



The
Oakwood
Historical Society

— Make History With Us —

The Historian

Preserving the past, present, and future of the Oakwood Community • Fall 2018

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Membership Campaign Underway

Oakwood has a top-performing school district, effective city management, an award-winning library, and a vibrant business district because Oakwood residents invest in their community. They support what is important to them. Barbara Miller, a Society volunteer, wants to challenge residents to support our city's premier historical home and museum by becoming a member of the Oakwood Historical Society.

In July, Miller sent letters to residents who have let their membership lapses. "We want you back" is the essence of the appeal. "Unfortunately, we haven't been as attentive as we should to our membership roster, and now we have to take measures to correct it," lamented Miller. The Society currently has around 230 members. The Board wants to double that number, and there are plans in place to achieve this goal.

"Sometimes I suspect residents don't want to join the Society because they just can't get involved in one more thing," said President Leigh Turben. "I get that; it's challenging to juggle work, family, and community engagement." As Treasurer Brian Mettling often says, "Our members do a great service just by becoming members. Their monetary support keeps the lights on at the Homestead."

Those who wish to become active members are welcome to participate with more than money. The Society depends totally on volunteers to keep the organization operating, and if a Board position becomes vacant, the work of a committee suffers.

Asked why a small town like Oakwood needs its own historical museum, Turben has a quick reply. "We're more than a museum. We're the keepers of Oakwood's historical archives, we're a resource to citizens interested in knowing the history of their homes, advisors on preservation issues, and educators for residents of all ages. We keep history very much current in Oakwood."

A variety of memberships are available. Members have the opportunity to participate in Society activities and receive quarterly newsletters, periodic e-updates, free or discounted admission to programs, and invitations to members-only events. Please join our efforts—and encourage friends and neighbors—to maintain, protect, and promote the stories, artifacts, and environment that make Oakwood unique. As the holidays approach, consider giving Society memberships to folks who appreciate Oakwood's history.

It's possible to join online at <http://www.oakwoodhistory.org/get/join.html> or with the form on the last page of this newsletter.



Help support your Oakwood community resource with membership in the Historical Society



Volume 6 Issue 3 - 2018

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Meet Our Treasurer

Brian Mettling joined the Society after driving his Ford Model T to the invitation-only Classics on the Lawn car show. He didn't have an invitation, but he and the car were welcomed anyway.

Brian purchased his first old car when he was just 13 years old. Since then he has owned, restored, and sold at least eight historical cars. It's correct to assume that cars are his passion; however, Brian keeps his hobby in check.

He made a tough decision to sell the 1953 Chevy Belair he painstakingly restored to purchase an engagement ring for his wife, Meghan. For ten years after the sale, he continued to search the internet, hoping it would reappear. Six months ago he found it and bought it again, and is now in the process of restoring it a second time—a process that is bound to take even longer than the first, given the time he spends with his daughter, Ellie, age three, and son, Owen, nine months.



Society Treasurer Brian Mettling with his wife Meghan, daughter Ellie, and one of his prized automobiles

Brian holds a bachelor's degree in international business and accounting and an MBA from the University of Toledo. He works at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in propulsion systems. He shares his love of antiques with Meghan. They both worked at antique malls while in college, and they continue to purchase period items for their 1920's Oakwood house.

Brian occasionally drives his Ford Model T around town. Brian describes it as a "bucket of bolts" when he purchased it the first time. You read it correctly, "the first time." It took him four years to restore it, and then he sold it. Just

last year he purchased it for the second time and again, he restored it.

Brian has served as Society Treasurer since 2015. He claims being treasurer fits into his busy life because he can do it on his own time when he's not managing defense budgets, parenting, and bringing old cars back to life.

Classics on the Lawn Returned August 19

The eighth annual Classics on the Lawn Car Show and Open House took place on Sunday, August 19, at the Long-Romspert Homestead House Museum. Chairman Mark Risley reports that 54 cars, including five Rolls-Royce automobiles, were showcased. This non-competitive automotive event grows in popularity each year. The Society wants to thank board member Tom Morrow for smoking the barbecue through the night so attendees could enjoy sandwiches as they swapped car restoration stories.



1957 DeSoto at the 2018 Classics on the Lawn

Far Hills Speaker Series Moves to a New Location this Fall

The series will be held at the Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 155 Thruston Boulevard, to better accommodate attendees. The series will still be on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. Another innovation: the fall lectures will be the first group of presentations on a topic; the lectures all relate to Dayton's role in World War II. One unchanged element of the series: it is co-hosted by the Society and Wright Memorial Public Library.

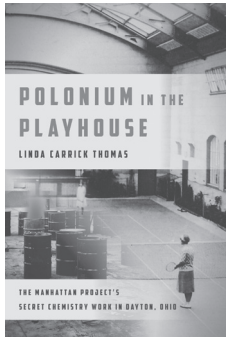
Dayton Codebreakers — Sunday, September 16 at 2 p.m.

Oakwood's Joseph Desch headed a top-secret Navy project in NCR Building 26 to build a decoding machine to interpret intercepted German messages and foil Nazi attacks.

Presented by Jim Charters, who makes presentations about significant historical events and individuals from the Dayton area for Dayton History. After a career with Illinois Tool Works, Jim is enjoying retirement as a guide at Carillon Park and Hawthorn Hill. He also performs onstage with the Tipp City Players and Dayton History.



Joseph Desch



Polonium in the Playhouse: The Manhattan Project —
2 p.m. Sunday, October 21 at 2 p.m.

The Talbot Family's Runnymede Playhouse in Oakwood served as a top-secret laboratory where the triggering mechanisms for atomic bombs were developed.

Presented by Linda Carrick Thomas, a freelance writer focusing on science and engineering research and author of *Polonium in the Playhouse*, which has received many favorable reviews from experts in the field. Linda has been a newspaper reporter specializing in the arts. She now works in higher education communications.

The Russian Spy in the Dayton Manhattan Project — November 18 at 2 p.m.

George Koval was an American-born spy who gave secrets of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union.

Presented by Don B. Sullenger, a trustee and past president of the Mound Museum Association.

Dr. Sullenger holds an AB in Chemistry from the University of Colorado and a doctorate with a Physical Chemistry major from Cornell University. He worked at the Mound site from July 1962 until August 1992 and has spoken on Koval's life in several forums.

Upcoming Events

Potions and Lotions — *Sunday, September 9 at 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

Long-Romspert Homestead – Fee: \$15

Linda Pearson and volunteer Lisa Kell will instruct participants in making bath bombs and lotions. This program is part of the Homemade at the Historical Society series.

Annual Fall Photo Shoot — *Sundays September 23 and 30 at 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

Long-Romspert Homestead – Fee: \$65 members/\$75 nonmembers

Photographer Betty Cochran will take pictures of individuals and groups at various locations on the Homestead grounds. Participants will receive their photos on a digital disc or memory stick, as well as a waiver permitting unlimited reproduction of the photos. Appointments can be made by phone (299-3793), or on the Society web page, www.oakwoodhistory.org.

The Scoop on Soup — *Sunday, October 14 at 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

Long-Romspert Homestead – Fee: \$10

Ulrike Massey, co-owner of Spice Paradise in the Oregon District, will demonstrate how to change soup flavors using various spices and herbs. This program is part of the Homemade at the Historical Society series.

Holiday Cheer is Welcome Here

Holding a Holiday Home Tour in Oakwood would surely win the praise of architects Harry Schenck, Louis Lott, and Albert Pretzinger. Their artistic styles varied distinctively, yet they shared a vision to advance esthetics and livability. John Patterson, NCR Founder and early Oakwood resident, would also have lent his support. He sought to build a sense of community among his employees by sponsoring events that brought them together, especially if it ultimately benefited a worthy cause.

These thoughts prompted Society Secretary Alex Duncan to pitch the idea of a home tour to the Society Board. She envisioned a tour that showcases the architectural styles of Oakwood's historical homes and the welcoming, creative ingenuity of their owners.



As with most volunteer boards, the person suggesting an idea is usually asked to take the lead. Because Duncan has a passion for historic architecture and preservation, she accepted the challenge. Eminently qualified, Alex runs a very active "old house love" Instagram page called @dayton_architecture and has amassed over 4,600 followers.

In just three months, Duncan persuaded seven families to open their homes to the community on Saturday, December 8, from noon to 7:00 p.m., the day before the City of Oakwood sponsors its "Light Up Oakwood" celebration. "It will be a wonderful

weekend of activities for families, something that would have pleased John Patterson," according to local historian, Mark Risley.

The tour includes seven architecturally unique homes including Craftsman, American Foursquare, Swiss Chalet, Tudor, Prairie, and Italian Renaissance Revival styles. Duncan wanted the tour to reflect the architectural diversity that early architects perhaps unwittingly achieved.

Society President Leigh Turben believes the tour will enhance citizens' appreciation of the owners' efforts to preserve the architectural integrity of their homes. She also thinks it reflects the spirit of community our residents enjoy and promote. Welcoming strangers into one's home expresses hospitality.



Local realtor Georgiana Nye predicts the tour will be wildly popular. "Oakwood residents enjoy seeing the inside of other people's homes. They are curious to see how homeowners blend new design with older architectural details."

In the spirit of Oakwood being a walking community, Duncan has planned a self-guided walking tour, although driving from location to location is also an option. The tour will begin at the Sugar Camp parking lot, where ample parking is available. Visitors will receive a tour booklet and a map and commence their journey.

As they move through the tour, guests will see the interior of the homes decorated for the holidays and learn about their history from the homeowners. The complete tour will take approximately 2-2.5 hours. After viewing the homes, guests will drive to the historic Long-Romspert Homestead and House Museum, where musical entertainment and refreshments will be available.

Although the Lunne, Harlamet, Gwinnup, Smith, Coomer, Miller, and Pennington Collins families have agreed to open their homes, the precise way the halls of each home are decked will remain a surprise until the day of the tour.





Oakwood has always had a strong sense of community, and Duncan hopes the tour will reinforce this feeling. It will also allow visitors from other areas to better understand why residents are proud to call this city their home.

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 the day of the tour. Society members will have the

opportunity to purchase tickets in advance of the general public and may purchase tickets at the discounted rate of \$20 the day of the tour.



All proceeds from this event will benefit the Society and support one of the oldest buildings in Oakwood, the Long-Romspert Homestead and House Museum.

For tour information, please visit the Society website <http://www.oakwoodhistory.org/>. If you would like to help with the tour, email Alex Duncan at Alexa.Jackson@gmail.com.

Society Board Member Attends National Conference

Linda Pearson, Chair of the Society’s Education Committee, attended the 2018 National Conference of the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in June. Linda reports that conference sessions covered topics including women’s suffrage, women soldiers, creating a period kitchen, and developing a living history program with a small staff.

Linda sponsored herself because she wanted to learn more about how volunteers at historical museums teach baking to visitors. “I wanted to try new historical

recipes and discover how they tie back to the history of the area.” Linda has been the brains behind the Society’s Herb Academy at the Homestead, and she stays current with what other historical museums offer visitors.



Old-time baking techniques using this wood-fired brick stove at Fort Gibson

Linda said a highlight of her training was learning to use the wood-fired brick bake oven at Fort Gibson, a Civil War fort located near the end of the Cherokees’ Trail of Tears. Participants in Pearson’s Bread and Butter class offered at the Homestead in late June had the benefit of Pearson’s new expertise. Future participants in such programs will enjoy the recipes and techniques Pearson gains from out-of-print books acquired from her contacts with other ALHFAM professionals.

Society President Leigh Turben knows Pearson’s dedication is exemplary, “Because Linda is willing to travel to a military garrison on land once owned by the Cherokee Nation, Oakwood residents have the opportunity to learn old techniques for leavening—a topic not easily learned from youtube.”



Linda shares her baking expertise at Homestead programs

OHS Committees Please get involved . . .

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City Staff Meets at Homestead

City Manager Norbert Klopsch held a staff meeting at the Homestead on July 10. "We have several new staff members as well as some longtime staff members who have never visited the Homestead, so I thought they should see it," was the reason Klopsch gave for asking Society President Leigh Turben to extend an invitation. Turben asked Harrison Gowdy to provide a tour, ensuring that staff members would feel especially welcomed.

"It's nothing short of amazing what the Society has been able to accomplish," said City Manager Klopsch. "When the Society accepted responsibility for the house twenty or so years ago, it was just an old house in need of major repair. Today it's a house museum on the National Register of



Chief Hill inspects the Homestead's ornate radio, yesteryear's home entertainment center, as Society Member Harrison Gowdy explains its workings

Historic Places. I wanted staff to be reminded of the treasure it is today." Law Director Rob Jacques agreed, adding, "I didn't know a house existed in Oakwood that still has a working summer kitchen. Being in the Homestead is like living in a different era." City staff members at the meeting included Leisure Services Director Carol Collins, Finance Director Cindy Stafford, Law Director Rob Jacques, Public Safety Director Alan Hill, and Personnel and Properties Director Jennifer Wilder.

What Is Unique about Your Home?

We are researching offbeat qualities of houses in Oakwood for a possible future article in the Historian. Perhaps your home was moved from another location, was a farmhouse or a store, or has unique features. Send an email to TOHSnewsletter@gmail.com, and we will get back to you!



Carol Collins wonders what it would be like to be a modern woman in 1920!



Rob Jacques tries his hand at the Victrola

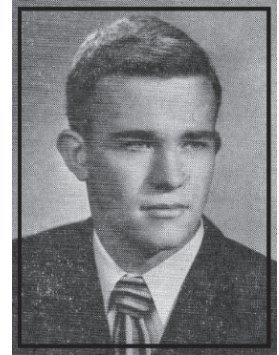
*Get
Involved.
Make History
With Us!*

In Memoriam

Harry Ebeling, a longtime supporter of the Society, passed away on July 14. Oakwood has lost one of its ardent cheerleaders. Harry was named "Mr. Oakwood" at Oakwood's Centennial Celebration and was a founder, president, and president emeritus of the Oakwood Historical Society.

Harry Ebeling was born and raised in Oakwood. He was a member of the 1950 graduating class from Oakwood High School, where he was president of the Student Association. Four years later he graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University, and then served in the U.S. Air Force. He obtained his law degree from Ohio State University and returned to Oakwood with his wife Marty and family. He practiced law with Pickerel, Schaeffer and Ebeling.

Harry's great passion was the history of the local region, especially Oakwood. His research and reporting became a foundation of the Oakwood Historical Society. He



Harry Ebeling, Oakwood High School Class of 1950



Harry and Marty Ebeling

was a longtime leader, president, and activist with the Society. He established relationships with city officials that strengthened local preservation endeavors. His efforts resulted in education projects, historically designated neighborhoods, citizen tours, and archival preservation of Oakwood's history. His enthusiasm and welcoming manner attracted citizens to learn and participate in local history.

He will be greatly missed by our community, which was fortunate to benefit from his energy and enthusiasm.

A memorial service for Harry was held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on August 29.



CAROL J. HOLM
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Dayton, Ohio



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The Oakwood Historical Society Membership Form

Membership Categories *(Please check one)*

- Individual \$25.00
- Family \$35.00
- Business \$50.00
- Bronze \$75.00
- Silver \$100.00
- Gold \$200.00

Receive a \$5 Discount *(Check if applicable)*

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Date _____

First Name _____

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The information that you submit will be used only by The Oakwood Historical Society and will not be given or sold to outside parties.