
Germantown Historical Society **Newsletter**



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FEBRUARY 2014

Hello everyone,

I would like to begin by thanking everyone that helped with this year's Oktoberfest. Whether you helped set up, clean up, or helped with the food and beverages, especially if you came to enjoy our event, I want to let you know that we couldn't do this without you. The weather was awesome and we were able to enjoy one of our most profitable fests yet. My committee did a great job and we all are thankful that those that came had a good time. Our donors came through once again and without the assistance from Sendik's and the village tourism fund we would really be in a bind.

We continue to offer the museums and the Wolf house which holds our genealogy department. Bob and Carol continue to do a wonderful job. They make a very hard task look easy. Mary is progressing on the new displays in the Christ Church Museum. We are always looking for new items to include in our inventory and work into new displays.

I also would like to take a moment to thank all of the personel at the parks and public works departments for their ongoing commitment to our little park. Things seem to be really shaping up around Dheinsville.

Now for the hard part. Our society is in desperate need of new "blood" to help with the many things that are needed to keep moving forward. It does not matter what you have to offer, We can use your help. If you are interested in genealogy, we could use some people to help with document filing or computer entry of what is already filed. We could use some people to help with plantings and flower plots. Light carpentry is also needed. We definitely could use some help with organizing our artifacts and identifying what is here and where it came from. Light cleaning and dusting is always needed. In spring we are planning to "manure out" (my mom's term) the blacksmith shop so it can become a storage and display area. We could also use someone to help identify and label the farm tools that are surrounding the building. Also, if someone knows of more items or someone to organize this area please contact the society. Finally, our board is not getting any younger, nor do any of us on the board see the opportunity to increase the amount of time we can spend helping with the things that need to be done. I sincerely hope that we can find some new people to help, because if not, I am not sure how long we are going to be able to keep this good thing going. Please call or visit the web site to offer your help. WE NEED IT!

On a much brighter note the new book "Germantown in the 20th Century Part 1" is now available and beginning to sell well. More information within this newsletter. Thank you Bill Gay for all of your help with distribution. (he also wrote it)

Thanks for taking the time to read this and a very big thank you to those that can find time to help us in any way.

Sincerely,

Jeff Dhein
President

Moraine Heritage Network

Since the beginning of the year, representatives from the different historical societies in Washington County have been meeting to share ideas and ways to work together. The first event that was planned by the group was a Getting to Know Us Bus Trip that took place on Saturday, October 26th. The tour included the following stops:

- Germantown Historical Society—tours of the Sila Lydia Bast Bell Museum and the Christ Church Museum of Local History,
- Richfield Historical Society—a drive through tour of the Park
- Hartford Auto Museum—brief discussion about their organization and the restoration of the building
- Washington County Historical Society—Lunch at the Old Courthouse and an overview of the Historical Society
- Barton Historical Society—Barton Roller Mill
- Farmington Historical Society—Lizard Mounds: overview at the Education Center and Orchard Grove Cemetery
- Kewaskum Historical Society—visit log house and museum

It was a very informative day to see the other historical society's sites and to network. Germantown Historical Society was represented on the tour by: Gordon Bast, Peggy Bast, Judy Bast, Carol Barkow and Eileen Densow.

The representatives at the meetings for the Moraine Heritage Network have been Gordon Bast and Peggy Bast.

2014 Annual Meeting

Mark your calendar for the Germantown Historical Society's Annual Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 15, 2014. The event will again take place at the Fox & Hounds Restaurant. Bill Gay will be doing a book signing for the new history book. More details to follow.

Year in Review

We continued to have many visitors to the museum during the course of the year. We had several large tours of 30 – 50 guests as well as people who just stopped by on the weekend. Our visitors ranged from Boy Scout Troops to bus tours from senior centers. It is always interesting to see the reaction of visitors as they take in the museum and all 5000 bells!

A very special thank you to our dedicated volunteers who help out with the tours including: Gordon & Judy Bast, Eileen Densow and Oliver Schowalter.

Thank you to Bob Kohls and Carol Barkow for countless hours spent at the Wolf Haus working on Genealogy.

Newsletter Frequency Change

Effective 2014 – after this newsletter, this newsletter will be done semi annually instead of quarterly. It will be done in April and before Oktoberfest. **If anyone has a few hours to spare, knowledge of Microsoft Word and a little creativity to compile the newsletter (now twice a year), please let Sandi Dhein know. It would be greatly appreciated. You can reach her at 262-305-7399 or sandipassion@charter.net.**

Areas Needing Volunteers

Besides the newsletter and board members requested above, we are also looking for:

- An artist eye for setting up display cases in the Christ Church Museum.
- Occasional Tour Guides. Tours are often in groups and view multiple buildings, so 3-4 people are needed for each tour. Usually no more than 2 hours needed.
- Handyman (Handyperson) to assist with minor repair projects.

Newest Book Available

Germantown in the 20th Century, Part 1: 1900-1959 is here and ready to be enjoyed for years to come. Now on sale by the Germantown Historical Society, this book is a pictorial journey through the first part of the twentieth century, decade-by-decade. The reader will find in each chapter a review of significant international, national, and state-wide events, all designed to put in perspective what occurred locally in Germantown and the surrounding area during the decade. Interesting captioned photos of developing agricultural and commercial ventures, along with schools, churches, recreation and family life are revealed as this sleepy, rural area slowly grew to a booming city suburb. The book is made personal through rarely-seen photos provided by people in our community willing to share their family's story. The 128-page 8"x11" hard cover book, printed on high quality, durable paper, sells for \$55.00, tax included. It is available at the publisher, Allied Digital Photo, at German Glass and Gifts, and at Sinter Klausen Christmas Shop. A fourth way to purchase is at the historical society's website www.bastbellmuseum.com, with an additional shipping fee of five dollars.

A bit about the author...

Bill Gay arrived in Germantown in August of 1965, fresh out of college, happy to have found his first job teaching English and Spanish. It turned out to be his *only* teaching job. He stayed until his retirement in 2001. In the early seventies he was asked to be the advisor to the National Honor Society, and it was in that capacity that his long association with the Germantown Historical Society began. In 1974 he was asked by the society's president, Irene Blau, if NHS would be interested in a community service project, helping to ready the Dheinsville Christ Church building for its new role as a museum in time for the nation's 1976 bi-centennial celebration.

It was a perfect fit for NHS, as students are selected for membership in part because of their leadership and service. It was also a perfect fit for Bill, with his love of history and his belief that the way to get young people to have a sense of ownership of their hometown was to engage them in something special. Over the next 27 years, the group was at the museum twice a year, cleaning, painting, weeding, moving things, clearing out the Wolf barn, and much more. (The most exciting moment came on a springtime Saturday workday when a rep from Old World Wisconsin crawling around in the attic discovered that the Wolf Haus was a half-timbered pioneer home.).... The rest of the story is shown in the Book...[Germantown in the 20th Century, Part I: 1900-1959](#)

Will a second volume follow anytime soon? Time...and present book sales, and demand for still more of the story...will tell. From quiet rural town to thriving suburban community, Germantown remains a special place with a rich history.

2014 Calendar of Events

April 15, 2014 – Annual Meeting

May 3, 2014—Bell Ringing at Christ Church Museum of Local History

June 1, 2014—Bell Museum opens for the season

June 4, 2014—Genealogists are available at the Wolf Haus on Wednesdays from 1-4 pm thru October 1, 2014

September 27 & 28, 2014—Oktoberfest

October 1, 2014—Genealogy closes for the season

November 1, 2014—Bell Museum closes for the season

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