

# MUSEUM MUSES

*Telling Highland County's story for over 50 years!*

MAJOR NEW EXHIBITS OPEN JUNE 3rd!

## HIGH HOPES

I bought McCoppin's Mill from Lynn and Marjorie Sydenstricker on October 2, 1980. My long-range plans to restore this historic area were beginning to come together and I was extracting myself from hectic international business activity.

Repair work on the Barrett's Mills dam was completed on September 21, 1980 and reported to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. This report totaled 93 pages and contained many photos of the work. Wayne Dance made the repairs and did an outstanding job.

I dusted off my old planning documents, and prepared several pages of new plans, adapting previous concepts to the current situation. I had also changed my engineering job situation so that I could spend much more time at home working on these long-delayed objectives.

### An Undisputed Arson

But someone did not share our enthusiasm for this new start on restoration. At 1:50 a.m., in the early morning hours of October 14, 1980, someone burned Barrett's gristmill and the covered bridge.

As of this writing, the person or persons who actually lit the match

for this despicable deed has not been apprehended. The fact that it was arson is indisputable. A woman from the area was driving home from work at 1:50 a.m. that morning. When she came to the covered bridge, she noticed a small fire in the bridge on the Rainsboro end. She had apparently driven into the bridge and then backed out again. She notified people through her CB radio about the problem, but all of a sudden, the flames spread in an explosive fashion throughout the entire 165-foot span. A neighbor, Mrs. Hargett, awoke about this time and saw the entire bridge in flames. After five or ten minutes of this blazing inferno, the side of the mill next to the bridge began to smoke and in minutes, the entire 120-year-old mill was engulfed in flames.

The fire departments of Hillsboro and Bainbridge were on the scene on both sides of the river within 12 minutes, but of course, they could only prevent the fire from spreading to other buildings. They saved the old sawmill, the blacksmith shop, and all houses in the area.

The fire at Barrett's Mill was reported in all newspapers in the area.

Needless to say, this tragic event was very upsetting to me and my family. Most of the people in the County, especially our neighbors in the mill area, were very disturbed.

At this point, I had no concept of what logical plan could be pursued for Barrett's Mills. The key features, Woolen Mill, gristmill, and covered

bridge, had been destroyed, although all of the other less important features remained in place.

*Reprinted with the kind permission of Jack Hope. Jack's book, HIGH HOPES, can be purchased in THE MUSEUM SHOP. Read not only stories of Highland County, but also about Jack's career as an engineer working with aircraft engine technology.*

## Jack Hope

## 2017 Tour of Homes & Historic Buildings

We are getting ready for the big day and hope you are planning to join us! Mark your calendars for the Highland County Historical Society's 2017 Tour of Homes and Historic Buildings on Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 to 5:00. Tickets will be \$15 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. You may purchase tickets in advance at Wilkin-Wilkin Insurance 127 South High Street, Burwinkel Dentistry 323 North High Street, and Highland House Museum 151 East Main Street, all in Hillsboro. As always, the circa 1844 Highland House Museum will be featured and is the perfect place to begin your tour if purchasing tickets the day of the event! While you are there, be sure to browse through the new exhibit focusing on the history of

Hillsboro's Lincoln School as well as a traveling display covering the 1954 Supreme Court case of Brown v. Board of Education.

Are you curious what else is included in the tour this year?

**Home of Betty and Dan Estle** at 150 East Main Street is just across the street from Highland House. It has been featured in the past, but now has different owners and has been given a different style that suits the house quite nicely.

**Home of Buck Wilkin**, 7980 US 50 East, is a cozy newer home nestled in a cove of trees which features shade gardens and two ponds with fountains. **Betty Ann Walker's "Back Home" Shop** at 112 East Main Street is the base for *(continued on page 5)*

2017 TRUSTEES

- Bob Brown
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- Justin Harsha
- Carolyn Hastings
- Steve Holland
- Diane Jolitz
- John Kellis
- Denny Kirk
- Tim Koehl
- John Levo
- Jim Rooney
- Nancy Wisecup

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- Sue Boatman-Vice President
- Arlene Huffman-Past President
- Secretary: Carolyn Hastings

- DIRECTOR: VICKI KNAUFF
- Newsletter Editor: John Glaze
- Historian: Jean Wallis

2017 EVENTS

- May 5—Art & Palette 60th Anniv.
- May 6—Museum opens for season
- May 13—An Afternoon with Madeleine Crouse (Poetry & Music)
- May 28—Hall of Fame Induction - 2pm
- May 29—Memorial Day-HH opens following service uptown
- Jun 3—Brown v. Board of Edu and Lincoln School Exhibits open
- Jun 11—Home Tour 12-5pm
- Jun 17—Community Male Chorus from Chillicothe 2pm
- Jun 29—Prof. Rick Sheffield speaks on "In the Wake of Brown: Color of Classrooms in Rural Ohio" 7pm
- Jul 2—Parker Hastings in Concert
- Jul 6-8—Festival of Bells
- Aug 12—Amazing Race—10 am at Liberty Park
- Aug 24—Ghost Walk
- Sep 16—Log Cabin Cookout
- Oct 3—Annual Meeting
- Nov 3—Spirits of Christmas Pre-Sale
- Nov 12—Children's Christmas Tea
- Nov 24—Black Friday Shopping
- Dec 23—Museum closes for season
- Dec 31—New Year's Eve at the Bell

MORE EVENTS TO COME!

DENNY'S BRIEFS—The Case For Preserving History



In the fast paced society in which we live, people often overlook preserving history, or at least may not give it much thought. I was recently pondering this topic. Without intentionally gathering information, learning about what is going on around us, and preserving some of this information or artifacts, it is easy to neglect history, or simply forget. By providing a location for others to view exhibits, locate historical information, and learn new things, the Historical Society has been able to help bridge the past to the future. History starts with a desire to learn information and preserve this information for others. Looking back over time, we are able to develop a better understanding of our culture and society, how life once was, and the legacies left behind by others. Learning from our past also helps us to avoid future mistakes, or at least we hope they do.

As we approach the opening of the Lincoln School Exhibit, and the visiting Brown vs. Board of Education exhibit, we can catch a glimpse into what took place in the past, and how important advocacy and persistence can be. The courage of the

women who marched their children to Webster Elementary, and to bring the case to court, might easily be taken for granted or forgotten, if it were not for the preservation of this history. While the events themselves are very unfortunate, what took place can be learned from. The idea to research and develop an exhibit for the Lincoln School was born in 2015 when a committee was formed to explore the possibility of creating an exhibit. As the project continued, the committee was energized to search for information and document this information. As Kati Burwinkel, Lincoln School Project committee chair, can attest to, each time the idea was presented to others, support continued to grow for the project. This culminated into an amazing exhibit with a very nice video presentation, photos, and other information being gathered together.

I highlight the Lincoln School Project to support the case why we should preserve history. We need to know what happened and how this affected the community, and what could be done in the future to avoid this. We need to understand that we each have the ability in some way

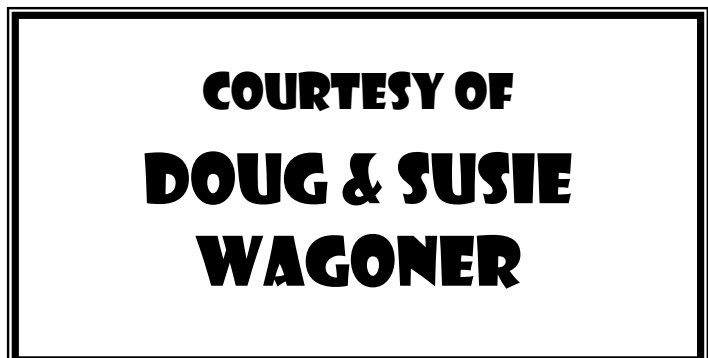
or another to advocate, encourage, and to persevere, just as the women did when they fought to integrate the local schools.

Over 50 years ago, a group of individuals saw fit to form the Highland County Historical Society and make it their mission to preserve local history. We owe it to these individuals to continue this task. To record information, collect important artifacts, and present this to the public continues to remain relevant even in today's world. I encourage each of you to come see the new exhibit, to get involved with the Historical Society, and to help preserve history for future generations to come.

**"It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future."**

*-William Murtagh, first keeper of the National Register of Historic Places*

Denny Kirk



## SOCIETY MARKS FINAL AG. OUTREACH SUBJECT WITH RECOGNITION OF SOIL AND WATER

Over the past year the Society's Agricultural Outreach Committee has worked to highlight historical elements of Agricultural Community in Hillsboro and Highland County. The project was part of a recent effort to identify segments of our community that may have been underrecognized by HCHS. The Committee that was appointed to identify and recognize Agriculture included: Chair John Kellis, Jim Faust, John Levo, Avery Applegate, and Director Knauff.

The committee identified so many elements worthy of recognition that it was decided to write newspaper articles and make presentations on each subject identified. Those subjects included: Local Century Farms, The World Conservation Matches held

in Peebles in 1957, The History of the Highland County Fair, the History of the Hillsboro Stockyards, The F&W Whiskey Distillery in Lynchburg, and the History of the Highland County Soil and Water Conservation (SWCD) District.

When the Committee began discussing the Soil and Water it realized that 2017 was the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and that the Highland District was the first District authorized in the State of Ohio in 1942. I agreed to write the article for the Society's Ag. series, but also as a newspaper announcement of the Historic Milestone Event to be held at the Highland County Fairgrounds.

The Society was also asked to contact John Wickerham of Adams County to see if he would reprise his



Plowing Contest presentation he made to an overflow crowd at Highland House in 2016. As things continued to advance, the Society was asked to co-sponsor the historical commemoration event, which we happily agreed to do.

HCHS partnered with the District to re-publish all of the Committee's Ag. Articles in a handout for the Anniversary Event. Anyone interested in one of the handouts can request one through the museum and Vicki. So many people saw the articles but missed one or two and the organizers thought this was a way to make them available in one place. Everyone seemed to appreciate getting one as a keepsake brochure. The handout included all the outreach articles as well as a previously published article on the Dust Bowl which I wrote in 2012.

Over 130 people attended the event where displays were set up by The Historical Society, the SW Ohio Farm Toy Collector Club, The Highland County Antique Machinery Club, the Highland County Recycling and Litter Prevention, and the Farm Bureau. The Mootz family also brought

the tractor and plow that Duane Mootz used to win the World Contour Plowing Competition in 1957. It was a great evening to talk about the History of Agriculture and Conservation.

Larry Vance, Former Chief of the Ohio Soil and Water Division was the keynote speaker describing how Ohio formed Conservation Districts and quoted testimony by Highland County Residents about the need for Districts. I introduced Mr. Wickerham and, on behalf of HCHS, congratulated the District and discussed the value of our Conservation Programs. Everyone was also invited to visit the opening of the Lincoln School Project and Brown vs. Board Of Education displays opening at the Highland House on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Finally, The District received proclamations of congratulations from The Speaker of the Ohio House, Cliff Rosenberger, US Representative Brad Wenstrup, and Governor John Kasich.

*John Kellis*



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## COUNTRYMAN'S MILL in Brush Creek Township

During a 100 year period from approximately 1800 to 1900, Brush Creek Township in Highland County, was blessed with at least seven grist mills, two carding mills, possibly two woolen mills, and an unknown number of saw mills. Although we do not know the exact number of saw mills, they were numerous. The grist mills, carding, and woolen mills were all gone by 1920, but various saw mills have continued to serve the community. Sinking Spring was the commercial and social center for the township, and was platted by Jacob Hiestand in 1815.

**Countryman's Mill** was the first grist mill in the township. The mill, under various ownership throughout its lifetime, was in operation from 1803 until 1914, thus becoming the longest operating mill in the township. For one hundred and eleven years, this mill provided the residents of Sinking Spring and Brush Creek Township a place to grind their wheat and corn. This mill was located on the west side of the Middletown Road, later Sinking Spring Road, and now known as State Route 124. The mill was built on the north bank of Bakers Fork Creek, also described in deeds as the East Fork of Brush Creek. The foundation for the mill is visible today, and is located approximately 60 yards off the state road where the bridge crossed the creek.

Henry Countryman, a Revolutionary War Soldier, came to Brush Creek Township in the summer of 1802, and located about 3 miles northwest from the famous spring at which John Wilcoxon, and later Timothy Mershon, settled, known now as Sinking Spring. Henry Countryman and his three sons, Martin, John, and Henry, moved out from Rockingham County, Virginia.

Martin Countryman built a cabin about 3 miles northwest of the spring, with help brought from Manchester for that purpose. The Countrymans built the first water mill in the present township of Brush Creek in 1803. It was a small affair and stood 2½ miles northwest of Sinking Spring.

There is no doubt that in 1803 the Countryman Mill would have been constructed of logs, and it is not likely that it was very large, as only a few families inhabited the

surrounding area at that time. No saw mills were in existence, therefore no planks, siding, or rafters, as we know them, would have been available. The dam was likely constructed of log pilings with loose stones in between, and possibly combined with an earthen type dam. This type of dam would have been highly susceptible to flood damage. Later a well-built stone dam was constructed.

At some point in time, this mill was converted from a water wheel grist mill to a turbine operated mill. It is believed that the Porter family, the last owners of the mill, purchased the first turbine for the mill. All of the previous owners would have operated the mill with the standard water wheel. This was the only mill in Brush Creek Township to introduce the turbine power technology.

Owners of the mill from 1803 to 1914 included: John Countryman, Jacob Wickerham, George Shepard, Lewis Crum, the Crum brother, William, Strawder and Elijah, John Harrison Crum, Sr., Valentine Bobb, Sampson T. Porter, and finally Walter "Buddy" Porter.

While the mill was owned and operated by



A view of the east side of the Porter Mill circa 1920s. The mill was permanently closed in 1914 after new technology made stone ground grist mills obsolete. It is believed the person in the picture with the horses is Walter "Buddy" Porter, the last owner. Behind him you see the cut stone foundation and stone walls for the mill. The water wheel was located at the right north-east corner of the mill. The area where the horse is standing would have been the pool and tail water, after the water passed over the water wheel.

the Porter family, the official name was "Cliff Mills", although locals all simply referred to the mill as the Porter Mill. During the latter years of operation, they produced flour, dealt in hay, straw and grain, and provided all types of custom sawing.

You can read more about the many mills of Brush Creek Township in the book, "The Mills of Brush Creek Township, Highland County, Ohio" researched and written by Dwight L. Crum. Copies of

this book are available for sale in the historical society's Museum Shop.

Betty Crum



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## Home Tour (continued from page 1)

the sweetest little apartment perched above. With elevator access from the street, you will see why she loves uptown living.



*Buck Wilkin Home*



*Mike & Joni Willer Home*

**Mike and Joni Willer's home** at 611 North High Street is a lovely home which has been a work in progress for several years, but the Willers now have it just the way

they want it...and the new kitchen is a favorite spot in which to gather.

Two doors north at 631 North High Street we have the **home of Sid and Theresa Raisch**. This grand home was on the tour years ago, but Sid has worked his gardening magic to make the place their own lovely haven.

**Rick and Jennifer Jenkins** have been on the tour before, but not in this house. Located at 11728 St. Rt. 72 on the outskirts of the village of Highland, this newer salt box style house is the perfect backdrop for their collection of authentic primitive antiques.

**New Hope Baptist Church** 128 East Beech Street.

**The Highland County Court House** 105 North High Street.

**The Highland House Museum** 151 East Main Street.

We also have something new to offer this year! We will be collaborating with the **Brush and Palette Guild** in celebration of their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Each site will have an artist on hand who has created a piece depicting the structure, an architectural feature, or an interesting bit of landscaping in the medium of their choice. Feel free to chat with them about their work and their upcoming show. Their annual event will be held at Southern State Community College in Hillsboro on Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. We do hope you will support these artists by attending their anniversary show and sale!

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## HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

The Hall of Fame Induction ceremony will take place Sunday, May 28 at 2pm at the Highland House Museum. The 2017 honorees are Charles "Chuck" Collier, General John Edwin Hull and Dr. Clara Weishaupt. Bob Hodson will emcee the event which will highlight the important contributions each of these people have made in their specific areas.

The categories are: arts and entertainment, enterprise, sports and leadership. The criteria and nomination form can be found on our website: [www.historicalociety.weebly.com](http://www.historicalociety.weebly.com). Nominations are due no later than August 1.

## Home Tour Volunteer Call

We are still in need of volunteers for the Home Tour. You will be assigned a home, but don't worry that you might miss out...the volunteers will have an opportunity to tour the homes in advance. If you are interested in spending the day in one of the homes, please contact Caroyl Reid at 393-2664.

This fundraiser helps the Highland County Historical Society by providing much needed funds. We are indebted to the owners for generously opening their homes to ticketholders and the volunteers for making sure the day flows smoothly. Without them, there would be no event.

*Avery Applegate*

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## GRANDLE COLISEUM IN LEESBURG

You read that title correctly! You probably had no idea there was ever a coliseum in Leesburg. The building is still there, as you will learn as you read this interesting story.

The Coliseum in Leesburg was built by Grandle Construction in 1928. It is said Art Grandle built it for his son Olin to practice basketball while in high school. At the time, the local gym required deflecting the ball from the ceiling to get it into the hoop. The school was allowed to use the facility at no charge.

Olin was graduated from Leesburg in 1930. He went on to play basketball for UC. After graduation from university, he coached both basketball and football at Lebanon, refereed some and became a successful businessman owning multiple parking garages. It is for Olin the new high school gymnasium is named. In 1998 he donat-

ed 111 acres to the school district for building new facilities.

The coliseum was used for area basketball tournaments for several years. Occasional skating parties were held there as well.

In 1939, Wilknit, a hosiery manufacturing business located in Greenfield, moved into the Coliseum making Leesburg its second facility. The stockings manufactured were shipped throughout the world. As a result, Leesburg became the first village of its size to be a first class post office because of the volume shipped. (Original Amazon?)

Even when silk was a rare commodity during the war, Wilknit's supply carried them through.

In 1944 the agricultural agent at the time rented the first floor of Wilknit to house migrant workers who had come early to detassle corn at an area seed corn facility.

In the mid 1950s there was talk of closing because of postage rates. The building itself sold in 1967 to Buckeye Molding for warehousing. At one point in the 1990s, the building housed "Friendly Village Inn" restaurant. Square One Heating and Cooling currently uses the building. They were able to salvage a bit of the hardwood—proof of its original purpose.

*Carolyn Hastings*

## June Events Planned During Lincoln School & Brown Exhibits

There are exciting events planned during the month of June at Highland House Museum to help us celebrate the opening of our new Lincoln School Exhibit.

On June 16, the **Chillicothe Community Male Chorus** with Wayne McLaughlin will bring their soulful gospel music to the museum at 2 pm. Bring a lawn chair and spend an hour hearing some of the area's best gospel music! Check them out on Youtube!

On June 24 at 3 pm, Hillsboro's own **New Hope Baptist Church Choir** will perform at the museum. Come join us for another afternoon of great gospel music!

On June 29, at 7 pm, Kenyon College Professor, **Ric Sheffield** will speak on *In the Wake of Brown: The Color of Classrooms in Rural Ohio*. Professor Sheffield is the Director of Kenyon's Law and Society Program. Join us for an interesting and thought provoking evening!

## VICKI'S NEWS

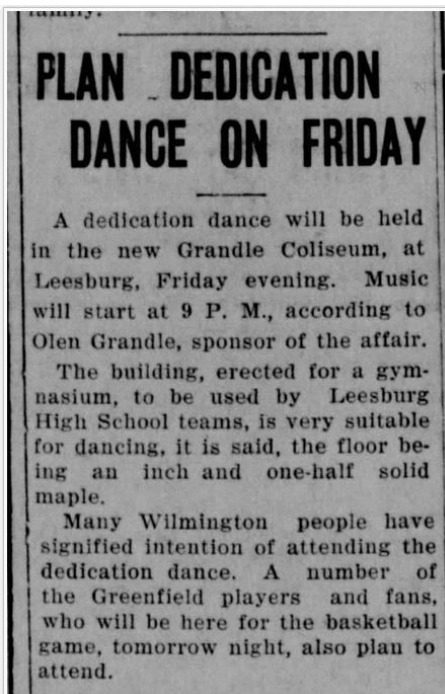
Will Albert has nearly finished his Eagle Scout project. Be sure to stop by the log cabin to see the hitching post, new railroad ties as steps in the front, new chinking in the south wall of the cabin and the new rock walk. He then needs to be interviewed by the scout council and present his documentation. He should know the results by June.

Membership stands at 292. Renewal letters are enclosed in this newsletter if your dues come due during these three months.

The St. Patrick's Day Brunch was very successful. More than 100 meals were served and slightly more than \$1,000 was earned. You were all very generous! A huge thanks to Lana Daniels, Jane Stowers, Jean Fawley and John King who worked tirelessly on this event.

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Soil and Water District was held April 18. More than 130 people attended. HCHS had a table of antique farm tools and many photographs of county farm scenes. Thanks to all those who provided cookies and who attended.

*(continued on page 8)*



Hours By Appointment

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## FROM MY CORNER OF THE COUNTY

Happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday to Robert “Pete” Shaffer! His children researched the history of the family farm and identified it as a Century Farm. Pete’s Grandfather, A. C. Shaffer purchased the 155 acres in 1898. At that time it was covered in water and White Oak trees. His grandfather tiled it with tile made nearby and thus it became productive farmland.

Pete’s children celebrated by putting up the sign which helps identifies those farms

remaining in family for over 100 years. To find other farms which have been identified, see Ohio Department of Agriculture website. Not all Century farms have signs to recognize their (our) history.

Side benefit: Daughter Becky Davidson says she enjoyed learning the family history while documenting family ownership. Congratulations, Pete and Nancy!

*Carolyn Hastings*



### Kirk Law Office, LLC Denny Kirk, Attorney at Law

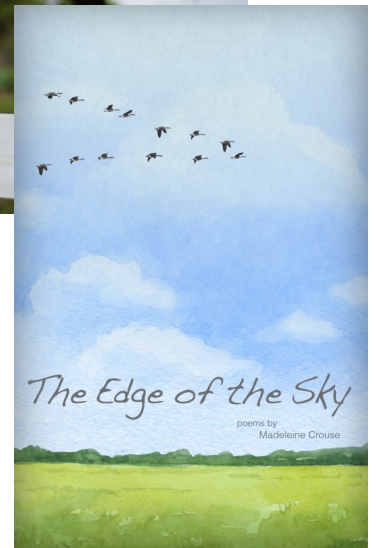


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Visit us on the web: [www.kirklawoffice.net](http://www.kirklawoffice.net)

## An Afternoon with Madeleine Crouse



On May 13 at 2pm, Madeleine Crouse will be visiting Highland House to share her poetry, sign books and greet old friends. Christopher Ford and Daniel Jacky will provide musical selections during the afternoon. The Museum Shop sells Madeleine’s book.

## LINCOLN SCHOOL EXHIBIT Kati Burwinkel

**Lincoln School Exhibit Opens June 3<sup>rd</sup>!**

The Lincoln School Exhibit will open to the public on June 3<sup>rd</sup> from 1-4 pm. The Historical Society is excited to finally share this important exhibit over a year in the making. This exhibit will feature a 15 minute documentary told by some of the Hillsboro residents who lived this story. During the month of June, the Highland House Museum will also be hosting the Brown v. Board of Education National Travel Exhibit, courtesy of the Highland County Bar Association. This exhibit will tell the story of the landmark Supreme Court case in which the Court declared separate schools for blacks and whites to be unconstitutional. The Hillsboro case was the first northern test case of the Brown decision and went on to help end segregation in other large northern cities. The museum will open on June 3 from 1 – 4 pm and members of the Lincoln School Exhibit Committee will be on hand to talk about the project and answer any questions. Please join us!



## HIGHLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Check the date found on your mailing label. This is your membership renewal date. If it falls within the period of this newsletter, your renewal statement is enclosed. Please make any corrections or additions on the form and return it with your payment. Please consider increasing your membership to the next level.

### VICKI'S NEWS *(continued from page 6)*

The Ohio History *Connection* (Historical Society) will be setting up a table on the courthouse square on Friday, July 7 from 4-7pm during the Festival of the Bells. Their purpose is to find out how much Highland Countians know about their local history and to support HCHS.

Pat Gilliland painted the front foyer, stairway, small hall and bathroom at a cost of \$1100, which included supplies. The bathroom was quite a challenge as he had to strip wallpaper and patch lots of cracks.

Jean and Carolyn continue to work in the library. File cabinets have been moved and another bookcase is being added. Cracks are being filled and the ceiling and walls are being painted. Hopefully, by opening, or shortly thereafter, the library will have a fresh, clean appearance.

Kati has finished a display on the sheriffs of Highland County in the south hallway (where the Marshall exhibit was previously located). This is a follow-up to the project involving our elected Highland County Sheriffs last year.

A few new artists are being added to the Museum Shop. Brenda Armstrong's jewelry, Lisa Saville's pottery and Terry Vance's pottery have been added. Remember that we have tee shirts featuring a photo of the Lincoln School for sale in the Museum Shop!

John Glaze has conducted training workshops on using our Square Point of Sale system. We want shoppers to have a fast, friendly and efficient check-out, in addition to capturing all of the data to make accounting, especially when it comes to paying our consigners, accurate.

### PARKER HASTINGS RETURNS



Parker Hastings returns to Highland House on 02 July! Make plans now to attend this concert to hear this talented young man. He is already performing as an opening act for major concerts and it won't be long before he will be the headliner!

He has been working on a new, full-length CD and hopefully will have some with him.



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