



HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

November / December 2019

HAPPY 50th ANNIVERSARY TO ANN'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT!

Fifty years ago, **Jeff Dietz** (shown right) became the owner of the restaurant that then was known as Ann's Pizza. He found that the decades fly by quickly when you're having fun and making great pizzas and other delicious Italian cuisine!

On October 1st, the official 50th anniversary of the restaurant, Ann's threw a party to celebrate the milestone. The party took place at the Ben Hunt Center and in a tent next to the Prairie Garden.

In lieu of gifts, Jeff generously requested that guests make a donation to HCHS to support our ongoing work of preserving the Village's history and heritage. Thanks to the generosity of Ann's guests, HCHS has received donations totalling more than \$3,600. We are most appreciative -- thank you!

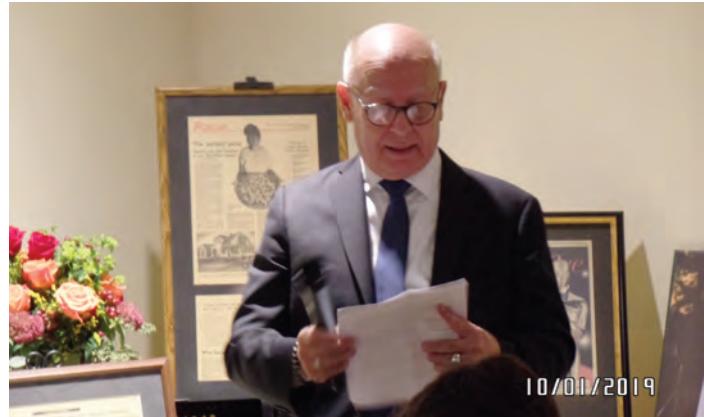
Our Society was pleased to contribute to this event by providing a PowerPoint presentation and a tabletop display depicting the 50-year history of Ann's Italian Restaurant, as well as the building's previous history under other owners. Society volunteers also provided tours of the Ben Hunt Cabin for Ann's guests, staffed the sign-in table, and directed parking.

43 From a House to a Restaurant

Ann's Italian Restaurant celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019. The restaurant dates from 1969, when John and Helen Meyerling opened Ann's Pizza House, named for their daughter. Jeff Dietz managed their restaurant for several years. In 1983, Tom Kysely became a business partner with Jeff. They expanded the menu and changed the name to Ann's Italian Restaurant. Jeff bought the building from Helen and Cleo Jeffers in 1984. It was enlarged in 1986, an outdoor patio was created in 2001, and a Tuscan-themed room was added in 2012.

Before 1969, the building housed Cap's Restaurant and Gloria Lynn's Beauty Salon. Originally, it was the home of the Frank Acker family. They raised seven children here. Frank was a well driller and his five sons followed him into the business.

The Acker name is still well known in Hales Corners and the surrounding area.



Ceremonies began with a prayer and blessing by **Pastor Michael Fazio** of Whitnall Park Lutheran Church, followed by Hales Corners **President Dan Besson**, who presented Jeff with a special proclamation from the Village.

Our Society came next, when **Randy Sannes** and **Al Strekow** thanked **Jeff**, his partner **Tom Kysely**, and his manager **Justin Giersch**, and presented them with the design for a commemorative sign that tells the history of their building back to when it was a house owned by the Frank Acker family. That sign (shown left) will be installed in front of Ann's later this month.

Jeff, Tom, and Justin then delivered brief speeches filled with memories and humor, and expressed appreciation to everyone who has helped contribute to the success of their **first** 50 years in Hales Corners. We wish you many more!

BIZARRE HISTORY A PERFECT FIT FOR HALLOWEEN

It's said that truth is stranger than fiction -- and when historical truth and fiction combine, they can produce some incredible stories! On October 16th, HCHS members enjoyed hearing some of those strange tales when paranormal researcher and author Chad Lewis presented *Bizarre History of Wisconsin: Strange Stories from Our Past*. Driven by the desire to sell newspapers, long-ago editors often included sensational headlines in their publications to "spin" the accompanying articles. Some of the stories had truthful elements, while others...well, not so much. However, there are some historically documented Wisconsin occurrences that still have not been explained.

Just a few of Chad's bizarre historical tales from state newspapers:

- **May 19, 1902, Milwaukee:** A mongrel chicken terrorizes women and children.
- **May 21, 1907, Janesville:** A widow has her husband's false teeth removed before burial so they can be reconfigured for her use as she re-enters the dating pool.
- **October 1, 1909, Ferryville:** An 8-to-9 foot (apparently) human skeleton is found buried in a Native American burial ground.
- **July 17, 1919, LaCrosse:** A heartbroken dog commits suicide.

Chad also talked about some well-documented bizarre stories from Wisconsin's history, including the infamous Ed Gein case of the 1950s. He also related the April 18, 1961 incident in Eagle River when well-respected local farmer Joe Simonton reported that he provided water to short, dark-eyed beings aboard a 30-foot-high by 12-foot-wide UFO that landed in his yard, and that they gave him "tasteless alien pancakes" in exchange. Interestingly, other area residents called the police that day to report UFO sightings near Simonton's farm. Yes, there are some historical happenings in Wisconsin that may never be explained....



THE HALE BOYS AND THEIR GANG MOVE TO FOREST HOME AVENUE!

In September, **Randy Sannes**, **Chris Schachtlie**, and **Al Strekow** converged on the HCHS Diorama building (on Forest Home Ave., near Pick'n Save) to install a banner advertising our history books. For those unfamiliar with this site, the building is a storage facility owned by Associated Bank, but HCHS maintains the facility's display window facing Forest



Home. Originally, the window contained a model of the Western/Dreyfuss Hotel, which

was moved to the lower level of the Hales Corners Library just outside the Ben Hunt Room.

**THE BEN HUNT CABIN WILL BE OPEN DURING THE VILLAGE TREE LIGHTING ON DEC. 7TH.
PLEASE JOIN US AT THIS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EVENT!**

CREATIVE CARVING CONTINUES AT CABIN

On October 8th, the **Badger Wood Carvers** once again spent an evening working on their carvings in the Ben Hunt Cabin. Twice a year, these carvers bring their projects to the Cabin to work on together, surrounded by the carvings of Ben Hunt. We're confident that Ben would be delighted to have them visit.



RIEBS MEMORIALS BENEFIT LIBRARY AND HCHS

The late **Priscilla Riebs** was once referred to as the “ultimate volunteer,” and no truer words were ever spoken. Among a number of organizations that benefitted from her active involvement were the Hales Corners Library and our own HCHS. The Library used funds given in Priscilla’s

memory to purchase new books (below) for readers of all ages. Our Society’s tribute to Priscilla will be a wooden bench to be built as depicted in Ben Hunt’s *Rustic Construction* book of 1939. The bench will be placed on the porch of the Cabin to allow visitors to “sit a spell.”



WELCOME, NEW* AND RETURNING 2020 HCHS MEMBERS!

Kenneth J. Augustine*
David & Margarete Harvey*
Mike Jedrzejewski
& Sybil Grandeck
Bob & Dottie King
Scott & Judy Kruger
Jerry & Marjorie Pagel*
Randy & Sandy Sannes
Kevin & Marnie Schmidt*
Thomas Ueberroth
& Delene Hanson

If you have not yet renewed
your membership for 2020,
watch your mail in December
for your renewal notice.

WHO WOULD GUESS THIS IS A BEN HUNT PAINTING?

Recently, we received several items from **Chris Flieller** that are related to Ben Hunt. The Flieller family has contributed many items to HCHS through the years, thanks to their long acquaintance with Ben. Among the latest acquisitions is this painting by Ben, dated 1917, which is a copy of a work entitled *A Cavalier: Time of Louis XIII*, by Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier. It's a prime example of Ben's artistry and a startling exception to the style of images we normally associate with him.



MUSICAL MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS WILL BE FEATURED AT THE LIBRARY

Be sure to stop by the Hales Corners Library during December to check out HCHS's annual Christmas display window. Thanks to the talents of **Mary Javorek** and **Katy Galewski**, this year's display, "Musical Memories of Christmas," will focus on the pleasures of holiday music across the decades.

DISCOVERED: POSTCARD SHOWING FIRST HALES CORNERS LUTHERAN CHURCH

The postcard below was sent to Mrs. Lena Leading in Rochester, New York, and is dated August 29, 1938. The card refers to her as "Mother," and was sent by Carrie and Bill. It is the only photo we have in our collection that depicts this particular church building. Thanks to **Katy Galewski** for finding this gem.



OUR SOCIETY WANTS YOUR PHOTOS

We are always looking for images of Hales Corners to add to our collection. The Village changes over time, buildings come and go, streetscapes are altered, and events occur and are forgotten. If you think you have photos that might be of interest to us, please email us at the address listed at the bottom of the page. We will digitize your photos and return them to you afterward.

TALES OF THE CORNERS

From the files of the
Tri-Town News and Hub

90 YEARS AGO (1929)

- Hales Corners residents mourn the death of Julius Dreyfuss, 71, owner of the Dreyfuss Inn and a founder of the monthly stock fair (which became the St. Martin's Fair).
- The new Hales Corners English Lutheran Mission Church building is near completion and the congregation plans to use it for holiday services. (See the postcard photo in the left column.)
- Ludwig's, Hales Corners, advertises "the spreader you will never need to replace." This piece of farm equipment has a 70 to 75 bushel capacity and can be pulled by two horses.

80 YEARS AGO (1939)

- St. Mary's Holy Name Society holds its first Sunday morning Communion Breakfast at the Dreyfuss Hotel. About 41 members attend.
- About 75 members of the Christmas Club at State Bank Hales Corners have an average of \$58 each to spend. Checks totaling \$4,400 are sent to club members.
- The Hales Corners Beer Depot advertises a case of Old Gold beer for \$1.29, plus deposit.
- F.J. Meyer, Hales Corners, buys three registered Guernsey cows.

70 YEARS AGO (1949)

- Nearly a dozen road crew members work for three hours when one of the "big" rapid transit trains derails in Hales Corners during a raging snowstorm.
- The first dial-type telephone in Hales Corners is installed at State Bank Hales Corners. Dial service will be introduced here in the early part of next year.
- The Hales Corners Fire Department reports that it responded to 139 blazes in 1949. The fire loss was \$15,470.

50 YEARS AGO (1969)

- The first 8.8 mile leg of the Rock Freeway is officially opened with a breakfast at Clifford's for about 200 people and a ribbon cutting ceremony at the freeway on South 124th Street.

Research by Katy Galewski

HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5885 South 116th Street, Hales Corners, WI 53130 • 414-529-6150, Ext. 24

info@HalesCornersHistory.com • www.HalesCornersHistory.com • www.facebook.com/HalesCornersHistory