**OT ready to spring into the 2016 season**

It’s finally springtime in southeast Iowa! The crabapples are in full bloom, the tulips are at their peak and the grass is ready to be mowed.

Things are waking up around Old Threshers as well. The list of capital projects has been approved, the mowers and tractors are being serviced and we are ready to start the 2016 School Tour season.

Crews will begin working on the Midwest Electric Railway tracks replacing ties and changing the grade of the hill as the tracks pass Grandpa’s Barn.

Construction has begun on a new storage building to the east of the old armory building. This added storage will help unclutter the unused spaces in the Heritage Museums and other areas allowing for expanded exhibit space.

Plans are being drawn up for a new home for the Bussey Doll Collection as well as the Foundation Office.

The restrooms on the east side of the grounds near the Veneer Mill will be remodeled and updated.

Funding for these projects comes from a variety of sources including the Old Threshers Foundation, Enhance Henry County Foundation, Hoaglin Foundation, Pennebaker Foundation and the Hawkeye Doll Club. While money from these entities amount to a large portion of what’s needed to make projects happen, it doesn’t cover all of the expense. Anyone interested in contributing to any of the projects is encouraged to contact the office at (319) 385-8937

As Spring arrives and temperatures warm up, activities around the Old Threshers grounds increase as well. (Above) Cole Birky and his dad, Matt, work on getting a steam engine ready for the 2015 Steam School, one of the first events of the year.

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**Foundation increases funding**

The Old Threshers Foundation presented a check in the amount of $104,573.19 to the Midwest Old Threshers Board of Directors at its March board meeting. As a financial support organization for Midwest Old Threshers, this represents the largest annual contribution the Foundation has ever given. Since the Foundation was founded in 1986, it has given over one million dollars in investments earnings and farm rent income to help fund capital projects and improvements.

Some of the projects which have received funding from the Foundation during those years include the Paul Anderson Welcome Center, buildings in the Log Village and the North Village, the food pavilion, the Theater Museum, Printers’ Hall, various museum exhibits, landscaping and tree plantings, benches and picnic tables, the sound system, campground electrical upgrades, roof replacements, restoration of steam engines, tractors and trolley cars, headquarter buildings for the tractor, gas engine and steam areas.

Projects for 2016 include trolley track reconstruction, upgrades to restroom and shower facilities, construction of a new storage building, seed money to build a new...
Greetings from Midwest Old Threshers!

If you happened to be the ONE lucky person on the planet who could predict the weather, the outcome of lottery jackpots, what team would win the next World Series, or even the next President—there is a good chance you probably would not be sitting where you are now! That ability to predict influential outcomes would put you at the top of EVERYONE’S friend list. All those new friends wanting you to use your amazing talents at predicting the success of their events, would make you a HOT commodity. However, since none of us have that friend, sometimes we just have to put together the best events we can through hard work and effort, and take our chances with the outcome—good or bad....

Here at Old Threshers, the largest and strongest uncontrollable outcome that our association faces for our events is “Mother Nature.” With the master weather control switch at her finger tips, she has the ability to make it a more successful five day event for us with favorable weather, or less successful with steaming hot temperatures and multiple days of rain. She doesn’t even directly have to give us an extended forecast for rain—who would have guessed that a hurricane in the gulf would rain out a day in Southeast Iowa at the Old Threshers Reunion? Cold, heat, wind, drought, dust, snow and RAIN are all the uncontrollable factors that affect the substantiality of the association and our events. This organization provides AMAZING events and attractions that draw thousands of takers, provided Mother Nature treats us well. How many times have you heard people—or you yourself have said “We aren’t going to go in this (rain, heat, snow, cold) this year, but maybe next year?”

This year I decided I was going to be pro-active. With all of the hard work taking place to prepare for the excitement of this year’s 2016 Reunion, I sat down and wrote Mother Nature a letter asking her for five days of good weather.

Dear Mother Nature,

Thanks for taking it easy on us these past winter months! I would like to put my request in now for your understanding and support this year for great weather. As you may remember at Midwest Old Threshers, we provide many events on our grounds, from early spring all the way to New Year’s Eve! As a nonprofit organization that relies on outside events to keep us from visiting our banker too much. We NEED your support! We especially need it those 5 days leading up to Labor Day, you know the Old Threshers Reunion. We have hundreds of volunteers, exhibitors, staff and generations of families working hard to put on a great Reunion for the visitors this year and each and every year. So, maybe 75° with a lite breeze and no rain for those days would be GREAT!

Well, I hope that this letter arrives to you soon enough to meet my request.

Your friend,

P.S. Mark your calendar Sept 1-5, 2016
2016 Grandstand Entertainment

Thursday, Sept 1

Kellie Pickler
Saturday, Sept 3

Tracy Lawrence
Sunday, Sept 4

Eric Paslay
Friday, Sept 2

Country Gold
Spring is about to “spring” into action here at Midwest Old Threshers. Campers are already reserving their favorite camp spots for the 2016 reunion, the Gift Shop is busy selling reserved tickets for the grandstand entertainment and discounted admission tickets on line, and outdoor projects such as trolley track work are ready to begin throughout the show grounds. Plans are already being made for two steam schools, the annual swap meet and elementary school tours – all of which take place in May.

Speaking of school tours, Old Threshers hosts more than 1,000 students, grades 4-6 throughout the month of May. The free school tour program gives us the opportunity to teach the younger generation and nurture an appreciation for our agricultural heritage. These students get a snapshot of what can been seen and done at the annual Old Threshers Reunion; hopefully, they will share this experience with their parents and encourage the family to come back to the Reunion. This year the Foundation will be giving each student a free “goodie bag” back pack to take home containing a pencil and ruler for school, Old Threshers information and souvenirs along with a ticket for a free steam carousel ride during the Reunion.

Look for something new at the 2016 Reunion which is being sponsored by the Foundation – BINGO! More details will be published in the summer issue of our Newsletter. Also look for Old Threshers and the Foundation at the Iowa State Fair this year – August 11-21. We are sponsoring a tourism booth in the Varied Industries Building along with Iowa Wesleyan University, the City of Mount Pleasant and the Chamber Alliance. Stop by to see us and register in a drawing for free admission tickets to the Reunion!

We thank all of you who have supported the Old Threshers Foundation with your charitable contributions throughout the years. Providing financial support to Midwest Old Threshers is the sole purpose of the Foundation. Since it was founded in 1986, the Foundation has transferred over ONE MILLION in earnings from its permanent endowment to Midwest Old Threshers. These earnings include cash rent payments received from the Illinois farm and earnings received from the Granaman Trust, both of which were bequeathed to the Foundation.

Three years ago donors to the Old Threshers Foundation were given a new option which allows them to designate where their contributions are used. With the creation of the pass through account, money can now be designated for specific needs and immediately be passed on to Old Threshers. Since the pass through account was established, over $260,000 has been given to Midwest Old Threshers for specific purposes; examples include the Mount Pleasant Festival of Lights, Printers Hall, Theater Museum, Drive a Tractor, trolley, carousel, campground, school tours and the new museum display for cars and trucks.

All gifts to the Old Threshers Foundation, either as a long-term investment in the permanent endowment or as a short-term investment in the new pass through account, qualify as charitable contributions to a non profit 501(c)(3) organization for Federal income, estate and gift tax purposes. We are always appreciative of any gifts received, whether in the form of cash, stocks or deferred giving. If you have any questions or need additional information about any of these options, please contact Alan Huisinga, Executive Director, at the Midwest Old Threshers office 319-385-8937 or e-mail offoundation@oldthreshers.org.

Executive Director
K E E P I N G  I T  I N  T H E  F A M I L Y

If the historic buildings around Old Threshers could talk they would certainly have stories to tell. The barn in the Log Village recently shared its history as the need for improvements have brought acquaintances from past friendships back to Mt. Pleasant.

Originally built in 1870, the barn sat on a farm in Van Buren County. Board member Bob Welander was familiar with the owner, Jim Huff, due to Bob’s veterinarian practice. Jim donated the barn to Old Threshers in 1989.

During this time, Bob had also become friends with Levi Weaver, foreman of a local Amish carpenter crew. They agreed to disassemble the barn and move it to Old Threshers.

The original structure was 40’x60’. One side of the barn was rotted and not usable. The usable portion of the barn was reassembled in the Log Village and measures 40’x40’.

As a sort of signature, those who assembled the barn carved their names in pieces of wood that hang in the rafters in the form of a mobile.

The Weaver crew returned in the Spring of 1992 to build hip-roof additions to the north and south sides. In the early spring of 1994, material was gathered to build an east hip. Construction was completed in time for the 1994 Reunion.

Last fall, friends and descendants of Levi Weaver ascended the roof of the barn to put on new shingles.

The younger crew took the time to go inside the barn and look up at the past and read the names of their predecessors blowing in the breeze.

What is it? Where is it?

Look on page 12 for this new feature of The Chaff. There are pictures of things that can be found around the Old Threshers Grounds. Can you identify what they are and where one can find them? The answers are found below.

A: The Yarmouth Depot is found along the Midwest Electric Railway just west of the Carousel Pavilion
B: The Wood Bros blacksmith shop in the log Village
C: The ladies of the Golden Slipper Saloon in the North Village wave to visitors from here
D: The fire is hot in the Blacksmith Shop in the Log Village
E: The ladies of the Golden Slipper Saloon in the North Village wave to visitors from here
F: Demonstrating how a corn sheller works in the Gas Engine Area
2016 Featured Lawn & Garden Tractor
1965 Case 130
Owned by Buckert Family, Fred & Ruth Buckert
Hamilton, Illinois

2016 Featured Antique Gas Tractor
1951 Case DC
Owned by Eric & Kelly Hosette
Charlotte, Iowa

2016 Featured Traction Steam Engine
1/2 Scale Rear-Mount Advance
Owned by James Broadhead and John Broadhead
Colchester, Illinois

2016 Featured Gas Engine
Any Vertical Style Engine
Stover & Fairbanks “T” 2HP
Owned by Ike & Carol Lockridge—Rogers, Arkansas

2016 Featured Antique Truck
1947 Mack E.F.
Owned by Mike Harbison, Sr.
Morning Sun, Iowa

2016 Featured Antique Car
1913 Buick Touring
Owned by Charlotte & the late Gary Seyb, Jr.
Donnellson, Iowa

Featured for 2016
Richard “Dick” Thuma, a long-time resident of Mt. Pleasant and enthusiast of Midwest Old Threshers, passed away at the age of 89 on March 11, 2016. Dick served as the Iowa State University Extension Director for Henry County, Iowa, for 31 years. In his retirement, he spent summers as a crop inspector for Pioneer Seed Company. Dick and his wife, Nancy, volunteered for many years in the Old Threshers Foundation booth, at the Carousel and worked in the United Methodist food tent during the Reunion. In the picture below, Dick proudly posed in the Crosley car exhibit in front of the Antique Car Building during one of the Reunions. (Right) Dick and Nancy’s three daughters – Jane Woline, Susan Rew and Ann Thuma – posed with the grandchildren in the front yard all dressed in their Old Threshers shirts ready to attend the Reunion, which is still an annual event for the entire family. The family has requested that memorial contributions to the Old Threshers Foundation be directed to the pass-through account to purchase benches in memory of Dick. These benches will be available at this Thuma Leaves Behind Threshers Reunion Legacy

Midwest Old Threshers & Hawkeye Doll Club Present 14th Annual Benefit for the Bussey Doll Collection
Midwest Old Threshers Museums, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
June 4, 2016
“Viewing Victorian Childhood”
Registration Form

Name: ___________________________ City: ______________ State: _______ Zip: __________
Phone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Please enclose registration fee of $60.00 covers all events including meal, souvenir gift and more. Mail to Old Threshers, 405 East Threshers Road, Mount Pleasant, IA, 52641. Make check payable to Midwest Old Threshers. Credit cards may be used by calling 319-385-8937. Registration due by May 22, 2016 - late registration extra charge of $5.00.

Tables in the sales area are available at $30.00 each. Tables will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis and is limited, so a quick reply is suggested. ATTENTION DEALERS: you do not pay registration fee unless also attending event activities. Dealers set up is Friday, June 3 from 8-4:30 pm.

Number of Tables Requested ________ Additional Amount Enclosed for Table(s) _______ Total Amount Enclosed ________

Any questions, please call Glenna Voyles at 319-367-2614 or e-mail gvoyles19@gmail.com
Restoration Corner

Blunk Wagon Returns to Horse Area Looking Like New

At the 1958 Old Threshers Reunion, a lady approached volunteers in the Horse Area asking them if they would be interested in an old construction wagon that was sitting in a warehouse in Ottumwa. Buddy Kiews and a few others said yes and gathered not long after the Reunion for the trip west.

Upon arriving at the warehouse and loading the wagon on a trailer they were approached by another woman who threatened to have them arrested for stealing. Not wanting to get in the middle of a family feud they unloaded the wagon and went home.

At the next Reunion they were again approached by the woman who originally offered the wagon. She was surprised they had not acquired it. They explained the confrontation that occurred. She told them that was nonsense, that she was the owner of the wagon and it was theirs if they still wanted it. Once again, a crew gathered post-Reunion and headed back to Ottumwa. The second trip was successful.

The Blunk Wagon, as it is called, is a very rare piece of history. Dan Wistron, Horse Area Director, says he is unaware of any others like it. It has the load capacity of 24,000 pounds. Visitors to the Old Threshers Reunion have seen this wagon in the Cavalcade of Power being pulled by a team of horse. Wistrom said the wagon would have been pulled by 4 to 6 horses and loaded down with construction supplies.

Hensen Wheel in South Dakota restored the wheels. Wistrom said there are only a couple of companies that can handle the 4 1/2” wide and 3/4” thick steel.

Horse Area volunteers helped paint the wagon. Buddy Fowler made stencils to aid in the detailing, while Linda Fowler and Larry Anderson wielded their paint brushes.

Sharing space with Farm Collector magazine just east of the Wright Family Pavilion, Dave VandenBloom invites everyone to stop by and see what they have.

Visitors can see everything from feed sacks to cornhusk dolls to hats as well as planting and harvesting equipment.

“One thing we do is demonstrate the evolution of planting and harvesting corn,” explains VandenBloom. “We also work to get youth involved and interested in the history of corn and collecting.”

Corn Collectors returning in 2016

The Corn Items Collectors Association will be returning to the Old Threshers Reunion in 2016.

This group of almost 200 members has tasked itself with collection anything corn. If it has corn on it, has to do with planting or harvesting corn they collect it.
Board of Directors
Bob Gerdes—President
Chris Heaton—Vice President
Alan Buckert—Secretary
Robert Welander—Treasurer
Ron Carver
Ralph Oliver
Bob Gilchrist
Jeremy Hobbs
George Alt
Rich Seberg
Dan Wistrom

Foundation Executive Director
Alan Huisinga

Nominating Committee
Chris Heaton—Chair
Ralph Oliver—Director
Matt Schimmelpfenning—Member at Large

Chief Executive Officer
Terry McWilliams

Antique Cars
Ron Carver, Director
Teresa Carver

Antique Coordinators
Eric & Liz Freueh

Bussey Doll Collection
Glenna Voyles, Curator

Campground
Bob Myers—Director
Chris Bell—Coordinator
Robert Welander—Director

Crafts & Vendors
Midwest Old Threshers Staff

Carousel
Bob Gerdes—Director
Mel Higgins—Coordinator
Todd & May Mabeus
Mary Elgar
Jeff Johnson

Entertainment
Doris Price—Coordinator
Dan Wistrom—Director

Explorer Post 1846
Karen Boston-Kemple
Cindy Dorrell

Ground Trains
Maribelle & Carl Lund

Gas Engine Area
George Alt—Director
Steve Alt—Coordinator

Gate Admissions
Rich Seberg—Director

Housing
Bev Hamm

Horse Area
Dan Wistrom—Director
Paul Bishop—Coordinator

Log Village
Robert Welander—Director
Eric Heerdt—Coordinator

Model Steam
Dan Carruthers—Coordinator

Midwest Electric Railway
Jeremy Hobbs—Director
Chris Heaton—Director
Maddy Murphy—Coordinator

North Village & Kids Area
Rich Seberg—Director
Bob Gerdes—Director

Oetken Museums
Bob Gerdes—Director
Bob Welander—Director

Printers’ Hall
Bob Gilchrist—Director
Jim Daggs—Coordinator

Shuttle Buses
Lowell Gaulke—Coordinator

Steam Power House
Ralph Oliver—Director
Dan Daugherty—Project Coordinator

Traction Steam
Robert Gilchrist—Director
Chris Heaton—Director

Tractor Area
Alan Buckert—Director
Ralph Oliver—Coordinator

Theatre Museum
David Ripper—National Society
Grace Davis

Trading Post
Nelson Pruitt
Rick Stone—Coordinator

Buildings & Grounds
Chris Heaton—Director

Swap Meet Committee
George Alt—Director
Steve Alt
Mike Dietze
Dave Dietze
Ron Carver—Director
Alan Buckert—Director
Carl Thompson

Foundation Board Members
Todd Mabeus—President
John Jensen—Vice President
Melinda Huisinga—Secretary
Jason Goody—Treasurer
Dean Hicks
Stephen Pacha
Bob Gerdes
Mike Barton
Jim Kinney
Joyce Dennison
John Garrels
Ralph Oliver
Sharon Davis
Barry Tuller
Jan Johnson
There is no sport that evokes more nostalgia among Americans than baseball. America’s favorite pastime originated before the Civil War as a game called “rounders.” Throughout the 1850s and 60s, the game evolved to include more mental judgment skills, and eventually involved scoring and record keeping. By 1871, just two years after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, the professional baseball league was born.

By the time the early 20th century rolled around, most large cities in the eastern United States had professional baseball teams. Because of the sport’s popularity, many famous ball players like Phil Rizzuto, Eddie Matthews, Harry "The Hat" Walker and the legendary Babe Ruth spent a significant amount of time riding the rails.

Enamored of the railroads, with a desire for camaraderie and recreation, formed employee baseball teams. These teams were quite organized and even competed in leagues and championships.

One semi-famous railroader took time off to play semi-pro and professional baseball. George "Stormy" Kromer was an engineer for the Chicago and North Western. Kromer made a habit of wearing his baseball cap while at the controls of his engine, but it just wasn’t quite what he needed while on the job. Kromer came home one day and lamented his discomfort to his wife, Ida. The Kromers put their heads together and came up the design of what we now call the railroad engineer’s cap.

Ida Kromer, an expert seamstress, assembled George’s new cap with what she had at hand: blue and white pinstripe pillow ticking.

Their efforts were a hit. The cap became very popular among railroaders, and ultimately resulted in the beginning of a business that still exists today.

Above: Jack Teagarden, who would rather toot a steam locomotive whistle than the trombone he rode to fame, is an honorary member of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen. Photo shows him in cab of Union Pacific Challenger locomotive [on April 14, 1941] as he received membership card from W. G. Baldwin (right), secretary of the California-Nevada Union Meeting Association of the brotherhood, while W. A. Rodda (left), treasurer of the union, looks on

Reprinted with permission from the Union Pacific Railroad Museum, Omaha, NE

**OBITUARIES**

**Ira Max Deal**

Dr. Ira Max Deal, 95, of Starbuck, MN, a former longtime optometrist in Mt. Pleasant, passed away December 17, 2015 at the Bethany Community Care Center in Alexandria, MN. Ira Max Deal was born on November 8, 1920, on a Prairie Township farm near Milton, Iowa. He was the third of six children born to Ira Lincoln Deal and Cecil Gay McBratney Deal. Max attended Craven Point School in Milton and graduated in 1939 from Bloomfield, Iowa High School. Max worked at Fent’s Drug Store in Bloomfield Iowa and became interested in pharmacy. He attended pre-pharmacy classes at the University of Iowa in 1940-41. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, he left school and moved to St. Louis, MO where his future wife Margaret had a government job. He worked in a drug store there and waited to be drafted. Max married Margaret Ellenberger on June 14, 1942 at the Ellenberger farm just outside Bloomfield, Iowa. That same night they rode the train all night to get back to St. Louis and their respective jobs. His number came up and he was drafted on October 24, 1942. He reported to Great Lakes Naval Base for boot camp, and was trained as a pharmacists’ mate. In those days the US Marines used Navy Corpsmen, as they had none of their own. Serving with the Marines, Max shipped out from the Marine Corps Depot in San Diego, CA to Pearl Harbor for about three months, then traveled with a Marine Transport Squadron in the Pacific Theatre – Gilbert Islands, Marshall Islands, Kwajalein, Saipan, and other locations as the US moved its war effort.

Continued page 11
$260,000 has been contributed through the pass-through account to fund a variety of projects including the campground, carousel, drive-a-tractor, museum exhibits, Printer’s Hall, school tours, steam headquarters, Theater Museum, horses, trolley, and the largest fund, Festival of Lights. The pass-through account also allows the Foundation the opportunity to apply for grants. It has received Enhance Henry County Foundation grants the past three years in order to purchase and refurbish light displays for the antique doll and clothing museum and relocation of the Foundation office.

Though the Foundation’s donation is the largest to date, it will only start to cover the expenses of this year’s projects. Other financial support comes in the form of grants and personal donations.

Three years ago a new pass-through account was added which gives Foundation donors the option to designate a specific purpose; their donation is transferred directly to Old Threshers for that purpose. Over

Festival of Lights. Financial gifts to the Foundation qualify as charitable contributions to a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization for Federal income, estate and gift tax purposes. In addition to monetary contributions,

O B I T U A R I E S  continued from page 10

He and his family enjoyed summer vacations to lakes in Minnesota, and in later years winter vacations on Florida’s Atlantic coast. Max was a 50+ year Kiwanis member in Mt. Pleasant; served as President of the Iowa Optometric Association and was a member of the Starbuck VFW Club.

He enjoyed an honor flight trip to Washington D.C. in 2006, and was a private airplane pilot for many years. He enjoyed golf and fishing. Dr. Deal is survived by daughter: Nancy (Bruce) Bakewell of Starbuck, MN; son: Dennis Max (Anne Morgan) Deal of New Smyrna Beach, FL; granddaughter: Suzanne (Eric) Sorensen of St. Paul, MN; three sisters: Betty Johnson of Fairfield, Shirley (Bill) Hamersley of Bloomfield, and Charlene (Dale) Hartman of West Des Moines; two step-grandchildren: Suzi Kay (Myron) Lee of Williston, ND and Jason (Katie) Bakewell of Fortuna, ND; four step-great-

5 BIG DAYS September 1 - 5, 2016 JUST $20
Order by May 31st!!
Call 319-385-8937 or order online at www.oldthreshers.com
After May 31st, 5-day admissions will be $30
2016 Calendar of Events

April 25-May 20—School Tours
April 29-May 1—Theatre Seminar
April 30-May 1—Steam School I
May 14-15—Steam School II
May 27-28—Greater Iowa Swap Meet and Collectibles Show
May 27-29—Gun Show
May 30—Heritage Museums open for the season—Open everyday thru Labor Day
June 4—Doll Show
June 9-10—Greater Southeast Iowa Tractor Show
July 4—Community 4th of July Celebration
July 12-18—Henry County Fair
July 22-24; 29-30—Summer Theatre Play
August 5-7—Western Illinois Threshers
August 20—Campground Opens
August 31—Harvest Day Parade 3:30pm
Sept 1-5—Old Threshers Reunion
Sept 14-17—Printers’ Fair/Ladies of Letterpress

Thrashers House of Terror
Oct 6-8; 13-15; 20-22; 27-29; 31

Midwest Haunted Rails
Oct 7-8; 14-15; 21-22; 28-29

Mt Pleasant Festival of Lights
Nov 17-20; 24-27; Dec 1-4; 8-11; 14-31

What is it? Where is it?
Look at the photos below. Can you tell what it is? And where it might be found on the Old Threshers Grounds?

Look for the answers on page 5.