

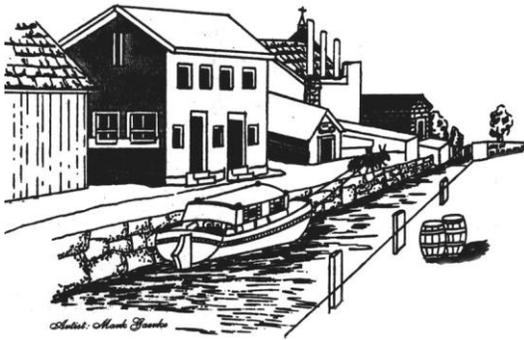
THE TOWPATH

Published Quarterly

January-April-July-October

THE NEW BREMEN HISTORIC ASSOCIATION

January 2015



NBHA CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

The 40th annual Christmas Tree Festival opened at the Lockkeepers House on a cold and windy December 1st. Many colorful decorations filled the house and gave visitors much to see during the Christmas season. New this year, a silent auction was held for a snowman tree donated by John & Sandy Wierwille and a photographer was available to take festive holiday pictures.

These individuals and organizations entered beautiful trees and displays: Betty Plattner, Beverly Plattner, Colten, Rogan & MariAna Muether, Dennis Dicke, Diana Hartwig & Karen Eckert, Greg Paul, Hardesty Family, Jackie Love, Jeff & Kathy Pape, Marcia Meyer Family, Rob & Diane Paul, Ruth Brookhart, Sandy & John Wierwille, Taylor & Rianna Paul, A'Bloom, Capabilities Country Club, Cherry Belles Red Hats, Elmwood Assisted Living, Gagel Plumbing & Heating, Gilberg Furniture, Hair Loft, Hair Performers, Maria Stein Animal Clinic, MECCA, Minster Bank, New Bremen 3rd Grade Classes, New Bremen Coffee Co. & Books, New Bremen Cub Scouts, New Bremen Girl Scouts, New Bremen Historic Association, New Bremen Kindergarten Classes, New Bremen Library, Paul Chiropractic & Health Center, Russell Blystone with Century 21 Key Realtors, Serendipity Preschool, Southwestern AC Chamber, Spirit Safari Club St. Paul UCC.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE NBHA CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE!



Sue Schmackers, Diane Paul, Judy Meckstroth & Amy Stephens



So much to see!



Tree decorated by New Bremen 3rd Graders

NBHS Chorus Members

- Kasey Haynes,
- Emily Steineman,
- Adeleine Whitten,
- Lydia Flynn



“**THE TOWPATH**” is a historical reflection of New Bremen and the surrounding area published quarterly by the New Bremen Historic Association. We welcome stories, pictures and suggestions of topics from our readers.

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Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month

Membership Dues

\$25.00 per year (includes spouse/S.O. at same address)

Lifetime membership - \$250.00 (includes spouse/S.O. at same address)

Payment is required by January of each year to assure uninterrupted delivery of *The Towpath*.

All levels of membership receive “*The Towpath*.”



Can anyone identify these gentlemen?

Call, write or e-mail names to Gen or Joyce!

From John Hay (Port Charlotte, Florida):

I am going through my mother's (**Louise Moeller Hay**) old photo albums and ran across an album from my Grandmother, Alfrieda Vornholt Moeller. Included was this picture post card by Taylor & Son, New Bremen, Ohio, given to my Grandfather Raymond Moeller. I am scanning all the pictures for my brother and sisters and trying to put names to the photographs. I assume that the fellows in this photo were friends of my grandfather, taken around 1915, and was curious if the historical society could help to identify the men. Thanks for any help you can give me.

I enjoyed seeing the old photos of the Kuenzel Mills buildings and history in the October issue of *The Towpath*. My mother, Wilhelmine Kuenzel Carter (1900-1986), told me many stories of her home in New Bremen and of “the mill,” my grandfather Gottfried and Uncle Felix and Aunt Helen. Of course, when growing up we had nothing but Kuenzel Mills blankets at home and I believe that we still have one or two well-worn Kuenzel Mills blankets in the cedar chest. Keep up the good work with *The Towpath*. **Jon Carter (Meridian, Idaho)**

Your October issue was fabulous. I read it cover to cover immediately. **Marjorie Stienecker (St. Marys, Ohio)**

We enjoy reading *The Towpath*. **Carl J. Poppe (Carlsbad, California)**

Great work everyone. **Betty Belton (Celina, Ohio)**



I enjoy reading *The Towpath* and I pass it on to others who feel the same. Ruth is doing fairly well. I don't remember reading about the Block family. Henry was the only plumber, I believe, for 50 years. His father Charles died in 1957 at age 89 and before he went broke during the Depression he owned a brewery in Sidney. I would appreciate anything you know on this subject. **Dan & Ruth (Block) Johns (Del City, Oklahoma)** -----

It is always a pleasure to read *The Towpath*. Thanks again. **Flo Bushman (Louisville, Kentucky)** -----

Richard Roediger passed away on September 26, 2014. He loved his *Towpath*. Read it thoroughly, then called his sister Juanita Scheer to discuss the articles. His obituary was in the New Bremen newspaper. **Pam Roediger (Allentown, Pennsylvania)** -----



Karen Bisel and Paula Bachman Williams visited New Bremen to research their ancestor, E. H. Solms. Mr. E. H. Solms had a blacksmith shop on Monroe Street in 1904. Karen lives in California and Paula lives in Arizona. We enjoyed our visit with you.



New Crown Building that connects with the Opera House.

Take a look at the new Crown building. If you are out and about today, you might want to take a look at the old carved stone arch put together directly across from the Crown street clock. An Irish stone mason reassembled an antique carved stone archway above the doorway. This was purchased from a Smithsonian auction of architectural details. It is from the "Warder House" in Washington D.C. that was dismantled some years ago. An internet search will produce several stories but here is one: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warder_Mansion. It is certainly notable. **Village of New Bremen**

Correction: Dona Mae Kuenning and Jim Kettler noted that Tom Waterman was misidentified in this photo in the October issue of *The Towpath*.

From left: Paul Opperman, Jim Kettler, Carl Roediger, & Tom Waterman



ITEMS DONATED TO MUSEUM

Photos (20), school books (9) of Wilbur Fricke, 1912 German Bible, Photo of children church group, STAMCO paper items by **Tom Fricke**. Memorial Day Programs 1939& 1955, war bond wallet, Chicago World's Fair booklet written by Marie Roettger by **Darlene Neuman**. School children photo (2) NBHS sweater letters, WWII helmet by **Dale Hirschfeld**. Time booklets from George Fark's masonry business by **Kathy Maurer**.

UPDATE ON PAPE HOUSE

The outside work on the Pape House has been completed. The porch has a new foundation, floor, railing and paint. Eaves have been repaired and also sport a new coat of paint. The large maple tree next to the house has been trimmed by an arborist. A new furnace and air conditioner have been installed. The inside of the house is now being painted.

We still need your help. We want to hear your opinions on the best use of the Pape House. Please call a Board member or write us a note at The New Bremen Historic Association, P.O.Box 73, New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073.

DISPLAYS AT STATEHOUSE

The Auglaize County Historical Society recently installed two displays in the Ohio Statehouse. The displays feature "Auglaize County at Work and at Play."

The **New Bremen Historical Association** loaned a New Bremen Blanket made by the Kuenzel Mills as part of the display. The displays will be in place through May 21, 2015.

Chandra Hoffman, President of the Auglaize County Historical Society, with the displays at the Statehouse in Columbus.



A TREASURE TROVE OF MEMORIES



James F. Dicke, Stanley Kuenning, David Schwieterman

(Photo by Dr. Sandra Conradi)

We had the pleasure of meeting with the three gentleman pictured above as they shared some New Bremen memories. All three men have a long history with our community.

David Schwieterman, second generation of Schwieterman Pharmacies, expanded the business that his father purchased in 1916. Schwieterman Pharmacies and Compounding Center branches are now located in five communities in Auglaize and Mercer Counties. Stan Kuenning became the owner of the Western Ohio Hardware in 1953 and expanded the business to three locations in Auglaize and Mercer Counties. The business is now owned and managed by his son Scott Kuenning. James F. Dicke followed his father Carl Dicke into the Crown Controls Company in 1945. Crown Equipment Corporation is one of the largest lift truck manufacturers in the world and his son James F. Dicke II and grandson James F. Dicke III hold the leadership roles.

The conversation that afternoon was lively covering many topics and was often punctuated with laughter as these longtime friends reminisced. Dave introduced himself as the “Heir of New Bremen,” born in New Bremen just three weeks before the Great Depression hit. He said that his family always blamed him for ushering in that dreadful time period.

Stan told a story about the arrival of Jim’s train car in New Bremen. The car arrived in February that year and all the Christmas decorations were still up due to the harsh weather. The train car was hauled from the railroad through town on Monroe Street. Four or five Village and Crown employees rode on top of the train car to lift the wires that might be in the way of travel. Butch Schelper,

owner of Schelper’s Market, yelled to Stan, “Do you think we can get them to take down the Christmas decorations?” Dave added that he had a picture of the train car being taken through town and he labeled it as “The Last Streetcar to go through New Bremen.”



The train car moving east on Monroe Street through New Bremen (Photo Courtesy of Stan Kuenning)

Jim told a story that depicted life in the small town of New Bremen. He remembered a meeting he was to attend in Mayor’s Court had to be postponed. The reason was the Mayor had to finish cleaning his chicken coop before he would convene the court.

Stan, a former volunteer fireman, served as the secretary-treasurer for the fire department. One of his jobs was to buy whiskey for the weekly Thursday night meeting. He went to Schulenberg’s Store to purchase twelve bottles of whiskey. The clerk asked him what the firemen do with all the whiskey. He told her that they put it their fire extinguishers!

Another topic was the First National Bank robbery that occurred on February 21, 1958. All three men remembered what happened that day at 9:15 in the morning. The bank employees and two customers were in the bank. Dave Schwieterman was walking across the street to the bank to get some change for the business day at the Drug Store.



Intersection of Washington & Monroe Streets

In 1958 the First National Bank was in the building on the SE corner. The Drugstore is on the NE corner. The Sohio gas station is across from the bank. (Photo Courtesy of Stan Kuenning)

As he neared the door to the bank, a man just ahead of him turned and put a gun to Dave's back as they entered the bank. The robber told everyone to stick up their hands that it was a robbery. No one complied at first but then Elodie Lanfersieck said, "This is not a Dave Schwieterman joke. This is a robbery." The bank manager came from his office holding a gun that he kept in his desk. One of the employees warned the group to be careful because he was not a good shot. The robber escaped with almost \$3000 in a get-away car driven by an accomplice. Later Stan saw a witness running down Monroe Street in a zig-zag manner. When asked why he was running like that he replied, "It is hard to shoot a moving target."

Jim said that he could see from his office in the former Arcade building that something had happened at the bank, so he went to the Sohio station across from the bank for information. He remembered that the FBI arrived within 25 minutes and took charge of the situation. The FBI leader put the constables in a circle and instructed each to tell who in their jurisdiction would do such a thing as this robbery. They soon knew who had done this deed. The robber was apprehended by 1:30 that afternoon. Dave said that when he was questioned by the investigators and was asked to give a description of the offender he told them he was so nervous that he would not have known his own mother.

Jim, Stan & Dave remember attending Central School on South Franklin Street. Jim said he attended school in New Bremen for one year and recalls what a wonderful teacher he had – Nettie Loy.



Central (Union) School on S. Franklin Street (1878-1956)

They also talked about some of their activities when they were young. Both Dave and Jim remember using carbide to blow up containers. Dave used the old ice cream containers from the drug store and Jim used milk cans. Both fired the containers with a spark plug and remember the loud noise and propulsion of the containers.

The canal was another topic that brought back memories. Dave remembers that he and Bill Komminsk played near

the Kuenzel Mill Buildings and the canal lock. One day Dave's sister, Betty Jo, fell in the canal and was saved by Bill's quick thinking.

Stan remembered that, depending on which side of the canal they lived, people in New Bremen were described as either being from Frog Town (near Rabe's Pond) or Cheese Quarters (near the Creamery). Rabe's Pond was located in the park area south of the Pavilion, between the canal and Washington Street, and was the home of many frogs. The pond area later became the city dump and Jim remembers shooting rats there.



Rabe's Pond, a turn-around for the canal boats

All three men remember the race track. Stan's family home was Kuenning's Grove where the race track was built. Dave said that his dad always told him that he made more money selling popcorn at the races in one day than he made one day in the drug store. Jim remembers being at the race track the day the drivers set fire to the grandstand. He and his dad left the track early and were back in Dayton when they heard about the fire on the radio.

The next topic was the Equity Ice Cream Store on Main Street owned by Harold Speckman. Stan remembers hanging out at the Equity because that is where the Speckman's daughter Dona Mae, his girlfriend, worked. Both Jim and Stan remember that the Equity building had an unusually deep basement and that a step ladder was needed to change light bulbs. Dave remembers that his dad scolded him for going to the Equity for the "high peak" ice cream cones when he could get ice cream at Schwieterman's Drug Store.

All agreed that by hearing one story they were reminded of another and another and the time sped by. It is clear that they are all strong advocates for New Bremen. They have spent many years of their lives here and they talked lovingly and respectfully about the people they have known. We are blessed by their presence and willingness to share their memories.

INTERVIEW WITH SELMA GEIB



Selma Geib with her Nephew John Hoffman

Selma (Hoffman) Geib has the rare privilege of becoming a centenarian when she reached 100 years of age on November 11, 2014. "I don't feel that old," she says and describes her ability to live independently. "I can do this because I have so many wonderful friends."

Friends have always been important to Selma and she named three from her childhood that were very special; Gabriel Schaefer Herring (1914-1987), Bertha Schowe King (1914-2011) and Viola Hirschfeld Headapohl (1914-2007). Today she still has special friends and relatives who help her. It was with the help of her nephew John Hoffman that we were able to arrange this interview. Selma was born in New Bremen one of the six children of Henry and Helena (Kuck) Hoffman.

Selma's interests and skills appeared early in her life. While still in school she began cutting hair for her family and neighbors. She charged ten cents if they came to her house and fifteen cents if she had to walk to their house.

After graduation from New Bremen High School in 1932 she enrolled in a beauty college in Lima to become a beauty shop manager. For 12 years she managed a shop in the summer kitchen of her house in New Bremen. Her operators were Ruth Luelleman, Helen Hoffman Simon, Janet Dietemeyer, and the Gensler girls. She retains her license today and was recently honored as being the oldest person with a manager's license in the State of Ohio.

Selma married Webster Geib (1914-1998), her New Bremen classmate, and settled in Sidney. They have two children, Bryan and Kathleen Geib Boykin. Webster enjoyed teaching school and served for many years on the Sidney Recreation Board. During those years Selma expanded her artistic talents by studying at the Dayton

Art Institute and taking private lessons. She studied techniques in sculpture, oil painting, water colors, and Sumi-e Japanese ink painting.

Selma also became an avid gardener. Her love for gardening began when she was given a rose bush by Mrs. Papsdorf as they were leaving St. Peter's Church for another pastorate. Selma planted the precious gift and was enthralled with the beauty of the blossoms. She became an expert gardener by trial and error and says she is still learning. Her membership in the Rainbow Gardeners Club gave her the opportunity to share her knowledge. Selma's studies at the Franklin Conservatory in Columbus helped her display the beautiful flowers from her garden.



Selma and a Winning Flower Arrangement

Her floral talents became apparent when she won over 100 ribbons at the Shelby County Fair flower show. This year the fair added a special artistic category to the flower show in honor of Selma.

During our interview we found Selma has a remarkable memory of New Bremen as it was many years ago. This is a list of places she remembers that are part of our history. **How many do you remember?**

The Arcade / The Post Office at the corner of Main & Monroe / Poppe's Shoe Store / Schelper's Store / Schulenberg's Store / Smith's Variety Store (5&10) / The Bank at the corner of Monroe & Washington / American Budget Loan Company / Knipple's Bakery / Fire Department on Washington Street/ Lanfersieck Barbershop / Mueller Brothers Clothing / The Ice House / Kuenzel Mills / The Grade School on S. Franklin and the High School on Herman St./ Gieseke's Grocery / Brown's Barber Shop

Selma's other special memories:

- My mother purchased material from Nieter's Store and sewed all our clothes when I was a child.
- At Christmas time, instead of getting a new doll, my mother would sew a new dress for my doll and my father would paint the hair a different color.
- I remember when the Armistice was enacted and we stood and all the bells rang
- I had to run home each day from school for lunch.
- We had oyster soup for dinner every Sunday.
- I got to ride on the last streetcar to St. Marys.
- Silent movies at the theater were made exciting because of the wonderful piano playing of Mr. Laut.

As we talked with Selma her delightful presence and many smiles showed that she enjoys her life. She said she stays busy socially and working on her many projects. It is apparent that she devotes her time to brightening the lives of her family and friends.



When we asked her secret of longevity? "Never give up!" she quickly responded with her upbeat spirit. Selma, we are so glad to know you.

The NBHS Class of 1932

(The New Bremen Sun, May 19, 1932)

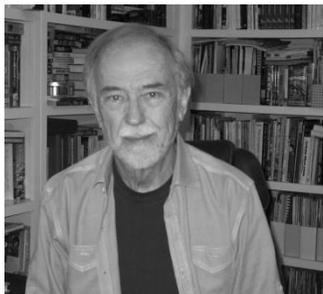
Professor Homer Cotterman of Capitol University, Columbus, will be the class day orator at the 46th annual commencement exercises to be held tomorrow evening by the New Bremen High School. The program will be presented at 8:15 o'clock in the High School Auditorium.

Thirty-one members of the graduation class will be given diplomas by W. J. Boesel, vice president of the board of education. They are **Harold W. J. Ahlers, J. Stanley Bienz, Woodrow T. Braun, Franklin E. Coss, Ralph H. Dietrich, LeRoy C. A. Egbert, Verlin Egbert, Paul A. Fischbach, Walter W. Frey, Hilda Garmhausen, Webster C. Geib, Dorothy Gieseke, Wilda Greber, Violet Grothaus, Louise G. Haines, Gertrude Heinfeld, Viola A. M. Hirschfeld, Selma M. Hoffman, Donald B. Kettler, Helen E. Knipple, Marie A. W. Kuest, Thomas E. Laut, Frederick L. Luedeke, Kenneth O. Moeller, Gabriel A. L. Schaefer, Ruth C. W. Schnell, Bertha M. Schowe, Paul L. Taylor, Louis W. Topp, Marie E. Waterman and Marie J. Westerbeck.**

Commencement week activities started Sunday evening when the baccalaureate address was delivered in St. Paul's church by Rev. J. C. Melchert. On Monday evening the class play, *Bab*, was presented at the auditorium by eleven members of the class...

The following program for the commencement exercises has been announced by S. M. Archer, superintendent, and Miss Alvina Burk, principal.

- Overture – *Radiant Youth* (J.E.Wells)...High School Band
- Invocation...Rev. N.E.Vitz
- Serenade – *At Evening Time* (Fred Jewell)...High School Band
- Salutatory – Bertha Schowe
- Presentation of Cane to Junior President – Gabriel Schaefer
- Response by President of Junior Class – Roland Kruse
- Concert Piece – *Simplicity* ...High School Band
- Valedictory – Marie Kuest
- Class Address – Professor Homer Cotterman, Capitol University, Columbus
- Serenade – *At Break of Dawn* (Fred Jewell)...High School Band
- Presentation of Diplomas – W. J. Boesel, Vice President of Board of Education
- High School Song – Class of 1932
- Benediction - Rev. Theo. G. Papsdorf
- March – *Lead On* (J.E.Wells)...High School Band



It has been our good fortune to feature some of Bob Gilberg's writing in The Towpath. His stories, mostly about New Bremen, have now been expanded into a book titled "The Last Road Rebel." The following story is from this book. He hopes the book will be in stores by February.

New Bremen, Ohio—the '50s

By Bob Gilberg

New Bremen, Ohio, was mostly like countless other small farm towns in that part of the state in the '50s. The primary business in that area at the time was farming—corn, wheat, hay, alfalfa, and soybeans, along with some dairy farming—and there were always cows and pigs in the fields. This was not gentleman's hobby-farm country; it was family, farm-for-a-living country. This is still the case today. The countryside's deep, rich soil attracted the original settlers who cleared the land, set up the farms, and built the towns. The land was wrestled by hand, with backbreaking manual labor, from the thick, hardwood forests that dominated the entire western part of the state in the early 1800s. Those settlers who founded New Bremen were primarily people from northern Germany, and a walk through the German Protestant Cemetery reveals names that clearly announce that background: Hogenkamp, Quellhorst, Meckstroth, Ziegenbusch, Ruedebusch, Blanke, Klanke, Schulenberg, Schwieterman, Luedeke, Vogelsang, Vanderhorst, Wuebbenhorst, and so on. People were still speaking German, at home and sometimes even in public, during my high school years in the late 1950s.

New Bremen had about 1,800 residents then. There were two drugstores, two food markets, two medical doctors, three bars, five churches, six gas stations, and, until he retired, one dentist. The docs both made house calls. With the exception of one small Catholic church, the rest were of various Protestant denominations.

There was also one auto racing track, one public swimming pool, one movie theater, one bowling alley, and the Lock One North canal lock on the Miami and Erie Canal. Those first few things were what made New Bremen typical of the other surrounding towns. The last few things were what made New Bremen different, and they made all the difference to me and—probably to varying degrees—most kids growing up in New Bremen in those days.

Movies generally reached New Bremen months after the releases in the bigger Ohio cities, and big movies such as *Giant* and *Stalag 17* and *High Noon* didn't get there for up to a year later. Admission on Thursdays was fifteen cents, and the balcony was always open. Popcorn was a dime. And, in a remarkable concession to movie viewers' enjoyment mostly absent today, there was a glassed-in "crying room" with a speaker for mothers with babies.

The auto racing track had seen some glory years back in the '30s when big-name drivers came for the racing, but in an infamous and well-known episode around the area at that time, the drivers, disgusted by the day's purse, set fire to the

grandstands and any wooden structure, and the place burned down. In the '50s, the track was just beginning its resurgence. It was an important part of my youth.

There was one high school and one grade school. Junior high classes were in the high school building. My senior graduating class had twenty-five students, eighteen of whom had started first grade together, and we had roughly 130 kids in the entire high school. Some of them had attended school in one-room schoolhouses in the surrounding townships before transferring into New Bremen's "bigger" system when the one-room schools began to close down.

There were two graduating students in my church's—the New Bremen Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church—confirmation class: my older brother and me.

In the very early '50s, milk, butter, and cream were all delivered to homes—in glass bottles—by a horse-drawn wagon every morning before seven o'clock. Ice, for those still using real iceboxes, as did my family, was also delivered by horse-drawn wagon. The milk bottles needed to be brought inside quickly in the winter to avoid freezing and popping the pressed-in cardboard stoppers. Bringing in the milk, along with the newspaper, was the first order of business in the morning.

Homes without plumbing, while not common, were still evident; you could tell by the wooden outhouses and the big cast-iron pump handles mounted on the backyard water wells or by seeing someone making the occasional backyard dash.

The canal was mostly abandoned by the turn of the twentieth century, but it was a main attraction and central point of kid activities in the 1950s when it had not yet become stagnant and unwanted. We found plenty of things to do around the canal: fishing, rowing boats, hiking along the towpaths, and even skating in winters when it froze over. We could sometimes skate to Minster, three miles away to the south, during hard freezes.

Surrounding towns were located on the county-state highway grid, with most just a few miles apart, linked together by arrow-straight, narrow, two-lane roads. The closest thing to an interstate highway was the Ohio Turnpike in northern Ohio, one hundred miles away, linking the industrial areas of northern Indiana, Ohio, and central Pennsylvania.

Most of the surrounding towns were as small as, or smaller than, New Bremen, generally between five hundred to two thousand people. Very few, if any, had movie theaters or swimming pools. It was farming community after farming community. Many of these towns were no more than the intersection of two county or state roads, with a gas station, a farm implement dealership, maybe a bar or café with a neon sign above the door saying EAT, the always-present church, and a scattering of houses.

Tall hardwood trees lined New Bremen's streets: oak, maple, ash, hickory, elm, and other species. On the older town streets, they were tall and wide enough to nearly meet over the center of the road. Walking or riding a bicycle down most of the town's streets was like going through quiet, leafy, shady, green tunnels. There was very little ambient noise. Ohio 66 was the only real highway through the town and carried little heavy truck—or, for that matter—automobile traffic. It was a very sleepy little Midwestern farm town; there were no leaf blowers, weed-whackers, power hedge trimmers, turbocharged lawn

mowers, chain saws, or wood chippers. In those special years when they were active, the cicadas were sometimes the loudest noise to be heard.

There were some kids with dual exhausts and Cherry Bomb mufflers on their cars, though. And Bill Haley and the Comets were beginning to be heard on the radio, and *Rock Around the Clock* was just around the corner—but we didn't know it then.

There were no radio or TV stations within fifty miles, and TV reception was always marginal. The families who could afford it mounted TV antennas on forty-foot aluminum towers equipped with the antenna rotators made by a then small company in New Bremen. In the fancier parts of town, every house had a TV tower.

The only TV stations—all three of them—were in Dayton. The nearest radio stations in the early '50s were also located in Dayton, which was our metropolis: it entertained us, sent us the news, and was the nearest destination for upscale shopping, first-run hit movies, and, to the extent anyone from New Bremen was enthusiastic about theater, the nearest place for regional theater or big-time stage shows.

Tom Hamlin, the radio and TV celebrity and sports announcer from Dayton, frequently came to New Bremen to announce the big races at our speedway. When back in Dayton and on the air for his 11:00 p.m. wrap-up show that same Sunday night, he always said, "I've been up in God's country today to do the races at New Bremen."

New Bremen's population was extensively middle class—rural middle class. There were upper-middle-class families, but few, if any, really wealthy families. People could afford a new car every few years and sometimes had a second car for the fathers to drive to work or the kids to drive when they were old enough. The second car was usually an old, '30s- or '40s-something Ford or Chevy that sat out, year around—through all weather.

There seemed to be no poor or poverty-stricken families in New Bremen that we knew about. People were very proud and careful to disguise their financial difficulties. There was a spirit of helping men who were out of work to find jobs. I don't think the town would have ever let anyone be unable to feed their families or not have a place to live. There would be a job somewhere, and food would find its way to a doorstep.

There were no racial minorities in New Bremen until the late '40s, when a local company set up a factory to process alfalfa into livestock feed. The workers were mostly black and had moved in from Hope, Arkansas, in the Deep South. In the mid-1950s, a pretty girl from a family working for that business became the first—ever—African American student at New Bremen High School. Ethel began school at NBHS in my freshman class in the fall of 1954. Initially, this was quite a revelation for us, but our class and the other students handled it very graciously, and I've always believed Ethel was well treated, especially by the girls. She became, although probably somewhat distantly, just another member of our class. There was never any overt discrimination shown toward her, and our class—again, especially the girls—went out of its way to include her in activities. We had some—although limited—understanding of how tough it had to be for her. While we didn't know too much about the overt discrimination and segregation in the South, since the TV coverage of the '60s was

still ten years away, we were vaguely aware of it. We knew enough to believe that things were probably better for her in New Bremen than whatever she had experienced in Arkansas.

Ethel finished high school and graduated with the other twenty-four of us in 1958—the first African American to graduate from NBHS.

That's not to say there wasn't subtle discrimination by some merchants and adults around town against those few black families living just to the north in the tiny homes provided by the agricultural business. New Bremen certainly wasn't perfect in that regard, but Fred—who owned the Lone Pine gas station where I worked part-time back then—allowed them credit when needed for gas their cars and the kerosene used for their home heaters.

Growing up in that small, peaceful town surrounded by my parents, twelve aunts and uncles, fourteen cousins, two brothers, dozens of school friends and classmates and their parents, many helpful neighbors, and most of the rest of the town's 1,800 residents—all of whom seemed to know my name—was a nurturing environment hard to duplicate anywhere today. Kids could stray and get into trouble if they wanted to, but it was nearly impossible to stray too far or get too deeply into trouble—everyone looked out for everyone else. But in my case, it wasn't for lack of trying.

The number of high school students who graduated then, as well as now, was nearly 100 percent, and the number who immediately went on to some form of additional education, the military, or into a job was nearly the same 100 percent. During a class reunion several years ago, I listened as the high school principal described how the about-to-graduate senior class—with the exception of one individual—had all finalized their plans for either going on to college, joining the military, or had already found an occupation.

That one individual was undecided. He could have been me—forty years earlier.

Bob Gilberg spent his first 18 years in New Bremen. In 1940 he was born in the family home on Pearl Street with Dr. Fledderjohann and Nurse Ruth Ritter in attendance. His family consisted of his parents Fred and Delight and brothers Ron and Richard. Bob graduated from NBHS with the class of 1958. He earned his engineering degree from OSU in 1964. His first job was in Dayton at NCR microelectronics. Then in 1972 his career path led him to California where he lives today with his wife Nikki. Bob's hobbies include travel, car restoration, music, reading and writing.

Bob has agreed to be our speaker at the Annual Dinner Meeting in March. Please plan to attend. Tickets will go on sale February 1st.



MORE 50'S CAPERS

WRITTEN BY PAT GELS D'ALESSIO

INSPIRED BY JOANNE BERNING MECKSTROTH

SNOW DAYS

When the snow started to fly we would pray for more so that we might get a “snow day”- a day of vacation from school. We would listen to the Lima radio station early each morning hoping to hear “schools will be closed in New Bremen today.” One particular day we decided to assist the process- we knew the ultimate decision was made if the school bus was able to complete the route. About ten of us (and I won't mention names but you know who you are) went out to Amsterdam Road and worked for several hours shoveling a mound of 5-6 feet of snow blocking the roadway.

What we did not figure or take into consideration (Miss Burk would be disappointed that we did not rely on our geometry) was that all the roads are 1 mile square; so even though the bus had to go 3 miles out of his way (and that did not please Mr. Watkins who had to do the extra driving) he did manage to pick up all the students and arrived at the school 45 minutes late.

Meanwhile all of us who were totally exhausted from the late night snow shoveling turned on our radios and did not hear New Bremen closed, so we had to go to school. By second period the PA came on and asked that the ten of us (our names being broadcasted through the entire school) report to the office. We had to face the music - we were busted! How did they know? It seems our civic minded parents had reported their snow shovels stolen to the police - and the New Bremen police were so sharp they put it all together. Yes, we were punished - and we did not get a day off, but we had a great time that night shoveling our hearts out for several hours.

LATE SWIMS

It was always a great past time to go swimming late at night - and not get caught. One of the favorite places was the Komminsk pool. We would sneak in, swim

about ½ hour and leave. One particular night when I arrived home with very wet hair my dad asked me where I had been - I made up some great fib but of course could not tell him where I actually had been. The next day when he went to work, his boss Lewis Komminsk was most upset because some “rowdy teenagers” had broken into his pool again last night. He vowed that he would catch them the next time and press charges - of course he was concerned with the liability issue (and those of us who were the violators did not even know what the word meant).

By this time my father (remembering my arrival at home with wet hair) had put it all together - he rarely got angry with me, but he came home and without allowing me one single word told me that he knew where I was last night - that he absolutely forbid me to go there again. He explained how upset his boss was, and if he was to keep his job I had to stay out of the pool. After that we concentrated on the Jim Dicke pool - there were not too many choices in New Bremen until I became a life guard and had keys to the municipal pool.

WATERMELON PICNICS

Another of our evening capers would be to help ourselves to one of the watermelons left in front of the Howell Grocery -(yes, I probably owe you for at least 5 melons, Dick) - we would drive out to Amsterdam Road, smash the melon over the stop sign and “pig out.” To this day, I do not eat watermelon. My husband claims it's because it doesn't have the rusty stop sign flavor.

PARENTS ON VACATION

During my junior year my parents went to Mexico for a two week vacation - big mistake. They left me in the very capable hands of my grandmother who spoiled me rotten. My parents of course had given the “No Parties” lecture before they left - I think the first one started before they arrived in Minster.

My grandmother would fix sloppy joes, chili, and tuna, whatever we wanted. Our basement had a red painted floor that came off on your shoes and a gray carpet upstairs, so after each gathering the vacuuming was endless to remove all the red from the carpet. We came up with a great idea - let's tile the floor - so I went downtown and charged a great deal of gray tile and invited all my friends to help do the floor - their pay was another party catered by Grandma Gels. She was happy to cook for all because now she no longer had to vacuum red paint out of the carpet.

When my parents arrived home Grandma bragged about our accomplishments- “wait until you see what Pat and her friends did.” They went to the basement, saw the new floor, and dad says, “Who paid for this?” I replied, “I charged it downtown in your name.” He was most upset, but his mother (my wonderful grandmother) was so happy, he said nothing.

OUR CHANGING CUSTOMS & MANNER OF LIVING

Gardens Going Begging

(The New Bremen Sun, May 18, 1939)

Harking back fifty years – and there are many residents of New Bremen and vicinity whose memory easily goes back that far – one will recall how that many things have changed including customs and manner of living, all for the better, to be sure, and yet hard to comprehend by such who have not kept up with the trend of the times. A half century ago, for instance, there was scarcely a residence property in New Bremen which was not equipped with a woodshed, and at certain times of the year did not have a great stack of cordwood piled up on the rear of the lot. Every woodshed was equipped with a sawbuck, a contraption which uncomplainingly carried and firmly held the sticks of cordwood while the family head or the big boy patiently sawed the stovewood lengths.

Perhaps two-thirds of the residence properties had a pig-sty adjoining the woodshed where the porkers were fattened in large enough numbers to afford smoked ham, bratwurst and summer sausage for the family's need, while chicken roosts were necessary adjuncts to a well regulated family because of the needed egg supply and the occasional chicken dinner. Very small space surrounding the house was devoted to lawn – if there was any – but a good part of the garden space was devoted to growing flowers, along partition fences and lining the walks in the vegetable garden, but the larger space of the vacant lot extending from the house to the sheds in the rear was devoted to vegetable gardening, and most families raised their annual supply of potatoes and onions and beans and cabbages and what not all, storing them in cellars and in dugouts until needed for table use.

Sanitary demands caused the discontinuance of pigsties and chicken roosts, introduction of gas and electricity made the woodshed superfluous, a sense of the beautiful caused green lawns and flower beds to be enlarged, and – is it a sign of the times? – vegetable gardens have become as rare as the proverbial hen's teeth while demand for canned goods has grown to such an extent that local groceries today handle more stock in the course of a year and have a bigger turnover, perhaps, than all the other retail stores combined. Money for such necessities as the grocers are able to offer flows in streams from the family bank account or from the weekly wage until one wonders where such a supply of currency really comes from. Vegetable gardens in connection with the residences have become a thing of the past, and not a few vacant lots scattered about town and which would easily grow the needed vegetable supply for whole families are growing up in weeds and thistles for want of someone who is willing to devote an hour or so a day of spare time to planting and cultivating a garden the produce of which would save a family many a dollar cash outlay.

Employment is scarce, money is still scarcer, and gardens, yes, entire town lots, are going begging for someone who is able and willing and sufficiently economical to undertake the job of planting and cultivating them so that dollars might be saved for other needy purposes.

A Few Comments about the Past

By Genevieve Conradi



Genevieve Conradi, David Tangeman, Larry Heil, Carole Warner & Edward Conradi in 1949

I grew up in the 1940s and 1950s and I remember some of the manner of living as described in this article. Our property on South Franklin Street had a barn and a shed as you see in this picture. The barn had only a metal roof and a dirt floor but was a nice place to play on rainy days with the sound of the rain on the roof. It housed our car, bicycles, wagons, lawnmower and garden tools. The barn kept everything dry and safe from the weather.

Our barn and shed were not painted so the boards were weathered and gray in color. Next door our neighbor's barn was red, but it too was weathered and had not seen paint for a long time.

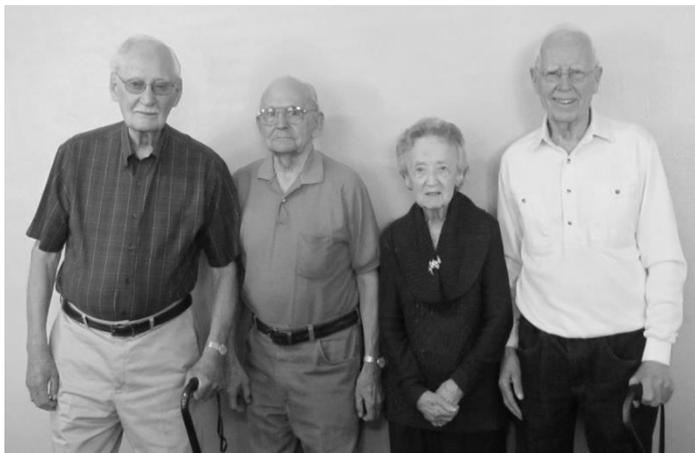
Before the town laws banned this, the shed had been a place for the chickens. Then it was a place to store the coal for the stoves. After our stoves were switched to oil, the shed became our playhouse. There were screens on the windows and the wooden flaps could be lifted to let the breezes in. Large pieces of cardboard were placed on the walls and linoleum covered the floor. It was a great place to hang out and play games or read. There was a hole cut in one wall so that the cat could go in and out.

The barn roof slanted to the back of the building. With our friends we would play "Andy-Over" by throwing a ball over the barn. One person would stand in the yard and the other in the alley. The thrower would shout "Andy-Over" and the other person would try to catch the ball.

The lot next to our house had once been the garden but was sold in 1950. Some of the plants were relocated to our yard. We had five cherry trees, a pear tree, currant and gooseberry bushes, a grape vine and a rhubarb patch. My grandmother & mother canned the cherries, made pear preserves, currant jelly, grape jelly and gooseberry and rhubarb pies. None of the fruit went to waste.

The other day I went looking for barns in New Bremen and I could only find fourteen. Most of them have been altered to accommodate an automobile and have been recently painted. I did not see any large gardens. Our customs and manner of living have changed again.

NBHS CLASS OF 1939



**Roger Busse, John Dicke, Ruth (Burmeister) Luelleman,
Jim Moeller**

These classmates met to celebrate the **75th anniversary** of their graduation.

Members of the Class of 1939

Katharine Bambauer, Preston Belton, Betty Brady, Ruth Burmeister, Roger Busse, Irene Dammeyer, John Dicke, Verna Egbert, Mabel Engle, Cleora Fark, Donald Fledderjohn, Jean Grothaus, Hazel Hespe, Helen Hespe, Norma Kettler, Warren Knipple, Robert Kuenning, Ruth Evelyn McKay, James Moeller, Dorothy Mohrman, Virgil Nedderman, Jean Niemeyer, Marjorie Pape, Antoinette Purpus, Esther Rabe, Helen Rehn, Jean Tangeman, Wilbur Warner, Betty Waterman, Robert Wehmeyer, Paul Westerbeck, Edna Wiehe, Richard Wissman.

The following excerpts from *The New Bremen Sun* give a look at the activities of our High School's graduating class 75 years ago.

Twelve Long Years

In 1927, a group of shy children started to school. Miss Esther Vornholt laid the first cornerstone in the foundation of formal education for our class. Passing to second grade was our first accomplishment and how proud we were. Miss Nettie Loy taught us to read and write and I'll never forget that I learned to tell time when in the second grade. "Readin', 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic'" were taught in the third grade; also geography. How hard we use to think it was. Miss Arminta Kuhlman was the teacher. Next was fourth grade and Miss Alberta Collins. We read the story of "Pinocchio" and I can remember the wooden statue Walter Buchloh, then in our class, made for us of Pinocchio. Miss Margaret Shaw was our fifth grade teacher and how big we thought we were to be able to go upstairs now. Sixth grade and Miss Enola Huenke were next. One can never forget the "bad-English hospital" and how we hated to have our names on the board when we used poor English. Who can forget the

Jerry Todd books? None, of course. Miss Huenke read the entire series to us during the year.

Mr. Herman Ludwig was our first man teacher and added much to our memory of the seventh grade. One can never forget learning many songs from Mr. Ludwig and also learning to diagram. Our last year in the grade school was taught by Mr. Lester Blanke. How big we now thought we were being the oldest class in the grade school. We gave the operetta "Hansel and Gretel" while in the eighth grade.

At last was the farewell to the grade school. Our jumping rope, take-away-ball, baseball, volley ball, basketball and other games played at recess time were all a thing of the past. We were now in high school and as "green" as any freshman could be. The Juniors gave us an initiation party the first year. Miss Frances Michael was our home room teacher and Antoinette Purpus was the class president. Silly Sophs we now were and Mrs. Garmhausen was the home room teacher. Bill Beachler was our class president and he also left at the end of the Sophomore year to move to Decatur, Ind. Next we were Juniors and were the hosts to the Senior class at the annual Junior-Senior reception. How hard we worked on plans for the reception. Jim Moeller was elected class president. We chose our rings this year and what arguments were started over them. Mr. Hormell was our class sponsor.

Senior class was next and now we really were dignified, we thought. Jim Moeller was again chosen as class president and this year we were entertained at the Junior-Senior reception. Miss Burk did her part as sponsor of the class.

With joys, sorrows, triumphs and defeats we come to the end of our Senior year. During high school years we played in the band, sang in the chorus and glee clubs and also studied. So with commencement we enter the world with the motto, "To strive, to seek, to find; but not to yield," and consider graduation the first rung in the ladder to success.

Senior Class Play Tuesday

Members of the Senior class of the high school will present their Class Play, "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," Tuesday evening, May 23, at the high school auditorium. Presentation is under the direction of Mr. Middleton who has devoted considerable time to instructing and drilling the individual members who have taken roles, and he believes that the production will afford an evening's entertainment that will be worthwhile. The cast of characters is as follows:

Mrs. Wiggs – **Irene Dammeyer**, Little Tommy – **William Greber**, Lovey Mary – **Marjorie Pape**, Miss Hazy – **Verna Egbert**, Miss Lucy – **Ruth E. McKay**, Mrs. Eichorn – **Betty Brady**, Mrs. Schultz – **Norma Kettler**, Asia – **Jean Tangeman**, Australia – **Antoinette Purpus**, Europa – **Esther Rabe**, Mr. Stubbins – **Donald Fledderjohn**, Mr. Wiggs – **Robert Kuenning**, Mr. Bob – **Paul Westerbeck**, Billy

Wiggs – **Warren Knipple**, Chris Hazy – **Jim Moeller**, Mr. Hunkerdunkus Jones – **Richard Wissman**, Sheriff - **Wilbur Warner**, Brother Splicer – **Roger Busse**, Deacon Bagby – **John Dicke**, Mr. Schultz – **Robert Wehmeyer**, Mr. Eichorn – **Preston Belton**, Mickey Viney – **Virgil Nedderman**, Tina Viney – **Jean Grothaus**, Lena Krausmeier – **Dorothy Mohrman**.

Commencement

Yes, the fateful hour had arrived. The Class of 1939 was to be rewarded for their twelve years of hard learning. As the band played *March of the Pioneers*, the Seniors marched for the last time as students of New Bremen High to the seats arranged on the stage.

After the invocation by Rev. Vitz, a trombone solo, *The Wanderer*, was played by Marjorie Pape accompanied by the band.

Then salutatory addresses were given by Helen Rehn and Antoinette Purpus who tied for secondary honors. Verna Egbert sang *Hills of Home*. Ranking first in the class, Irene Dammeyer gave the valedictory address. The band played a fine selection, *Victor Herbert Favorites*. Robert Kuenning sang an old English air, *Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes*.

An interesting and inspiring class address was given by Mr. George Dietrich, the superintendent of Piqua high school for 30 years. Jean Tangeman sang *Prayer Perfect* followed by a song by the Girls' Glee Club, *Lift Thine Eyes*.

Then came the presentation of diplomas, a turning point in each person's life, by Miss Burk. The benediction was pronounced by Rev. Papsdorf. The seniors were now alumni ready to go out into the world "To strive, to seek, to find, but not to yield." With this I and the class of 1939 say "Farewell."

The Joy of Graduating

Baccalaureate, commencement and senior play are all a thing of the past and we Seniors are all alumna of New Bremen High School.

Baccalaureate services, Sunday May 14, was very interesting. Rev. Melcher gave the sermon and Rev. Vitz and Rev. Papsdorf assisted him with the prayer and benediction. The Seniors looked very nice in their caps and gowns.

Commencement Exercises, Friday, May 19, was the next on the program. Irene Dammeyer gave a very good valedictory address and Helen Rehn and Antoinette Purpus both are to be complimented on their Salutatory addresses. All the Seniors are very sad to think of leaving dear old New Bremen High School and all their friends in the other classes.

Tuesday, May 23, the stupendous senior play was presented. All the characters played their parts well and it went over in a big way.

The Alumni Banquet will mark the end of all the Senior activities as a class. The Seniors will have an important part in the program. Jim Moeller will give a short talk and some of the other Seniors will give a short musical program.

What a joyful time graduation is. All the Seniors received beautiful gifts and are all very grateful to the people who presented them.

The time has come that we must bid *adieu* to New Bremen High School and our friends. We wish them the best of luck, especially next year's Senior class and hope they have as splendid a senior year as we did.

NATIONAL EVENTS IN 1939

The Nation was in the ninth year of the Great Depression and unemployment was at more than 17%. A loaf of bread cost 8 cents while hamburger sold for about 14 cents a pound.

May of 1939 found people listening to the radio and singing along with the number one hit song "Three Little Fishies" by Kay Kyser. They also heard Lou Gehrig end his epic baseball career with the New York Yankees. He retired after revealing he had ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), a disorder now often called "Lou Gehrig's Disease."

The World's Fair in New York opened April 30th with the dedication by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. His speech was not only heard over radio networks but also televised by NBC, making him the first President to appear on television.

(The New Bremen Sun, May 25, 1939)

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

(Dennis Dicke, Recorder)

NEW MEMBERS

Roger Just

James & Amy Stephens

Paul Wayne Kettler

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Linda Meyer

Larry & Judith Coppess

MEMBER DEATHS

9/8/14 **Rev. Floyd Braun** (Charter Member)

9/9/14 **Don Isern**

9/26/14 **Richard Roediger**

9/30/14 **Dorothy Dunlap** (Life Member)

10/17/14 **Paul Schott** (Charter Member)

10/21/14 **Virginia (Rinehart) Buss** (Life Member)

11/26/14 **Carolyn (Schilling) Pape** (Life Member)

11/30/14 **Helen (Brockman) Wissman** (Life Member)

12/1/14 **John Tomhafe**

DONATIONS

Michael & Linda Hirschfeld, Barb Ziegenbusch, Robert & Julia Ziegenbusch, Daniel Johns, Karl & Ethel Mesloh, William & Linda Jones, Charles & Dorothy Huwer, Matilda Elking, John & Eleanor Brucken, Nancy Brucken, Eugene Hirschfeld, Scott & Sharon Mueller, Edward & Rosalind Ekermeier, Judy & Wayne Wiehe, Jon & Kay Carter, Louise Davis, Selma Geib, Donald Sink, John & Nancy Knost, Larry Neuman, Roger Just, Lee & Rita Wissman, Thomas & Florence Fricke, Duane Heinfeld, Bill & Juanita Bruns, Michelle Broussard, Jack & Becky Dicke.

NBHA RAFFLE WINNERS

OCTOBER - \$100 to **Roger Dicke** (New Knoxville), \$75 to **Martha May** (St. Marys), \$50 to **Andrea Wentz** (N.B.).

NOVEMBER - \$100 to **Paul Poppe** (Edmonds, WA), \$75 to **Sandy Frey** (New Knoxville), \$50 to **Bill Bruns** (Muncie, IN).

DECEMBER- \$100 to **Jerry Maxson** (N.B.), \$75 to **Carl Roediger** (N.B.), \$50 to **Pat Broerman** (N.B.).

A special THANK YOU to all the winners who returned their winnings to the NBHA!



Sydney Holdren

As we reported in the last issue we are happy to have Sydney Holdren volunteer with us. In this photo she is finishing the first phase of a display in the high school honoring 100 years of basketball in New Bremen. Working with curators Mike Staton & Rob Ziegenbusch, Sydney put together artifacts and written information tracing the history of New Bremen Cardinal basketball. She plans to add more items as the school year progresses.

A senior at NBHS, Sydney is the daughter of Tony & Lexa Holdren and granddaughter of Tom & Joyce Holdren. Joyce is a former curator for our museum. Sydney we thank you for doing a great job showcasing our history!



Can you identify any of the children in this 1920s photo from **Dale Hirschfeld**? His parents Nevin & Verona (Kettler) Hirschfeld graduated from NBHS. We think that this picture may be one of their elementary school pictures. The teacher was Miss Cost.

Call, write or e-mail names to Gen or Joyce!

History Mystery Page



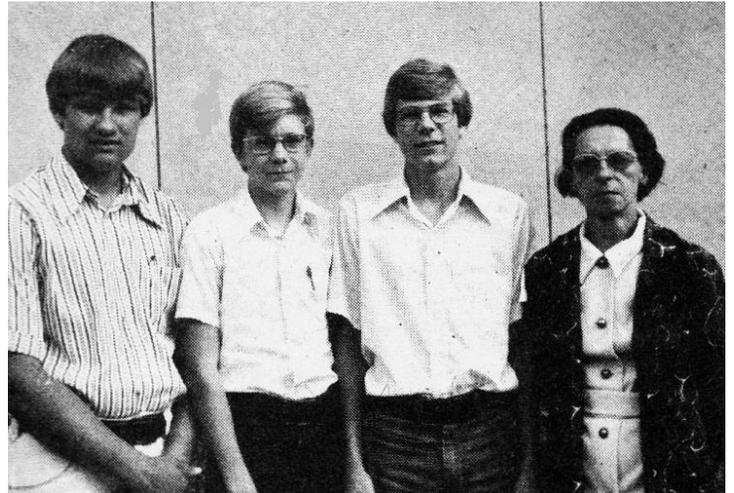
#1 - A Winter ride in the 1930s. Hint: The first name of the man holding the horse is Emil.



#2 - Who is this young man shopping in downtown New Bremen in 1938?



#3 – Can you name the 1947 Woodmen Festival Queen and her court?



#4 – Who are the 1973 NBHS Science Delegates with their teacher?

Do you have a photo that you would like to share with others? Send a scanned copy (JPEG) to Gen at gen@nktelco.net or call us and we will scan it for you. Please share your photos with us.

Answers: #1 –Emil Topp, “Dolly” the horse, Unknown, Wm. Combs, Edna Topp, Charles Wierwille, Eugene Ahlers, Tom Waterman, James Pape, Everet Topp, James Waterman, David Waterman, Donald Ahlers. #2- James Moeller. #3 – Seated: Donna (Greber) Conradi, Queen & Marian Frey Engle, 1944 Woodmen Queen. Standing: Ruth Block Johns, Susan Schulenberg Rabe, Marjorie Braun Belton, Esther Fogt Slattery, Betty Schroer Bulp, Donna Holdren Wirtz. #4 – Scott Kuenning, Dwight Schroer, Alan Sommer and teacher Miss Laverl Foes.

New Bremen Historic Association

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New Bremen, Ohio 45869-0073

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LM P-11 - Means you Paid for a Lifetime Membership in 2011.

LM D-15 - Means you are a Lifetime Member and made a Donation in 2015.

CM P-76 - Means you are a Charter Member and Paid in 1976.

CM D-15 - Means you are a Charter Member and made a Donation in 2015.

The Luelleman House Museum is open to the public by appointment. Call a member of the Board.

March 16, 2015 - Annual Dinner Meeting

Holy Redeemer Church

New Bremen, Ohio

Dinner at 6:30 P.M.

Speaker Bob Gilberg

Tickets will go on sale February 1

Call a Board Member for tickets!

The Raffle Drawings have been such a success that the NBHA Board of Trustees voted to continue them.

The 2015 Raffle (March 2015 through February 2016) will begin in March with the first drawing at the Annual Dinner Meeting.

Watch your January mail for details.