



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

JUNE 2019

NUMBER 2

MUSEUM ON MAIN

Our collection includes more than 7,250 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.

Board of Directors 2019

Charlie Waca, Pres.
Ed Waca, Vice Pres.
Julie Sampson, Sec.
Judy Wright, Treas.
Connie Kauffman
Randy Senneff
Bill Wendle
Museum Director
Cecille Gerber

A BUSY SUMMER OF SPECIAL GATHERINGS IN OUR VALLEY

Monday, MAY 27:

Memorial Day in East Park, "As Is" Open House at Gallery on Galena.

We were proud to once again sponsor the annual Memorial Day Ceremony in the East Park. The annual event was organized by society member and U.S. Navy Veteran **Jennifer Fisher** with a contribution by **Tiskilwa Community Association** for flags and food. After remarks by **Pompeyo Flores**, Tiskilwa's only surviving World War II veteran, **Mike Johnson** of Princeton donated several military items originally belonging to Tiskilwa doughboys **Harry Quick** (pictured at right) and **Milford Olds**. Immediately following the ceremony in the East Park, Board members served snacks at the [soon-to-be] Gallery on Galena, and visitors toured the former American Legion Hall to admire restorations and improvements. When the project is completed, this museum annex will house items from the society's overflow collection of military artifacts, as well as a look-alike country school house.



Saturday, JUNE 8:

Arts & Strawberry Festival on Museum Lawn and Along Main Street



During last year's Fest, **Jan Lohaus** clicked this photo of her cheerful helpers **Shannon Cotter**, **Carli Wright**, and **Olivia Eiken** near the kids' painting table. This booth will again be one of many scattered around the lawn as we stage a town festival to welcome summer on June 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Come on down to wander among the booths, where local vendors will be selling strawberries and shortcake topped with a dollop of ice cream (from **Hungry World Farm**), artwork, farm produce, handicrafts, pizza, and baked goods. To add to your fun, stop by the rock-painting booth—it's for adults as well as kids! Our faithful troubadours, **Phil and Pam Kaufmann**, will create their cheerful singalong music. In addition, the **Tiskilwa Public Library** will be participating with children's activities, and beginning at 6:00 p.m., the **TCA** will hold its annual drawdown at Harmon's Lake. Don't forget: For early-bird bargain-seekers, various residents will be holding garage sales throughout the village.

Sunday, JULY 14:

Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic and 13th Anniversary Party

To honor our miracle-working volunteers and celebrate the anniversary of our 2006 founding, we again (with a tip o' the cap to Neil Diamond) sing out, "*Pack up the babies and grab the old ladies and everyone come*" to our summer picnic on July 14. Friends and neighbors always seem to have a good time visiting and chowing down on hot dogs and all the fixin's, served by our Board members. And, if the heat is too hot or the rain is too wet, the library will graciously give us shelter – air-conditioned, dry – across the street. This year, a special program features **Dan Lybarger**, sharing Native American stories, music, and maybe even a group dance based on his Cherokee heritage.



TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(RECENT ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST)

Thank you to those listed below who have joined or renewed since our March printing deadline. We're currently at **324 members**, happily exceeding our "full-strength" goal of 300+ for 2019! (No state is listed if it's Illinois and if no city is identified, it's Tiskilwa.)

NEW & RENEWED INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES ♦

Janet Balensiefen (Princeton)
Bob Bitting
John Cotter Family (Bradford)
Betty Jo Gustafson
Maylo Beil Hranac (Huntley)
Robert & Margaret Lueders (Peoria)
Doug & Norma McQueen (Peoria)
Helen Cotter Price (Eden Prairie, MN)
Randy & Christy Senneff (Peoria)
Phyllis Sims
Janet Wagner
Marc & Deanna Wilt (Walnut)

NEW AND RENEWED SPONSORS

♦ FRIENDS ♦

Joe & Janet Ary Ballerini (New Lenox)
M. Jean Goodale (Worcester, MA)
Gerald Gutshall (Downers Grove)
John & Abby McAnally (Downers Grove)
Connie McChesney (Bath, ME)
Bob & Eileen Prusator (Moline)
Joy E. Schertz
Bob & Kay Telfer (Princeton)

♦ PROMOTERS ♦

Central Bank (Princeton)
Janet Anderson Frazee (Pawnee)
John F. Hedrich (Princeton)
Kelly's Place
Indian Valley Inn
Ed & Rose Waca

♦ GOLD BENEFACTOR ♦

Caterpillar Foundation Fund (Peoria)

REMINDERS: If you are a current employee or retired from ANY company that has a **MATCHING GIFTS** Program, we'll happily fill out the paperwork.

Also, if you have **Required Minimum Distribution from an IRA account**, please remember that we are a 501(c) (3) organization. Contributing part of your RMD to Tiskilwa Historical Society might be good for both of us!

CLASSIC RIDES DISPLAY ON AUGUST 3

Don't miss a chance to show off your special car, truck, tractor, motorcycle or bike! We'll again be hosting the "Classic Rides" display from 9:00 to 12:00 on our west lawn on **Saturday, August 3**, before and after the **Pow Wow Days** parade.

Annual Meeting of the Spring Clean-up Committee



Left: **Christy Senneff, Charlie Waca, Helen Murphy, Judy Wright, and Jerry Murphy** tidied up the oval garden on the west lawn.

Right: **Judy and Christy** supervise the outstanding garden work by **Betty Brokaw and Connie Kauffman** near the sign.

Responding to our requests for help on Facebook and in the *Bureau Valley Chief*, several T-H-S volunteers enjoyed an hour's worth of sunshine and chatter on Tuesday, April 9, while playing Pick-up Sticks, Pull-up Weeds, and Haul-out Branches. Maybe next year, you'll be a one-day member of the Clean-up Committee, too?

On Clean-up Day, **Randy Senneff** and **Bill Wendle** were once again at the Gallery on Galena, toiling away. Others not pictured, but on the work team that day were **Eddie Waca** and **Cele Gerber**. Later in the week, **Scott Owens** and his brother **Brick Owens**, a landscape architect from Kansas City, did additional spruce-up work in our Indian Stone garden, which Brick designed. As you may recall, several years ago, **Ryan Owens** and family created this handsome garden area as Ryan's Eagle Scout project. The huge, curious stone that serves as centerpiece was donated by **Bob** and **Mick Bowers**.

TISKILWA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI BANQUET

WHO: Anyone who has fond memories of THS

WHEN: On **SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 2019**
Social hour at 5:00 and dinner at 6:00

WHERE: Hundred Acres Orchard, Princeton

HOW to buy tickets (\$25/person): Purchase at Kelly's Place or Indian Valley Inn (both in Tiskilwa) or Heartland Bank (south branch in Princeton)
OR mail check to Sondra Compton-Owens, 734 Brewster, Tiskilwa, IL 61368 by 07/27/19.

Museum Hosts the Land of Lincoln Packard Club

Tiskilwa residents who drove down Main Street in the late morning on Friday, May 3, must've done a double-take to see 16 gleaming vintage Packards lined up in front of the Museum on Main. That day, we hosted 29 visitors from Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Nebraska. Their visit began with an "Ed Talk" about Tiskilwa's land dams, followed by an hour's stroll through the museum, upstairs and down. They wrapped up their visit with lunch at Kelly's Place.
(See page 4 for a few photos of their classic beauties.)

Three Harrowing Escapes of Yesteryear

*Editor's note: During our spring clean-up of the museum lawn, **Jerry Murphy** (THS' 63) regaled us with the following story. When we asked him to write it up, his adventure inspired us to gather two more escapades to share. All kids survived and thrived. Tiskilwa Grade School photos are from 1953 and 1955. The Waca photo is credited to Charlie's diligent search through five tubs of family photos: **Grandpa Edward, Charlie, Dad Bill, and little Eddie Waca.***

By Jerry Murphy: Many moons ago, probably 1950, my sister Camille and I were playing in our yard in Tiskilwa. Dad was at work in the local grocery store and I don't remember where Mom was, but big sister was in charge of me. Camille decided that it'd be a good idea to take our bicycles up "Cemetery Hill" (by Mount Bloom) and coast into town.



This was not a good idea. I don't remember going up the hill, but I suppose we walked our bikes up. I do remember coming down though. FAST! Camille went racing ahead of me and I followed.

My bike was an old used one with no coaster brake and no rubber handlebar grips. The road had just been blacktopped or oiled. As we neared the curve, there was a car in front of us going up the hill and another behind us going down. I panicked, veered into the loose gravel at the side of the road, and down I went. The handlebar hit the ground then slammed through my mouth, taking along a couple teeth and breaking my jaw.

We were in trouble. A man living in the first house on the left at the bottom of the hill (red house still there) took care of me until Dad was able to come get me.

Doctor Brown sewed me up and wired my jaw shut to heal. The crash happened probably in May because I remember Dad promising to take me mushroom hunting while the doctor was working on me. But my guess is that Mom and Dad were not pleased with their two oldest that day.

By Cecille Gerber: That afternoon started as just another lazy summer day, way back in 1955. After enjoying that wonderful "School's OUT!" feeling all day, my brother David and I didn't mind doing chores when five o'clock rolled around, and we hiked down to the barnyard.

Just as we finished feeding the calves, our horse Penny came trotting over to greet us. Although we were only about fifty yards from the house, I wanted to ride rather than walk all the way. David agreed to hoist me up on Penny's back.



Then we made The Big Mistake: Dave handed me the clunky metal buckets that we'd used to feed the calves. The buckets clanged, Penny shied, and I was off on a ride even wilder than Mr. Toad's!

Penny started tearing around the barnyard as fast as she could gallop. All I could do was stick my face in her flopping mane and stretch my 10-year-old arms around her neck as far as I could. Every few seconds, I managed to catch sidelong glimpses of the fence posts and buildings as we blew past.

Finally, I jerked up my head, only to see that we were speeding directly toward the barn door. Closed, of course. A few feet from the door, Penny made a sharp left, but I didn't. Instead, I catapulted face-first into the barn, splitting open my lower lip right down to my chin and doing something curious to my nose.

Dave dashed over to my rescue and struggled to carry me up to the house while yelling, "MOM! MOM!!" all the way. I remember bleeding all over everything in the car as we sped down the hill to Dr. McQueen's office. He calmly looked at me over his trademark bifocals, wiped most of the blood away, and proceeded to sew my lower lip together, layer by layer. I remember that he was so kind and calm. When he finished, he gave me a dime for being a good little girl and not squirming too much during his repair work.

By Ed Waca: Well, my memory is good, but it doesn't stretch back to when I was 11 months old. So this is what Mother and Dad told "Uncle Brother" Charlie and me about that darn near fateful day.

We were upstairs acting like a couple little kids (Charlie was more than two years old and he shoulda known better!) when somehow, I went right through an open second-story window. Thud. By the time Mother could make out what Charlie was screaming and crying about, I was spittin' out dirt and feeling generally uncomfortable.



Mother rushed me to Doc Brown and he took a fluoroscope picture of my strange-looking right leg. (*Editor's note: Yep, it was one of those creepy instant X-ray contraptions, like the ones that used to show your toes in Buster Brown shoes.*) He clicked his teeth and told Marie Longman to call St. Francis Hospital. We all piled into our '39 Buick and made an extra quick trip to Peoria. In fact, we later heard tell that Dad had told Mother, who was driving, "Slow down, Gertrude, or we'll all end up in the hospital!"

I was soon the proud owner of a full-body cast, from my chest to below my knees. Although the operating doc in Peoria told my folks that my right leg would probably be an inch shorter than the other, that didn't happen. And they tell me that, for the whole time I wore that body armor, I could scoot around pretty good in an army-crawl.

Do you have a memory to share? Please get in touch with Cele Gerber on Facebook or at cecillegrbr2@gmail.com.

UPDATE ON GALLERY ON GALENA (FORMER AMERICAN LEGION HALL)



As of press time on May 20, the transformation at the former Legion Hall continues apace. As we write this, we're looking forward to our "As Is" Open House there on Monday, May 27, immediately following the Memorial Day Ceremony in the East Park. We think this June issue is a good time and place to share several specific details with you about the ongoing work and the overall project.

- To date, we have almost \$35,000 in our Building Fund.
- So far, we have spent \$23,000 on the Gallery on Galena.
- We estimate another \$16,000 in expenses, including the major projects of installing vinyl siding, refinishing oak floors, building an accessibility ramp, and landscaping the property. (Contractors are discounting some of this work.)
- If you've been adding and subtracting, you'll see that we now stand at a shortfall of \$4,000 to complete the project.

In the past six months, we've contracted the work of installing a new roof, twelve new windows, insulation of the attic and walls, and mudding new drywall. Then add in the cost of materials and expenses such as survey work, legal expenses, and utilities. If you're familiar with renovations, are you thinking, "Huh? How has so much work been completed for only \$23,000 and \$39K for the total cost?"

The Big Secret: Aha! The true, final cost would be closer to \$72,000 – if you included the contracted work and materials at full price (and we estimate \$6,000 in contractor discounts) and value our volunteer labor at \$50/hour for skilled and \$20/hour unskilled. Volunteers have completed electrical and plumbing work, drywalling of three areas, installation of a furnace, construction of a new bathroom, grading of property, as well as countless unskilled labor tasks. Totalling up those hours, their work adds up to a value of \$27,000.



Throughout the spring, work has continued at the GoG, thanks in a large part to the efforts of **Bill Wendle, Randy & Christy Senneff, and Ed Waca**. Others who've pitched in are **Les Saal**, [above left in Bears jacket], **Connie Kauffman, Cele Gerber, Margaret Wendle**, and several mystery guests.

To clarify: Just how was a stunning amount of \$35,000 raised? Well, \$8,000 of the current total has come from private gifts (such as **Lee Helle's** donation of the proceeds from sale of his pocket watch collection) as well our own fundraising event in 2017, "Voices from Mount Bloom." Individual donations have exceeded \$17,000 and **Bob Sash** has matched the first \$10,000 of those donations.

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Sixteen classic Packards and their classy owners —
Destination: Tiskilwa. (Details on page 2.)

180+ Visitors Fill Three Spring Programs



On March 11, **Brian "Fox" Ellis** engaged an audience of 67 visitors in a lively give-and-take as he portrayed John Deere. He even had us singing "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

On April 8, **Dave Horst** shared one up-close portrait of a turtle ("I AM smiling") as Dave delighted a crowd



of 63 with his photographs, camera tips, and wry commentary.

On May 13, **Gary Wagle** (far left in photo), president of the Friends of the Hennepin Canal, presented fascinating insights concerning the past, present, and future of the canal to 66 visitors. Even after the program, folks couldn't seem to stop asking him questions.



THANKS TO THE SEVERAL NEW DONORS TO OUR BUILDING FUND: **A&M PRODUCTS, CATERPILLAR MATCHING FUNDS, CONNIE MCCHESENEY, GERALD GUTSHALL, LEE HELLE, JOHN & ABBY MCANALLY, JEFF & AMY PRUSATOR, DOUG & NORMA MCQUEEN** IN MEMORY OF **MAJOR KENT MCQUEEN, M.D.**

TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING FUND APPEAL FOR 2019

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED = \$ _____ DATE: _____

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

IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for these memorials received since March 2019

FRANCIS ARY
MAYNARD & LOIS BEIL
NANCY FUNDERBERG
GENE GUSTAFSON
GAIL MCCAULEY
MAJOR KENT MCQUEEN, M.D.
JOHN NELSON
RUBY I. STACKER



*We get by
with a little help
from our friends. . .*

Maybe you missed our Staffing Orientation session but you'd still like to lend a hand once or twice a year? Stop by MoM or call **Julie Sampson** (815.646.4456) to pick up *The Ropes*, our packet of the museum's open-up-close-up procedures. We'd love to have more helpers!

History Mystery for June



*This young man was a traveling salesman in the summer of 1900. With his suitcase in a wire basket on his bike, he pedaled from his home in Galesburg to Wataga, Oneida, Galva, Kewanee, and onward to Bureau County. The fella was trying to earn money for college by selling stereoscopes. In his memoir, *Ever the Winds of Chance*, he wrote this passage: "From Neponset, I went to the towns of Sheffield and Tiskilwa. [Then] I rode my bicycle home the last week in August with something over \$100. On handing my father half of what I had made, he said, smiling, "Maybe some time you be a good businessman, Sholly." Instead, this son of Swedish immigrants became a poet, editor, and biographer who earned three Pulitzer Prizes during his career.*



*During a recent road trip by board members to **Bunker Hill Country School** near Buda, **Sharon Wilson** showed us her family's old stereoscope. Could our [as yet unnamed] hero be the person who sold it and the "views" to her great-grandpa?*

History Mystery Solved: Yes, it was Carl Sandburg selling those newfangled stereoscopes. He won two Pulitzers for poetry and a third for his biography of Abraham Lincoln. His memoir (available for check-out from our museum library) is a good reflection of his wry humor. "If the farmer was not in sight and I canvassed the woman of the house, she might say, 'I can't order anything without my husband's say-so.' Across the pasture I would go to find the farmer who would say, 'Those are nice views you've got all right. Times is a little hard, but if the woman says she wants them, I guess it's all right with me.'"

New Addition of Bona Fide Oldie

Thanks to **Paul McCauley** (THS '59) for donating an impressive 24-by-9-inch millstone. This old rock seems to be settling in nicely in our Indian Stone garden. According to **Mary B. Steimle's** 1985 booklet, "When Tiskilwa Was Young," there were sixteen mills along Bureau Creek and its tributaries in the early 1800s. She lists many different kinds of mills near Tiskilwa, including saw mills, a carding mill (to prepare wool for spinning by brushing the fibers to align them) and a grist mill (for grinding cereal grain into flour) as well as a furniture factory, and as many people know, a plow factory.



Coach Greg Sarver Swings for the Fences: BOOM!

After delivering a memorable keynote speech at last year's THS Alumni Banquet, former THS teacher and coach Greg Sarver also hit a home run for our museum! He asked if we'd like to have 26 VHS tapes from football and basketball games played during his years at our high school. Ummm . . . SURE! Those Glory Days games date from 1984-1995 and are available for check-out – if you can dig up a VHS player to view them!

Go Figure! Stats for Jan. to Dec. 2018

Although space didn't permit it in March, we want to share statistics compiled by our secretary, **Julie Sampson**.

1,004 @ 11: Number of attendees @ number of programs

552: Number of visitors who signed in on Saturdays in 2018
(52% Tisk; 38% other IL cities; 9% out of IL; 1% out of US)

301: Members & Sponsors

6,389: Estimated volunteer hours

Since 2006, we have cataloged more than **7,250** items donated by **409** individuals or families!

At our website this year: From January 1 to April 30, webmaster **Adnan Imtairah** recorded viewers from **26** states.

TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Don't forget to sign up for the **2019 Pow Wow 5K Scholarship Run/Walk**. Organized by THS alumni, this ninth annual race will raise funds for graduating seniors who are direct descendants of THS alumni. To enroll, help sponsor, or apply for a scholarship, contact **Janel Wheeler Goodale** or **Jenine Joiner Proffitt** at powwow5k@gmail.com. Last year, 94 runners took the challenge and \$2,200 was awarded in scholarships. Walkers welcome, ya know.

Photo by Daniel Acker

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