



FOL OPEN WITH NEW SANTA HOUSE, NEW LIGHT DISPLAYS

The 2021 Festival of Lights opened November 20th with a Fun Run/Walk through the lights. What started out as a fundraiser a few years ago for Iowa Wesleyan University has turned in to a popular night for the festival. So much so that a second night was offered on November 21st this year.

Also new to the run/walk nights were the addition of the Midwest Electric Railway and Log Village. An open air and a closed trolley took people around the campground to get a different view of the lights. The trolley stopped at the Log Village allowing passengers to disembark down a lantern-lit path to the Cassity House where they were greeted with hot cider and cookies.

After several months of hard work, the new Santa House was completed. Children waiting to see Santa are now able

to stand inside the new building and look at a beautiful snow village donated by Paul and Joyce Dennison while they wait. Thank you to the Old Threshers Foundation and everyone who donated funds to build the new Santa House and neighboring workshop.

The building has a bathroom and kitchenette and can be rented for events throughout the year. Just behind Santa's new digs is his workshop. A place to store the light displays in the off-season.

Attendance numbers are surpassing 2019, but won't come close to 2020 as people are not as confined to their homes and small social circles as they were a year ago.

More than 120 displays line the 1.5-mile route. Several are new for 2021. The Mount Pleasant Festival of Lights is open through New Year's Eve.

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STAFF AND BOARD DONATE GIFTS TO TOYS FOR TOTS PROGRAM

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Midwest Old Settlers and Threshers Association Board of Directors and Staff worked together to collect toys for the Mt. Pleasant Police Department Toy Drive. Pictured Left to Right: Terry McWilliams CEO, Julie Scott, Grant Davidson, and Police Chief Lyle Murray.



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

2021 was a year that finally felt normal again for us here at Old Threshers! A year filled with many events, many hand shakes and hugs as volunteers, friends and exhibitors returned to the grounds throughout the year. This past year we saw great numbers of kids during the school tour program, two steam schools, trolley school, lots of buying and swapping at the Swap Meet and an increase in tour groups visiting the museum all year. The Old Threshers Reunion was as close to perfect as we can get with weather in the 80s, third highest attendance in the last 10 years, and the smiles on everyone's faces as they enjoyed their Reunion favorites once again.

On the heels of the Reunion was the Printers' Fair that once again brought folks from across the country to share and experience the hands-on exhibits as they created some amazing printed items. But before the ink was dry on their creations, ghosts and goblins arrived on the grounds for the Haunted Rails and Haunted House. All of our ghosts and goblins needed some well-deserved rest by the end of October with record crowds for both events. As the glow from the pumpkins dimmed down, the brightness of the Festival of Lights hit the grounds again for a long Holiday run and of course, Santa in his new house. As I watched the kids in line to see Santa with the pure joy and excitement on each face awaiting their turn to ask Santa for that special Christmas gift, it made all the work on that project well worth it.

As I look into 2022 and beyond, Old Threshers is like that house plant that needs to be repotted to a bigger pot to grow bigger and stronger. Old Threshers needs to head into a period of growth in my mind, as your CEO for the association. "Growth", the process of increasing in physical size, something that has grown or growing. Old Threshers is growing and has grown to new limits pushing our abilities here to the max with full campgrounds, parking areas, exhibit spaces, and over following show grounds.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward seeing you all again in 2022 and at the Old Threshers Reunion, Sept. 1-5.



Tang

OT FOUNDATION OKAYS ASSOCIATION’S WISH LIST FOR 2022

Christmas came early for the Midwest Old Threshers Association as the Old Threshers Foundation Board approved its 2022 projects list at the Foundation’s annual meeting in November.

The Foundation will support several projects next year totaling more than \$118,000.

Santa House Project	\$ 20,000
Trolley Area—equipment & ties	\$ 7,000
OT 75hp Case engine repairs	\$ 14,900
OT WK40 tractor repairs	\$ 2,200
New LED lights in Antique Car Bldg	\$ 7,700
Drainage & safety area East of Museum A	\$ 3,000
Trading Post—concrete for pallet racking, storage	\$ 5,270
Butler Building—concrete at north and south entrances	\$ 9,950
Walnut Street Walk-in entrance concrete work	\$ 11,624
Enlarge footprint and repair main stage	\$ 34,000
<u>Operational Support</u>	<u>\$ 2,416.93</u>
Total Support	\$118,060.93

The Old Threshers Foundation has supported hundreds of projects of the Midwest Old Threshers Association throughout the years. These projects include steam engine, tractor and trolley restoration, museum exhibits, Bussey Doll Collection, trees and landscaping, campground electrical upgrades, trolley tracks, sound system, building construction for the Log Village, North Village, Printers' Hall, showers and restrooms, Paul Anderson Welcome Center, food pavilion, steam carousel, and headquarter buildings for the tractor, gas engine and steam areas.

LONGTIME OLD THRESHERS FOUNDATION DIRECTOR STEPS DOWN

After 34 years of service on the Foundation Board of Directors, Dean Hicks elected to retire rather than continue for another three-year term. According to the by-laws of the Foundation, the nominating committee recommended the title of Director Emeritus be bestowed upon Dean in recognition of his outstanding leadership throughout those years, many of which he served as president of the Foundation and a member of the Investment/Financial Committee.

Pictured at right is Foundation Executive Director Alan Huisinga, Dean Hicks and his wife, Linda, and Foundation President Todd Mabeus.



DP WILSON RECOGNIZED FOR HER SUPPORT OF OT



During the 2021 Old Threshers Reunion, Mount Pleasant resident and Old Threshers supporter Dr. Delores P. Wilson was presented with the Foundation’s Golden Wheat Award.

The award was given in honor of DP’s dedication and financial support to Midwest Old Threshers and its mission to preserve our agricultural heritage. This award is presented to major donors in the Foundation’s Founders Circle, and is the highest level of recognition.

DP was honored again in front of the membership at the Old Threshers Annual Meeting in November. Pictured at left is OT CEO Terry McWilliams, DP Wilson, Foundation Executive Director Alan Huisinga, Foundation President Todd Mabeus and Foundation and OT board member Melinda Huisinga.

2021 REUNION WELCOMES EVERYONE HOME AGAIN

After a cancelled 2020 Reunion, the family we have become accustomed to seeing five-days ending Labor Day gathered once again in 2021.

The weather was as close to perfect as can be. Mother Nature must have sensed how we all need this event. She gave us a little rain on Reunion Friday to help settle the dust. Otherwise it was 80s for the high and 50s at night.

Attendance for the show was fantastic putting it in the top three of the last decade.

As 2021 comes to a close, we are all looking forward to 2022!

It's not too early to sign up to volunteer at Old Threshers. There are events going on throughout the year and help is always appreciated.

Have you ever been around during set up for the Reunion? There is a lot to do and many hands make light work. How about after the Reunion? There is always help needed putting everything away.

If you are interested in sharing your time and talents, please contact the office at 319-385-8937.



OT HORSE AREA VOLUNTEERS STAY BUSY OUTSIDE REUNION TIME

by TJ Bishop

Some people who attend the Midwest Old Threshers Reunion believe that the activities happen for five days, ending on Labor Day. Anyone who has ever volunteered at Old Threshers can tell you that it is possible to stay busy with Thresher activities almost year 'round.

The Horse Area has an especially unique ability to find reasons to gather together and work. Unlike a steam engine, tractor, stationary engine, or antique vehicle, horses must be fed and worked every day, if they are to stay healthy and physically fit in order to put on a good show during the Reunion.



Teams of horses work the baler during the 2018 Reunion

Two examples of activities the Horse Area volunteers have enjoyed are Eldon Old Iron days September 24- 26, and a plow day hosted by the Martin family October 22. During both events it was heartwarming to watch the more experienced horsemen and women mentoring the less experienced.

Families and friends share horses, equipment, and knowledge as they work together to enhance their own skills while educating and entertaining the public. Questions are asked and answered. Old timers reminisce about days gone by, and new memories are created.

One especially memorable event this autumn occurred when three families combined their horses into a nine-horse hitch, pulling a three bottom plow. Horse area volunteer Tony Garrett awed young and old as he drove the horses, turning a beautiful set of furrows. Plans are already being made to repeat this performance, next year.

Of course, the year's activities wouldn't be complete without the much anticipated horsedrawn wagon rides through the spectacular Mount Pleasant Festival of Lights display. Although three wagons were added this year, for a total of eight, the rides quickly sold out. Teamsters spread Christmas cheer December 9 and 12.

During this holiday season, the horse area volunteers would like to wish all of you Happy Trails, Merry Christmas, and a Blessed New Year. We'll see you at the Reunion September 1-5, 2022.

ANNUAL HORSE PULL SEES 12 TEAMS FROM ALL OVER MIDWEST

by TJ Bishop

"Teamwork makes the dream work," we've all heard that quote. Draft horse teamsters who compete in pulling horse competitions are a living example of the truth of that saying. Not only does the team of horses have to work together, but the teamster must work with his horses and they with him.

If you've never had the thrill of attending a horse pull, let me tell you about it. Imagine with me. You're seated on a grandstand seat. The sun is setting, and lights are blazing, catching dust motes dancing in the breeze. Your attention is riveted on the track in front of the stand.

Drivers huddle with family and friends, planning how to get



the very best effort from their horses. Should they forfeit an attempt and get to place the pulling sled in the position of their choice, or leave it where it is, and get three tries? Only Lady Fortune knows for sure, and she's not saying.

More cement blocks are added to the load. They're stacked so high boards must be added to the sides to hold them all in place. Surely this weight will stop the horses in their tracks! Your heart is pounding and your mouth dry.

Three bodies, three minds, all straining together to reach a difficult goal. The crowd is hushed, the air crackles with excitement. Will the horses pull the tremendous load the entire distance? Will the next team beat their effort? Muscles bunch, sweat darkens glistening hair, they dig in... they did it!

The Midwest Old Threshers Don Carlson Memorial Horse Pull was the scene of all the excitement. Twelve teams from all over the Midwest, even as far away as Roseau, MN, up near the Canadian border, were contestants in the 2021 pull. Everyone had a good time, and plan to participate next year.

If you would like to witness this thrilling event for yourself, save the date of Wednesday, August 31, 2022. You can check the Midwest Old Threshers website, <https://www.oldthreshers.com/> or call the office at (319) 385-8937 for additional information about this or any other Old Threshers activities.

THE OLD THRESHER'S STEAM WHISTLE: FOUR GENERATIONS OF DEWEES

by Curt Swarm

It started in the fifties when H.D. Dewees, a farmer from Marion, Iowa, was on a trip to Florida. On the way home he went by a Navy shipyard and, unable to contain his interest in



The tall bronze whistle on the left was donated to Old Threshers by H.D. and Helen A. Dewees.

machinery and all the activity, stopped for a tour. It just so happened that a big steam ship, known as a Liberty Ship, was being decommissioned and torn apart. H.D. noticed the big steam whistle from the ship. Being an avid attendee and participant of the Old Thresher's Reunion in Mt. Pleasant, he asked if he could buy the steam whistle. "Well, sure."

Each year, the Dewees had their own steam engines at Old Threshers—a Stanley Upright and a Russell. He asked the Old Threshers Association if they would like to have the big ship's steam whistle.

"You betcha."

So the big steam whistle was mounted on a building and hooked up to the main boiler. It became tradition that each day at noon, while the Old Threshers Reunion was in session, the steam whistle would be blown. Its shrill scream can be heard for miles, and would alert the steam engines in the Cavalcade of Power to blow their whistles. As an honor one time, H.D. Dewees was given the privilege of blowing his own whistle.

While in Mt. Pleasant for Old Threshers the Dewees would eat at Jerry's Restaurant and stay at a nearby motel. Friendly people, they got to know Jerry and Lea Bradley, owners of Jerry's Restaurant, quite well. Jerry Bradley was always a little envious of the Dewees because they were able to attend Old Thresher's. Jerry, being the main cook at his restaurant, was always too busy feeding hungry threshers.

One year the Dewees' motel reservations fell through and the Dewees were left without a place to stay. Everything in Mt. Pleasant was full-up. Lea Bradley overheard the conversation and said they could stay with her and Jerry. The Dewees have been staying there ever since.

H.D. Dewees and his wife, Helen A., passed away. But his son Earl and wife Dana, from Maryland, kept up the tradition of coming to Old Threshers each year, and showing the family's

two steam engines. Of course, they stay at the Bradley's. Earl, now 81, had been coming to Old Threshers since he was 12. For the first time this year, he had the joy of blowing his dad's steam whistle.

But Earl and Dana are getting up there in years and it's hard for them to maintain their family's steam engines. So, they asked their son and two daughters if they would like to carry on the tradition.

"Well, sure."

So now, son Tom and daughters Molly and Emily are taking over the controls and maintenance of the two steam engines. But wait. Their kids, who would be Earl and Dana's grandkids, and H.D. and Helen A's great grandkids, love it too. So, the tradition, the legacy, and staying with the Bradleys and extended family, carries on into the fourth generation!



Earl and Dana Dewees are turning over the reins of their steam engines and steam whistle to their kids.

One more thing: Jerry's Restaurant closed a couple of years ago when Jerry became too ill to keep up the cooking responsibilities. This year, for the first time, Jerry was able to attend Old Threshers. He was driven around in a golf cart, but by golly he got to go and see what it was all about. There was talk that next year, Jerry might get the privilege of blowing the Dewees' steam whistle, proclaiming to the world that Mt. Pleasant, Iowa has the greatest Old Thresher's Reunion of all! Sadly, Jerry passed away on November 14. It will up to the future generations of Dewees to blow that whistle.



MISS SWEET 16 AND MISS SWEET 17 CROWNED AT 2021 REUNION

Since the 2020 Reunion was cancelled so was the Sweet 16 contest. For the 2021 Reunion, there would be a Sweet 16 for the ladies who were 16 by the first day of the 2021 Reunion as well as a Sweet 17. The Sweet 17 group consisted of those ladies who were ready to be in the 2020 program.

Congratulations to all who participated. And congratulations to

Miss Sweet 16: Kalayna Durr
 1st Runner Up: Everlee Harvey
 2nd Runner Up: Tristian Shull
 Miss Volunteer: Sydney McElhinney

Miss Sweet 17: Ava Fischer

1st Runner up: Kaitlyn Lee
 2nd Runner up: Abby Blint
 Miss Volunteer: Emma Harvey

These ladies kept busy throughout 2021 by helping to set up and volunteer in the Thrashers House of Terror set up Midwest Haunted Rails; help the Friends of Henry County Health Center with its Annual Soup Supper; participate in the Mount Pleasant Main Street Holiday Parade and Mount Pleasant Festival of Lights.

They have some big surprises coming up in the next couple months for the program.



Front row: Miss Sweet 17 Ava Fisher; Miss Volunteer Emma Harvey; Kaitlyn Lee 1st Runner up and Abby Blint 2nd Runner up. Back row: Sydney McElhinney Miss Volunteer; Kalayna Durr Miss Sweet 16; Everlee Harvey 1st Runner up and Tristian Shull 2nd Runner up.



Sweet 16

Julie Campbell—Mt. Pleasant
 Mica Carter—Mt. Pleasant
 Kalayna Durr—New London
 Alexandra Farley—New London
 Paige Hart—Clarence
 Everlee Harvey—Argyle
 Julia Kinzer—Mt. Pleasant
 Syndey McElhinney—Morning Sun
 Tristian Shull—Mt. Pleasant

Sweet 17

Kylee Adams—Mt. Pleasant
 Amanda Allen—Mt. Pleasant
 Abby Blint—Mt. Pleasant
 Lysha Bunnell—Mt. Pleasant
 Madison Craig—Solon
 Allison Elmore—Mt. Pleasant
 Gisele Fajarda Peña—Mt. Pleasant
 Ava Fisher—Altoona
 Emma Harvey—Argyle
 Kaitlyn Lee—Mt. Pleasant
 Kenzey Logan—Danville
 Kahlia Parish—Mt. Pleasant

FEATURED FOR 2022

Garden Tractor

1973 Oliver 125 Hydrostatic

Owned by: Gary Spitznogle of Wapello, IA



Horse
"Haflinger"



Tractor

1953 Oliver 66

Owned by: Kenny & Teresa Grimm of Goose Lake, IA

Traction Steam Engines

A Colean Collection

Owned by: Larry Nelson of Muscatine, IA



Antique Car

1951 Ford Convertible

Owned by: Gladys Parish of Wapello, IA

Antique Truck

1947 Dodge WDX 1 Ton Powerwagon

Owned by: Clint and Martie Dixon of Reynolds, IL



Antique Gas Engine

2 HP Dempster

Owned by: Mike & Pat Dietze of Waverly, NE



SANTA HOUSE, FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



The new Santa House gives Santa's visitors a warm place to wait.



Volunteers log in many hours, not only staffing the Festival of Lights, but also setting up displays and changing out incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. December's warm weather made this a little more pleasant as the supply of light bulbs weren't delivered in a timely manner.



Above: Members of the OT Horse Area hitched up their teams of horses to give wagon rides through the Festival of Lights for two nights.



Above: In addition to lighting up the campground, Melinda Husinga and Linda Enearl bring the festivities to the Mount Pleasant Square and wrap the Nichols & Shepard steam engine in lights, some of which are in motion making the engine look like it steamed up and moving!



Left: The Log Village was open for the two rum/walk nights of the Festival of Lights. Visitors could either take the trolley to the Log Village or walk down the steps from the campground and enjoy hot cider and cookies in the Cassity House.

OBITUARIES

Donna L. Huffaker

Donna Huffaker, 69, of Mt. Pleasant, died December 15, at the Henry County Health Center in Mt. Pleasant.

Mrs. Huffaker, the former Donna Lee Horkstrom, was born August 5, 1952 in Galesburg, IL. She was the daughter of Robert and Betty Jean (Cisco) Horkstrom. On June 20, 1981 at the parsonage in Maquon, IL, Donna was united in marriage to James Martin "Jim" Huffaker. Mr. Huffaker died April 8, 2011 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

Donna was a longtime homemaker. For a period of time, she was a CNA at the nursing home in Abingdon, IL. She volunteered many hours at Midwest Old Threshers in Mt. Pleasant. Donna was a Past Worthy Matron of the former Bethlehem Chapter #38 of the Order of the Eastern Star in Mt. Pleasant. In her spare time, Donna loved to create crafts.

Those thankful for sharing in Donna's life include her children – Donnie Bartlett of Crawfordville, Kenny Huffaker of Mt. Pleasant and Kristi Anderson and her husband Sam of Abingdon, IL; a half brother – Donald Horkstrom of Arizona and several grandchildren including the grandson with whom she made her home, Wyatt Bartlett of Mt. Pleasant.

Her parents, husband and 1 son – James Strange, precede Donna in death.

Memorials may be directed to the family. On-Line condolences may be directed to www.kimzeyfuneralhome.com

John Maurer

John Charles Maurer passed away on October 30, at his home at the age of 88 of natural causes.

He graduated from Danvers High School in 1951. He served in the army during the Korean War from 1951 to 1953. He was raised on a farm and continued his career corn shelling with his father, working at grain elevators, and as a machinist at Solo Cup in Urbana. He enjoyed coaching his sons in baseball and running the clock at basketball games at Oakwood High School.

In 1983 he and his father brought their Pierce Arrow corn sheller to Midwest Threshers Reunion. He added several gas engines to exhibit. He and his family members enjoyed over 30 years of celebrating Labor Day weekend in Iowa. He faithfully volunteered setting up the gas engine area, hauling water to fill the tanks, and being a part of flamingo row.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley Bennett; his daughter and son-in-law, Terry and Barry Grodsky; son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Mary Maurer; and son and daughter-in-law, Jon and Angie Maurer. He has 8 loving grandchildren and 3 great-children.

Memorials may be sent to C-U Kiwanis Little League, c/o Terry Grodsky, 706 Ashton Lane South, Champaign, IL 61820.

Joy Conwell

Joy Lynn Conwell of Salem, and formerly of Mt. Pleasant, passed from this life on October 25, at the Park Place Elder Living Center, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, after a short illness at the age of 69. She was recently diagnosed with a terminal form of brain cancer.

She was born on September 25, 1952, in Fairfield, Iowa, the daughter of Don Leroy and Miriam Louise (Harrison) Ferguson. As a young child she attended a variety of elementary schools, including a "one room" school near Wayland, Iowa, graduating from Mediapolis High School in Mediapolis, Iowa in 1970. She attended college classes at Southeastern Community College in Burlington, University of Iowa and Brigham Young University, Provo, UT focusing on museum studies.

Joy was united in marriage to Edward Eugene Conwell on June 13, 1974, at Logan, Utah. Joy and Ed were married 47 years and had two children, Kathleen Joy and Edward Eugene Jr. Joy was employed as a bank teller with the Burlington Bank and Trust prior to her marriage and was a stay-at-home mother until her children were in school. She then worked part-time at Williams Clothing and Adventureland Video both of Mt.

Pleasant.

Joy and Ed moved to Atlantic, Iowa for five years where she worked as Editor of the local newspaper and as a librarian in the Atlantic High School. They then returned to Henry County and Joy spent the last twenty years with the Chadwick Library of Iowa Wesleyan University. She loved history and spent those years researching and organizing the university archives.

Joy was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving in many capacities in the church and in the community, she also was a member of the Chapter NZ of P.E.O. She was the first woman to serve on the Midwest Old Settlers and Threshers Board of Directors and organized the Explorer Post at the Log Village. She served on the Fellowship Cup Board and served three terms as a member of the Mt. Pleasant Community School Board. She served as the chairman of the Governor's Youth Conference during the Branstad Administration.

Joy is survived by her husband, Ed, and son, Ed Jr., along with her sisters, Sheila Frances (Joseph) Gorsuch, of Tucson, Arizona, Hope Darlene (Dale) Jennett, of Morning Sun, Iowa, and Eileen Faith (Mark) Doneson of Tucson, Arizona, and her brother, Wayde Eugene Ferguson of Mt. Pleasant, along with several nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her daughter, Kathleen Joy Conwell, her sisters, Paulette Elaine, Karen Sue and Ann Louise and her brother, Joseph "E".

A memorial has been established in her memory.

Margaret Neil

Margaret Mae Anderson Neil, 87, of Mount Pleasant died October 22, at Arbor Court in Mount Pleasant.

Margaret was born May 19, 1934, in Ottumwa, Iowa, the daughter of W. Hervey and Beatrice (Leonard) Anderson. She graduated from Ottumwa High School in 1952. On September 20, 1953,

OBITUARIES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Margaret was united in marriage to John W. Neil of Mount Union at the Lutheran Church in Ottumwa. They made their home in the Mount Pleasant community, where Margaret made customized window dressings for J.C. Penney while working at the Mount Pleasant Savings and Loan; she worked for Peterson's Implement, and was a manager at the Henry County Credit Union for 27 years.

Margaret was a member of the First Baptist Church for 29 years where she taught Sunday School and conducted women's circle for many years. Margaret was currently a member of

the Calvary Baptist Church since 1993. She served as secretary of the district Republican Women of Henry County for many years, and was a former Girl Scout Troop Leader.

She enjoyed quilted blankets for John, children and grandchildren and sewing many clothes including matching clothes for all the grandchildren. For many years, Margaret enjoyed team bowling and was a member of the Iris Bowling Hall of Fame and had years of fun playing community slow-pitch softball and volleyball. She enjoyed activities with her grandchildren and family events.

Margaret is survived by her husband, John; a son, David (Jane) Neil of New London, Iowa; a daughter, Patricia (Ron) Greer of Olive Branch, Mississippi; six grandchildren: Lindsey Williams, Melanie (Lee) Forrester, John M (Rachel) Neil, Michael J (Lisa) Neil, Cara (Jake) Renfrow, and Kathrine Neil; 20 great grandchildren. Two sisters, Gladys Roquet and Mabel Sammons of Ottumwa, Iowa. She was preceded in death by her parents and one sister Irene Ryan.

A memorial fund has been established for Hospice Compassus.



Old Threshers Reunion

Sept. 1-5, 2022 ★ Mount Pleasant, Iowa