

# 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*

*\*Project Winner of the 2020 Governor's Hometown Award,  
representing the Volunteers of the Tiskilwa Community*

VOLUME 16

JUNE 2021

NUMBER 2

### MUSEUM ON MAIN

AND

### GALLERY ON GALENA

Our collection includes more than 10,000 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

**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

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

## VILLAGE OF TISKILWA WINS 2020 GOVERNOR'S HOMETOWN AWARD WITH GALLERY ON GALENA PROJECT

Hey, it's time to celebrate! (Again!) In a virtual ceremony originating in Springfield on April 20, our village received recognition as a "community where the ethic of service and the positive actions of volunteers have improved the town's quality of life."

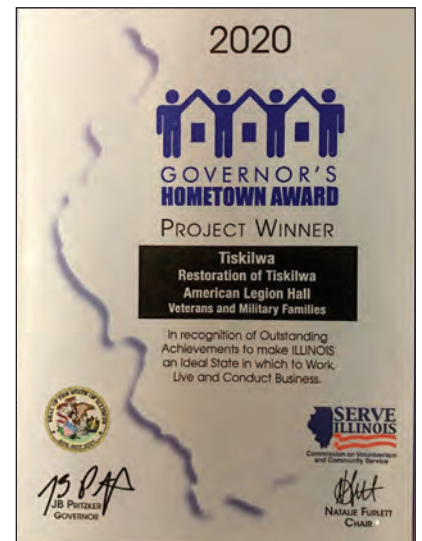
The Governor's Hometown Award (GHTA) commission sent word on March 25 that Tiskilwa's volunteer work titled "Restoration of the American Legion Hall" was named as a Project Winner in the category of Veterans and Military Families. At the May 11 meeting of the Village Board, several society representatives presented a handsome plaque (pictured at right) to the community. In addition to the GHTA recognition plaque, IDOT will install a permanent road sign at the north entrance to town announcing the 2020 award.

To achieve state recognition, projects were required to demonstrate strong volunteer support, meet a need, and make a definite impact on the community and by extension, the state. In our efforts, we raised almost \$46,000 in donations and obtained discounted contractor work valued at \$6,500. In addition, the estimated value of skilled and unskilled labor by volunteers pushed the renovation cost to almost \$80,000.

Tiskilwa's quest began in February when, on behalf of all the volunteers of the community, board members **Bill Wendle**, who had served as project manager, and **Cecille Gerber** (THS '63) plunged in to complete a detailed, eight-page application. In March, they developed and presented a 15-minute PowerPoint overview to a panel of state judges who watched the presentation online in real time and followed up with several questions.

Our society saw the GHTA as an opportunity to honor the work of countless local volunteers of all ages. As one example, we detailed the three-year process of transforming the Legion Hall into the Gallery on Galena. In our presentation, we highlighted the completely volunteer groups who have donated play equipment in the parks as well as sidewalks on Main Street, restored and maintained the historic Mt. Bloom Cemetery steps and gazebo, created a baseball diamond, and installed signs honoring country schools. They also continue to recognize veterans with Quilts of Honor, organize seasonal festivals, plant flowers in the Triangle and on Main Street, organize a 5K Scholarship Run, host monthly historical programs, plan THS Alumni gatherings, distribute meals to shut-ins, fight fires, and initiate numerous other projects. The unstated motto of these volunteers seems to be "No need to ask. No thanks expected."

In his letter of support, former mayor **Randy Philhower** (THS '71) noted: "The village of Tiskilwa recognizes and supports the efforts of the Tiskilwa Historical Society. Their ability to use vision to secure landmark structures, fill them with local history, and then interest the public to witness these attractions is a true success story." Thanks for the kind words, Randy.



## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(RECENT ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST)

**Thank you to those listed below who have joined or renewed since our mid-March deadline. We're currently at 299 members.**

*(If no state is listed, it's Illinois; if no city is identified, it's Tiskilwa.)*

### NEW & RENEWED INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

Dan & Gina Acker Family  
Janet Balensiefen (Princeton)  
John Bauer  
Dave & Becky Cook (Princeton)  
Nancy DeBord (Princeton)  
Thomas Haffner (Chicago)  
Barbara Kasper  
Greg & Nancy Senneff Ketay (St. Charles)  
Bob & Pat Law (Princeton)  
John & Sharon Kristofzski (West Richland, WA)  
Sherry Nilsson (Fair Oaks, CA)  
Angela Norene-Todaro (Longmont, CO)  
Judy O'Brien (Princeton)  
Richard Quick (St. Louis, MO)  
Louis Quick (San Jose, CA)  
Eleanor Sapp (Princeton)  
Barbara Quick Schaefer (Peoria)  
Marc Smucker (Magnolia)  
David & Diana Znavor

### NEW AND RENEWED SPONSORS

#### ◆ FRIENDS ◆

Wilma Anderson Devins (Richmond, TX)  
Donald Friel, Jr. Family  
Dr. & Mrs. Ronald Hock (Phoenix, AZ)  
Ed Magnuson (Silvis)  
Susan Brokaw Morris (Bowling Green, KY)  
Ed O'Neill (Dunlap)

Cynthia Steimle (Davis, CA)  
Diane Wampler (Wyanet)

#### ◆ PROMOTERS ◆

Central Bank (Princeton)  
George & Connie Kauffman  
Judy Fredenhagen Kramer (Waynesville, NC)  
Ed Waca

#### ◆ PATRON ◆

Nyla Bell Pinter (Normal)

#### ◆ BRONZE BENEFACTORS ◆

Larry & Janice Magnuson

#### ◆ SILVER BENEFACTORS ◆

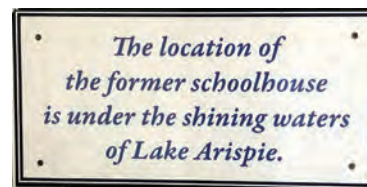
Caterpillar Matching Funds Foundation (Peoria)  
Robert Senneff (Canton)

#### ◆ GOLD BENEFACTORS ◆

Clayton & Ethel Hock (Oxford, OH)

### 5K SCHOLARSHIP RUN DELAYED UNTIL 2022

*From the 5K Committee:* Due to the delay in knowing whether Pow Wow Days would occur, we did not have enough advance time to set up registration, order T-shirts, and organize other details. We hope to resume the Scholarship Run in 2022. Thanks for your participation and generous support over the years.



*T-H-S Board members will soon be replacing the Arispie School signs that turned to toast when an unidentified flying vehicle missed the corner near Lake Arispie.*

### TISKILWA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION TO PRESENT POW WOW DAYS AUGUST 6, 7, 8

*From TCA:* The Tiskilwa Community Association is making plans to host the annual Pow Wow Days Festival on the weekend of August 6, 7 and 8 this year. We will make a decision in the middle of June if the weekend's events will be able to proceed, based on the state pandemic restrictions at that time. For this year only, we are cancelling the Lil' Spurs Rodeo and Queen Pageant. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

### TISKILWA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PLANNING "PICNIC IN THE PARK" FOR ALUM GATHERING

*From the THS Alumni Association:* An ad hoc committee of Tiskilwa alumni recently met to brainstorm a way to provide a get-together for THS alums in 2021. We've come up with a new, possibly improved idea. In lieu of the traditional banquet, let's have a "Picnic in the Park." We are coordinating with the TCA to use the West Park shelter on Saturday evening, August 7, from 6:00 to 8:00. The idea is to cater a light meal and ask alums to BYO lawn chairs. We're planning to honor the Classes of 1995, 1970, and 1971 in a brief program. Tickets \$10 each at Kelly's and the IVI. Questions? Call Sondra Owens, 815.646.4166.

### TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLANS TO HOST "CLASSIC RIDES" ON WEST LAWN AUGUST 7

Here's your chance to show off your favorite "wheels" for all to admire! Cruise on over to Tiskilwa's Museum on Main by 9:00 a.m. (or earlier, for a shady spot) on Saturday, August 7. Stay and visit as long as you'd like. All vehicles welcome - cars, trucks, tractors, buggies, motorcycles, bicycles - any favorite ride. A few owners may even wish to participate in the Pow Wow parade first. Questions? Call Randy Senneff at 309.253.3052

## IN MEMORIAM

*Thank you for Memorials received since our March publication:*

Orville & Bessie Brokaw  
Delmar Friel  
Francis Allen "Al" Hock  
Harold Hutchinson, DDS  
Mary Steimle Kenney  
Janet Bell Landis  
Deko Miller  
Keith Miller  
Barb Taylor Philpott  
Dan Russell

Editor's Note: In this issue, we're again sharing a childhood memory printed years ago. Monica wrote this cute memoir in 2007. When we asked if we could reprint it, she pleaded to tweak it a bit, which explains the reference to the Alpaca Shop.

## Main Street Memory by Monica Jamison Morris

No way did I want to go to Girl Scouts. Now that I was a fourth grader, I decided I was just too old for talks of badges and cookies. I knew my friend, Eileen, felt the same way. Nothing against our leader, Mrs. Buckley, but we agreed that there were more things to do in town besides go to another Girl Scout meeting. We both rode the bus into school and for a country kid, nothing was more exciting than spending the after-school hours in town. Unless you had to go to a Girl Scout meeting.

Recess was over and Mrs. Ioder, our teacher, was busy writing our homework assignments on the chalkboard when an idea occurred to me. I ripped a piece of paper out of a notebook as quietly as I could and scribbled a note, folding it into a triangle. Making sure Mrs. Ioder was still facing the board, I slid the note over one row to Eileen. She opened it, turned to me and nodded yes, a slow grin covering her face.

"So where should we go?" Eileen asked as we hustled out the east exit of Tiskilwa Grade School with the town kids. "We don't want anyone to see us and tell our moms." No West Park, then. Everyone in Tiskilwa knew everyone else and their kids and who should be where at what time of day. I realized then how hard it would be to hide in our small town.

"Maybe we should just go to Girl Scouts." My shoulders slumped in defeat.

"Letha's," Eileen said a moment later. "No one will see us in there. We can sit in a back booth and look at magazines and no one will even notice." Letha's Drug Store was directly across Main Street from the Baptist Church where the Tiskilwa chapter of the Girl Scouts held their weekly meeting. Hanging back from a group of more earnest troop members, Eileen and I waited until the last Girl Scout had entered the side door leading to the church basement before making our getaway.

Dashing across the street, we entered Letha's, a set of bells hanging in the doorway announcing our arrival. We each had a whole dime meant for Girl Scout dues which were now destined for the large brass cash register at the far end of the counter. A nickel would buy one scoop of the world's best, most tasty ice cream, but a whole dime meant a double scoop. Two scoops of pure deliciousness.

"What are you going to get?" I whispered to Eileen as we peered at the different flavors in the display case. Vanilla was too bland and I'd never really cared for chocolate, while this day called for something far more special than strawberry. "Why are you whispering?" Eileen nudged me and I glanced up to see Letha gazing down at us from behind the counter that was so tall I could barely see over it.

It then occurred to me that of course Letha knew our moms and our dads and our brothers and our sisters and our grandparents and both of our families and probably also knew that we were skipping our Girl Scouts meeting. What if she told on us? But her gaze was soft and her brown eyes kind. She might have even winked and I knew then that our secret was safe with her.

"Peppermint stick," Eileen announced and slapped the dime on the counter. "Double scoop."

"Me too."

Ice cream cones in hand, we made our way to the magazine rack. Lurid headlines from the tabloids tempted us and racy titles from the romance magazines beckoned. Elizabeth Taylor's

violet eyes stared up at me from the latest issue of *Photoplay* and I reached for it, until I spied another magazine that captivated me.

"Eileen, look!" I grabbed an issue of *Tiger Beat*. "It's the Monkees!" Eileen sighed, "Oh, Mickey Dolenz is so dreamy."

"Davy Jones is cuter."

One *Tiger Beat* and one *Sixteen* magazine later, we had slurped the last dregs of our ice cream and crunched away on the cones, wishing this afternoon would never end. A glance out the large window facing the Baptist Church, however, told us that our fun afternoon was over as cars filed into the church parking lot.

"Thanks, Letha!" We shoved the magazines back onto the rack and scooted out of the drugstore and across the street to the far side of the church, congratulating ourselves on our covert actions.

"Next week?" Eileen called before hopping into her mother's car.

"Of course!"

We probably would have continued our ice cream-eating, magazine-reading adventure until the end of the school year had we not been caught. We had just finished the latest issue of *Sixteen* and were looking forward to the next issue and a new flavor of ice cream when a neighbor lady from across the field saw my mom and me in the produce section of Al's Grocery Store. "I saw Monica and Eileen the other day in town after school," she said to Mom. "They must have missed the bus. Did you pick them up at Letha's?"

Our adventure was over. We were forced to apologize to our Girl Scout leader and pay back our dues, all forty cents of them.



In a photo from the mid-1950s, **Letha Hock** (THS '19) stands near the fabled marble counter, moved down the street to her Tiskilwa Store from Wilkins' Drug Store. Letha's place rivaled Alice's Restaurant of musical fame – a place where "You can get anything you want." This photo, plus 97 more from Tiskilwa taken by **Sid Durfee** in the 1950s, are available for purchase on our CD *"The Way We Were: Part 1."* Parts 2 and 3 are scenes from our village in 1985 and 2008.

Letha's Drugstore is gone now. In its place is the **Tiskilwa Farms Alpaca Shop**, owned by Bob Sash. The tall marble counter is gone, too, and the soda fountain has vanished. The magazine rack that so fascinated me as a child has disappeared and there aren't any booths to hide in, whether from the Girl Scouts or a nosy neighbor.

What remains is just a memory of a quiet, brown-haired lady who never plied us with silly questions and didn't even charge us for those tween magazines that we pulled out of the rack every Tuesday afternoon. A lady with a twinkle in her eye for two Girl Scout escapees, who served us the best peppermint ice cream in the world.



## UPDATES FOR GALLERY ON GALENA AND MUSEUM ON MAIN

### Behind the Scenes at Museum on Main

During March, April, and May, your Tiskilwa Historical Society Board has been busy with numerous projects involving enhancing our displays as well as the look of the lawn at the MoM.



Thanks to **Kenny Fisher** (THS '77), we have five new banners to display. To mount three banners earned by THS boys' basketball, we rounded up the usual suspects: **Ed Waca** (THS '66), **Randy Senneff** (THS '73), and **Christy Wagner Senneff** (THS '81). Above at the right is one of our two girls' volleyball 1990 Regional Championship banners. The girls were again champs in 1991.



Several of us pitched in to do the spring clean-up of our lawn and gardens after our April board meeting. Later, **Paul and Randy Senneff** (top right) and **Christy Senneff** added two truckloads of mulch to freshen up the spring look.

### Behind the Scenes at Gallery on Galena

In the Gallery's bright and shiny lower level, (Hey, let's not call it a basement!) Tiskilwa newspaper archives dating back to the 1880s are now ready to be accessed upon request. We have not only organized the bound copies on the east shelves, we also have set up a microfilm reader, ready to roll. Email Cele or Jane to arrange a time and date.



**Wapsipinicon** Editors:

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

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

## Updates Completed for Research Materials

As the months of pandemic isolation have plodded along, our members have been completing updates for several pieces of our collection that needed additional attention. Visitors to the Museum on Main and the Gallery on Galena may now request indexed records and recordings organized by our secretary par excellence, **Julie Sampson** (THS '67) and her ever-helpful assistant, hubby **Dave**. We'll list three categories below, and if you have a hankering to delve a little deeper in to one or more, just let us know your area of interest.

#### 1. Old school records donated by the family of Bill Joiner:

When items from the old high school were auctioned off, Bill purchased a filing cabinet. Surprise! Its contents included school records with rosters and teachers' notes. Most information dates back to the early to mid-twentieth century. It includes records from the country schools of **Kitterman, Benson, Cottage, Dorr Hill, and Providence** as well as **Tiskilwa Grade School and High School**. In addition, we have school board minutes and bus route details.

#### 2. Assorted DVDs and CDs of T-H-S programs and interviews:

We have more than 80 DVDs of our historical society's monthly programs, recorded between 2006 and 2019. These DVDs include many recent favorites, such as **Brian Ellis's** portrayal of John Deere, "Message" Quilts on the Underground Railroad, and Cajun fiddle music performed by **Dennis Stroughmatt**.

Thirteen oral interviews, recorded between 1974 and 2012, are available on CDs in which old-timers share memories of Tiskilwa. For instance, there are chats with **Helen Kaufmann** about her family of 12 children; with **Ellen Stevens Lawton** about growing up in the stately Stevens home in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; and with **Vivian and Elzie Moses**, reminiscing about their 80+ years of marriage and various jobs, including their escapades as Tiskilwa school bus drivers.

#### 3. Obituaries for 900+ individuals with Tiskilwa connections

A tip of a Great Big Hat goes to **Jane Jones, Melvina Lewis, and Cheryl Barnett** who recently indexed and reorganized our 900+ obituaries. During the first weeks of T-H-S in 2006, we began collecting the obits of people who were born, schooled, or had resided in Tiskilwa. Over the past several months, **Charlie Waca** (THS '64) has clipped and added hundreds of obits from his mother's newspaper collection. As a result, our four-volume obituary inventory covers approximately 1950 to the present. They are arranged in alphabetical order, and best of all, completely indexed for ease in locating a specific name.

#### A NOTE ABOUT YOUR 2021 MEMBERSHIP:

*If you did not receive your June newsletter in the postal mail or in an email, perhaps you've forgotten to join for 2021.*

#### 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 Patron: \$250

Bronze Benefactor: \$500; Silver Benefactor: \$1,000; Gold Benefactor: \$2,500

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*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!



## Volunteers on Wheels: Friends of Tiskilwa

*Editor's Note: We've asked **Tracy Hannon** to share this article with details about yet another heartwarming volunteer organization – one that popped up in our community in the past year. Thanks to participants!*

During the last year a lot of things have changed in our world, but one thing that has stayed the same is the community support of Tiskilwa. In April 2020, a group of volunteers decided to reach out and check on some of our residents both in town and the country who, due to COVID-19, were not getting out as they usually would have. It started with a lunch, a few goodies, and a note with phone numbers to call if they needed anything.

This was such a great hit with not only the recipients but also with the volunteers. We started to put a plan in action and after several months of success, we have a schedule in place. **The Friends of Tiskilwa** was created. With a huge helping hand from the **T.C.A.** and several donors, we have been able to get delicious soup and sandwiches from Kelly's Place and the Indian Valley Inn. Both **Kelly Johnson** and **Mike McComber** have also donated several lunches.



*Lindsey Friel captured a photo of the Friends of Tiskilwa as they set out on their delivery routes in May. Left to right: **Tracy Hannon**, **Nancy Johnston**, **Liz Piacenti**, and **Jan Lohaus**. The Friends' littlest helper is **Scarlett Johnston**.*

The Friends of Tiskilwa now deliver meals the second Tuesday of each month. These deliveries consist of over 30 lunches and growing! In addition to the meal, there is a homemade treat and a word search. At Christmas time, Valentine's Day, and Easter, they were treated to homemade goodies made by **Marsha Madsen**.

This group is always looking to increase our volunteers, and monetary donations are greatly appreciated. Please contact Tracy Hannon 815.866.9112 or Lindsey Friel 815.876.7691.

## History Mystery for June



*This old yearbook photo features the talented THS Varsity and Junior Varsity cheerleaders. Excellent formation, girls! Coincidentally, we recently heard a version of this saying: "Friends don't tell friends that 1982 was almost 40 years ago." Can you recognize them? (Answers in column 2)*

**History Mystery Solved.** How many did you identify? If you could name 'em all, pick up your PRIZE at the Collector's Corner booth on the lawn at Museum on Main during Pow Wow Days. (Yeah, we'll employ the Honor System.) Here we go:  
Very front: **Missy Opsal**; L to R, kneeling: **Tracy Dillman**, **Tammy Allen**. L to R, standing: **Julie Brokaw**, **Denise Warren**, **Vickie Miller**, **Leigh Gillingham**, **Debbie Heiser**.  
Sitting on shoulders L to R: **Mary Leigh Nye**, **Jill Cordum**, **Teresa Colby**. Standing and holding top person: **Sondra Compton**, **Cathy Tyne**. Top person: **Kristi Hamilton**.

## New Showcase Honors Tiskilwa's Volunteer Firefighters



*T-H-S members **Sally Munson** and **Betty Brokaw** were being creative again in late April, developing a new showcase for the summer. They took their inspiration from the naming of May 4<sup>th</sup> as International Firefighters Day. The items from our collection honor local firefighters over the years.*

## 2021 Memorial Day Virtual Ceremony Available Online May 31

This year, Tiskilwa Historical Society is teaming up with the **Quilts of Valor** to continue Tiskilwa's longstanding tradition of honoring our service members on Memorial Day. In years past, this annual event has drawn between 150 and 200 local residents to the East Park in Tiskilwa where two war monuments stand.

When the **Tiskilwa American Legion Post 346** dissolved in 2018, the veterans asked us to take over the tasks of organizing and presenting an annual program. Since that time, T-H-S member and Navy veteran **Jennifer Fisher** has been our emcee and organizer.

Because of undetermined state restrictions for pandemic safety when we were planning the May 31 program, this year we will videotape a private ceremony for family members at the Gallery on Galena. At that time, two of our Tiskilwa veterans will receive Quilts of Valor. In the coming months of the summer and fall, the Q of V group hopes to hold several more presentations to award quilts.

On or before May 31, we will post the ceremony on YouTube, just as we did in 2020. Viewing details and a link will be available on our FB page and T-H-S website.

**COMING SOON to a Museum (on Main) near you:**  
**T-H-S programs are back!**  
September 6: Creole fiddle music  
October 11: A program on Illinois' Everett Dirksen  
November 8: A visit from Chief Black Hawk.

## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

110 EAST MAIN STREET

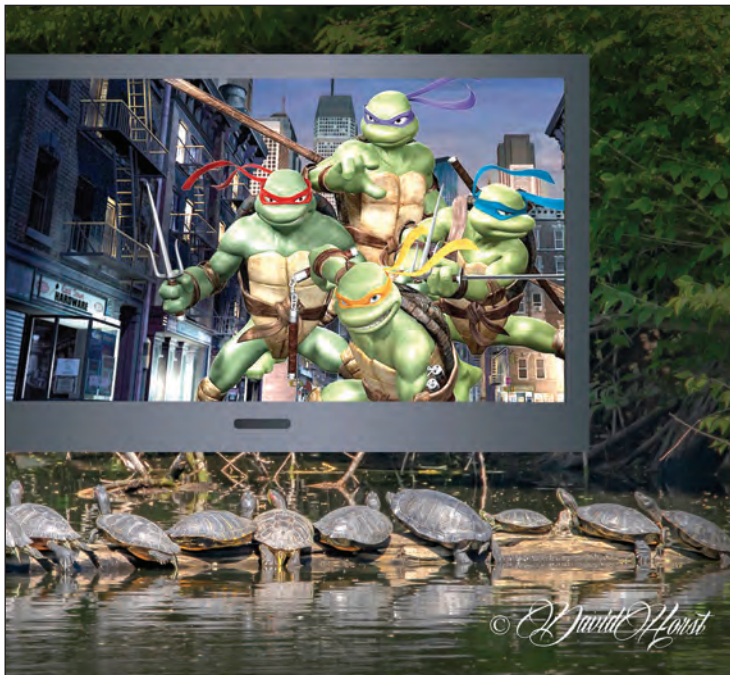
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### Movie Night on the Canal

Imagine our surprise to find that local turtles found a way  
– with an assist from Dave Horst (THS '74) –  
to watch one of their favorite oldie movies  
along the banks of the Hennepin Canal, just east of Tiskilwa.

These generous businesses help  
pay printing and postage costs.

**JOHN F.  
HEDRICH**  
*Trial Lawyer*

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