

President's Remarks – Jenny Quigney 937-459-8090

At this time when the newsletter is being composed for print our village, and the rest of the world, is doing our best to protect ourselves and our loved ones against the COVID-19 virus.

April Open House is cancelled. We are waiting to hear the County's decision about the April 18<sup>th</sup> Trash Bash.

Just as we look forward each year to spring bringing a fresh and new start, lets look to May and the summer months with optimism that we will be able to have our scheduled programs and the village Old Fashioned Days festival. Take time to be outside, watch the trees leaf out and the flower blossoms unfold.

I would like to recap a few things that have occurred in the last few months.

First and foremost we held our annual membership meeting in January and enjoyed the pizza and salads. A good time was had by all. It was at this meeting that the election of officers was held. All officers have remained the same and most of the board members as well. The one exception was Larry Wallace, he has decided to step down from this position. It is with great appreciation for all he has devoted to the organization that I accepted his resignation. Larry served three years as president and several years on the board of directors. As stated before his time was and is greatly appreciated. On that note we are welcoming a new member to the board of directors, David Kepler. David began his term in March.

Annette Stewart and Kathy Daughtery have been busy at work redesigning and updating our web site. Make a note of our new web site address: [awths.org](http://awths.org) and new email address is [awths@awths.org](mailto:awths@awths.org). Please check the web site to learn all the information the site has to offer. Thank you to Annette and Kathy for all their work.

A special thanks to Jerry Synder and his crew for donating and installing the new front porch floor. It looks great.

We look forward to having Hannah Weist revisit May 7<sup>th</sup> with a new program. Plans are underway for the Saturday morning Coffee and Conversation Series for the months of June, July and August.

Two fund raisers are planned for the next few months. The first is the annual Trash Bash held in April then in August AWTHS will again man the north fair gate. As always we appreciate any donation of your time for these activities and also help with reference and genealogy materials, to host during open hours, help provide refreshments or help with keeping the house presentable, otherwise known as cleaning. Please keep in mind "many hands make light work". Please don't wait to be asked, contact myself or a board member to volunteer or with any questions or concerns.

That's all for now folks but be sure to watch for us in the Old Fashioned Days Parade. The historical society will be open Saturday during OFD from 1-4 p.m. to view displays and for research. During this time the newly formed Arcanum Preservation Society will host a student APS logo art show and reception. APS members will be there to answer questions about revitalizing the City Building and Opera House. Yes, Arcanum has an opera house.

**Program      May 7<sup>th</sup>      7:00 p.m.      Hannah Weist Presents "History's Dirty Laundry"**

Many of you will remember Hannah Weist from her presentation "Layers of History: Women's Fashion During the War Between the State" here a few years ago.

Hannah Wiest is a history enthusiast both personally and professionally. She works as a historical interpreter at Carriage Hill Farm, an 1880s living history site, in Huber Heights.

Through Hannah's historical research she has written a program sure to entertain the men as well as the ladies.

**History's Dirty Laundry**

*Sort, wash, dry, fold, repeat...not quite. Before the automatic washer and drier drastically reduced labor, the washday woes were real. Women across the social spectrum dreaded the task, and laundresses were a common household expense throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Modern innovation saved effort and allowed women to redirect their energy, but it also replaced technical understanding with destructive, all-in-one products. From the chemistry of stains to the mechanics of starching and everything in between researcher Hannah Wiest will present the step by step process of dealing with history's dirty laundry.*

Join us Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. when Hannah will tell us the "dirty truth"....

**Washboards Made in Arcanum \* Star Manufacturing Company 1909 – 1916 \* 11 South High Street**

The washboard factory was started and run in connection with the J. M. Mellinger Planing Mill in an effort by the Mellinger sons to save the mill. While it worked for a period of time, the mill was out of business by 1916.

Read more in ***Arcanum ... a secret place***, the 1999 Arcanum Sesquicentennial book, page 252.

**Summer Coffee and Conversation Series****10:00 a.m.**

We look forward to our Saturday morning conversations, discussing the *Who, What and Where* of our local communities in days past. The three sessions are sure to spark a memory we feel you will want to share. Bring friends and enjoy light refreshments while reminiscing and learning.

**June 13 10:00      David Kepler      "Who are my ancestors, and what can I learn about them?"**

David will share his obsession in researching his ancestors, his preoccupation with where he came from and what he has found. He is meeting multiple-great-grandparents, whom he never met and are long dead, and he "bores" others in a nice way with their stories. Some of the surnames David has researched through his father Don's side include, Spitler, Wise, Ravelly, Condon, and Baker. On his mother's side, Ruth Blumenstock Kepler, are the surnames of Blumenstock, Allread, Hangen, Delaplaine, Moist, Rose and Gish.

Come and listen, ask questions and share information about any relationships to David's family you might have.

**July 11      10:00      "The Day Words Went Up in Flames"**

**A total Loss of the Arcanum Public Library, Post Office , Arcanum Lockers and Clark Hardware.**

How old were you and where did you live when fire consumed the huge two storied Weisenbarger building? Did your folks have meat stored in the lockers? Did you know that hundreds of books were donated to the library from all over the United States to replace those lost in the fire? You may know as a result of the fire our current Post Office was built. Join us to share your memories of that day. The conversation will start with when our panel of guests first heard the fire sirens. You are welcome to bring photos, newspaper articles and any memorabilia which help tell the story of that fire and what followed. And of course we want you to tell your story, too.

**August 8      10:00      "Arcanum - Today and The Many Tomorrows" - Gregory Baumble, Arcanum Mayor**

It is fun to talk about the days of yesteryears, but in this session the conversation will be about now and the future. We look forward to a chat with Mayor Baumble. Mayor Baumble will bring us up to date on what is being planned for our village. We may hear about the prospect of expanding Ivester Park and upgrades to the baseball park.

Bring your questions and ideas, Mayor Baumble wants to know what's on your mind.

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**Membership – Sharon Troutwine** 692-5128

Thank you to all who have paid your 2020 membership dues. At this time we have 19 singles, 39 families, 3 sponsorships, and 4 lifetime memberships. We have 12 members yet to pay their dues for the current year- be sure to check your records.

Welcome to our newest members: Sue Besecker, Phil & Karen Garbig, Nathan & Maria Kendig, and James & Beth Piel. We would also like to announce long time member Jean Auckerman has become a life time member. Thank you, Jean.

Encourage friends and family to become members to help preserve the past for future generations.

**House Rentals and House Keepers**

*Our AWTHS house is available to rent for parties and get-togethers. The fee has recently been raised from \$75 to \$100. Renters have full use of the main floor of the house and are issued the key the day before the event. Those wishing to rent the house can contact Carolyn Furlong, 548-6556.*

*We want to thank Carolyn Furlong and Fred Troutwine for their many years of having the house ready for renters. Now, we are asking for help from our members. Would you be willing to handle readying the house for rentals for one month? You would be the Keeper Of The House—your duties would be to make sure the house is clean., You would meet with the renters giving them the key and rental forms. Some months may have several rentals and some months may have none.*

*We thank the following for volunteering the past few months: Jenny Quigney, Annette Stewart, Barb Deis, Joyce Colville, Sharon Troutwine, and Bev Rench, Please call Sharon, 937-692-5128 if you could help with this project.*

**Farmers Market****Veterans Park on George Street****9:00 – 12:00**

June 6<sup>th</sup> is the opening day for the Farmers Market continuing into September--it all depends on the growing season. Shop for baked goods, produce and hand crafted items. Vendors are welcome to set up any Saturday they have goods to sell. Support the vendors while enjoying visiting with friends.

**Christmas Bazaar 2020**

Mark your calendar for November 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. When you think Thanksgiving, think AWTHS Christmas Bazaar. Our Bazaar is always the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving. Gently used Christmas items can be left on the back porch throughout the year. Your donations are appreciated.

**Southern Darke County History**

Annette Stewart 417-3746

**Hosting**

Host volunteers are needed for the upcoming year. Greeting guests, helping with questions, and possibly the reference library are some duties. If interested, give Annette a call or email. Come and assist on Open Hours days to learn. Volunteers also needed for summer Coffee & Conversation sessions including refreshments. Contact Barb Deis regarding refreshment help.

**Website and Email Update**

Please update your email address book to AWTHS email: [awths@awths.org](mailto:awths@awths.org). The "newly designed" web site is: [awths.org](http://awths.org). Please check it out. Short blogs are included, which also are on Facebook, along with events, updated calendar and availability to book the facility for rentals.

**New Acquisitions for Research**

Thank you to those who have donated acquisitions. Sue Pitzer donated several boxes of books for reading on historical events as well as numerous research materials: early American Legion program, plat books including late 1895's Montgomery Co, Frazier Wilson's Darke Co. History, History of Laura, Funeral records from Fisher-Oliver in Ansonia 1908-1939. Come in and check them out!

**Donating Library or Research Acquisitions**

We love and appreciate quality reference materials. However, we are currently running out of room in our downstairs library room. We would ask for now to please wait on donations in this area until we can reorganize some materials or obtain more space. Digital copies of photos are still being accepted.

We encourage all making donations now or in the future to please follow a few basic guidelines: items need to pertain to Southern Darke County (2) items are not duplicate (check our reference list on web site or ask (3) and items be in good shape when donating. Please call before donating. Old crumbling newspapers are really not useable. We do have a "wish list"-just ask!

We have plenty of copies of old newspapers from the 1950 celebration, the 1950's and 1960's basketball teams and the Arcanum tornado. Thank you. This will help free up space for new acquisitions.

**Researching Your Old House**

This is a question our historical society is asked frequently. People move into the community, especially Arcanum, and ask about the history of their house or property. The age of house, who lived there and events are common starters and important to find out.

First we recommend looking at your property deed or title. If you only have the last seller you will need to start at the local courthouse in the recorders department. A search needs to be done of past home owners and years of purchase.

Second, talk to surrounding neighbors and residents of the town where you purchased. If someone has lived in the same place or address for a number of years, they might know about your current house and have stories about the past owners or even old photos. Contacts and networking are important.

Third, once you have a list of past property owners, look for the names in the census records. We have some of these books at AWTHS Reference Library. Other sources or places to look include: Arcanum or Greenville Public Library, the Darke Genealogical Society at Garst in Greenville and looking on-line thru Family Search or Ancestry.

Fourth, look in old newspapers for the names or addresses of the property. AWTHS has limited info from the Arcanum Newspapers. Other libraries may have papers on microfilm.

Fifth, google the names on the internet and see what search engines can find. Those who have researched their family's history and worked on family trees may have already found this information. Their search may not include all the names in the deeds but every find is a gold mine. In searching also put out inquires for old photos of the property or the family.

These are a few starters to get you pointed in the right direction. Please consider a copy of your report for the AWTHS library files.

**Home Owners from the past and Addresses AWTHS has on file. Some include Old Photos as well as Present.**

Charles Williams and William and Ira Dull. Old and Present Photo.	*	405 W. George Charles Smith. Old and Present Photo.
302 W. South Fred Harris and Metzgar. Old and Present Photo		
Clark Home Corner of Main and George-Gone. Old Photo only.	*	Founders Lot on North. Color Photos.
Kaylor Home First was east side of South Main. Moved to Locust Lot 327. Old and Present Photo		
2 North Main John W. Smith Home. Present Home.	*	4 North Main Ozias Smith. Some B/W photos and present.
3 North Main T.D. Smith- Gone today. Old Photo.		1 North Main Zimmerman- Gone Today. Old Photo.

### “in love and fidelity, George Sprecher Civil War Letters”

AWTHS recently received the book “*in love and fidelity, George Sprecher Civil War Letters*” from Larry F. Carter, great- great grandson of George Sprecher.

Mr. Sprecher, an Arcanum resident, wrote to his wife, Sarah Ann Renshaw Sprecher, during his time in the military writing nearly every other day. The book contains transcribed copies of these letters and other documents.

George was mustered into the Ohio 34<sup>th</sup> Regiment Volunteer Infantry, Company K in November of 1861 at the age of 53. The army was looking for volunteers for the Medical corp. He volunteered for that because it paid 25 cents more than the regular foot soldier.

The book contains transcribed copies of the letters he wrote to his wife giving her instructions on running their mercantile store as well as the post office both located in Arcanum. Mr. Sprecher wrote about his camp life, including many individuals from Arcanum and Greenville. He talks of some battles his unit fought in. George mustered out October 1864.

It is interesting to learn the Arcanum family names of the men serving with Sprecher. George lists names of those he knew of who were wounded or killed in 34<sup>th</sup> Regt. OVI Companies C, D, E, F, G July 1864, also Companies A, B, C, D, F, and G in a battle near Winchester, VA, Sept. 19, 1864

Sarah was a strong woman, enabling her to carry on the responsibilities of running the business and post office as well as raising their family for 3 years by herself. In a letter to George she tells of a fight she had to break up between two women in their store..

A map sent with the book indicates George owned property on what is now the downtown parking lot and also near the Rose Post, both on George Street.

The book is available for research in our library. It is also available at the Arcanum Public Library.

### Horseshoe pitching – A yard game enjoyed by generations – before cornhole

Submitted by Don L Schlosser, March 2019

I knew Harold Anthony during 21 years while I was active in the Darke County Horseshoe Club. Harold was affectionately known as the “paddle guy” and “Mel” to our group. During organized pitching there is a scoreboard on every court. Each scoreboard has a “paddle” with the player’s name. Harold was the guy who made the paddles in his home workshop.

This activity may sound trivial, but Greenville used to host: summer leagues, Ringer Classic (open to all players across the US and Canada), Ohio championship. Tournaments each day at the Darke County Fair, Darke County club tournament, winter leagues and the Snowball Open.

Some of these tournaments drew close to 300 pitchers. Making the paddles was one task, the other was to get them ready for scoreboards as each class was due to take the courts. Those of us who worked in the office would make up the classes and pass the names along to Harold.

Since it was a family sport you might, for example, have three people from the same family in competition. For example, George, Thelma and Brian Neff.

Harold also was known as “Mel”. Things have changed recently, but for many years the horseshoe club used the Chicken Kitchen building at the fair grounds for winter pitching. They would take out sections of the concrete floor to install three courts and also put in temporary heat. Leagues were pitched most nights and a Snowball Tournament was held over several weekends.

During the tournament there was a need for limited food service. Don’t know why, but Harold was tasked with food service. There was a TV show that featured Mel’s Diner. The name stuck. Harold was content to watch the pitching and crank out hot dogs, burgers, chips, soda and candy. Mostly in an electric frying pan.

During the summer months his wife Marge joined us. Didn’t know the rest of his kids, but Jerry used to pitch when he was a teen. He won the Ohio boy’s junior championship in 1970.

*Editor’s note: The Darke County Horseshoe Club is in its 60<sup>th</sup> year continuing to host many of the same tournaments. The club uses the Domestic Arts Building on the site of the former Chicken Kitchen for winter pitching.*

### History of Arcanum Books for Purchase

<i>The Secret Town - The Story of the Founding of Arcanum, Ohio and William Gunder Family</i>	\$20
<i>Arcanum, Ohio Business History (1852-1968)</i>	\$25
<i>Arcanum Chronicles Includes - Opera House, Sports, Parades &amp; Celebrations, Brig. Gen. Ed Sigerfoos, Grassville Quartette, Christmas, Chautauqua, Fast Horses, District 7 Ithaca School</i>	\$20
<i>Arcanum Chronicles Volume 2 - History of Fire Department and Arcanum Public Library</i>	\$18

**Dreamland Theatre William and Harry Chancellor , Proprietors**

Located at 108 West George Street the Dreamland Theatre opened in 1907. The theatre was part of the Arcanum life and business community for many years. The name was changed to Ritz Theatre in 1927. The following are excerpts from the book “Arcanum, Ohio Business History (1852 thru 1968) written by Anita Short.

*The first full length showing began August 7, 1907 and was the Pathe hand-colored “The Life of Christ Passion Plays” which were shown in serial series over a week’s time.*

*The theatre would show many films still recognized as classics of their time. Two examples include “Wizard of Oz” which was shown at the Ritz on November 17-18-19, 1939 and “Gone with the Wind” being shown on April 2-3-4-5-6, 1941.*

*William (Bill) Chancellor passed away at his home on West First Street on March 29, 1953, unmarried. Harry had married late in life and continued to run the Ritz, possibly hoping to obtain 50 years of service to the community. However, the new “Drive-In theatres” were hurting the admissions at large movie houses, and a small local market could not withstand the economics of time.*

The large film projector and ticket booth used at the Ritz are on display at AWTHS. Stop in to see them.

The theatre was located in the building which is now Tom Wetzel’s antique store, “The Olde Nostalgia Shoppe”.

**Arcanum Preservation Society Up Date**

The **Arcanum Preservation Society, Inc.** has been hard at work. The Facilities committee has been granted access to the old town hall to start the process of measuring the rooms to do detailed CAD drawings so that we can start to formulate restoration plans. The Finance committee has completed and submitted the paperwork for the 501c3 and is working on putting together their plan for fundraising (grants, sponsors, etc). The Heritage committee is working on gathering historical data about the old town hall as well as searching for old photos to help with restoration accuracy. The recently formed Membership committee is getting established by beginning work on a membership drive. The Communications, Events & Social Presence committee has been working on community presence, looking for ways to work with other organizations and businesses in town.

APS has started working on some exciting upcoming events including a Logo Art Contest with the students from Arcanum and Franklin-Monroe high schools. We will hold a reception the Saturday of Old Fashioned Days May 16<sup>th</sup> from 1-4pm at AWTHS where we will announce the winner. Be sure to watch for information to be released about other upcoming events.

**APS’** monthly member meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Due to an ongoing project at the old town hall the meetings are temporarily being held at the Family of God Ministries on South St. Interested in helping, have suggestions or just want to watch our progress? Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter. You can also contact us at [arcanumpreservationsociety@gmail.com](mailto:arcanumpreservationsociety@gmail.com).

Angela Herron, Committee Chair - Communications, Events & Social Presence Committee

<b>2020 Membership Form</b>		<b>Clip and Mail to AWTHS, P.O. Box 4, Arcanum, OH 45304</b>	
Name _____	New _____	Renewal _____	
Phone Number _____	Receive Newsletter by Email? Add email _____		
Address _____			
City, State and Zip Code _____			
Annual Fees	___\$15 Single	___\$25 Family	___\$50 Sponsorship ___\$150 Corporate ___\$1000 Lifetime
Your additional tax deductible contributions are also greatly appreciated \$ _____			
Please check the area where you would like to help.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Acquisitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Ways & Means	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Sites	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Flower Garden Care
<input type="checkbox"/> Yard Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Publications	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt A Highway
<input type="checkbox"/> Displays	<input type="checkbox"/> Help Reference Librarian	<input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy	<input type="checkbox"/> Type Research Papers
<input type="checkbox"/> Serve as Host/Hostess during Open Hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Bazaar	<input type="checkbox"/> Organize Refreshments for Membership Meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Monthly Keeper of the House

**Calendar of Events**

*Visitors Open House Hours* First Saturday of the Month 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. \* (Some changes follow)  
Changes- dates & times from April 4 to April 18, 1-4 p \* May 2 to May 16, 1-4 p \* July 4 to July 11, Noon-3 p  
*Euchre Party 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month 7:00 p.m. Card Party cancelled May 15 due to OFD*  
**Board Meetings** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m. Note the change from Monday to Tuesday.  

- *Farmers Market Saturday mornings 9:00 a.m. June-July-August \**

May 8, 2020	Serve Arcanum – Students workday at AWTHS (rain date May 8)	9:00 a.m.
May 7, 2020	Program: Hannah Weist	7:00 p.m.
May 16, 2020	Old Fashioned Days <i>Parade</i> 11:00 a.m. * <i>Open House Hours</i> 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	
	Arcanum Preservation Society Logo Art Contest and Reception	1:00-4:00 p.m.
June 13, 2020	Coffee & Conversation: Discovering Ancestors - David Kepler	10:00 a.m.
July 11, 2020	Coffee & Conversation: 1959 Downtown Arcanum Fire	10:00 a.m.
July 11, 2020	Research and Genealogy Library open following C&C	Noon –3:00 p.m.
August 8, 2020	Coffee & Conversation: Gregory Baumble, Arcanum Mayor	10:00 a.m.

On Going Projects  
Hall Rentals – Carolyn Furlong 548-6556 \* Aluminum Recycling – Lynn Trump 548-6116 \*  
Donation of Appreciated Stocks – Richard Troutwine 692-5128 or Todd Durham, 2<sup>nd</sup> National Bank, 548-2206 \*  
Adopt-A-Highway – Jim Deis 662-0119 \* Arcanum Books by Anita Short and Bill Gunder for sale at AWTHS,  
contact a board member, or through our website.

Gentle Reminder

Pay your 2020 AWTHS dues. \*\*\*\*\* Offer to help with the many responsibilities needed to keep AWTHS viable.  
Encourage friends to join you for scheduled programs. \*\*\*\*\* Support the Farmers Market vendors.

<u><b>AWTHS Officers</b></u>			<u><b>Directors</b></u>		
President	Jenny Quigney	459 -8090	Keith Furlong	548-6556	Dave Flora 692-8413
Vice President	Dick Troutwine	692-5128	Joyce Colville	692-8686	Fred Troutwine 692-8939
Treasurer	Jerry Kramer	692-5764	Jim Deis	662-0119	David Kepler 692-5908
Secretary	Connie Norris Wells	692-8085			