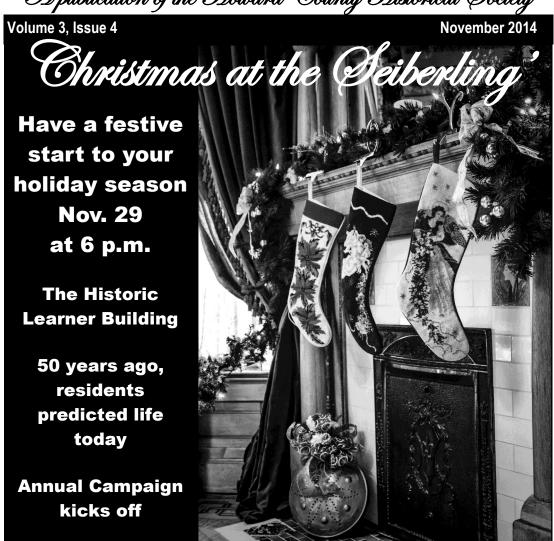
Tootprints A publication of the Howard County Historical Society



From the executive director

Preserving the Seiberling for another year

ne of the burning questions this November: Will the coming winter be as difficult as the last?

There's no way to predict, so the wise choice is to prepare for another adventure in snow, ice, and subzero cold.

Last winter took a toll on the Seiberling Mansion and the other three buildings on the historical society's campus. The mansion's slate roof has a few more leaks now and one of the gutters exploded under pressure from ice, sending a gusher of water down and through the rear wall. Elliott House required fresh tuck-pointing because of ice-damaged mortar on the porte cochere.

And then there were the utility bills. Not only accomplish those goals and pass this pricele was there a deep and prolonged cold snap, but heritage along to our children and grandchilnatural gas prices spiked at the same time.

You've probably figured out where this is all going. Preserving the Seiberling is expensive

even in a good year, but its value to the community is immeasurable. As an architectural masterpiece, it has few peers; it is a community icon and a symbol of the great gas boom that enriched Howard County, setting us on a path we still follow; and as the Howard County Museum, it is home to the exhibits and collections that represent our heritage.

The historical society's annual fund-raising campaign is underway. Donations to the campaign are a critical part of our sustainability, providing resources to maintain the mansion and museum, protect and preserve the collections and provide programs and educational resources for all ages. Your gifts will help us accomplish those goals and pass this priceless heritage along to our children and grandchildren.

Dave Broman Executive Director

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"Christmas at the Seiberling" expands to seven evenings

Whith the success of last year's "Angels in the Seiberling" holiday celebration, the only complaints registered with the Howard County Historical Society were that one night wasn't enough to enjoy the beautiful display to its fullest.

The HCHS "Christmas at the Seiberling" organizers heard you. This year, the mansion will be open on seven evenings during the Christmas season.

As always, the festivities will begin with the traditional Lighting Ceremony on Nov. 29 sponsored by The Wyman Group. Join us on the Saturday after Thanksgiving for refreshments, musical entertainment, and carriage rides, and bring the kids and grandkids to see Santa in the Elliott House.

"And in response to public demand, I'm happy to announce that visitors will be welcomed during evening hours on the three Thursdays and Fridays following Thanksgiving – December 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, and 19, said event committee chairman Peggy Hobson. "On each of those days, the mansion will open at 1 p.m. as usual, but, instead of closing at 4, will remain open until 8 p.m. and refreshments will be served each evening."

Of course, the extra hours mean extra volun-

teers on those dates.

"We need volunteers to serve as guides and room monitors, as well as people to serve refreshments," Hobson said. "Any historical society member who would like to help on

those evenings should call me at 765-271-0039."

If you loved seeing the angels last year, get

ready for the 2014 edition of "Seiberling Angels Return." Hobson said there will be even more angels and the decorations will be even more outstanding. Visitors will be invited to vote for their favorite room by putting

monetary donations in ballot boxes located in each room. Last year's winner was

the Ballroom, decorated by Darryl

and Bruce Blasius.

Visitors 12 or younger will again have an opportunity to compete in the "How Many Angels Did You See?" contest with a prize basket awarded to the child whose guess is closest to actual number of angels on display at the mansion.

Solidarity Federal Credit Union is sponsoring a "Holiday Celebration at the Seiberling" on Thursday, Dec. 18, as part of its 60th anniversary observance. Through Solidarity's generosity, admission will be free to the public between 4 and 8 p.m.

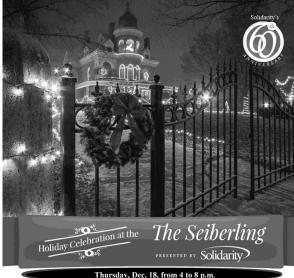
'Christmas at the Seiberling' activities and sponsors











Tour the mansion dressed in beautiful holiday décor. Bring the kids to see Santa in the Elliott House from 5 to 7 p.m.

Make a gift to the future

By Dave Broman HCHS Executive Director

ome people just love history in all its forms. Some love museums and old things. Some are entranced by old houses and architecture. Some know details, dates and names. And, some follow the larger ebb and flow of life on Earth.

Others are drawn to the stories of our ancestors and their times. Still others are students of the past, striving to understand today's world through the lessons of yesterday.

The historical society exists to preserve our heritage for all of those people and interests. Which one describes you?

The historical society serves the community as the custodian of our history and the means by which we preserve our heritage. The Seiberling Mansion, symbolic of a major turning point in local history, is a big part of our responsibility, along with the exhibits and artifacts it houses. The museum campus includes three other historic structures, as well, for storage, workspace and meeting places.

That's quite a responsibility – and one that we feel deeply. It's also why we ask the community for financial support every year. The climate control systems that help preserve the buildings and artifacts

cost more than \$40,000 a year. Our maintenance budget for the properties is another \$20,000. Providing the trained staff that can manage and conserve the artifacts and archives is a critical expense, as are the supplies they need. Simple things like pest control are needed to keep insects from eating historic documents. And security systems provide protection from fire and water damage as well as theft.

Our goal for 2014 is to raise \$40,000. We're well on the way, with a commitment for the first \$15,000 from James Long. In a letter late last year, he wrote, "Even as a youngster, I remember being fascinated by the mansion's architecture and its enormous size. Probably, I wished I could live in such a grand house. I am inspired by preservation of significant architecture anywhere, and especially of someplace I know and remember fondly. Not only is the Seiberling Mansion a landmark for Kokomo, it also preserves a rich history in its collections. I'm proud to help."

Your gift to the historical society during the annual campaign is a gift to the community – as well as the children, grandchildren and future generations who will benefit from the museum for years to come. Please take a moment to think about why our community history is important to you and then make your gift to the future.

Flame Keepers

preserving and sharing our heritage

> Howard County Historical Society Annual Campaign

Levels of Giving

Leadership \$2,000
Platinum \$1,000-1,999
Gold \$500-999
Silver \$200-499
Bronze \$100-199
Friends \$1-99

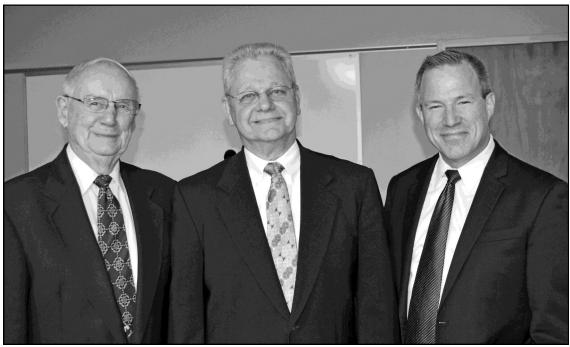
Celebrating Haynes International at HCHS Annual Meeting



oward County Historical Society members joined with employees past and present of Haynes International on Oct. 21 for the HCHS Annual Meeting.

The 102-year-old manufacturer of high-tech metal alloys was founded by Elwood Haynes, a member of the Howard County Hall of Legends and an inventor with few peers.

Haynes retirees Dale Kingseed and Ed Bickel and current VP/CFO Dan Maudlin presented a program on the past and future of the company.



Dale Kingseed, Ed Bickel and Dan Maudlin presented the program at the HCHS Annual Meeting.



Above, HCHS President Ted Goff addressed the guests at the annual meeting.

Opposite page, top left, HCHS PresidentElect Judy Brown, with Executive Director
Dave Broman, announced the society's annual campaign.





Above, board member Jule Rider and her husband, Darrell, both longtime HCHS volunteers, were among the guests, as were board member Wayne Luttrell and his wife, Susan, at left.

History around the county: Interurban station and photography projects are underway

By John Morr HCHS Publications Committee Member

around the county.

Phase 1 of the interurban station project was scheduled to be completed by the end of October, according to Marsha Berry at the **Russiaville Historical Society**. It included restoration of the exterior to its original appearance.

Landscaping and interior work, including plumbing, electrical work and climate control, will be completed later as the grant from the Indiana Office of Rural and Community Affairs (OCRA) only covered the exterior work.

On Oct. 6, the Howard County Commissioners voted to allocate \$15,000 to the Russiaville Historical Society in support of the interurban restoration. These funds will become part of the community match for the OCRA grant and will allow the society to finish the outside restoration with no debt.

The Russiaville Historical Society plans to finish the inside with the help of volunteers and to fund it with donations. One way people can help is by "adopting" a window. The average cost to restore or replace a window is between \$1,500 and \$2,000. A donor plaque will be mounted on each adopted window.

Learn more by following the Russiaville Historical Society on Facebook or visit its website at www.russiavillehistory.org.

Through Dec.14, the **Greentown Historical Society** is focusing on photography.

"Light Transcending Time" is an exhibit of early Greentown photographers and their equipment. Visitors will learn how light is integral to the creation of photographs, both from the scientific and artistic aspect. The camera captures light at a moment in time and that moment instantly becomes part of the past.

With the advent of digital photography, film, darkrooms and enhancement techniques have become obsolete, joining dial phones and typewriters in museum collections. They're used only by craftsmen who want to keep old skills alive, according to Rachel Jenkins of the Greentown Historical Society.

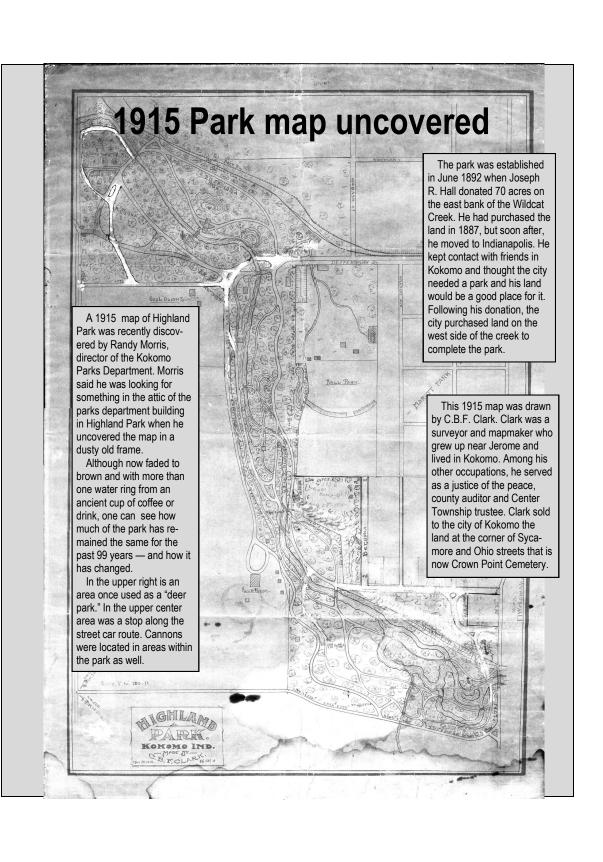
To supplement the exhibits at the Greentown Historical Society, three programs have taken place that were free and open to the public.

The first was titled, "Dating and Identifying Historic Photographs." Joan Hostetler of Heritage Photo & Research Services discussed examining and interpreting historic photographs and reviewed processes and formats from the daguerreotype to snapshot. She also explored dating clues like clothing, hairstyles, automobiles, props and even ear shapes.

The second program was a "History of Jenkins Studio", presented by Rachel Jenkins.

The third, "How to Take Better Photos — A workshop on Introduction to Basic Photography," took place in November.

The Greentown Historical Society is located at 103 E. Main Street. Hours are Saturday and Monday 1 to 4 p.m., and Sunday 2 to 4 p.m. Other hours may be arranged by calling 765-628-3564. The facility is handicap accessible.



Learner Building a step back into history



The historic Learner Building in downtown Kokomo is now home to Kokomo Toys & Collectibles. In the past, the building served as a grocery, bakery, ladies' suit and millinary shop and jewelry store.

PHOTO COURTESY TIM BATH/THE KOKOMO TRIBUNE

(Editor's note: Information for this story comes from a variety of historical and contemporary sources. Some sources disagree with others; this article will try to take that into account.)

By Linda Ferries HCHS Publications Committee Member

lot can happen to a building in more than 100 years. Take the Learner Building at 107-111 E. Sycamore St. in downtown Kokomo as an example.

The east end of the first floor is now the home of Kokomo Toys & Collectibles. Behind the bright and multi-colored façade is an early Kokomo commercial room with soaring ceilings and an impressive mezzanine. It's filled with highly collectible mementoes of popular culture from "Star Trek" to "Dr. Who," "Minecraft" to "GI Joe," "He-Man" to "Batman."

Todd and Amber Jordan moved their shop from East Morgan Street into the historic structure last February, joining Scott Pitcher and Fortune Management in advancing the building's restoration. Down came the dropped

ceiling that cut the height of the room in half, revealing a ceiling 17 feet high in the commercial room and 24 feet in the loft. Out came the drywall that carved offices out of the huge selling floor. Away went the additional walls that hid the original mezzanine.

From his position as proprietor of Kokomo Toys, Todd is excited to share the history and historic aspects of what has been known as the Learner Building for more than 100 years. Today, the building's wide first story includes Goblin Games and the Sycamore Cottage collectibles store along with Kokomo Toys. Even more interesting is its expansive second story, a time capsule basically untouched since the last occupants left sometime in the 1940s.

Let's talk about some of the other tenants through the years. According to the 1905 city directory when, under the old numbering system, the building's address was 7-13 E. Sycamore St., tenants included Williams Bros., Grocer; Ladies' Suit & Millinery House; and Schwenger Bakery, Restaurant and Lunch Room. By the 1907 city directory, Karl W. Kern Jeweler had joined the grocery and res-

taurant, starting more than 30 years at this location. K.W. was a cousin of Howard County's John Kern, who represented Indiana in the United States Senate.

Over the years a number of businesses moved through the commercial spaces – Fleck Garrison meat

See "Building" on page 13



Kokomo Toys & Collectibles proprietor Todd Jordan enjoys sharing the history of the Learner Building.

Child of pioneers, Learner a prominent community leader

John Wesley (better known as J.W. or Wes) Learner was a prominent Kokomo businessman and community leader whose name lingers on in the Learner Building on East Sycamore Street. When he died in May 1940, *The Kokomo Tribune* described him as "probably the oldest native-born resident of Howard County."

In his early 1980s column on the Learner Building, then-HCHS curator Richard Kastl noted that the Learner family had a long history in Howard County. J.W.'s father, Bernhart Learner, emigrated to this country from Bavaria, Germany, settling in Howard County in 1841 as a squatter; the Miami Indians still held title to the land. When the United States government finally surveyed the county in 1847, Learner's improvements were duly noted.

J.W. was a pioneer himself, born in 1848 just four years after Howard County was incorporated. He grew up on the family farm. Primarily self-educated, he spent a few years as a teacher and school administrator in Howard Township, moved to the "big city" of Kokomo and became an entrepreneur. In his early years, he engaged in the manufacture of field tile to drain excess water from area farms, "a vocation," his obituary said, "which gave him his financial start." In 1881, during his short service as a deputy sheriff, he was witness to one of Kokomo's most sensational and tragic incidents - the fatal shooting of Dr. Henry C. Cole, then Kokomo mayor, as he allegedly was attempting set fire to the grist mill on

See "Learner" on page 13







A view from the mezzanine: During recent renovations, old walls added years ago to hide the mezzanine were removed, leading to this view of the store from upstairs.

Learner, continued from page 11

the southeast corner of Jefferson Street and Indiana Avenue. (But that's another story!)

Learner's real prominence in Kokomo business circles began in 1890 when he became associated with W.E. Blacklidge and Peter B. Hoss in the ownership and operation of what continues today as Kokomo Opalescent Glass. He served as the company's vice president and remained on the board until. at the age of 84, "his broken health compelled his retirement from active pursuits." A leader in Grace Methodist Church, a member of the Masonic order and a lifelong Republican, he cast his first presidential election vote for Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. A child of pioneer parents living to the see Europe engulfed in a second World War, he was a true witness to history.

From his obituary:

"It is not improbable that Mr. Learner was the only person left in Howard County in 1940 who had been enumerated in the first federal census count made in the county in 1850. He was enumerated then and lived to be enumerated in the same county ninety years later, a truly remarkable record, particularly in view of the fact he had been enumerated here in every intervening census."

J.W. outlived two wives and most of his contemporaries. He was honored by the *Kokomo Tribune* obituary writer with this final summary of his life – "long a prominent figure in local industrial and financial circles, a leading churchman and steadfast supporter of civic and patriotic causes, and a citizen of unobtrusive worth and substantial works."



This staircase leads from the second floor of the Learner Building to Sycamore Street.

Building, continued from page 11

market, Harold C. TenBrook electrical appliances, R.D. Robbins real estate, a chiropractor, several optometrists, First Federal Savings & Loan, Chew's Regal Store. One of the most prominent tenants was The Boston Store, a major downtown department store. One if its most beloved was Victory Cycle, located there for more than 50 years.

First noted in the 1907 city directory, the Oliver Hotel – later known as the New Oliver Hotel – spread out over the building's second story. According to some sources, the New Oliver Hotel closed its doors around 1943 or 1944, after some 40 years



Huge doors separate rooms on the second floor, which is slated for renovation in the future.

Copies of "Historic Downtown Architecture: A Walking Tour of Historic Buildings in the Kokomo Downtown Area" are available in the City of Kokomo's Department of Development (third floor of the Stephen J. Daily Government Center) and Kokomo Toys as well as the office of the Howard County Historical Society.

The building also is a stop on the historical society's downtown mobile tour; a plaque on the front includes the URL to internet-based information and the phone number into an audio story of the site.

of business. Here's a description from "Historic Downtown Architecture," a booklet outlining a walking tour of historic buildings in downtown Kokomo published by the Kokomo Historic Review Board:

"The second floor was once quite beautiful with two large apartments complete with eight-foot pocket doors (editor's note: actually solid French doors). Ornamental woodwork framed interior windows that faced a central hall/staircase, lit during the day by a large skylight. When the addition was constructed (adding about 40 feet to the building's width on the west side), the building lost its elegant luster, fading to just another boarding house."

Today, that second floor is the stuff of dreams or nightmares, depending on one's point of view. For the Jordans, it's the dream of recreating the original ambiance with two extremely spacious modern condos highlighted by the historic woodwork. That dream awaits the sale of their current home. The nightmares were what organizers of Downtown Kokomo's First Friday were going for when Indianapolis "ghoul" Sammy Terry entertained more than 1,000 visitors Oct. 3 on a Halloween tour of the second floor.

The Learner Building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, described as an outstanding example of bracketed Italianate design. And when was it built? Hmmm. in 1881, or 1885, or 1905 – depending on the newspaper article or history book you choose to believe; historical research can often lead to contradictory information. In the accompanying story, you'll learn more about its builder, J.W. Learner. Considering his age and career, with prosperity based on the Gas Boom that began with the discovery of natural gas here in 1886, it seems the 1904 date of construction noted in a newspaper column by Richard A. Kastl (curator of the Howard County Historical Museum

from 1978-1983) may be closest to the truth.

In the Kokomo Historic Review Board's 1981 "Architectural Survey and Inventory of Kokomo, Indiana," the Learner Building was called "a significant example of Kokomo Commercial Vernacular Architecture." Take a walk down East Sycamore Street and note the interesting brick work of the upper façade. Kastl also noted the cornice with projecting molding and scroll-like brackets and a fascia underneath consisting of a series of sunburst patterns in each bay.

As Kastl wrote his column in the early 1980s, the Learner Building was undergoing its first "modern" restoration as residents and developers began taking interest in Kokomo's historic structures. The F.D. Miller Co., owner of much of downtown at the time, began by chemically cleaning and painting the brick. In 1984, the Learner Building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its historic significance. By 2013, it was time for restoration number two.



Jordan, above, plans to restore water-damaged ceilings on the upper floors of the Learner Building. Plans include turning the area into two spacious condominiums.

Have a passion for the past? Volunteer!

Show your passion for the past, help share our remarkable history and have fun at the same time.

Museum volunteers are a great group of people who enjoy giving back to the community and telling our story to the world. Guides and hosts provide invaluable service to the museum and its guests, offering a pleasant reception, answering questions and providing guided tours for groups and individuals. It's a great way to meet new people from all over the globe, and be part of a group of like-minded people.

Learn more about the historical society at howardcounty-museum.org and at facebook.com/hchistory. You'll also find us online at VolunteerMatch.org, Google, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Foursquare, TripAdvisor, and CrowdRise.



Back to the future

50 years ago, residents predicted life today

By Randy Smith HCHS Curatorial Assistant

hen I research in the extensive vertical files at the society, I can't resist looking at the other articles on a newspaper clipping. Recently, I came across a 1964 article in *The Kokomo Tribune* that discussed improvements the Chamber of Commerce thought should be made in the greater Kokomo area. The president-elect of the chamber, R.J. Lembke, had stated at the time, "What we do in the next three years will determine the progress of the community for many years to come."

Some of the ideas brought up by the chamber will sound familiar:

- Improve downtown parking facilities
- Implement a total downtown improvement plan
- Seek new non-automotive industry for the area.

Others are a bit less familiar or outdated:

- Maintain and improve air transportation
- Provide a public relations program to acquaint the public with the purpose of parking meters
- Build support for the sanitary building code

One of the ideas has finally come full circle: a multiple-story parking facility in the downtown area. Even in 1964, parking was a headache for downtown, and finally, after 50 years, the idea for a parking garage is coming to fruition.

Looking through an entire clipping — rather than just the parts pertaining to the research project — reveals that "history repeats itself" is more than just a phrase.

In another newspaper article, from Sunday, Feb. 6, 1966, *Kokomo Morning Times* reporter Jim Helm pondered what Kokomo might be like as his one-year-old daughter, Mindy Jo, grew up.

He thought that at five years old, Mindy Jo would be in the new Kokomo schools kindergarten classes in 1970. He also predicted that parking would still be a headache and that it would take two hours to find a parking spot.

Foreign language classes would be something Mindy Jo would begin in the sixth grade in 1976 and continue through high school.

Helm also believed retail would expand greatly by then with six shopping centers in town

One of the things he foresaw correctly was that Kokomo would have two high schools, though his estimate put it in 1976, not 1968. He also correctly estimated that Kokomo would expand beyond its 1966 boundaries in all four directions.

Helm thought that by 1986, the 1966 downtown area "will be a thing of the past." In an estimate he placed a bit early, the downtown would be developed into a civic center with a separate city hall, fire and police departments along with many financial and legal offices. Art and entertainment venues in the downtown area were also part of his vision for the future of downtown Kokomo.

As for transportation in the mid-1980s, Helm believed that Kokomo would be surrounded by major arteries complete with cloverleaf interchanges. Logansport, Greentown, Peru and Russiaville would have major four-lane roads connecting with Kokomo to alleviate a major



Remembering Pat DiSalvo



Rokomo and Howard County marked the passing of Pat DiSalvo last month. Pat was a long-time member and supporter of the historical society and served in many commu-

nity leadership roles. The museum collections include a number of Pat's famous hats, as well as photographs documenting her remarkable career in broadcast and print media.

Back to the future, continued from page 16

increase in traffic to Kokomo from around the region.

Regarding the city limits of Kokomo, Helm was fairly accurate. His estimate was that the boundaries of Kokomo would be Malfalfa Road, Center Road, Darrough Chapel and the U.S. 31 junction on the north side.

His 50-year estimate of Kokomo is still a couple of years away. Helm thought that by 2016, Kokomo would be a "regional trade and employment center." Surrounding towns would be where people lived, and they would commute to Kokomo for their work and shopping. The downtown area would be dominated by tall buildings to better use the area, the suburbs of

Kokomo would also be home to many high-rise apartments.

By 2016, Helm would be 77 years old. His thought was that he would be talking to his children and grandchildren "on the videophone" and might be commuting to his family's homes through the use of Kokomo's heliport.

Jim Helm didn't live to see if his predictions would be realized. He passed away in Florida in 1992.

Researching the past always fascinates me. Especially when it turns up a gold nugget like Helm's article on his thoughts about the future of Kokomo.

Koh Koh Mah/Foster Encampment



In mid-September, the HCHS participated in the Koh-Koh-Mah/ Foster activities where school children and the public had the opportunity to experience life as it was in the 1700s.

Historical society volunteers led participants in learning how to dip candles and sold buttered, sweet corn-on-the-cob from the HCHS tent.





Membership

Thanks to all who joined the Howard County Historical Society or renewed their memberships from August through October.

Dr. Gilbert & Ellen Anderson
Joni Andreas
Doyle & June Beck
Laurence & Janice Blanchard
Jim & Jan Briscoe
Herb & Barbara Buchanan
Kevin & Hilda Burns
Don & Ann Button
City of Kokomo,
Mayor Greg Goodnight

Linda Clark
DAR General James Cox
Chapter, Rosemary Pike

Dorothy Dague
John & Kathy Davidson
Del & Jody Demaree
Marion Eller

Beryl Etherington Ken & Linda Ferries First Farmers Bank & Trust,

Gene Miles
Greg & Sharon Foland
Heather Fouts
Jim & Jane Goerges

Emily Golightly Rusk Cheryl Graham

Beryl & Jacqueline Grimme Glenn & Nancy Grundmann Mauri & Janet Henricks

Connie Hess Kenneth & Diana Hill Mark & Peggy Hobson Zachary Hobson

John & Mary Ann Holmes

Joe Holtson Home Builders Association of Howard County

Bob & Betsy Hoshaw

Patti Host

Ken & Marcheta Humphrey Mike & Kelly Karickhoff

David & Janice Kellar Joan Kellum

King's Heating & Plumbing, Jerry King

Dale & Grace Kingseed Phillip & Diane Knight William & Margy Kring

Judy Kruggel Brian Lausch

Keith & Judy Lausch Jack & Maureen Lechner

Gale & Donna Leiter Jean Leyda

Marsha Maple Juanita Martin Davis Jan & Bill Miller

Ann Millikan Larry Moss Larry Newlin

Roma North

Palmer's Jewelry, Mike Freed Paul & Kathy Pfettscher

Don & Marti Pries Sherry Rahl

Philip & Carolyn Rankin David & Melody Rayl

Kyle & Lisa Rayl

Beth Rider Sherry Rider

Dr. Thomas & Carol Scherschel,

Todd & Heather Scoggins

E.P. Severns

Shallenberger Realty,

Keith Shallenberger Carol Hynds Shallenberger Bill & Lyn Shirley Dr. Marilyn Skinner

Ted & Mimi Slate Spectrum Photography,

Curt Alexander
Connie Sproch

St. Joseph Foundation,

Todd Moser Mike & Linda Stegall Greg & Melody Sumpter

Karen Swan

Syndicate Sales, Del Demaree

Rheld & Lorina Tate
J. Alan & Lee Ann Teller
The Windmill Grill,

Tom & Carrol Trine

Betty Underwood Cathy Valcke Bonnie Van Kley

Douglas & Lynn Vaughn John & Emily West

Brendan White

Larry Wise & Larry Little Paul & Shelly Wyman

Volunteer opportunity

Do you like to clean? Would you like to clean some beautiful and extraordinary things?

Museum caretaker Bill Baldwin is in need of assistance each week at the Howard County Museum.

He is looking for volunteers to help with general cleaning once or twice a week.

If interested, contact Baldwin at (765) 434-3031.

Howard County Historical Society 1200 W. Sycamore St. Kokomo, Indiana 46901

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