



Established 1984

www.nktelco.net/historicalsociety

Our Focus and Goal Is to PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE

Spring 2013

German dinner to be part of annual meeting and German historian to share his expertise

Thanks to Rev. Jim Egbert, a Shelby County native and current Cincinnati resident, this year's annual meeting will begin with a German dinner.

The complete German celebration was the brainchild of Egbert when he found out that the speaker for the evening would be Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann of Cincinnati, author and editor of numerous books on German-American history and culture.

THE MEAL

Egbert, who works part-time at the HofBrau Haus in Newport, Kentucky, will be preparing a meal of pretzels and cheese dip, soup, schweinbraten (Bavarian pork roast), Oktoberfest chicken, smoked and fresh mettwurst, rot kohl (spiced red cabbage), sauerkraut with pork, haluska (special fried cabbage), mashed potatoes, German potato salad and rot grutze (berries with vanilla pudding topped with whipped cream).

COST AND TICKETS

The meal, costing \$6.00, will be a buffet-style dinner beginning at 6:00 P.M. at the American Legion in New Knoxville. Tickets can be purchased at the Village Market or the New Knoxville Library or from any historical society board member. Anyone from out

of town who would like to come for the dinner may contact Edythe Henschen by phone at 419-753-2104 or by e-mail at beep@nktelco.net.

Assisting with serving the meal and providing entertainment will be New Knoxville German students of Frau Kathy McClain.

Anyone not wanting to attend the dinner may attend just the business meeting and hear the speaker for the

evening.

WHY TOLZMANN?

Trustee Mike Neuman secured Dr. Tolzmann for this year's annual meeting. He first heard of him during a weekend in the Cincinnati area. He and his wife Vicki ate at the Hofbrau Haus, and he picked up several brochures there advertising German Heritage tours given throughout the Cincinnati area by Dr. Tolzmann.

"I also saw where he had written several books relating to German history around Cincinnati," said Neuman. "All this got me thinking about what was Cincinnati like for our ancestors when they arrived there. I have always wondered how our ancestors found their way around Cincinnati and met up with others from their native regions of Germany."

Neuman said he was curious about those who didn't come north immediately and how they found housing and work in Cincinnati. Did those who lived there for a few years live among other Germans from the same regions of Germany?

"Like at New Bremen, the first settlers there had formed a land company to buy land for its members," he said. "Did all these people know each other before or did they meet in Cincinnati and from there join

continued on page 2



This bicycle is typical of those made and sold at the turn of the twentieth century by Louis Meckstroth in his first shop at the northeast corner of Mill and German streets. Items and photos like this one will be available to peruse during the dinner before the annual meeting.

MEMBERSHIP: Single - \$10/Year \$50/Lifetime
Couple - \$18/Year \$100/Lifetime
Student - \$1/Year

Checks may be mailed to Edythe Henschen, 07653 St. Rt. 219.
New Knoxville, OH 45871

Attention, NKHS members!
Would you be interested in serving as a society officer or board member? Contact Janean Oberlander at 419-753-2077.

together? It's information like that I have wondered about and hoped that some of these kinds of questions might get answered."

When the Neumans got home from their weekend trip, Mike did a little more research about German history around Cincinnati, and Dr. Tolzmann's name always came up as one of the leading historians of the region there.

"Even though we aren't directly part of the Cincinnati region," said Neuman, "most all of us who are from the 'old families' do have an ancestral bond to Cincinnati. I doubt there are very many families in western Ohio that are of German heritage that at least one or more of their ancestors didn't spend a period of time in Cincinnati before heading north to where they ended up building a new life in America."

Not only did Neuman think Dr. Tolzmann might be able to shed some light on the connection of those who stopped in Cincinnati before moving north, but he also felt Dr. Tolzmann's speaking at New Knoxville might be a way for him to learn of this area's German heritage and see German history from a rural perspective.

"I feel this region of Ohio has just as much to offer some one researching German history as what Cincinnati does, just in a different and more widespread way," Neuman said. "Think of how long Platt [Deutsch] has been spoken routinely in this region of Ohio, I doubt even in Cincinnati that the German language was kept alive to the degree that we grew up experiencing."

TOLZMANN'S RESUME

Dr. Tolzmann has received many awards, including the Federal Cross of Merit from Germany, the Ohioana Book Award, the German-American of the Year Award, and Outstanding Achievement Award of the Society for German-American Studies. An emeritus librarian and professor, he served as curator of the German-Americana Collection and director of German American Studies at the University of Cincinnati and is well known as "Mr. German-Americana."

Currently, he serves as president of the German-American Citizens League of Greater Cincinnati and as curator of its German Heritage Museum. He also serves as historian of the Covington-Cincinnati Bridge Committee and the Steuben Society of America and is a trustee of the Beer Baron Hall of Fame.

Because of the scope of Dr. Tolzmann's presentation, others from out-

side New Knoxville may be interested in learning more about Cincinnati's German connection. Attending the dinner is optional, but for those who are interested in the dinner, reservations are required.

So purchase tickets at the New Knoxville Library or Village Market or from any board member (See page 6) or call or e-mail treasurer Edythe Henschen.

A message from the president

Dear Friends and Society Members,

When I decided to take on the presidency of the New Knoxville Historical Society, I really wasn't sure if I could do the job successfully. The only organization I was ever president of was the Girls Athletic Association, that school organization for us girls who never got a chance to play interscholastic sports.

What I have discovered is that the job has been made easier because of the help of the officers, trustees and board members. Each one contributes his or her own expertise to help our society flourish.

I would like to thank those board members. Rusty Elsass handles all displays and makes sure we are aware of the maintenance needed on the interior and exterior of the buildings. Mike Neuman, Allen Schroer and Kirk Stienecker help with the organization of open houses and the physical labor needed throughout the year. Larry Niemeyer, who schedules the lawn mowing every summer, was our organization's first treasurer and is our photographer and keeps the web site up to date. Karen Niemeyer, the historical society's first secretary, keeps the membership records as well as address updates. Roberta Tanzini, historian since 1994, keeps a scrapbook of any related New Knoxville activities, writes the entries for the *Village Voice* and is a big help with the newsletter and at open houses.

Diane Fledderjohann, secretary since 1995, keeps accurate records and takes care of publicity for events and other correspondence as well as looking after the flowers at the Heritage Center.

Edythe Henschen took over as treasurer this past year and not only keeps accurate books, but helps at open houses and work days. Ali Carpenter, who just completed a three-year term as trustee, helps wherever there is a need.

Finally, I want to thank Myron Fledderjohann, Vernon "Ducky" Feldwisch, and Lloyd "Red" Kuck, the elders in the group, who provide historical knowledge as well as 58 years of combined wisdom from serving the historical society. Ducky and Red are retiring from active service this spring. Many thanks to them for all the years they gave the historical society. (See the article on page 6.)

During the past year we have continued to make improvements at the Heritage Center in order to preserve our past. The front porch floor was replaced and the outside house trim was painted. We also sealed the log cabin. Thanks to Kirk Stienecker, who took on that job.

Board members held a fall clean-up day on Oct. 6, cleaning flower beds and trimming trees and bushes. We also manned the east entrance by the horse barns at the Auglaize County Fair. Thank you to all who helped with this. We are always looking for volunteers for this fund raiser, so notify me or any board member if you are interested in helping with this.

I also hope you join us at the annual meeting. Our first-ever dinner should prove to be a culinary delight, especially if you enjoy German food.

Janean Oberlander

August open house pays tribute to early area transportation

Antique automobiles, bicycles, a police car, trains and even a school bus and horse-drawn hearse were part of the displays at the August open house, which once again opened the doors to the gymnasium in the Hoge Brush building across the street.

Coordinated by Rusty Elsass and Allen Schroer, the day allowed visitors to spend an afternoon exploring the area's first modes of transportation.

The most extensive display included a number of antique automobiles belonging to members of a Dayton area antique automobile club.

Elsass happened to meet members of the club in Sidney, discussed their coming to the open house and they were more than willing to accommodate us.

Before the automobile rolled into town, bicycles were popular. Addis and Bill Katterheinrich, collectors of antique bicycles, provided a display of several from their collection.

The two bicycles on the right were made at the turn of the century. The larger front wheel required a skilled rider.

Three unique vehicles were part of the display. One was a Ford Fairlane police cruiser, owned by Sue Miller of Celina. William and Carol Prenger of Minster brought their restored 1930 AA Ford school bus.



Katherine, Callum and Emily Dimmick stand by the door of the antique school bus on display at the August open house.



These antique automobiles were four of eight that were on display at the August open house.

Photos by Larry Niemeyer

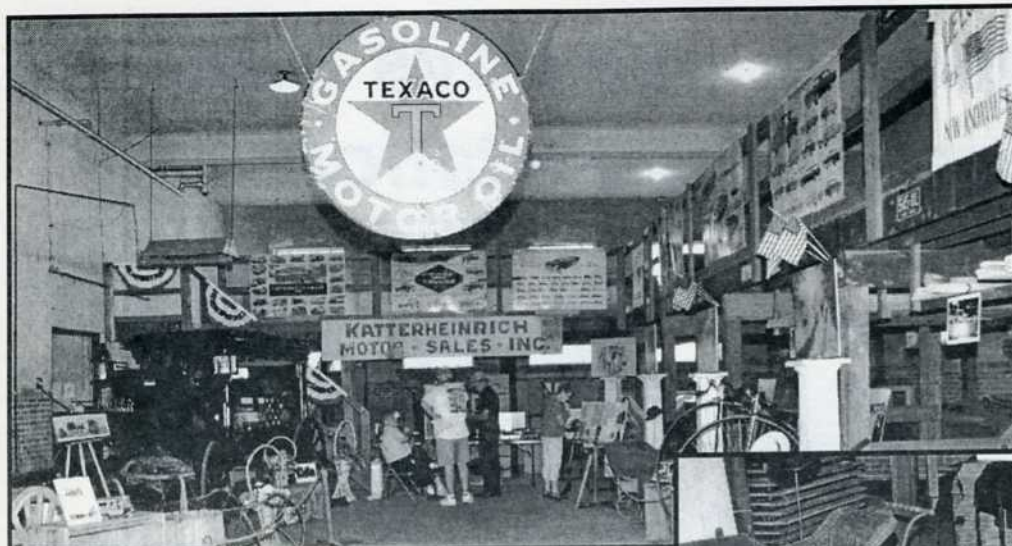


Miller Brothers Funeral Home had their horse-drawn Civil War era hearse on display in the gymnasium and even brought in two Percheron horses used to pull the hearse in parades and at an occasional funeral. Although the hearse now bears the name Miller Brothers, it was purchased in West Virginia from a friend of the brothers about 10 years ago, according to Kent. The brothers restored the hearse to the shiny vehicle they own today.

Dan Meck-

stroth, former local resident, brought his knowledge of the railroads in the area. Meckstroth's model train and print displays showed how the railroad played a role in the early development of New Knoxville even though not a single railroad track travels through the school district. Pictured below with Greg and Betty Bergman, he discusses the railroad in the area, especially the Nickel Plate's Dutch Run, which traveled on the west side of Minster and New Bremen.





Clockwise from top: Period advertising of oil products and automobiles and vintage transportation photos were on display in the old gymnasium now owned by Hoge Brush during the August open house. The large posters hanging from the loft were car displays used by Katterheinrich Motor Sales. Children's transportation from a buggy to wagons to pedal cars came from the late 1800's to the 1940's. The 1963 Ford Fairlane replica of the Mayberry squad car is complete with working lights and siren. Allen Schroer's display of vintage toy vehicles line the shelves of this display, which included oil cans, advertisements, and even a bowling shirt from Warner's Garage.



LEARNING ABOUT TOMBSTONE RUBBINGS. Karen Bennett, a board certified genealogist from Chattanooga, Ohio, spoke at the June open house. She shared with visitors how she uses a wax-type bar to take tombstone rubbings. Cemetery and German research are Bennett's special interests. She also spoke to a group of interested citizens earlier in the month prior to a Saturday workshop at the German Reformed Cemetery at the corner of South and West streets. Sponsored by the Auglaize County Historical Society, the event allowed participants to do tombstone rubbings, and they also helped in restoring the placement of some of the broken markers.



GOOD MUSIC AND GOOD FOOD. Mike Neuman's homemade chili, corn bread, pumpkin donuts and cider were on the menu at the Autumn Heritage Day in September. The high school band played several numbers, and Roberta Tanzini and Janean Oberlander shared some history of the music program at New Knoxville School between songs. Pictured above are band uniforms from the 1950's and 1980's, the band director's uniform worn by director Carl Frische, a vintage majorette uniform plus Lawrence Meckstroth's silver saxophone from the late 1920's and several photos and information from the earliest school music programs.

Katterheinrich Motor Sales approaches century of serving community and area

It has been a mainstay along the 200 block of South Main Street for nearly a century. It is also one of the oldest continuously family-owned Chevrolet dealers in the state.

Katterheinrich Motor Sales wasn't always a Chevrolet dealer, however, when brothers Noah and Elmer Katterheinrich opened the business in 1915.

"Their early business dealt with selling Dodge products and Samson tractors. They also sold Atwater-Kent radios and were involved with the Delco Light Plants that electrified the rural areas in the 1920's" (*Our Times* 43).

Younger brother Elmer was drafted into the army during World War I and served in Europe. When he returned, "the brothers erected the present building and became involved in a new corporation, General Motors" (43). Katterheinrich Motor Sales became a direct franchise on Mar. 22, 1927. The agreement gave them an exclusive right with General Motors to sell new cars and trucks.

Current owner-operator Tom Katterheinrich, Elmer's grandson, said during those first years, Elmer had to drive to Detroit to pick up a new Chevrolet automobile.

During the Depression of the 1930's, Noah became involved with the operation of the New Knoxville Telephone Company in addition to serving as Auglaize County treasurer. Elmer, meanwhile, was elected mayor and chaired the centennial celebration in 1936.

In 1946 Noah sold "his



This photo from the early 1950's shows owner Elmer Katterheinrich in front of a new 1954 Chevrolet Impala. Behind the car on the left is son Howard, who ran the sales department, and on the right at the gasoline tank is son Allen, who was in charge of parts and service.

interest in the partnership to . . . Elmer. It was then that Howard, Elmer's son, became associated with the enterprise. In 1951 Allen, another son, came into the business" (44).

The original building, seen in the above photo, had two large double doors in front through which the cars entered.

"Howard was in charge of sales," said Tom, his son, "and Allen was in charge of parts and service."

The two sons weren't the only family members involved. Elmer's wife Frances walked across the street from their home to help.

"Frances was an integral part of the business," said Tom. "She did all of the book work."

An addition at the northeast side of the building in the early 1960's provided a larger service department.

A stone lot just north of the building held used cars and trucks.

The business later bought a garden and a brick home to the south, and the garden was converted into another automobile display lot.

Allen died in 1976 and Elmer in 1985, at which time Howard took over the ownership. Howard died in 1987, making Tom and his sister Kathleen the shareholders. After buying his sister's shares, Tom was designated as dealer/operator.

A lawyer since 1978 with a practice in St. Marys, Tom was required by General Motors to move his practice to New Knoxville to be available on a daily basis.

Tom remodeled the brick home on the corner of Main and South streets and established his practice in New Knoxville.

The business was targeted for closure about four years ago when General Motors faced bankruptcy. Katterheinrich received a letter from GM, stating that his business

was "not in GM's long-term plans."

While some businesses closed on their own, "it was my intention that if I lost the GM franchise, I was still going to operate the business to serve the community," said Katterheinrich, who still planned to sell used cars and offer repairs.

An arbitration law in the summer of 2009 stated that dealers not closed but given notice could appeal closure. Katterheinrich did that.

During the appeal process, GM reversed their position for 700 dealers and reinstated them as full long-term companies.

Today Katterheinrich's is in the middle of a five-year contract with GM, is being remodeled both inside and out, and employs six full-time people and one part-time person.

Instead of driving to Detroit to pick up a new Chevrolet, semis deliver new vehicles, most of them trucks.

"When we were kids," said Katterheinrich, "the Impala was the big seller. The last 20 years trucks have been our bread and butter of the operation."

General Motors, the vehicles, the building and the personnel have all changed since 1915, but the business at the center of town still bears the name Katterheinrich Motor Sales and still sells and services Chevrolets.

Work Cited: Fischbach, Deloris, ed. *Our Times*. Chelsea, MI: Book-Crafters, 1986.

After many years of service,

Lloyd "Red" Kuck and Vernon "Ducky" Feldwisch retire from board

Two of the most active members of the New Knoxville Historical Society will retire from the board this spring.

Vernon Feldwisch joined the board as a trustee in 1992. In 1995 the former Washington Township clerk was elected treasurer and continued in that position for the next 18 years and then served last year as trustee.

Lloyd Kuck is one of the three original founders of the historical society. Kuck joined the late Deloris Fischbach and the late Roger Henkener as the incorporators of the society, which was officially certified on March 12, 1984.

At its first public meeting on March 29, Kuck joined Woody Hoge and Stan Wietholter as trustees on the first board. After two more years as a trustee, Kuck stepped away as an officer until 1996 when he returned to take on the vice presidency for two years, the presidency for three years and the vice presidency for two more years, then serving as trustee since 2003.

Kuck was instrumental in bringing the barn to the historical society complex.

The century-old barn originally sat on the A.H. Stienecker property behind the house now owned by Scott and Lisa Newcomer on West Bremen Street. It housed horses, hay, butchering tools and an outside toilet.

In 1958 it was moved to the property behind the school and was owned by New Knoxville Telephone Company and used by the village.

On Nov. 6, 2000, following the laying of a foundation

by Bob Brown Construction at the Heritage Center, the process of moving the barn began. Members and volunteers dis-



Lloyd "Red" Kuck relaxes following the preparation for moving the barn to the Heritage Center. Vernon "Ducky" Feldwisch drives the tractor that pulls the barn across town to the Heritage Center. The two men's combined years on the board totaled 41.



SLATE OF OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

President - Janean Oberlander

Vice President - Allen Schroer

Secretary - Diane Fledderjohann

Treasurer - Edythe Henschen

Trustees

2013-2016 - Ali Carpenter and Bob Feldwisch

2012-2015 - Mike Neuman and to be announced

2011-2014 - Myron Fledderjohann and Kirk Stienecker

Board Members

Display Curator & Cataloging - Rusty Elsass

Farm Items - Myron Fledderjohann

Membership, Web Site, and Historical Records

Larry and Karen Niemeyer

Historians & Memorial Plaque

Myron Fledderjohann, Roberta Tanzini, Kirk Stienecker

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

Myron Fledderjohann - Genealogy and History

Glenna Meckstroth - Author of *Tales from Great Grandpa's Trunk*, *Surviving World War II*, and *Giggles and Grins*

Tours available upon request.

Contact any board member.



assembled the barn. Seven feet had to be cut from the two-story barn in order to comply with zoning laws. The rafters were removed and the ends were folded in to lay flat in order to move the building.

After securing everything on a flat-bed wagon, the barn traveled from West Street to West German Street to South Main Street and then was backed in the Katterheirich Motor Sales car lot. It was then put in place south of the summer kitchen at the Heritage Center.

Today both floors of the barn are filled with antiques and memorabilia, mostly related to agriculture.

Memorial Plaque honors those who died during past year

The following names will appear on our Memorial
Plaque in our Heritage Museum.

Barbara Painter Stroh	April 17, 1912
Dr. Kermit R. Heidt	May 1, 2012
Eleanor Imler Wolfe	August 9, 2012
Susan Farquarkson Meckstroth	July 23, 2012
Virginia Glass Hegemier	August 23, 2012
Dr. Rev. Linus L. Wierwill	September 22, 2012
Virginia Pitthan Hoelscher	December 26, 2012
Rev. Vernon W. Clausing	January 14, 2013
Carol Kuhlman Ramey	February 20, 2013

New Lifetime Members

Nathan Bambauer, Frankfurt, Germany
Ann Pergande, Stow, Ohio
Ben DeVerville, San Antonio, Texas
Jonathan DeVerville, San Antonio, Texas
Vivian Elshoff, Lake City, Florida
Deb Eschmeyer, New Knoxville, Ohio
Jeff Eschmeyer, New Knoxville, Ohio
Beth Hotaling, Ottawa, Kansas
Chris Speckman, New Knoxville, Ohio
Janice Speckman, New Knoxville, Ohio
John Schroer, Northbrook, Illinois

Yearly Members

Marian Abbate, New Knoxville, Ohio
Debbie Eversman, Oregon, Ohio
Jeff Eversman, Oregon, Ohio
Ruth Kettler, St. Marys, Ohio
Carolyn Leighton, Haslett, Michigan
Don Schroer, New Knoxville, Ohio
Denise Testa, Leroy, New York
Barb Wibbeler, Wapakoneta, Ohio
Ned Wibbeler, Wapakoneta, Ohio
George Wood, Raleigh, North Carolina

Student Members

Lana Bizet, New Knoxville, Ohio
Dana Miles, New Knoxville, Ohio
Kyle Prenger, Minster, Ohio

Visit us during our open houses in 2013.
They are held the last Sunday of the month,
May through October from 1:00 to 4:30 P.M.

Sunday, May 26

Sunday, July 28

Sunday, September 29

Sunday, June 30

Sunday, August 25

Sunday, October 27

A special countywide tour of historical societies
in Auglaize County is being scheduled for May 4
& 5. Watch for more detailed information.

*Your Valuable Donations Make
Our Historical Society
an Active Museum*

2012-2013 Acquisitions

- *New Knoxville School yearbooks
- *school photos and articles
- *church photos
- *1922 Auglaize County history book
- *old weight scales
- *walnut marble-top table
- *pair of frames containing marriage certificates
- *1870's one-piece wardrobe
- *1920's oak ministerial desk
- *children's prayer books
- *ladies' vintage gloves
- *lace collars and cuffs
- *wooden lathe barrel
- *Union 76 oil can
- *Warner's Garage ice scraper
- *wooden shipping crates
- *burlap bags
- *barrel cart
- *German books
- *Ranger Wrap-up school paper
- *Brookside Farms butter dish
- *local photos

*Do you have any pictures or stories of the past you would like to share? We'd be glad
to consider using them in future newsletters. Let us know what you would like to read
about or how we might improve our historical society.*

*Contact Janean Oberlander at 419-753-2077 or joberlander@nktelco.net
or any board member.*

New Knoxville Historical Society

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Editor of Historian
Janean Oberlander
Photography
Larry Niemeyer

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, April 11, 2013 New Knoxville American Legion

Dinner: 6:00 P.M. Business meeting & Program: 7:00 P.M.

Speaker: Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann

German Immigration and Heritage in Western Ohio

AVAILABLE FROM THE NEW KNOXVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COMMEMORATIVE AND MEMORIAL BRICKS

This is our means of financial and visual support from the many families and friends that desire to preserve our heritage. Contact Betty Henschen at 419-753-2142 or 101 Hanover Ct., New Knoxville, OH 45871.

BOOKS AND GIFTS

Books and gift items are available from our society and also at the community library. See our web site for available items.

[www.nktelco.net/historical society](http://www.nktelco.net/historical%20society)

ADDRESS CHANGE

Notify Karen Niemeyer of a change of address in one of the following ways:

P.O. Box 301, New Knoxville, OH 45871 or phone at 419-753-2215 or e-mail at niemeyer@nktelco.net.

Member of the Southwestern Auglaize County Chamber of Commerce