

Historical Society reviews growth, progress of 2015

By KATHY TANDBERG

The Mercer County Historical Society annual meeting held Jan. 19 reflected on another busy year in 2015, a year that included the completion of a new addition, building improvements, many new artifacts, and new displays.

MCHS President Blake Wiedrich, also the chairperson of the building committee, reflected on the year in his annual report.

"I want to give a big thank you to the board members. I truly appreciate all you have done and continue to do," Wiedrich said. "It shows in the museum and the comments we receive, written and verbally."

MCHS directors took to the road at the beginning of the year, meeting with the cities of Mercer County to request donations for the new addition.

Each community of Mercer County – Beulah, Golden Valley, Hazen, Pick City, Stanton, and Zap – responded favorably to the requests and donated funds for the new addition, now known as room 4.

Donations were also received from several organizations and clubs for the building addition, artifacts, display cases or various other projects throughout the year.

Wiedrich expressed a gracious thank you to all who donated funds or artifacts throughout the year, in addition to the many helping hands.

"I do thank everybody, including the volunteers for helping during the fair, keeping the museum open, serving Muds, and helping with the ice cream social," he added.

Among the larger projects in 2015 was the addition of 25 upright and lighted glass cabinets in room 4. Also added to room 4 were a furnace, air conditioner, electrical outlets, and a breaker panel.

Peggy Wolff, display chairperson, spoke of the many artifacts donated or purchased throughout the year. Some of the obtained artifacts, but not all, are:

- Bride dress from Ida Voegelé
- Military uniform from Wes Gunsch
- Beech-Nut Coffee store tin from Judy Weiger

- Seal coat from a former Zap resident
- 1930s wedding dress from Kate Kusler
- James the Pig weather vane
- Morse Code machine used at the Zap Railroad Depot
- Vintage bareback rigging from the Fort Berthold Reservation
- Pump organ from Pauline Richau

One of the new displays in the museum is the original optometrist equipment and chair from the practice of Dr. James (Al) Powers. Powers opened his office in Beulah in 1953 and practiced until his retirement in December 1989.

Powers' optometry equipment was donated to the museum this past May by Beulah optometrist Dr. Mike Hammerschmidt, who went into partnership with Powers in August 1983.

Wolff said several displays have been rearranged and others have been relocated.

"We are continually changing our displays to keep them

farmer Herb Zuern was donated to the museum in 2014 by his widow, Lorina Zuern. The collection came in time to help fill the new glass display cabinets in room 4.

The Zuern collection includes several hundred vintage and newer collectable pieces. There are several duplicates, and Zuern has given permission for them to be auctioned off March 20. More information will be available at a later date.

In addition to the Zuern collection, the museum has many other vintage toys on display, some handmade many years ago. But toys not in cabinets take additional work to keep them clean. The goal is to one day have those in glass display cases as well.

"We spent much of November through January cleaning toys to preserve them," Wolff said.

Fundraising for the museum is ongoing. The historical society holds card parties four times a year,



Linda Welk has her eyes "tested" by Lani Meyhoff while they work on a new display featuring the optometrist equipment of Dr. James (Al) Powers, who opened his Beulah practice in 1953. The equipment was donated by Dr. Mike Hammerschmidt, former partner of Powers.



Betty Helm, left, and Peggy Wolff make adjustments on the relocated bridal display now in the new addition of the Mercer County Museum.

new and interesting," Wolff said.

Mannequins have been one priority at the museum. Wolff said many of the older mannequins have been in poor condition, often making it difficult or impossible to change clothing on them.

"We order new mannequins when possible," Wolff added.

The expansive farm toy collection of rural Hazen

which raised \$473 in 2015. The public is welcome to join the card parties.

Also in 2015, an ice cream social raised \$220; \$520 was raised selling the popular ice cream treat, Muds, at the Mercer County Fair and on Labor Day.

There are still historical Mercer County playing cards available at \$10 a deck, which also bring in funds.

Total funds raised in 2015 through these various fund-

raisers were \$2,408.

Memberships are an important part of any organization and with the MCHS. Memberships are also another way to raise funds for the museum.

MCHS offers one-year memberships as well as Lifetime memberships. With Lifetime memberships, it is a one-time dues payment.

Memberships are as follows:

- Individual one-year membership - \$5
- Individual Lifetime membership - \$100 (one-time payment)

- Business one-year membership - \$25
- Business Lifetime membership - \$500 (one-time payment)

The museum is open every Wednesday throughout the year (winter depending on weather). Memorial Day through Labor Day the museum is open every Sunday afternoon.

Volunteers are always welcome. There is something to do for every volunteer, from displays to cleaning to computer work and more. To become a volunteer call 873-5070. Leave a name and number if no answer. Or, stop in at the museum any Wednesday.

MERCER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2016 DIRECTORS

- Blake Wiedrich, president
- Murel Spier, vice president
- Renee Lindemann, treasurer
- Susan Neuberger, secretary
- Peggy Wolff
- Lani Meyhoff
- Betty Helm
- Linda Welk
- Jean Bornemann