

## Festival of Lights Extends OT Event Calendar



**Melinda Huisinga, secretary of the Old Threshers Foundation Board and member of the Festival of Lights Steering Committee, checks light bulbs in one of the displays. The Festival of Lights schedule is on page 16.**

For more than 60 years, Midwest Old Threshers has been known nationally, and even internationally, for the Old Threshers Reunion held five days ending Labor Day.

What started as a small group of people who wanted to preserve our agricultural heritage, has turned into an annual event that draws people from all over the globe. Though the event only lasts for five days, the Old Threshers office is here year round. It is that 12-month presence that sparked the effort to find ways the Midwest Old Threshers Association could generate income other times of the year.

The Midwest Central Railroad had an idea to operate for three weekends in October and bill the event as The Ghost Train of No Return. Old Threshers and the Midwest Electric Railway joined MCRR and now, 12 years later, Midwest Haunted Rails attracts more than 10,000 people to southeast Iowa from all over the state as well as Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota and beyond.

In addition to operating the trolley around the haunted campground as a part of

the Haunted Rails event, Old Threshers also operates the Thrashers House of Terror. The attraction was started eight years ago as a way to bring in additional income, the attraction was voted one of the best haunted houses in Iowa.

The most recent addition to the activities here at Old Threshers is the Festival of Lights. Using the 60-acre campground to the south of the Richard E. Oetken Heritage Museums as a drive thru light park started in 2013, however planning for the new event started in 2012.

A steering committee was formed to determine the feasibility of such an event in Mt. Pleasant. Their first task was to raise enough money in private funding to lease the light display from North Pole Productions in North Adams, Mass. The committee needed a three year commitment out of the initial investors in order to get the event off the ground and on its way to being self-supporting.

They were able to get many individuals to commit to the three years, however there were some who made just a one-time

**Lights continued on page 18**

## Board Appoints Terry McWilliams as CEO



**Terry McWilliams**

Members of the Midwest Old Threshers Board of Directors named Terry McWilliams as CEO during their October board meeting.

McWilliams had been interim CEO since April when then CEO and Administrator Lennis Moore fell ill. Moore held the top position at Old Threshers for 36 years. He passed away in June. Moore and McWilliams worked side by side since January 2002 when McWilliams was hired on as Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator.

“Lennis and I had many discussions about projects and ideas that would move the Association forward and help strengthen the Old Threshers Reunion,” said McWilliams. “I am very appreciative that the Board has put their trust and faith in me allowing me to follow in Lennis’ footsteps. I look forward to leading this organization into the future.”

“Terry and Lennis worked very closely with each other over the last several years,” said Old Threshers Board President Chris Heaton. “The board has a unique opportunity to build on Lennis’ vision for the future of Old Threshers while tapping into new ideas from Terry.”

The Board will be looking at candidates to fill the Public Relations and Marketing position by the end of the year.

McWilliams came to Old Threshers on a part-time basis in 2001 after a job as the Director of Student Activities at Columbia College in Columbia, MO. Before that he worked at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. McWilliams graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Art. He earned his Master of Science in Recreation, Parks and Tourism at Western Illinois University. He and his wife, Cyndi live in Mt. Pleasant with their three children – Brady, Nathan and Rachel.

## Old Threshers Foundation Annual Report 2014

It is my pleasure, as Executive Director, to provide a brief overview of the Old Threshers Foundation's performance over the last year.

The year 2014 contained a very significant milestone for the Foundation - over **ONE MILLION** in earnings has been transferred as financial support to Midwest Old Threshers since the Foundation was established in 1986. So **THANKS A MILLION** to all of you who have contributed over the years to make this possible.



*A Financial Support Organization for Midwest Old Threshers*

The addition of the Pass Through Account has also helped the Foundation pursue new fundraising endeavors; it has allowed the Foundation to apply for grants. The first ever grant was received from the Enhance Henry County Foundation awarding \$3,000 to the Mount Pleasant Festival of Lights.

The Pass Through Account also now gives contributors options. You can continue to donate to the Permanent Endowment where only earnings are transferred as financial support to Midwest Old Threshers or you may now donate to the Pass Through Account where your entire contribution is transferred to Midwest Old Threshers exclusively for the purpose you intended. Examples of such contributions include, but are not limited to, projects such as the campground, carousel, drive-a-tractor, Festival of Lights, museum exhibits, Printer's Hall, school tours, steam headquarters, Theater Museum and trolley. The possibilities are endless.

Here are the financial statistics for the Foundation as of its fiscal year, ending October 31, 2014:

<b>Total cash under management:</b>	<b>\$ 1,158,710.61 – Cash Basis</b> (endowment plus checking account)
	<b>\$ 1,349,147.06 – Market Value</b> (endowment plus checking account)
<b>Total market value of all assets:</b>	<b>\$ 3,349,148.06</b> – includes endowment, checking account and farm
<b>Donations Received:</b>	<b>\$ 19,793.52</b> - These funds are invested as principal; only earnings are spent. This amount includes <b>\$15,488.52</b> received from the Floyd Granaman Trust.
<b>Interest &amp; Dividends Earned:</b>	<b>\$ 37,257.17</b> Investment earnings received from checking and trust accts.
<b>Farm Rental Payments:</b>	<b>\$ 53,370.00</b> The Illinois farm, bequeathed to the Foundation by the late Frederick Strong in April 1997, is a major source of income for the Foundation.
<b>Gross Income:</b>	<b>\$ 90,627.17</b> This amount is the sum of the interest & dividends plus farm rent.
<b>Expenses:</b>	<b>\$ 9,932.55</b> (farm taxes and insurance, tax preparation fees, admin costs)
<b>Net Income:</b>	<b>\$ 80,694.62</b>

The amount transferred to Old Threshers for financial support in 2015.

**This is the largest annual amount ever transferred in Foundation history.**

As you approach year-end and consider your charitable contributions for this tax year, please keep our Old Threshers Foundation in mind. Remember your gifts to our 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, other ways to support the Foundation include: a will bequest, a designation as a life insurance beneficiary, and/or a gift of appreciated stock.

On behalf of the Foundation Board, we thank you again for your continued support which enables us to fulfill our mission of providing financial support to Midwest Old Threshers. **ONE MILLION STRONG!**

Alan D. Husinga, Executive Director

## Lennis Moore Exhibit Hall Dedicated at Reunion

The Old Threshers Board honored Lennis Moore, CEO from 1976-2014, on Reunion Friday by naming the Lennis Moore Exhibit Hall in Heritage Museum B. Lennis' Legacy will live on through the exhibits he designed and built in the museum. The board felt that it was fitting to name this space after him. The Moore family was present to cut the ribbon. Daughter Catie joined the festivities from half-way around the world via Skype.



(Above) Sandy Moore cuts the ribbon at the dedication of the Lennis Moore Exhibit Hall in Heritage Museum B on Reunion Friday. Helping her are son, Ben (left) granddaughter, Amber Rose, son, Lucas and daughter-in-law Erin.



(Left) Following the ribbon cutting, Sandy Moore and son, Ben, unveiled the plaque at the southwest entrance of Heritage Museum B officially naming the Lennis Moore Exhibit Hall.

## Caitlyn DePriest Crowned 2014 Miss Sweet 16

(Right) From left: Sidney Taylor, Mt. Pleasant, 3rd Runner Up; Ally Lowe, Mt. Pleasant, 2nd Runner Up; Amber Manning, Brighton, 1st Runner Up; Caitlyn DePriest, Mt. Pleasant, Miss Sweet 16.



(Below) 2014 Miss Sweet 16 Participants: Front Row from left: Lydia Allen, Lindsey Barton, Bryanna Evans, Elsbeth Bacher, Marissa VanElsen, Melanie Marek, Claire Tillotson, Elizabeth Scheer, Alyssa Smith, Megan Hoenig. Back Row from left: Hannah Stater, Katie Mile, Miranda Haynes, Kailey Peterson, Skye Loving, Sam Zeleny, Sidney Taylor, Ally Lowe, Mikayle Lance, Hayley Buettell, Amber Manning, Andrea Shull, Ashley DeMeyer, Caitlyn DePriest, Madison McDowell.



## 2014 OT Volunteer Award Recipients



Front row (L to R) Mike Dietze, Larry Robison, Edwin “Buddy” Kiewes, Kyle Waldeck, Jason Newby, Melissa Meeks, Bev Birky, Marjorie Nenninger, Jeanie Seberg, Rich Seberg, Sherri McPheron, Jeff Johnson. Back row (L to R) Vicki Durr, Chuck Dewey, Marlene Perkins, Karen Buckert, Konnie Pace, Ann Pelley, Judy & John Ryckaert, Randall Hall, Melanie & John Carlson, John Maurer

### Mike Dietze

Mike’s first Reunion was in 1977. He has been back every year since then. He has actively volunteered this entire time. Mike is the owner of Waverly Plumbing and Well Company in Waverly, Nebraska. He and his wife Pat have been married for 39 years.

### Larry Robison

Larry was raised in Keokuk County and graduated from Keota High School. He has been married to his wife, Carol, for 18 years. He has worked in farming and agriculture since graduating from high school. Larry has been attending the OT Reunion for the past 9 years and works hard setting up the horse area. He also provides Suffolk Draft Horses for demonstrations.

### Edwin ‘Buddy’ Kiewes (Keys)

Buddy has not missed a Threshers Reunion since he started coming in 1953. He couldn’t attend the 3 years before that because he was in active Military service. He lives on the farm in Packwood, Iowa, where he was born and raised. Buddy farmed with horses until 1990! This farm has been in his family since 1867. He has been active in the Horse Area all of his years at the Reunion. Many of the wagons, running gear and items used in the Horse Area today have been donated by Buddy. Buddy’s vision is to “impress on everyone the importance of preserving our farming heritage.”

### Kyle Waldeck

Kyle was born and raised in Waggoner, IL.

He started coming to Threshers at the age of 4 and hasn’t missed a year since. He took Steam School in 2009 and has volunteered at the Steam Power House ever since. He also willingly helps out at both the Carousel and Printers’ Hall. Kyle collects Old Threshers Buttons and memorabilia.

### Jason Newby

Jason has been coming to Old Threshers since 2001 and has been showing engines for several years. Since 2009 he has been volunteering in the Wilkie Room in the Stationary Steam Area. Born in Nebraska City, Jason grew up in Syracuse, Nebraska and is a diesel mechanic at their local John Deere dealer.

### Melissa Meeks

Missy and her family travel 500 miles from Waynesville, Ohio to help at the Old Threshers Reunion. She has been attending OT since 1968. She and her husband Dale have ‘raised’ their children at OT. Over the years Missy has volunteered in numerous areas from running steam engines, cleaning and painting all over the grounds as well as doing demonstrations. She is co-creator of the Old Threshers Smoke Box Cook-off with Bev Birky. Her favorite part has been working in the information booths. She said, “You get to meet people from all over the world and fill them in on things about the show that they might miss seeing.” At home she is actively involved with her son’s Boy Scout troop, serving as camp and activity coordinator.

### Bev Birky

Bev can be found volunteering in the Traction Steam Area. Matt, her husband of 20 years, brought her to Old Threshers in 1991 and she has been coming ever since. Bev, Matt and their son, Cole, help with Steam School and Haunted Rails as well. She is co-creator of the Old Threshers Smokebox Cook Off along with Missy Meeks. Bev is administrative assistant for the City of Cedar Rapids Solid Waste & Recycling Division. She is a graduate of Kirkwood Community College with an Associate Science Degree in Horse Science and Associate of Arts Degree as a Legal Assistant. Bev was born in Corning, Iowa, and raised outside of the small town of Nodaway, Iowa.

### Marjorie Nenninger

Marjie attended the very first Old Threshers Reunion with her parents when her dad, Major Watkins, exhibited their 1911 Ford Delivery Truck and has missed only 6 since then. She started volunteering in the late 1950s and continued thru the 1970s as a period costume model in the Antique Car Area. In the 1960s she was chauffeur to the Volunteer Award Recipients and the Couples who were celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary as her father allowed her to drive his 1930 Model A Towne Sedan. Born in Yarmouth, Iowa, she moved to St. Louis where she met her late husband. She now resides in the Lake of the Ozarks. Marjie retired from full time work with CIGNA Healthcare in 2001 but continues with part

Continued on page 5

## 2014 OT Volunteer Award Recipients continued from page 4

time work. She has volunteered at the Carousel, Haunted Rails and the Antique Car Barn and anywhere else she is needed. You can still find her driving in the Harvest Parade and Cavalcade of Power. And her dad still lets her drive his 1930 Model A!

### Jeanie and Rich Seberg

Rich attended his first Reunion in 1950 as a baby in the Finely Church Tent. When he was older he helped build Museum A, in the 1960s he helped with the Ground Trains. The 70s and 80s found him in the Tractor Area. Most recently he has helped with landscaping throughout the grounds together with his wife Jeanie. Born and raised in Henry County and the Swedesburg Area, Rich attended WACO schools and Iowa Wesleyan College. In 1987, he founded Courtesy Door Sales & Service. Jeanie's love of flowers and gardening got her involved in helping Rich with grounds clean-up and landscaping over the last two years. She was born in Mt. Pleasant, raised in New London. She is a graduate of New London High School. The Sebergs have 7 children, 25 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

### Sherri McPheron

Sherri, better known to Reunion visitors as Miss Violet, has been volunteering at the Reunion since she was 17. She has helped in her church food tent, sang in three different groups and helped with the landscaping in the North Village. She began appearing as Miss Violet in 1993 and plays the Purple Witch during the Haunted Rails event. Sherri is an elementary teacher and a high school consumer science teacher. She received her Interior Design degree from the University of Iowa. Born in Mt. Union, Sherry was raised in the Danville and Mt. Pleasant area. She and her husband, Jeff, have been married for 37 years and have 2 children and 6 grandchildren.

### Jeff Johnson

Born and raised in Manchester, Iowa, Jeff received his education in civil engineering from the University of Missouri and physics from Northeast Missouri State University. He is retired from a career with the Iowa Department of Transportation as a

construction engineer. Jeff started volunteering with the Midwest Central Railroad in 2002. In 2006 he started helping out in Traction Steam and at the Hazel Grace Pierson Carousel Pavilion. He enjoys working with the old equipment and meeting people with like interests. He attended his first Old Threshers Reunion in 1964 with his great uncle Earl and was hooked.

Jeff and his wife, Juanita, have been married for 40 years. They have 3 children and 2 granddaughters.

### Vickie Durr

Vickie and her husband Bob have been married for 38 years. They have 2 children and 1 granddaughter. She has been working at Alaniz/Metro Group for 35 years.

In her spare time, she volunteers for Relay for Life with the American Cancer Society and has been a 4-H volunteer for 24 years. Vickie has volunteered at Midwest Old Threshers in many different areas over the years. This includes St. Alphonsus Church, 4-H program and 7 years working at the Haunted Rails and the Threshers House of Terror.

### Chuck Dewey

Chuck has been volunteering at Old Threshers since 2011. He has helped with general track and trolley maintenance for Midwest Electric Railway Assoc. His first job was to bury a wire at a crossing. Since that time he has worked on brake systems, made motor controller repairs, and the under car traction motor wiring and lubrication tasks. He has made trolley parts from brass and steel and set up a milling machine with a three phase inverter he donated. This summer he put together a compressor for the shop air system.

### Marlene Perkins

Marlene and her husband Ken have attended most of the Reunions for the past 30 years. They have been volunteering and displaying tractors for the past 10 years. She helps with the setup, registrations and tear down at the Tractor Headquarters. They have purchased a 1958 - 800 Case to restore after finding an old picture of Marlene driving one. They hope to have it

finished in time to have it here this year! Marlene and Ken live in Bennett, Iowa, and have 2 sons and 5 grandchildren.

### Karen Buckert

Karen is a volunteer in the Tractor Headquarters and all around in the Tractor Area. She is also one of the "Water Girls" during the Cavalcade of Power parade. Karen's grandfather used to operate steam engines for Neil McClure during the Reunions. She lives in Warsaw, Illinois, with her husband Danny. They have two sons. She is a clerk/cashier for Sullivan Auctioneers, in Hamilton, Illinois.

### Konnie Pace

Konnie grew up in Winfield Iowa, she and her husband, Tim, have two children and two grandchildren.

She has been a 911 dispatcher for Muscatine County Joint Communications for 19 years.

Konnie has volunteered at the Tractor Headquarters and the Kiddie Pull for over 25 years.

### Ann Pelley

Ann has been volunteering in the tractor area for about 20 years. Her Huber tractor was the featured tractor in 2013. She and her husband Chuck come when the campground opens and help set up and prepare for the show. She really enjoys the time before the show starts to visit with the friends they have made over the years. She is retired from 19 years at Farm and Fleet in Davenport. She and Chuck will be celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary next month. They have 6 children and 7 grandchildren. She is also a member of local tractor clubs and editor of a monthly tractor newsletter.

### Judy and Harold Ryckaert

Judy works in and around the campground in various ways. Painting, cleaning and serving in the information building in the campground. Judy worked for John Deere Foundry for 28 years as an industrial Nurse. Harold is a carpenter/contractor in Rural Milan, IL. He and Judy have 4 children and 9 grandchildren. He works in, paints and does repairs in the campground - ground trains and their canvas tops. He

Continued on page 6

## Sunny Skies for the 2014 Labor Day Horsepull

The sun welcomed visitors to the last day of the 2014 Old Threshers Reunion.

With the help of Mike Barton Construction and Kinney and Sons, the track in front of the Grandstand was scraped of mud and made ready for the Don Carlson Invitational Horse Pull.

Twelve teams of horses pulled in front of a grandstand full of spectators. Ed Alan Smock from Clarence, Missouri was the top puller.



## 2014 OT Volunteer Award Recipients continued from page 6

also washes and cleans ground trains, tractors and golf carts after the Reunion. Judy and Harold have been Threshers volunteers for 8 years.

### **Randall Hall**

Randall has been coming to Old Threshers for over ten years and has been volunteering most of that time. He has been married to his wife June for 39 years. They have a daughter and two grandchildren. He worked for Caterpillar for 38 years before retiring. At home in Galesburg, Illinois, he volunteers at a nursing home for handicapped children.

### **Melanie and John Carlson**

Melanie lives in Lockridge, with her husband John and their two boys. She is a

Civil Engineer at French-Reneker Associates in Fairfield, Iowa. She has been volunteering in the Log Village since 2008. She can usually be found making soap at Cassity House or working in the General Store. Since 2010, she has put in many hours working in the garden and orchard. She was also able to reconnect with her 5<sup>th</sup> grade church camp counselors who also volunteer at the Log Village. John is the proud farmer of a Century Farm outside of Lockridge, Iowa. He is also a survey technician. He volunteers at the Log Village in major, behind the scenes work of setting up, clean up and all that goes with that. He has also been working on the orchard and garden since 2010.

### **John Maurer**

John celebrates 34 years at Old Threshers. In that time he demonstrated the custom corn sheller with his father and their family for 20 years. He and his wife Shirley also volunteer in the gas engine area. John lives in Danvers, Illinois. He worked with his father in the custom corn shelling business; as a grain elevator operator and with the Solo Cup Company in maintenance. He volunteers with youth sports programs. He is an Army Veteran who served in the Korean War. His father, S. Earl Maurer received the OT Volunteer Award in 1983.

**Thank You Volunteers!!!**

## McGordan Gets a Makeover Prior to Reunion



One of the horses from Old Threshers' Smile Machine made a trip to Joplin, Missouri this summer where he received some much needed restoration work by Thane Snyder. The cracks were filled and the entire horse was sanded down and given a new coat of paint. His smile certainly shows how good it feels after a complete makeover!



## Traction Steam Headquarters Dedicated

Bob and Penny Gilchrist had a lot to celebrate during the 2014 Old Threshers Reunion. Not only were they honored by the Penny and Bob Gilchrist Traction Steam Headquarters, they also had the Engine of the Year. Their 1911 18hp Wood Brothers engine once belonged to the Joe and Anna Barbaglia family of Centerville. Bob and Penny bought the engine in 2012. It was restored for the 2014 Reunion. The Gilchrists included the Barbaglia family in their celebration by inviting Joe and Anna's daughters, Jean Wenisch and Mary Ann Bond down to Mount Pleasant to see the newly restored engine.



Above: Penny and Bob Gilchrist cut the ribbon officially opening the new steam headquarters. Right and Below: People took time to converse and take in the photographs during the building's dedication.



(Left) Jean Wenisch, left, and her sister, Mary Ann Bond sit on a bench given to Old Threshers and the Steam Area in honor of their parents.

## Reunion Visitors Treated to 143 Vehicles

by Teresa Carver,  
Mt Pleasant

It's hard to believe that we have wrapped up another Old Thresher's Reunion. The Antique Car and Truck area had a wonderful showing of automobile exhibits in 2014. Overall, we had 143 vehicles displayed; ranging from the unique and petite- like the Quadricycle, Austin Bantam, Isetta, and BMW; to the large and in charge group of Semi Tractors like the Macks, Internationals, and Peterbuilts. In between were coupes, sedans, touring cars, pickups, convertibles, hardtops, and no tops with several over 100 years old and still running strong.



We also hosted the Iowa Corvair Enthusiasts who provided a wonderful showing in our Specialty display area this year. The Corvair group had a well rounded ensemble of the various models including the great white Ultra Van camper that was in attendance briefly on the weekend. If you missed any of these, you really missed something this year!

We have been blessed year after year to have our area assemble such an array of great examples of automobilia (if that isn't a real word, it should be) and the concerning yet exciting thing about it, is that the director and coordinator never really know what or who is going to be in attendance.

We have the unique opportunity to have the majority of our exhibits provided by the Southeast Iowa Antique Car club. Since the beginning (literally) of the Reunion, the club has been the life blood of the Antique Car and Truck area. One of the club's main social events is built around the Reunion, because it is truly the club's Reunion too. We also have additional support and great vehicles from people who have learned of our love of antique cars and the hobby through interaction with Old Threshers. Some have chosen to join the club to continue the friendships they made



during the week, while others choose not to... and we appreciate the efforts of all.

Through both of these groups of collectors, we have grown in numbers to the point of nearly "bustin' at the seams"- what an awesome problem to have! And what an awesome opportunity for visitors to the Reunion to see such a wide assembly of rare and seldom-seen makes and models. I believe we can challenge any quality auto museum with our exhibits for those five days, especially since the majority of our exhibits come out and parade through the Cavalcade of Power daily. Where else can you see these types of beauties up close, watch and hear them purr, and also get to learn about them from the owners- not in just any old museum, for sure!

This year our featured car and truck were of the same make and model- both were Ford Model Ts. The last time this happened was in 2000, also with Ford Model Ts; but...SURPRISE!...again in 2015, we have our feature car and truck represented by the same make and model- this time by the 1930 Ford Model A Coupe of John and Barb Ramsey, and the 1929 Ford Model A pickup of Ron and Lorraine Herring. What great fun!!!!

Continued on page 11



## Midwest Old Threshers Board of Directors

More than 100 people attended the 2014 Midwest Old Threshers Annual Meeting held in the Performance Level of the Theatre Museum on November 9th.

The membership voted in Jeremy Hobbs and George Alt as new board members. They replaced Matt Crull and Louis Tuller who's terms had expired. Jeremy will oversee the Midwest Electric Railway and George will be the director over the Gas Engine Area.

Louis Tuller served for 36 years as Director for the Gas Engine Area, it was pointed out at the meeting that that is equal to half of his life! Louis decided it was time to enjoy retirement and to step down at the end of his 12th term. His service was recognized by the Board as well as all in attendance.



**From L to R: Ralph Oliver, Bob Gilchrist, President—Bob Gerdes, Ron Carver, Dan Wistrom, George Alt, Treasurer—Bob Welander, Clair McBride, Earl Reynolds, Secretary—Alan Buckert, Vice President—Chris Heaton, Jeremy Hobbs.**



**Louis Tuller**

### Meet George Alt

George has been an exhibitor in the Gas Engine Area for more than 25 years and has volunteered in that area for almost as long. He is Commander of the American Legion for the past 4 years, Chairman of Veterans' Affairs for Muscatine County for 2 years. He and his wife, Donna, live in West Liberty.

George is looking forward to working with all of the directors to come up with ways to keep Old Threshers going. He wants to support all areas in anyway he can.



### Meet Jeremy Hobbs



When looking at Old Threshers and the great things that the organization has achieved, it is easy to see that the strength of the organization is the amazingly dedicated volunteers. Without these great people this organization would not be where it is today. Something that would be great to see in the future would be an extension of the trolley track so that it could go up to the main grounds allowing a longer trolley ride!

Being a new director, I am hoping to bring more creative ideas to the table as well as a younger perspective. Being in the Marines, I have a good leadership background and am skilled in talking with people from different back grounds. I believe that everyone deserves to be heard and will listen to anyone's ideas. I am looking forward to seeing what new ideas can lead to and the great new experiences to come.

Jeremy is a ground maintenance supervisor at Iowa Wesleyan College. Originally from Northeast Missouri, Jeremy has lived in the New London/Mt Pleasant area since high school.

## Rare Portable Case Steam Engine Restored

Wayne Kennedy, Danville, is known far and wide for his restoration skills. He acquired one of his most challenging projects to date from Roy Larson—an 1879 Portable Case Steam Engine.

Case built their first portable engine in 1869. Farmers were slow to warm up to the idea of steam engines. Early designs were far from ideal. Risk of fire and lack of operator know-how made them almost dangerous.

One can see from the design that moving the engine when it was in operation would have to be done from the seat mounted to the smoke stack. In order to sit in that seat, the stack would have to be laid down on top of what would have been a very hot boiler. The engine would then be pulled by a team of horses with the engineer at the reins.

This particular engine was a static display at Old Threshers for about five years before Wayne bought it for the cost of scrap.

On Thanksgiving weekend about 9 years ago, Wayne and his son, Brian, loaded up the engine to take it back to Wayne's shop. This wasn't an easy task. The wooden wheels were so fragile they barely supported the weight of the boiler. It was doubtful they could even move it to load it onto the trailer.

Even though the boiler was not in too bad of shape, there needed to be an extensive amount of repair. He had the original smoke box door but had to fabricate the ring as well as the hinges for

the smoke stack. The cylinder casting and crank shaft are original. Wayne had to fabricate almost all of the parts for the engine. The wheels-up restoration process took three years.

Wayne is a tool & die maker by trade. Ever since he was a child, he has been fascinated with precision machining skills and wanted to work on engines, both stationary and traction. In 1970, he was an apprentice on a stationary engine restoration and the rest is, as they say, history.

His most aggressive project was a 1/3 scale Case threshing machine. It took eight years to make. Wayne said he took no short cuts. He said never again will he take on such a big project.

"There was nothing that I could go to the hardware store and buy," said Wayne. "I had to fabricate everything. There are three times as many parts in a separator as there are in a steam engine."

Outside the scope of machining parts were the woodworking skills needed to make the wheels. Wayne had the wood for the wheels sawed during an Old Threshers Reunion on the Sears' Sawmill.

Historically wagon wheels were made of hickory, Wayne felt that the oak he had would do the job just as well for his museum piece.

Wayne also exhibits a 1902 New Giant and has a center crank Case used in the Traction Steam exhibit in Heritage Museum B.

Visitors to the Old Threshers Heritage

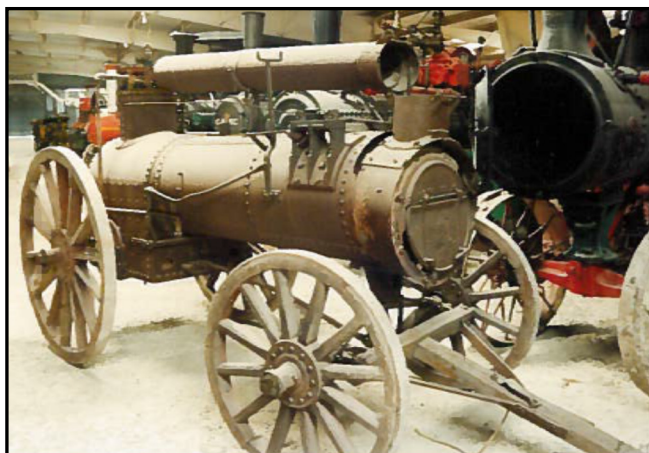


**Above: Wayne Kennedy stands with his restored 1879 Portable Case Steam Engine.**

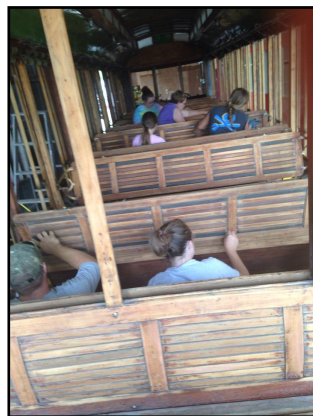
**Below, left: The engine as it sat in the museum at Old Threshers prior to restoration.**

**Below: The boiler sitting on the new wheels.**

Museums can find the portable Case on display just outside the gift shop near the traction steam engines.



# 1779 Gets Spruced Up with New Paint



Volunteers for the Midwest Electric Railway put many hours of hard work into the 1779 this year getting it ready for the 2014 Reunion. A new paint job is the most obvious, however upon closer inspection one can see the seats have a new coat of varnish. It took a Village to strip off the old finish and prep the benches.

Thanks in part to a grant from the Washington County Riverboat Foundation, new platforms were constructed around "The Loop Line." In the photo to the left, trolleys drop off and pick up passengers at the Log Village stop during the 2014 Reunion.

## Antique Cars and Trucks

continued from page 8

For a little background on these features: 2014 marked the debut of John and Barb's Model A coupe. The restoration project was completed earlier this summer and they are very proud of it. On a fun note, John had a special sign created to place on the coupe during the reunion and positioned it on the side door. In the excitement of learning they were chosen as 2015 feature he opened the door and forgot to remove the sign which fell inside the door frame behind the new upholstery. Rather than have to take the door apart he was willing to leave it - but he ended up deciding to retrieve the first one after a moment of dismay and then a good laugh. As for Ron and Lorraine Herring; they herald from Winchester, Kansas and 2014 marked their 6<sup>th</sup> year as exhibitors with their first introduction to Old Threshers coming in 2006 after seeing the Reunion on an RFD-TV episode.

As a whole, the 2014 Old Threshers Reunion was a huge success in the car area- lots of vehicles, lots of friends, lots of entertainment and food, and above all; lots of memories--- because after all, this IS where Memories are Made! Hope to see you in the Antique Car and Truck Area next year to see what great things will be in store!



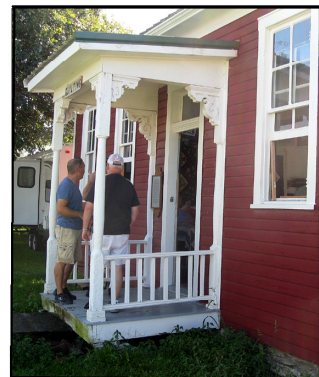
Steve Alt, Randy Hall, Maddy Murphy, Teresa Carver and Louis Tuller received the 2015 Old Threshers 30-hour volunteer award during the 2014 Annual Meeting. Ben Moore is the artist, producing a work of art that honors his father, Lennis Moore.





# 2014 Button Collectors Forum

~  
by Carolyn Sidebottom  
Photos: Lloyd Jacobs



~ A Time for Fellowship and Discovery ~





*A Large and Diverse Group Gathered with a Common Interest*

*Carolyn Sidebottom presented the Early Bird/Volunteer Series and the Exhibitor/Staff Series of supplemental buttons.*

*Forum Attendees donated over \$100 to the O7 Foundation to support the school tours program.*



## Featured Gas Engine



Cushman Taylor Works  
Galen Perron  
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

# Featured for 2015

## Featured Car



1930 Ford Model A Coupe  
John & Barb Ramsey  
Washington, Iowa

## Featured Truck



1929 Ford Model A Pickup  
Ron & Lorraine Herring  
Winchester, Kansas

## Featured Steam Engine



Gaar Scott  
Nelson Smith  
Brighton, Iowa

## Featured Tractor



44 Massey Harris Diesel  
Herb & Twila LaMack  
Durant, Iowa

## Their Blood Runs Massey-Harris Red

What started out as a hobby after retirement has turned into a passion for the Loving family.

Dave Loving’s father, Lacy, started farming with Massey-Harris tractors. His first one was a Massey-Harris 44 bought at Peterson Implement in Polishville. When retirement was nearing, Lacy decided he needed something to occupy his time. He chose a path that the entire Loving family has chosen to follow – collecting Massey-Harris tractors.

The family collection includes 18 tractors, 13 of which were on display during the 2014 Reunion. They usually restore a couple of tractors a year.

“We are always working on something,” says Dave. “We jump around from project to project. As we await parts for one, we move onto the next.” Just as exhibiting is a family affair, so is restoration. Dave says they get everyone together to work on their collection.

Each member of the family has their favorite tractor and they love to share their appreciation with OT visitors. While their



**The Loving Family and their collection of Massey-Harris tractors. Standing from left: Jeremy Loving, Jason Loving, Deanna Loving. On Tractors from left: Jodie Loving, Skye Loving, Clayton Loving, Jessica Loving and Dave Loving.**

tractors are show pieces, Dave stresses that they are also meant to be driven and played with. The Lovings have been exhibiting at Old Threshers since 2009.

*Editor’s Note: This is the first in a series of stories about Massey-Harris collectors at Midwest Old Threshers.*

## OT Leaders Take Part in Ice Bucket Challenge

This summer, people across the Nation were being dared by friends and co-workers to take the Ice Bucket Challenge. The fundraising campaign was started as a way to raise money and create awareness for the disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). The challenge encourages nominated participants to be filmed having a bucket of ice water poured on their heads and then nominating others to do the same. Participants had 24 hours to comply or forfeit by making a charitable financial donation.

Then interim CEO Terry McWilliams, OT Board President Chris Heaton and Vice President Bob Gilchrist took part in the challenge.





# People of the Old Threshers Reunion





## Obituaries

### Mary E. Rinker

Mary Elizabeth Rinker, 75, of rural Streator passed away early Wednesday morning, April 23, 2014, at her home after a courageous battle with lung cancer. Funeral services for Mary Beth Rinker will be at 11 a.m. Saturday April 26, 2014 at the Elias Funeral Home in Streator. Pastor Bill Niebuhr will officiate and also conduct graveside services in Grand Rapids M.E. Cemetery in rural Grand Ridge, IL.

Visitation will be held from 4-7 p.m. Friday at the Elias Funeral Home. Born July 21, 1938 in Streator, she was the daughter of Fred and Elizabeth (Harcharik) Hall. She married Eugene Rinker Sr. on April 5, 1956 in Ottawa, IL. She is survived by her husband Gene of rural Streator, children Eugene (Debbie) Rinker Jr. of Streator, Cathy (Larry) Troyer of Hudson, IL, Trish (Henry) Swartz of Hudson, IL, Elizabeth (Al) Lieberum of Austin, MN, grandchildren Melissa (Brian) Ritter, Annette (John) Cherry, Amy (Ben) Russell, Jennifer (Matt Tiberi) Lieberum, Kerri (Andrew) Augustine, Andy (Whitney) Lieberum, Lis (Andrew) Schurman, Ray (Brittany Sampson) Rinker, Christine (Alex Roberts) Swartz, Austin Rinker, and Brandon Swartz. Also surviving are 10 great-grandchildren, brother Gerald (Carole) Hall of Streator and 7 nieces and nephews and her beloved cat Boo.

She is preceded in death by her parents and a sister Arlane Reed of Streator. Mary Beth attended St. Mary's Grade School and graduated from Streator Township High School in 1956. She drove a school bus for many years and later worked at Bill Walsh in Streator for 18 years.

She was a member of the former Grace United Methodist Church in

Streator where she also taught Sunday School.

In addition to raising her children, she was an active partner in the family dairy and grain farm. She was an Election Judge and a volunteer at the Old Threshers. She also enjoyed sewing, crocheting, reading, computer games and gardening.

Memorials may be directed to the Morris Hospital Foundation, Grand Ridge Volunteer Fire Department or the donor's choice.

### John Dale Sparks

John Dale Sparks Sr., age 62, of Ewing, MO died, September 5, at his home.

He was born June 1, 1952 in Quincy, IL a son of Cyrus Dale and Vivian Laura Olson Sparks. He married Emma L. Wood on June 1, 1975 in Ewing, MO. She survives.

John was a board member of Ewing First Assembly of God Church. He was a board member and track master of Midwest Electric Railway Association at Midwest Old Threshers where he volunteered for 20 years.

He was employed at Harold Wood Trucking, Inc. for 33 years and enjoyed going to church and spending time with his family.

Survivors include his wife Emma (Wood) Sparks of Ewing; two sons, John Dale Sparks Jr. "Johnny" (Traci) of Lewistown, MO and Nathan Laurence Sparks (Jessi) of Canton, MO; two grandchildren, Patrick John and Patience Danielle Sparks of Lewistown and adopted granddaughter, Aspen Marie Pryor of Quincy, IL; his mother, Vivian Sparks of Ewing, MO; father in law Harold Wood (Mildred) of La Belle, MO; siblings Carolyn Sparks of Quincy, Daniel

(Virginia) Sparks of Maywood, MO, Donald (Barb) Sparks of Maywood and Sandi (Stewart) Leonard of Palmyra, MO; sister in law, Kathy (LeRoy) Corbin of Hurdland, MO, Violet (Michael) Hoffer of Ewing, Lynn Wood of Ewing and several nieces, nephews, great nieces, great nephews and great great nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his father, Cyrus Dale Sparks, mother in law, Virgie Sharpe Wood, his grandparents, great niece, Paige Lankford and a great nephew, Chase Holman.

Funeral services were held First Assembly of God Church in Ewing with Rev. Elmer Hagood officiating. Burial was in Ewing Memorial Cemetery, Ewing, MO. Visitation was held September 8, 2014 at the First Assembly of God Church in Ewing. The family suggests memorials be made to John Sparks Benefit.

Pallbearers were Kevin Brashears, Stephen Brashears, Christopher Johnston, Dan-Dan Sparks Donny Sparks, Billy Lankford, Jeremiah Goings, Justin Hudson, Cyrus Sparks and Josh Hudson. Honorary Pallbearers will be: Daniel Sparks Sr., Donald Sparks and Stewart Leonard.



# OLD THRESHERS

## Reunion

MOUNT PLEASANT, IOWA

September 3-7,  
2015

## Festival of Lights

Continued from page 1

contribution. In 2013 there were just over 60 displays. In 2014, there are 80 displays and all have sponsors.

The Festival of Lights is a prime example of how the Old Threshers Board of Directors and staff are trying to think beyond the Reunion as far as ways to utilize the grounds and assets here at Old Threshers.

Other events held at Old Threshers include Steam School, School Tours, The Bussey Doll Event, Swap Meet and Printers' Fair.

Look for the Calendar of Events on the Old Threshers website or in the pages of *The Chaff* and be sure to visit Old Threshers throughout the year!

If you haven't found that perfect Christmas gift yet consider shopping in the Old Threshers Gift Shop open Mon-Fri 8-4:30.



After several chilly nights of checking and replacing light bulbs, the Festival of Lights was ready for opening night on November 20th. (Above) Terry McWilliams. (Right) Rich Garrells, Alan Huisinga, Melinda Huisinga.





*Mount Pleasant*  
*Festival of Lights*

**November 20-23, 27-30**  
**December 4-7, 11-14, 18-31**  
**5:30 pm to 9:00 pm**

Come and visit the 1 mile  
Holiday Light Drive Thru Park  
with over 60 Holiday displays.



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
319.385.8937  
[WWW.OLDTHRESHERS.COM](http://WWW.OLDTHRESHERS.COM)



# Happy Holidays

From everyone at  
Midwest Old Threshers