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WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021

VOLUME 6



It's time for gardening and graduations!



MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

Dear Members of the Historical Society,

On a quiet Sunday afternoon, I sat at my kitchen counter thinking of what makes June so special. For most of us, the thought of winter is now behind us. But now, June is the month for many of us to show our great talents of gardening. Gardening is the joy of the soul. It brings color into our lives. The excitement of planting seedlings and watching them grow, bringing us fruits and vegetables. What a beautiful gift from God.

Gardening brings us happiness; it can bring us peace, and it can settle our nerves after a long, stressful day at work.

I would like to share a few pleasant quotes from some special authors:

“When Heaven falls to earth it becomes a garden” ~ Phillis Theroux

“Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.” ~ Mary Sarton

“Don’t judge each day the by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.” ~ Robert Louis Stevenson

As many of you can see, flowers can also make our city. Just look at downtown Wyadotte. Our city looks so beautiful. It is all because of the love and care Maggie Moinar gives to our city. You can see her working on the flower baskets or weeding the Veterans Memorial on Superior. She also cares for all the flowers along downtown and City Hall. The flower planted in June bring happiness to us all. Thank you Maggie!

Christopher Stieler, President



Thank you for your time and donations to help with the cleanup and restoration of Oakwood Cemetery!



Special thanks to:

Boy Scout Troop 1783, Chris Stieler, Edward C. Headman American Legion Auxiliary Unit 217, Eula Grooms, FOP III, Fisher Construction, Kaylin Crayne, Robert DeSana, Ron Adams & his students from RHS, Rosemary Shuryan, Southgate Lowe’s, Tarnowski Plumbing and all those individuals who joined them to help out.

Mary-Johna Wein

During this past year with our special ‘friend’ Covid-19, the Historical Society along with other organizations has not been able to hold fundraisers or events. However, there IS a very easy way to help support the Society – no fundraiser to attend and no check to write.

Kroger Community Rewards will donate a portion of every dollar you spend at any Kroger store to the Historical Society. It takes a few minutes online to set it up and you are done.

You will need a Kroger Plus Card to begin. If you don’t have one, you can ask for one at the Service Desk of any Kroger store.

Once you have your card, go to the online link at www.krogercommunityrewards.com. Toward the bottom of the page you will see the following icon.



- Click on “Get Started”.
- Next enter our organization’s name: “Wyandotte Historical Society”.
- Then enter our number “MT260”.

If you have any questions, please contact Kroger’s [Customer Service Center](#).

Every time you shop at Kroger, you will be supporting our programs!

Beth Labadie

MUSEUM ACQUIRES "CELEBRITY" PLANTER URN

Museum staff is thrilled to announce a recent donation of local popularity and significance. The communication started in April of this year when Tim Caldwell reached out to Wyandotte Cultural and Historical Commissioner, Eula Grooms. He and his sister were hoping the museum campus may be interested in acquiring a planter urn that had belonged to their mother, Mary Louise Blanco. Apparently, the urn had been owned by the C.W. Thomas family. After reading the emails and communicating with Eula, I was very excited to obtain the piece, the stipulation being it must have a presence on our campus in some capacity.

Charles W. Thomas came to this area from Wales and became Wyandotte's first druggist around 1863. He married Elizabeth Thon (yes, of the famed Wyandotte Thons) and raised his family in Wyandotte. Passing away in 1902, he passed the torch onto his son, Charles W. Thomas II, who continued the family business until his wife, Minnie's death, in 1928. At that time, the pharmacy doors were shuttered, having been open for roughly 65 years. C.W. Thomas II died in 1941.

C.W. Thomas Sr. resided in properties adjacent to or near the downtown area of Wyandotte. His son, C.W. Thomas II was living with his daughter, Louise, at 160 Walnut (at 2nd Street), at the time of his death. It is at this property, which was purchased by Mary Louise Blanco around 1973, the planter urn fell into her possession. Apparently, the item was locally famous for being part of the famed Thomas family and Mary Louise would take it with her to her next three homes, including her last, in Trenton. After her passing, her family hoped it could come back to Wyandotte and live at our museum.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where the true beginning of the provenance of the planter urn began. At this stage, we are sure it was owned at the property at 160 Walnut. Louise Thomas moved into the home with her second husband and child from her first marriage, around 1939. Was it previously part of the family's collection? Was it already on the property when they moved in? Was it purchased between 1939 and 1941 when the family resided in the home, before the death of C.W. Thomas II? These are all questions that cannot be answered currently. We will continue to do research to see if we can get further information about the urn.

So, what is our goal for this planter urn that was gifted generously on behalf of the estate of Mary Louise Blanco? As the family wishes for it to be displayed on our grounds, that will become the ultimate legacy. Currently, staff has yet to decide on the proper spot. The urn is mammoth in size at almost three feet tall and over two feet in diameter! It is heavy and comes apart in five pieces. It will undoubtedly command any space in which it inhabits. The picture that accompanies this article was taken before it was donated and does not include the massive base. It truly is an object to beholden.

On behalf of the City of Wyandotte, museum staff and the Cultural and Historical Commission, we would like to thank the estate of Marylouise Caldwell Blanco and her children, Mary Wodzien, James, Jonathan and Timothy Caldwell, for gifting this beautiful piece. It belonged to one of Wyandotte's most famous and influential families and we are pleased it will live on as part of the Museum's collections, on the campus grounds.

For those interested in learning more about the C.W. Thomas business and family, contact the Wyandotte Museums office at 734-324-7284 or museum@wyandottemi.gov. A temporary exhibit about this subject is currently on display on the third floor of the Museum and can be viewed during open tours or by appointment.



Jesse Rose, Museum Director, May 18, 2021

Roosevelt Humor of the Past

In high school yearbooks, the same sections appear time and time again throughout the past and present: superlatives, sports, dances, clubs, and advertisements. A different section that appears in the 1920s yearbooks of Roosevelt High School seems to have been lost to time: the humor section. The humor section (sometimes also called the “slam” section) is something that appears in RHS yearbooks starting in 1921 (the first yearbook produced) through 1928.

The humor section was a place for the yearbook committee to joke about other students, teachers, school events, and the everyday activities of a high school student in the early 20th century. Sometimes the “jokes” were real (and sometimes, embarrassing) answers given by students to teachers, or faculty talking to each other, throughout the school year. For the last three years, the humor section was some kind of a short story written about what the future (or past) would look like for certain classmates, such as what jobs some people would have, how many children they may have, and what they would look like.

Why don't we see humor sections in yearbooks today? Well, from the sections present in 1920s RHS yearbooks, some jokes would definitely be interpreted as being hurtful to other students, so I think it was a safe bet to discontinue them. However, now we have a glimpse into high school humor from the early 20th century. Here are some examples from these RHS humor sections:

1921



Mr. Hire – What do you expect to be when you get out of school?

Howard – An old man.

Mr. Rankin – Under what combination is gold most quickly released?

Ruth – I know, marriage!

1922

Mr. Rosa – Where are the Straits of Gibraltar?

Mr. Eberts – A few miles south of Trenton.

Miss Grohe asked how many had their plots for their stories.

Paul – Well, what do they have to be on?

Jiggs – On paper.

1923



Teacher – Who can name one important thing we have now that we did not have one hundred years ago?

Min – Me!

Schendel – I hear Curtis was kicked off the team.

Nixon – How come?

Schendel – He was told to tackle the dummy and he tackled the coach.

1924

Simmie – Want to do something big?

Mr. Ashworth – Sure, what?

Simmie – Wash an elephant.

Miss Chambers — Clyde, do you know Lincoln's Gettysburg Address?

Clyde — Why, I thought he lived at the White House.

Miss Chambers — The fellow I go with takes me out in a Lincoln.

Miss Sammett — That's nothing, the fellow I go with takes me out in a different car every night.

Miss Chambers — My! But he must be wealthy to have so many cars.

Miss Sammett — Yes, a different streetcar.

1925

DeJack – Hadley ate something on the Ypsi trip that poisoned him.

Art. Hass – Croquette?

DeJack – Not yet, but he's pretty sick.

Guy Fox — Why do you call your socks “golf socks?”

Roy P. – Because they have eighteen holes.

Miss Chambers – Which three words are used the most?

L. Latta – I don't know.

Miss Chambers – Correct.

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Roosevelt Humor of the Past

(continued from page 4)

1926

This year’s humor section was a parody of Wy News called “Why Snooze.” Although it is not funny in a traditional sense to a reader from ninety-five years in the future, there is a sweet memorial included for a dear friend of the class of 1926:

“Only a few students witnessed the death of one of our prominent characters around this school last week. The deceased used to go from class to class, and was very popular. Even Mr. Hire accepted his friendship. He saved one of the DeGrace girls from getting an E in class, and he made all classes lively. The student body mourns the death of the faithful friend, and feels as though they shall never miss any one as much as that cat.”

1927

This year’s humor section was “Hidden Memories,” which is a short story written by senior Ethel Huchthausen, who, in the story, meets up with her old high school friend, Helen Bennett. The pair explore Wyandotte in 1940 after Ethel moved away and she recounts how everyone has changed in the thirteen years since high school like what jobs they have, their changed appearance, their new families, etc. It’s not really humorous, but it is a cute story nonetheless.



1928

The 1928 yearbook theme (and it is the first RHS yearbook to have a theme) is Medieval, so the humor section is another short story that was written as if it were medieval times and RHS was a castle.

The 1928 seniors are then categorized as parts and people (kind of like superlatives) in the “Wreck of Ye Olde Twentie-eight” in “Ye Kingdome of Roosevelt.” For instance, the “Spare Tire” is Joe Knack, the “Mysterious Rattles” is David Groff, and the “Ye Smalleste Lorde” is Harold Smythe. Overall, it is an odd theme that we probably would not see today, but it is still a start to what superlatives look like today (superlatives like we know them did not start in RHS yearbooks until 1948, and even then, they were not in the yearbook every year going forward).



Do you think humor sections should be included in yearbooks today? What was your favorite part/section of your senior yearbook?

Audrey Wicklander

ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL

In a previous article I mentioned the Distinguished Graduate Program at Roosevelt. I wanted to take the time to highlight the class of 2021 that will be inducted. The first person of this year's class is Thomas Desana.

George Purdu

Distinguished Graduate Class of 2021 - Tom Desana



Mr. DeSana attended Theodore Roosevelt High School beginning in 1970 where he was a success both academically and athletically. He was a member of the Yearbook Staff for three years as a sports editor. He received numerous athletic awards in Football, such as 2 time All League, All Area, and MVP honors; in Basketball, he was named MVP; and in Track & Field, he was a 2 time All League, 2 time All Area, and 2 time All Region athlete.

He continued his success at the collegiate level at Albion College, where he majored in Business and Physical Education. In college athletics, he was Co-Captain of the Albion College Track team. Mr. DeSana was also a member of the Football teams that were inducted into the Albion Hall of Fame and received Division 3 National Runner-Up honors. He also coached JV Football at Albion College.

Mr. DeSana came back to Wyandotte Public School after graduating from Albion College, where he has given back to his school and community since 1980. From 1980 to 1993, he was involved in coaching football, basketball, and track in various capacities. He taught physical education in Wyandotte at the elementary level beginning in 1987. While he was working with the youth of Wyandotte, he also went back to school to earn his Master’s Degree from Eastern Michigan University in 1991, all in the name of bettering himself for his career and his students. He then went on to become an administrator at Wilson Middle School in 1994 as an Assistant Principal. He became the Athletic Director in 2000 at Roosevelt High School. In 2011, he received the honor of being named Regional Athletic Director for his hard work in high school athletics. During his tenure at Wyandotte Public Schools, he has mentored thousands of students and made a true difference in those students’ lives.

Hillary Borowicz. RHS Teacher

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Wyandotte Historical Society

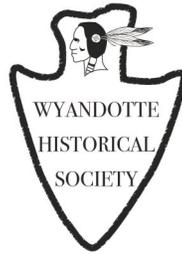
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UPCOMING EVENTS!

- The 60th Wyandotte Street Art Fair is scheduled for July 7, 8, 9 & 10.
- The Wyandotte Stars Annual Home Classic is scheduled for August 28.
- The Fall City Wide Garage Sale is scheduled for September 10, 11 & 12.
- The Historic Cemetery Walk is scheduled for October 15 & 16
- The Halloween Open House is scheduled for October 22.

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