October 25, 2013

TO CEDARVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS

Your historical society and museum are approaching the end of an exciting and fruitful 2013 season. Some highlights:

- Attendance at the museum, programs and events has shown an increase;
- Operating expenses have been kept within the budget;
- Three new exhibits were created;
- Building restoration has been accomplished without the need for additional funds;
- Membership has remained steady despite ongoing national economic problems.

The installation last year of the elevator to move physically handicapped people between the first and second floors of the museum has been a real plus. I believe attendance at the museum and its programs has increased noticeably because of it. Every passenger likes the ease of operation: Push a button and the door opens; get in and push another button and the elevator moves to the proper floor and the door opens.

With the great success of last year’s three live music and history programs, it was inevitable a similar series would be offered this year. Presented in the museum’s second floor LeRoy Wilson Theater before a full house of 80 persons each night, the three programs explored early American jazz, American folk music from the 1960s and 70s and women’s barbershop harmony. Financial help from Freeport’s Kent Bank allowed the Society to present the series for a single $22 admission charge.
The year started with the historical society’s traditional First-Sunday-in-February soup, salad and sandwich lunch that was attended by more than 125. Squeezing the event between church and the Super Bowl kickoff seems to be popular with our members and other guests.

The museum opened on schedule Saturday, May 4, and maintained its traditional Saturday and Sunday afternoon hours throughout the six month season thanks to the help of the more than two dozen volunteers who welcomed visitors and helped them better understand the exhibits. The museum will close Sunday, October 27. The admission charge remained at $3 for non-members and no charge for members. The museum’s policy has always been to have new or updated exhibits every year to encourage visitors to return. This year the staff examined our large collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century local clothing and created an impressive exhibit that included photographs and stories about the persons who wore the garments. Also new this year was a large collection of photographs and tales about the legendary John Henke and his equally legendary Blue Room tavern in nearby Scioto Mills and a display of nineteen trivets donated by Mrs. Anita Lausch, Cedarville. They are from her late husband’s large collection of trivets and pressing irons.

In May the society again joined the Cedarville American Legion in sponsoring the Memorial Day parade on Mill Street and the ceremony at the Cedarville Cemetery. With a one car police escort, the marchers, followed by several hundred onlookers, stepped of at 10 a.m. from in front of the telephone company building and proceeded down the street, over Cedar Creek bridge and up the path to the cemetery. With Cedarville’s current population at 741 (more or less), we probably have one of the shortest parades in the country, but we do not lack enthusiasm and patriotism. The day was capped with the annual picnic on the museum grounds with more than 150 lined up to eat.

For the fifth year, in June and July we presented free Friday night outdoor movies on our large screen of four queen size sheets mounted on the museum north wall. The films were Hollywood classics of yesteryear. Once — with one third of the film still to be viewed — an unexpected rain shower forced the audience to retreat into the museum’s second floor LeRoy Wilson Theater. Sue and Steve Myers and Dale Priewe and their crew were up to the emergency and in less than 15 minutes all equipment was disassembled and reassembled inside and the movie continued. The refreshment stand with fresh pop corn (free refills), soft drinks and candy at 50 cents did a great business during intermissions.
Besides the three evening music programs that were presented in July, August and September, the society presented two talks related to the Civil War. The May program featured Dr. Gordon Dammann with a graphic description of the battle at Antietam, one of the world’s most costly military engagements in terms of casualties. Dr. Dammann, a former dentist from nearby Lena, is an official guide at Antietam. He is also chairman and founder of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. In June the Freeport husband and wife team of Don and Vickie Franz detailed the day-to-day life of Civil War soldiers. Their program also featured eight tables of artifacts collected by Don and several Civil War songs played by him on a period lute.

On September 21 the historical society held the tenth annual Jane Addams Festival in commemoration of the Cedarville native’s 153rd birthday. The morning started with the usual 5K run and walk on the Jane Addams Trail. The late morning and afternoon featured a new format that included booths of local craftsmen and artists, two folk singers and plenty of food. The craftsmen and artists demonstrated their work and offered their work for sale. It was a day of great fun!

It is now October. The historical society has at least three events before we formally close out the year. After a careful inspection of the museum roof, the board voted to spend $3,500 for repairs designed to head off probable leaks. I am happy to report that because of operating budget savings over the past several years, society members were not asked for additional funds to make these repairs. At the end of October society volunteers will man the “brat stand” sponsored by CUBS, a Freeport supermarket. All profits from the Friday and Saturday event will go to the society. Two years ago this same opportunity netted the society $1,500. That amount is twelve per cent of our current operating budget. Finally, there will be the annual historical society Christmas party on Tuesday, December 10. It’s free and open to members and anyone interested in the work of the society.

We are winding down 2013 and looking ahead to 2014. In these unsettled times it’s hard to predict with any certainty what will happen next year. However, I do want to assure you that whatever the society does it will always be to further the purpose of the organization: (1) To collect, preserve and interpret the history of the Cedarville area; (2) To inform our members and the general public of what we learn through our efforts.
Despite my comment in the previous paragraph, it is possible for me to project that certain activities will be on the historical society’s agenda in 2014. These and others will probably be acted upon at the November board meeting.

I would expect the society will continue the June and July free Friday night outdoor movies. They have proved to be quite successful with attendance growing each year.

The February lunch, the Memorial Day parade and picnic, the Jane Addams Festival and the Christmas party do not appear to be in jeopardy. These events and the free movies are great ways to bring the entire community together and to draw attention to the work of the historical society. This year’s new afternoon format for the JA Festival improved attendance at the event, but there is always room for improvement.

This year we had five history related evening programs for the membership and general public. Scheduling interesting programs that will attract a large audience is always difficult, but I think our board will be up to the task. The creation of new, informative and interesting exhibits is equally difficult, but again it must be done if we are to meet our historical society responsibilities.

The board is always open to suggestions for programs, events and exhibits from the membership.

Our operating budget this year is under $13,000 and I am confident we will not exceed that figure. We have no debt and we never have had any debt. Our membership dues and year end membership contributions have historically covered almost two thirds of our operating expenses for the last several years. Sales, admissions, program attendance and non-membership contributions are responsible for the rest.

As I wrote last year, if you think we have done a good job in 2013, please consider a year end contribution that is both generous and appropriate for you when you renew your membership for 2014. Even a small amount means a lot to us because it is a vote of confidence. Our board will do its best to keep expenses down and give you a product you can be proud of. You can also help by renewing your membership with this first notice rather than waiting for the third or fourth. Each mailing to the 151 members costs about 50 cents and time.

Thanks for reading,

Jim Bade
President
Cedarville Area Historical Society

BOARD MEMBERS: Narcissa Engle, vice president; Galen Bertram, treasurer; Sharon Barmore, secretary; Carol Meyers, Steve Myers, Dale Priewe, Diane Hagemann, Don Franz, directors.
2014 Membership Offer

The Cedarville Area Historical Society invites you to become a member of the society. If you accept our invitation, please fill out the form below and mail your check to the Cedarville Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 336, Cedarville, IL 61013. Individual membership is $15, family membership is $25. Your January through December membership entitles you to receive copies of the monthly newsletter and other communications and free admission to the museum. Most importantly, you will be supporting the work of the historical society.

NAME __________________________________________

ADDRESS ________________________________________

CITY ____________________________ STATE ______ ZIP _______

E—MAIL (if you would like to receive the newsletters electronically rather than by mail. The historical society encourages this because it saves the society more than $7 annually in printing, postage and envelope expenses per member. The individual member also benefits because all color photos are transmitted in color at no additional cost. Last year 67 of our 151 members chose this option.)

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INDIVIDUAL _______ ($15) FAMILY ___________ ($25)

The historical society spends only the money it has on hand. It has never borrowed to fund any of its activities or restoration projects. Membership money, museum and program admissions, special events and sales of books are not enough to cover each year’s expenses. We need additional help in the form of contributions from members who are pleased with what we are doing and want to see our efforts continue. If the society’s activities and accomplishments meet your expectations, consider giving us a financial helping hand. Contributions to the society are tax deductible because we are a non-profit organization with 501 (c) (3) status from the United States Internal Revenue Service.

I am enclosing an additional contribution of ___________ to the Cedarville Area Historical Society. These funds are to be used for ongoing operational expenses and/or restoration projects undertaken by the society.