

# 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 15

SEPTEMBER 2020

NUMBER 3

## MUSEUM ON MAIN AND GALLERY ON GALENA

Our collection includes more than 7,700 artifacts, displayed to preserve and interpret local history.

The MoM is housed in an 1855 Illinois Historic Landmark Building at 110 East Main Street. The GoG is in the former Legion Hall, 550 North Galena.

**MUSEUM HOURS:**  
SATURDAYS: 9 TO 2  
**GALLERY HOURS:**  
FIRST SATURDAYS: 10-1  
**CURRENTLY,**  
 both museums are open by appointment only. Call Cele anytime at 815.646.4353.

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

For private tours, call Ed Waca at 815.646.4016.

## Board of Directors 2020-2021

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## TISKILWA FARM SETS SIGHTS ON MAKING HISTORY

In the farmland, timber, and native prairies two miles southeast of Tiskilwa, **Hungry World Farm** aspires to educate people about "healthy fields, food, and bodies while caring for the Earth." This vision starting becoming reality late in 2017, when members of **Willow Springs Mennonite Church** in rural Tiskilwa initiated plans to form a team of lead farmers, interns, directors, and volunteers. Since then, HWF has grown into a special group with a focused mission. Recently, our T-H-S board decided that our community might find touring HWF a good way to spend a fall afternoon.

As a result, we're inviting those who are interested to join us for a short road trip to tour the farm on **Sunday, September 13**, beginning at 4:00 p.m. In this pandemic time of restricted gatherings, we've missed presenting our usual summer programs for the entertainment and education of our community. We conjured up this road trip as a possible solution in which people could drive themselves to the event and be in the open air of a farm, rather than meeting in our Community Room.

If you're not familiar with HWF's location, follow your GPS to 19183 Plow Creek Road, Tiskilwa. Or, if you'd rather follow Ed Waca, meet at the Museum on Main around 3:45 that afternoon. Please plan to drive your own vehicle and don't forget to bring your face covering.



*Both photos are by Daniel Acker, Tiskilwa.*

The Grand Opening for Hungry World Farm was held on September 28, 2019. "There's the recognition that as humans, all of us have hungers in our lives — hunger for food, hunger for relationships, and a deep spiritual hunger as well," said **Cal Zehr**, pastor of Willow Springs. For interns, HFW seeks hard-working, team-oriented individuals, 18 or older, who want to participate in and learn about holistic farm management. Their commitment is to serve for two to six months.

Using the farm as a textbook for healthy, sustainable food production, activities at HWF will soon include seminars in gardening methods, heritage grains, grain milling, local habitat, hillside prairie preservation, and canning. In our COVID-free future, HWF plans to host retreats for guests to learn about caring for all the hungers in their own lives. As indicated in their name, one of their major objectives is to help alleviate global food needs through education and experiential learning about sustainable nutrition. Their website is [hungryworldfarm.earth](http://hungryworldfarm.earth).

**October 14:** At the direction of the Illinois Humanities Council, sponsors of the Road Scholar program, we've cancelled our October program featuring **Brian "Fox" Ellis** portraying **John James Audubon**. We hope that this is merely a postponement until the spring, when it would be our pleasure to host Brian as he brings to life the fascinating adventures of this American artist.

**TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
(RECENT ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST)**

*Thank you to those listed below who have joined or renewed since our June printing deadline. We currently have 344 members!*

**NEW & RENEWED INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES**

Dave & Ginny Gill (Peoria)  
Larry & Janet Johnson (Princeton)  
Jan Lohaus (Putnam)  
Jerry & Gayle McMorro (Houston, TX)  
Brian & Lisa Padilla (Spring Valley)  
Eleanor Sapp (Princeton)

**NEW AND RENEWED SPONSORS**

◆ **FRIENDS** ◆

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Francis & Sandy Morse  
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Cinamon Morse-Sneade (Tinley Park)  
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◆ **PATRONS** ◆

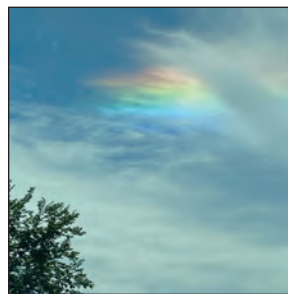
Bobby Blaker (Lutherville-Timonium, MD)  
David Golinvaux Family (Minnetonka, MN)

◆ **BRONZE BENEFACTOR** ◆

Sally Berg (Gainesville, FL)  
Kent Koshkarian (Peoria)  
Caterpillar Matching Funds Foundation (Peoria)

**REMINDERS:** If you are a current employee or retired from a company (such as Caterpillar) that has a **MATCHING GIFTS Program**, we'll happily complete the paperwork.

*Have you been lucky enough to see a sundog? It's always a thrill, but usually in frigid weather, right? Nevertheless, **Nancy***



***Harmon** (THS '76) spotted this one on a recent August day. As you may remember from science class, they're caused by a layer of ice crystals between your eyes and the sun. Those crystals act as a prism, bending the light rays passing through them.*

*Thanks to Nancy for sharing this photo she recently posted on Facebook. In folklore, sundogs bring good luck. We sure could use a little good news today!*

**POW WOW DAYS FOR 2021**

**From the TCA and the THS Alumni Association:**

*We're disappointed to miss hosting this year, but we're already making plans for next year's Pow Wow Days and the THS Alumni Banquet next year - to be better than ever!*

**Tibetan Proverb:**

*Eat half. Walk double. Laugh triple.  
Love without measure.*

***Newsletter Moniker Mystifies Some Members***

Since our first issue in December 2006, we've had a lot of fun with this newsletter's unusual name: *Wap-si-pin-i-con*. The pronunciations having ranged from "Was-ca-pin-e-ron" to the abbreviated "Waspie" (Owww. *That stings!*) and even "Woopsie." Our namesake is the Potawatomi designation for a local stream – the one that European settlers began calling Rocky Run. Using the creek's Native American name seemed like a natural since our "news" flows first through our little village, and then onward and outward: to the Big Bureau, the Illinois River, the Mississippi, and eventually all the way to the Gulf of Mexico! (Hey, buddy, careful what you toss in there!)



*You can see in these postcard photos how the early settlers came up with the name "Rocky Run." These views are from the early 1900s, one postmarked 1908 and the other 1924.*

When we checked the origin of the word Wapsipinicon, we found that "Waabizipinikaan-ziibi" is an Ojibwe word for "river abundant in swan potatoes." Ummm, swan potatoes? Apparently, that's another word for the wild artichokes that once lined the banks of the Wapsi River in northeast Iowa. Oh, BTW, we recently had a note from member **Barb Hughes** (THS '71) telling us she'd come across a strain of yellow tomatoes called "Wapsipinicon Peach," named after that same river in Iowa. The tomatoes reportedly have these characteristics: "A sweet, well-balanced flavor. Rot resistant." Well, gosh, thanks for that, too!

**IN MEMORIAM**

*Thank you for the memorials received since our June issue.*

Thelma Knapp Casper  
Dennis Chamberlain  
Albert Flaherty  
Jim Flaherty  
Helen Lines  
Richard Madsen  
David & Mary Ann Norin  
Jerry O'Neill  
Mildred Sidebottom  
Sherry Wagner-Henry



**Editor's note:** Instead of a full-page feature, we decided to print this short memoir, written for a prompt in a creative writing class. We thought some of you might also be country kids who heard night-time rain storms sweeping across summer fields.

## Summer Storm by Cecille Gerber (THS '63)

I remember an August night in my childhood when I could hear a rain storm rushing my way. Lying in the pitch-blackness of my upstairs bedroom, I'd awakened when a bolt of lightning filled all three windows. I silently counted, *One thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand* – KA-BOOM! My fifth-grade science text said that meant the storm's center was less than a mile away.

But no fear here. Instead, I shifted toward the west window to enjoy the show. I wouldn't think of closing the window on the wind pushing the sweet smell of ripening corn toward me. And I certainly didn't want to miss one of Nature's special deliveries – a summer rain making its way across cornfields directly to my home.

I could imagine the edge of the storm cloud as it surged toward my window. But it was my ears that helped me track the storm's progress – each tiny drop hitting with a soft plop on a broad cornstalk and then a multitude of heavenly plops becoming distant pattering that grew louder as it swept through the mile-wide fields toward me.

Finally, the moment came when I reluctantly rolled out of bed to shut my windows. But as I returned to snuggle a little deeper into my light covers, my thoughts assured me without forming the words – God's in His Heaven, and all's right in my ten-year-old's world.

*It's time to view "the stuff that dreams [and memories] are made of" at Museum on Main and Gallery on Galena!*



**Left:** THS teacher **Dave Doolittle** sports a flamboyant wig during a Seniors vs. Faculty Game, probably in the 1970s. Anyone who can say the date for sure?



**Right:** In October 1944, six soldiers and sailors from Tiskilwa met at a restaurant in Philadelphia just before shipping out for active duty.

**Top row:** **Hobart Joiner, Edmond Choinere, Stanley Sterling;**

**Bottom row:** **Lance Rodseth, Wayne Burrell, Laverne ("Mike") Magnuson.**



Do you have memories to share of the old bandstand in Tiskilwa's West Park?



"Little things mean a lot . . ." If you're shopping on Amazon, you can help our society by using [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). It's easy! As you begin your purchase at this site (rather than going to regular old Amazon.com), you are prompted to click on the name of the charity of your choice. (*Hint: Tiskilwa Historical Society*) But don't worry. Even if a different favorite charity is already designated for your "Smiles" buys, it's easy to click to our name for a single purchase and then click back next time.

One of our members, **Lee Helle** in Northport, Washington, sent us this "click tip" and explained his shopping this way: "*I even buy canned cat food from Amazon. But then it is 100 miles from here to Spokane, where the prices might be better.*" Each fiscal quarter, our checking account is credited with .5% of designated purchases, at no extra charge to the buyer. Since we set up our Amazon Smile account in 2019, we've received \$56.31.

## Wish List for Our THS Class Photos at Museum on Main

One of the crowd-pleaser favorites in Gallery Two at MoM is the swinging chart display of graduating classes. Although we currently display more than 100 years of class photos (from 1894 to 1995), we're always hoping to fill in the missing pieces. Indeed, we've received a few more class photos in the past couple of years.

Nevertheless, we're still missing a picture of THS seniors from these years: 1924, '25, '26, '27, '28, '29, '30, '31, '34, '35, '44 and '45. Noticing a pattern here? That's because, as we mentioned in our March 2020 issue, THS's principal during that time was **C.D. Long**, who apparently thought yearbooks were frivolous non-essentials. As a result, from the beginning of his reign in 1924 until it ended about twenty years later, there were no yearbooks printed and only snapshot class photographs taken. We have a few non-senior photos of an entire class from the mid-1930s. But we'd be very pleased to make our collection more complete. If you have a THS class photo from any of those missing years, please email it to us as a JPG file. Or, if you prefer, use the U.S. postal service to send us a copy.

## Department of "Inquiring Minds Want to Know"

How many Tiskilwa High School sweethearts married each other? Looking at names in our membership at 344 strong, we can spot quite a few! Might be fun to print a beginning list in our December issue. Get in touch if you can share a few names with us.

## From the Collector's Corner

**Suggested donations:** T-shirt \$15 (navy or gray); Long-sleeved gray shirt \$20; Directory \$15; DVDs = \$10 each (\$3 postage)

**ALUMNI DIRECTORY:** We've heard many unsolicited testimonials that it's extremely handy to own this 2009 booklet. It has a listing of all THS graduates (1878-1995) plus a photo history of Tiskilwa's grade and high schools and the Tiskilwa Alumni Association.

**"THE WAY WE WERE":** Three DVDs of Tiskilwa as captured through a camera lens during the 1950s, 1970s, and 2009. On a long COVID evening, enjoy a virtual trip down Memory Lane, with participants identified.

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

**TISKILWA T-SHIRT** in navy or gray, as modeled above by our museum 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.





## UPDATES FOR GALLERY ON GALENA AND MUSEUM ON MAIN

Many thanks to volunteers (as well as **John's TLC Lawn Care**) who've kept the grounds of both museums looking attractive throughout the summer! One morning a few weeks ago, we even had a freebie newspaper delivered to Gallery on Galena! So it seems the place is looking "lived in" to passersby.

**GoG:** We rounded up the usual suspects – **Bill Wendle**, **Randy Senneff** (THS '73), and **Eddie Waca** (THS '66) – to install our handsome sign that includes an invitation to visit both museums. In the small floral garden, just north of the Gallery on Galena and south of the tracks, our sign is now a respectable partner to the newish "Welcome to Tiskilwa, Gem of the Valley" provided and installed last summer by the **Tiskilwa Community Association**.



**MoM:** Several board members gathered on June 29 to weed and mulch our gardens and trees on the west lawn.



*Left:* Even the neighbor doggies, **Brodie** and **Sophie Bowen**, were impressed with the yard work accomplished by **Ed Waca**, **Randy Senneff**, **Christy Senneff**, **Connie Kauffman**, and **Cele Gerber**.

*Right:* "Dang! That thang is HEAVY!" Ed and Randy maneuvered the old high school's cornerstone into pride of place.

The most exciting addition to the Indian Rock Garden is the 1911 cornerstone from the Tiskilwa High School building (1911 to 1979). When **John Bauer**, owner of "new" 1979 building, offered the cornerstone, our intrepid president, Ed Waca, fired up the fork lift and rumbled from the school to our garden to give it a new home.



Back in May, **Connie Kauffman** planted white-petaled vinca, now in full bloom, along with our perennials, in the Indian Stone garden.

## UPDATE and REQUEST for OUR 15 COUNTRY SCHOOL SIGNS

Good news! All signs in need of replacement have been printed and only Arispie remains to be installed. This charming twilight photo at Providence clarifies why a number of explanatory signs needed a new printing. The new [lower] sign explains: "The Providence School stood 400 feet to the southeast on private property." Thanks to **Chuck Adams**, who has always kept the entire grounds nicely mowed without ever being asked.

**RED ALERT REQUEST:** We need a few helping hands to keep the areas near the signs looking attractive. Several spots are being maintained nicely, but others of the 15 need some TLC. If that's something you would be willing to do – every 3 weeks or so in growing seasons – please get in touch with Cele Gerber (815.646.4353) who'll identify available locations. With such a stretched-out maintenance schedule, even members who don't live in the immediate area could drive down (or up or over??) for an afternoon now and then, right? Currently, one society member is taking care of three areas: **Kitterman**, **Providence**, and the former **Tiskilwa Grade School**. Would you step up to help?



## Other Happenings in the Gem of the Valley



*Left:* **Dugosh Farms**, Tiskilwa, asked permission to set up a produce market on the west lawn of Museum on Main. **Becca** and **Jessie Turpen** (Jessie at left) and **Curt Dugosh** (THS '85, *almost* visible in center) are doing a thriving business Tuesday evenings from 4:00 to 6:30. Above left, **Lisa Bettner**, Tiskilwa, stocks up on fresh veggies.

*Right:* Various community volunteers, including **Kathy Mager**, **Liz Piacenti** (THS '64) and other members of the **Garden Friends Garden Club** have dug in and spent lots of time beautifying the Triangle Garden at the northwest corner of the West Park. Thank you!

**Looking to Next Spring:** "Mussels, Moonshine, and Music: Workers in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Along the Mississippi," presented by fiddler and historian **Dennis Stroughmatt** has been cancelled for 2020. We plan to invite Dennis again in the spring to introduce us to the history of river-based migrant folks who made their livings and their music a century ago.

## MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Our entrance hallway is a fitting place to display names of more than **325** loved ones, whose families and friends have donated to our society in their memory. Thank you for your generosity.





## Open by Appointment Since June, Our Museums Continue to Please Visitors

When Illinois entered Stage 4 of its pandemic response in late June, we once again were able to open our doors to visitors. Since that time, we've hosted a small but enthusiastic number of guests, including **Bobby Blaker** who lives near Baltimore, MD. She wanted to visit Tiskilwa because her mother, **Helen Lines**, was born here in the so-called "Birthing House" on the southwest corner of First and High Streets in 1911. A nearby hospital was not available in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and many mothers-to-be hurried over to the local doctor's home, where their babies were delivered with the help of a midwife. We know that **Bill Perry** (THS '38) was born there. We're still trying to discover the doctor's name. Any help out there?

When we opened the door of the Gallery on Galena on the Fourth of July, we were rewarded a visit from **Nancy Bell Sampson**, a former Tiskilwa resident, who donated something we've long wanted for our country school display: a stereoscope, along with 200+ photos!



Left: **Bobby Blaker**, her daughter **Debbie Salter**, and grandson **Jake Salter** were happy to discover our T-H-S website. Without delay, they called to make an appointment to tour the museum in late June.  
Center: **Nancy Bell Sampson**, Princeton, holds the donated stereoscope with photos, as well as an 1888 geography textbook.  
Right: Great-granddaughters of Bill Joiner, **Chloe** and **Lucy Moats**, Princeton, tried our school desks for size at Gallery on Galena.

## History Mystery for SEPTEMBER



Can you identify the THS band members in their fabled Eisenhower jackets? We've printed this picture from our CD collection *The Way We Were*,\* photos taken in the 1950s by **Sid Durfee**. Clue: In addition to high school students, we believe the band included 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. See column 2 to find a few names and help us identify other musicians. (\* CD available for purchase!)

**History Mystery Partially Solved.** We can recognize a few band members, but we'd love to have some help naming the others. We're quite sure that's **Bernie Cotter** (THS '56) carrying the baritone, and trombonist **Johnny Schaefer** (THS '57) to Bernie's right. That may be half of **Penny Weise** (THS '58) to the far right of the photo. Controversy rages about the young girl at the right front. Some say she's 8<sup>th</sup>-grader **Marilyn Cohrs** (THS '60). Please send us your theories about any identities.

## Museum Receives a Treasure Trove of Records

Following the death of **Bill Joiner**, her beloved grandpa, **Emily Moats** called to see if the historical society would be interested in two boxes of items that they found among Bill's possessions. *Sure!* Our best guess is that, when the high school closed in 1995, Bill purchased a filing cabinet and these records were still inside.



Our ever-faithful secretary, **Julie Perry Sampson** (THS '67) has spent several hours poring over documents from the Bill Joiner donation. One of the challenges has been determining a way to catalog and classify items so that visitors can request to see a certain year and class. Most of the books are attendance records from **Tiskilwa Grade and High Schools** (between 1948-72) as well as a few books from these country schools: **Benson** (1937-41), **Cottage** (1939-49), **Kitterman** (1906-48), and **Arispie** (1949-50).

*If you're not yet a member, would you like to support our efforts?*

### TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Annual dues: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31**

**MEMBERSHIP:** Individual \$15; Family \$20

**SPONSORSHIP** (Includes membership dues – and it's tax deductible)

Friend \$50 Promoter \$100

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*I'm also including a MEMORIAL DONATION  
of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in MEMORY of \_\_\_\_\_*

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED = \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please make check payable to Tiskilwa Historical Society and mail it to P.O. Box 87, Tiskilwa, IL 61368. Thank you!

## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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We asked **Dave Horst (THS '74)** to share one of his photos of the **Neowise comet**, taken on July 17 at 10:33 p.m. That night, Dave set up his equipment in rural Tiskilwa, less than a mile north of **George & Connie Kauffman's farm** on 2050 E. Street. Dramatic composition, don't you agree?

(For camera buffs, here's the scoop: 55 mm, f/4, 10 seconds.)

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