post commander, **Don Lawson**, THS '50, (*pictured at left with another veteran, **Paul McCauley**, THS '59*) informed us that Post 346 had officially disbanded and offered the building to our group. Our first challenge was the long and winding road of complicated legalities. But we hung in there, as did our patient yet persistent attorney, **John Isaacson**. In addition, we appreciate the generosity of **Tim Smith** and **Princeton Elementary District**, as well as **Adjutant Marty Conaster of the American Legion Department of Illinois** in making it possible for us to preserve the old Legion Hall.

Since the June issue, our additional **BUILDING FUND** donors are **A&M Products**, **Caterpillar Foundation Fund**, **Susan Kauffman Cater**, **Jean Goodale**, **Brian & Lisa Padilla**, **Jeff & Amy Prusator**, **Bob Sash**, **Bill & Cherri Senneff**, **Attendees at the Tiskilwa Alumni Banquet**, **the THS Class of 1969**, and **Top Notch Distributors**. We now have raised \$37,000 (!) in donations, including the first \$10,000 matched by member **Bob Sash**. At press time, we've spent almost \$35,000. We estimate another \$9,000 in expenses, including a new furnace with A/C, accessibility ramp, sidewalks, and landscaping.

With a thumbs-up from **Ruby** and **Leila Acker** (*below, center*) and enthusiastic interest from (*left*) **Judy Fredenhagen Kramer**, THS '74, **Kim Brokaw Hixson**, THS '79, **DeeAnn Schertz Nelson**, THS '56), (*right*) **Mary & Ray Warren**, and **Dorothy** (THS '50) & **Sue** (THS '84) **Ary**, our efforts were well rewarded.



**Hot Fun in Tiskilwa Summertime**

**Memorial Day in the East Park on May 27**

For the Memorial Ceremony, organized by member **Jennifer Fisher**, our Society again presented a solemn remembrance of the sacrifices of our veterans as well as active-duty men and women. Despite the rain – and even HAIL! – a crowd of 150+ attended the ceremony. WW II veteran **Pompeyo Flores** (*below left with **Liz Piacenti**, THS '65*) thanked the **Quilts of Valor** organization. Then **Mike Johnson** of Princeton donated several World War I items belonging to local doughboys **Harry Quick** (THS '12) and **Milford Olds**. After the ceremony, more than 40 visitors braved the weather to attend an "As Is" Open House at the Gallery on Galena and enjoy sandwiches and refreshments provided by **Tiskilwa Community Association**.



**Strawberry and Arts Festival on Saturday, June 8**

More than 150 visitors enjoyed music, arts, history, food, and fun at the Museum on Main, both indoors and out. **Hungry World Farms** provided the strawberries as part of the 18 other booths displaying the work of local artists, artisans, eateries, and authors. Volunteers helped with rock-painting and other kiddie activities, and **Phil & Pam Kaufmann** provided toe-tapping music for fun. Even those little fellas from **Tiskilwa Farms Alpacas** seemed to have a good time!



**Indian Heritage and Annual Picnic on July 14**

Reverend **Dan Lybarger** of Abingdon fascinated the crowd with Native American music, legends, and historical notes. After the presentation, more than 45 friends and neighbors relished all-beef hot dogs with all the fixin's, conversation, and games at our picnic.



**TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**BUILDING FUND SPECIAL APPEAL FOR 2019**

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Please & thanks: Jot "BUILDING FUND" on the memo line, since it is a separate account from annual Memberships & Sponsorships.

## Society Receives \$1,000 from Class of '94



The **THS Class of 1994** shared a nostalgic moment during Pow Wow Days near the sign for the school that was once their pride and joy. [History note: The “new” building served as the community’s high school from 1979 to 1995.] Thank you very much!

*Left to right: Shelly Sears Kierczynski, Holly Kauffman McClure, Rebecca Forbeck, Bryan Anderson, Paul Kingsley, Steve Greathouse, John Gray, Michael Walters, Bobbi Haun Russelburg, Kevin Sights, Mandy Lee, and Christina McVety.*

## Financial Summary for 2018-19 Fiscal Year

Because of heartwarming support in memberships, sponsorships, and memorials, the Tiskilwa Historical Society again ended the fiscal year on June 30, 2019, on a break-even basis. Treasurer **Judy Wright** will present an overview at the brief annual meeting, just before our September 9 program. An audited financial report will soon be available for members to review. Our success depends on the generosity of those who continue to contribute their time, talent, and resources, and WE THANK YOU!

## THS Class of '84 Donates Banner to Museum

Visitors to the “Tiskilwa Schools” section in our Museum on Main are now greeted by a handsome 4 X 5-foot banner, bursting with pride for the institution, students, and teachers who created cherished memories from 1878-1995. Thanks to the Class of 1984, whose generous members designed and donated this gift to the community.



## HISTORY MYSTERY FOR SEPTEMBER



The Pow Wow Days 5K Committee would like to recognize this special runner. Not only did he bike ride 78 miles in one day on his 78th birthday earlier this summer, but he also decided to check off Tiskilwa’s 5K from his bucket list. He earned a bronze medal in his age category with a good time of 41:25! (Photo by Daniel Acker) Need a few more hints? He’s a member of THS Class of 1959, and he and his wife Sandra have lived on First Street in Tiskilwa for many years.

**History Mystery Solved:** Congratulations to **Francis Morse**, our mystery iron man! May he be an inspiration to us all. Way to go, Fran!

## 2019 5K Scholarships Winners Announced

While we’re on the subject of running, thanks to **Janel Wheeler Goodale**, THS '92, and **Jenine Joiner Proffitt**, THS '90, and their hubbies, **Trent and Dwayne**, for organizing the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Scholarship Run during Pow Wow Days. Scholarship eligibility: Student must be a graduating senior and a direct descendant of a Tiskilwa High School alum. Here’s their press release: “Our \$1000 scholarship winner for 2019 is **Joshua Wooden**, son of **Don Wooden** (THS '82) and **Mary Wooden**, grandson of **Patsy Morris Wooden** (THS '63), and the great-grandson of **Russell Morris** (THS '40). We were also able to award three smaller scholarships to **Maggie Johnson**, granddaughter of **Marcia (Wheeler) Johnson** (THS '57), **Lanie Hannon**, granddaughter of **Joe Hannon** (THS '66), and **Elijah Grundman**, son of **Denise (Warren) Grundman** (THS '82). Top male finisher was **Drew Toohill** at 17:38.7 and top female was **Jeanna Loftus** at 23:48.5. Winning alumni were **Bob James**, THS '85 and **Jan Pruitt Lohaus**, THS '73.”

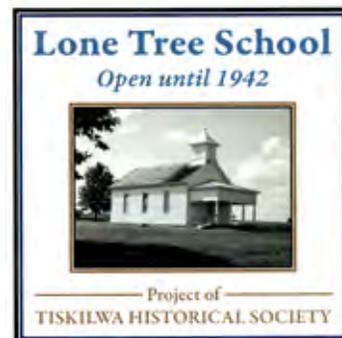


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## Fifteen Country School Signs Get a Face Lift

We’ve been concerned that Tiskilwa’s fifteen country school signs, erected by our society in 2012 to honor Tiskilwa’s country schools are fading away. Following research into more lasting materials as well as obtaining price quotes, we’ve decided to replace the signs with the new look depicted here in a design by Princeton Graphics. Each sign will cost \$47 to print, and we’re on the lookout for a few country schoolers who’d like to help us honor their old school and complete this project. Might that description fit you? If so, please send a check to our P.O. Box 87 and write “COUNTRY SCHOOL SIGN FUND” on the memo line. If you decide to join this effort – thanks!



## IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for these memorials received since our June newsletter.  
**BRIAN BOWERS, EDMUND & GRACE HICKEY, BOB TELFER**

# TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

110 EAST MAIN STREET

P.O. BOX 87

TISKILWA, IL 61368

[www.tiskilwahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.tiskilwahistoricalsociety.org)

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## THS Class of 1969 Donates \$1,069 to T-H-S!

Following a generous tradition established by the THS Class of 1962, this year's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary class made a hefty donation to our society. They've earmarked the money for the Gallery on Galena, beginning by buying the remaining eight shutters. These fourteen class members pictured above gathered on Friday night of Pow Wow weekend. We thank you!

*Front row:* Nancy McCauley Wagner, Sharon Engel Royer, Jane O'Neill Piccatto, Connie Magnuson Kauffman, Cindy Madsen Davidson, Ross Joiner  
*Second row:* Pat Hassler, Clarence Turpen, Joellen Schertz, Keith Miller, Duane Bell, Diane Madsen Ori, John Vail, Mike Kane, Ron Ziegler

**Wapsipinicon** Editors:

Cecille Gerber, [cecillegrbr2@gmail.com](mailto:cecillegrbr2@gmail.com)

Jane Jones, [jjones215@gmail.com](mailto:jjones215@gmail.com)

**JOHN F. HEDRICH**  
*Trial Lawyer*  
726 South Main Street  
Princeton, IL 61356  
815-872-1010

**Indian Valley Inn**  
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