



HERSCHER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

SECOND QUARTER
NEWSLETTER – 2023

"from past generations to future generations"

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Stepping into the office of president of the Herscher Area Historical Society seems to be the natural progression for me at this time and season of my life. There have been knowledgeable and kind mentors over the years for me to follow. From the first President, Pat Wagner, to the present one, Carol Desch, and those in between, I have worked with like-minded folks. Many along the way have had a deep-rooted historical connection to this area, and others, like me, simply enjoy the discovering and preserving of area history.

My interest was instilled through my parents who were museum founders, board members, and volunteers well into their 80s. That museum, not unlike Herscher's, resides in a small rural community in Washington state. The inception of HAHS over 20 years earlier, that began in a basement, to the current two memorial plazas and three facilities (Main Street Museum, Anderson House, and The Annex) certainly reflects the growth of the organization and stands as a testament to the officers and members, all of whom are volunteers.

The significance of having museums that actually house original village and school documents, military memorabilia, pictures, letters, and items, whether household or farm, should not be lost on any of us. It is far easier to grasp a historical story when you have a "hands on" opportunity rather than looking on the internet. We are thankful for the donations of money and artifacts along with the volunteers who step up to help, knowing that these organizations do not run merely with an active board. We invite you to stop in to see your Herscher Area Historic facilities. There is always something different to see. Right now, we have set up an exhibit of "local sports through the years" dating back 100 years. You might just recognize a great aunt or uncle or perhaps a grandparent who was involved in the wide world of sports. Remember that the area community's history is being preserved and presented for you, your children, and your grandchildren. We who are involved with HAHS invite you, if you are not already, to participate in some capacity in this endeavor.

Mary Kirstein
HAHS President

MISSION STATEMENT

Herscher Area Historical Society's purpose is to capture and preserve history and artifacts related to Herscher and the surrounding area from past generations to future generations.



NEW ELECTED
HERSCHER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OFFICERS

Pictured Left to right

Vice President - Bob Voss
President - Mary Kirstein
Co-Secretaries - Debbie Witheft and Cindy Witheft
Treasurer - Myrna Masching (not pictured)

Pleased to have the Withefts join the board. These gals have volunteered in accession of historic items and data entry.

HERSCHER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY FACELIFT

by Bob Voss

The Village of Herscher is awarding grant money to downtown businesses. The program is called Downtown Business District Improvements with work being done this year.

As part of this program, the HAHS intends to:

- Paint the exterior brick facade
- Erect an awning on the Main Street side of the building
- Install an aluminum/glass entry door at the Main Street entrance
- Paint a mural on the south face of the building

By the end of this year, Main Street will be taking on a new and improved look.

ANNOUNCEMENT

There will be NO GARAGE SALE this year for the Herscher Area Historical Society but watch for information on our annual Christmas Bizarre to be held in November.

Become a
MEMBER

Our Memberships run from January to January and are available as follows:

Individual/Family: \$20
Business/Civic: \$50
Lifetime: \$200

If you or someone you know would like to become a member, please complete the membership form included with this newsletter. Membership dues help us to **Preserve the Past for the Future.**

HAHS VINTAGE BRIDAL SHOW

by Kelly Knobloch

The HAHS hosted a Vintage Bridal Show at The Anderson House on Sunday, February 13th. More than 45 guests attended the event.



*Myron and Geneva
Diefenbach
February 16, 1947*

Thirteen bridal gowns from 1900 to 1972 were modeled at the event. Bertram and Mary Lovell's wedding was the oldest wedding to be featured. They were married on December 26, 1900. Their great-great granddaughter, Avery Wright, was there to model Mary's gown.

Several relatives were models of their family's heirloom gown. Kate Mau modeled her great-grandmother, Geneva Butz Diefenbach's wedding dress from 1947. One of the gowns on display was first worn by Jackie Landeck in 1960, then by her daughters at their weddings in 1988 and 1992 and by her granddaughter at our event.



*Geneva's Great
Granddaughter, Kate Mau,
modeling her wedding gown*

During intermission, guests enjoyed cake and champagne while they browsed historical wedding paraphernalia including wedding photos, marriage licenses, cake toppers, reception posters, and area newspaper wedding announcements.

The bridal room at The Anderson house displays local wedding announcements and gowns that have been donated to the historical society.

MUSEUM HOURS

MAIN STREET MUSEUM

190 S. Main, Herscher

Open Fridays 9-11 AM and the First
Sunday of Each Month 1-3 PM

ANDERSON HOUSE

161 W. Myrtle, Herscher

Open the First Sunday of Each
Month 1-3 PM

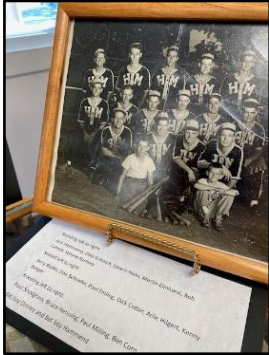
Museum Board Meetings take place at the Anderson House on the Fourth Monday of each month at 6:00pm in the spring and summer and at 4:00pm in the fall and winter. Exceptions will be posted at 190 S. Main and on our website at herscherhistory.org. All members are welcome to attend.

Call the Museum at 815-426-2627 to visit the museums at a time convenient for you.

SPORTS EXHIBIT

by Mary Kirstein

New-Old Local Sports “Through the Ages” is the latest exhibit at the Main Street Museum. Football, baseball, basketball, and track are recognized with pictures, newspaper coverage, trophies, uniforms, and medals. This exhibit covers 100 years of school and town team sports. It was put together by retired teachers who are knowledgeable about town teams and the school sports.



A get-together of old coaches and teammates is planned for this summer. See the details below and mark your calendars!



Herscher Area Historical Society
Presents

**Take Me
BACK
to the Ballgame**

Sunday, June 25, 2023
1:00pm – 3:00pm

Tour our New Sports Display at the Main Street Museum
and enjoy Snacks, Drinks, and Memories at the Herscher Athletic Club

Join Us for a Baseball Team Reunion!

Grab the team, throw on your old ball jersey, and head over to enjoy an
afternoon of catching up with old friends! Bring the kids and grandkids too!



THIS “N” THAT

by Bob Voss

We have a “big” tree sighting. On 14000W Road, just south of 115, there is a stump of a recently cut ash tree that was cut down by ComEd. The Owner of the property counted the rings on the stump and came up with 131. He said he missed a few rings and was going to count again, but even at 131 that would make it planted in 1892.

Do you know of an old tree? The HAHS would like to hear from you. There was an old ash that was taken down at the corner of Oak and Myrtle a few years back. It was probably older than this one. There are a couple of large trees on Chicago Avenue that may well be that age also.

Without cutting down a tree, you can still roughly find the age by Googling “determining the age of a tree.” It is very easy to do.

Did you ever wonder how some of the streets in Herscher got their names? Not numbered streets or tree streets, but some like these:

Kay Street – Daughter of Merle and Opal Fritz (Carolyn Kay)

Jeanette Street – Daughter of Merle and Opal Fritz

Myrtle Street – I bet you thought that this too was a Fritz. Wrong. It’s a tree by that name.

Clyde Street – Help me with this one.

Vernon Street – Help me with this one.

We do have a Front Street. Do you know where that is?

If you can help me, please email me at robertlvoss@aol.com

HISTORICAL PLAZA and GIFTS IN HONOR OR MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

The Historical Society offers an opportunity for families, friends, and organizations to remember special people in our lives with gifts in honor of or in memory of their loved ones. These can be designated for pavers at the Historical Plaza located next to the Village Hall in Herscher or as funds to be used as needed for the ongoing upkeep and special needs of the Herscher Area Historical Museums. We are happy to say we have located a company to do our pavers. At this time pavers may be requested, and pricing will be available in a few days. Contact the museum by mail at Box 403, Herscher or call 815-426-2627 for more information regarding honoring someone who has made an impact on your life, family, or community.

JACKIE LANDECK EBERLE

by Debra Weerts



To some people their job is just a job. To others, it's their vocation or career. To a select few, it's their calling. Jackie recently retired from 63 years in nursing and enjoyed every one of them. Nursing was truly her calling. More on that later!

Jackie was born on September 13, 1939 in McPherson, Kansas to Fred and Marie Miller. She was the middle child, having one brother and three sisters. Her father was a green grocer and her mother was a homemaker and ironed clothes for extra income. They lived in town, owning a very small house with only one bathroom, but that was common in those days. She and her siblings played games with others in the neighborhood until after dark in the summer months. "Red Rover" and "Kick the Can" were popular.

Jackie graduated from McPherson High School in 1957. She loved participating in musicals and cheerleading, along with the social fun of having boyfriends and girlfriends. These friends still stay in touch, and every five years she returns to Kansas for their class reunion.

After high school Jackie went to Kansas City to attend St. Margaret's School of Nursing for three years. It was here that friends introduced her to "a good Catholic boy" named Bob Landeck. He was in the Navy and stationed nearby in Olate, Kansas. They were married in 1960 during her last six months of training.

When they began married life, Bob and Jackie moved wherever he was stationed for four years. His last assignment was in Newfoundland. She recalls on the way to the base, they ran out of paved road. They shared their quarters with another couple. They had no stove - just a hot plate for cooking!

After Bob's discharge, they moved to Oak Forest, Illinois where Bob grew up. By then their first baby, Mike, was on the way. Four more babies soon followed: Scott (Christi), Barb (Geno), Mary (Dan), and Rob (Gayle). Now Jackie proudly boasts of 12 grandchildren and soon to be 12 great-grandchildren. Some live as close as Herscher and others are as far away as Texas.

Bob and Jackie moved to Herscher in 1972 where Bob worked as a meat cutter at Jewel until his death in 1985.

The next chapter of Jackie's life began back in Kansas while attending one of her class reunions. Joel Eberle, a former high school classmate, lived across from her sister. They reconnected and were married in 1990. She convinced him to move to Herscher where he worked for the Village of Herscher until his death in 2000.

Now let's return to Jackie's nursing career. She worked at Oak Forest Hospital, Riverside Medical Center, Dr. Sinha's office, Merkle Knipprath Nursing Home, as a home health nurse, as an instructor at Kankakee Community College training CNAs, and at Harvest View. She performed many different functions during those years and enjoyed them all. Perhaps her favorite memories were working at Dr. Sinha's office and at Harvest View because she knew so many people.

But wait, we're not done yet! Jackie has been involved in many volunteer activities as well. She's an active member of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church where she's served as CCW President, Lector, Eucharist Minister, Parish Nurse (visiting the homebound), and on Council of Churches. She's also a member of the Herscher American Legion Auxiliary where she's served as President, First Vice-President, and Secretary of the Herscher Legion Community Center Board. In addition, she's donated many gallons of blood to the American Red Cross and served as a volunteer. Lastly, she continues to assist Father Ron Neitzke and Deacon Ron Gagnon with their ministry at Courtyard Estates.

However, the outreach closest to her heart takes place each Memorial Day weekend when her family and others sponsor a golf outing at Wolf Creek Golf Course in memory of Bob and Joel, along with friends

Basil Kilbreth, Bob Deany, and Les Styck. This has grown with time to become a very successful fundraiser with all the proceeds going to the American Cancer Society. The name of their Relay for Life team is “Grandpa’s Kids.” How appropriate!

Looking back over her life, Jackie says she misses the simplicity of life “in the old days.” Life took a much slower pace and there was less technology to deal with. However, she’s happy to now drive a car with an automatic transmission. The stick shift was very difficult to handle when you are very short statured!

With 39 people in Jackie’s family, they are frequently celebrating birthdays, weddings (showers), and babies (showers), besides gathering together for Christmas and Easter. She said it’s “wild and fun” with the toddlers, babies, and all.

Jackie’s children and grandchildren have always enjoyed coming over to her house on the Sunday before Labor Day and going to the beer tent when they were older. They’d watch the parade from Scott and Christi’s house. One year her granddaughters performed some 50’s songs and dances on stage at the Village Park and she made poodle skirts for each of them.

Her hobbies are reading and sewing - though these days it’s mostly mending. She’s sewn many dresses for her daughters and granddaughters through the years.

Despite losing two husbands Jackie said her faith in God got her through. Her words of advice? “Enjoy life and be kind to others.”

After 63 rewarding years in nursing, her children teased her saying she might be the only person living and working at the same time in assisted living! However, at age 83 she made the decision to finally retire and enjoy her home, friends, and family. We wish you well Jackie!

Contact Us:

Herscher Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 403
Herscher, IL 60941
1-815-426-2627
Email: herscherareahistory@gmail.com
Follow our Facebook Page: Herscher Area Historical Society
Join our Facebook Group: Herscher Area Historical Society/Kankakee County West
Website: herscherhistory.org

**REMEMBER HERSCHER AREA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN YOUR ESTATE
PLANNING**

Your legacy is important to us and our community. Please remember the Herscher Area Historical Society in your final wishes and estate planning. Your gift will ensure that the work of capturing and preserving the history of Herscher and County West continues for future generations. If you have questions, please contact the museum at 815-426-2627 and we will direct you to our legal advisor.

HERSCHER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 403
HERSCHER, IL 60941