



THE MUELLER RECORD

Summer, 1998

Museum receives Art Award

The Hieronymus Mueller Museum received the Art Award for its exhibits from the Decatur Area Arts Council during the group's Annual meeting in May.

Recognition was given to the museum for its creative exhibits since its opening on Memorial Day, 1996.

The first exhibit, "Vibrant Hydrants," featured 83 fire-hydrant-related items, including artwork by local middle-school students. The Mueller Co. manufactures approximately half of all the fire hydrants in the United States.

The museum was also recognized for its "Steppin' Out" exhibit which featured clothing and accessories from the Mueller and Staley families. Mannequins were dressed in clothing which had been worn by either Mrs. Ora Mueller Blair or her daughter, Mrs. Lenore Mueller Staley Schmick. Photographs of the women wearing the clothes were enlarged to poster size and placed beside the mannequins. Pins, featuring a dress shoe, were created for the show by local artist Shirley Kramer.

Other exhibits have included "Snap!" which featured an assortment of black and white photographs of the Christmas parties held by the

Mueller Co., and the present exhibit, "Potluck--A Little Bit of Everything."

In presenting the award, Susan Smith, executive director of the Arts Council, said, "Exhibits aren't easy and for a museum to have created four such exhibits in its short lifespan is amazing. We are so fortunate to have this museum in our city."

Nancy Shoop, a local artist, has curated all of the shows for the museum.

Jane Mueller (center), president of the Board of Directors, holds the Art Award presented to the Hieronymus Mueller Museum by the Decatur Area Arts Council during its annual meeting. Jane is the daughter of William Everett Mueller and the granddaughter of Adolph Mueller. Joining her are Nancy Jo Batman (left), museum director, and Betty Wheatley, director of volunteers, board member and former employee of the Mueller Co.



For the Record . . .

by Nancy Jo Batman, Manager

This is one of those Small World Stories, and, like all such stories, you have to pay attention. It gets complicated.

My best high school girlfriend is named Fran Jones. She used to be Fran Davis. Her mother was Ruth Davis. They lived in Boody.

We shared many hours growing up. We fixed each other's hair, made up new cheers, and practiced "Glow, Little Glow Worm" about 500 times on her piano just in case anyone ever asked us to perform. We were also in a singing group called "The Donfraleeskass's, whose signature tune was "Pineapple Princess," complete with hand movements.

But, not once did I ever ask her what her mother's maiden name was. We were too busy to discuss such topics because we had more important problems: like was Donnie Pistorius' sister's convertible aqua or turquoise?

Fran was in the museum the other day with her new grandson and she mentioned that her mother used to work at Mueller's, as did her grandfather and great-grandfather and a lot of other relatives, including Loyle Davis, who was the first Recreation Leader for the company.

As I mentioned in last month's newsletters, I spent the winter putting names on the computer from old Mueller Records. One of the names I entered over and over was "Zetterlind." It's that kind of name you don't forget.

Come to find out, Ruth Davis was formerly *Thelma Ruth Zetterlind*. Her father was Harry Zetterlind. Her grandfather was Frank Zetterlind, one of the first employees of the company who worked 41 years as a blacksmith and was hired by Hieronymus Mueller.

The family line goes even further back if you consider Frank's father-in-law, Nelson Johnson, who worked at the company from 1882 to 1911.

In the Christmas issue of the 1921 Mueller Record, there is an article entitled "Remarkable Family Record of Employment" and pictures of the entire family which spent a total of 108 years of service with the Mueller Co.-- a record at the time.

Can anyone top that story? If so, drop me a line and tell me the particulars. Don't worry if you can't remember specific dates. We can verify information from old *Mueller Records*. Now that I'm old enough to appreciate history, I do.

Museum Members

Sponsor - \$100

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Archer
Mr. James Renzulli
Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Tyrolt

Support - \$50

Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Curry
Mr. and Mrs. Stanford England
Mr. Stephen G. Graliker
Mr. and Mrs. Levi Green
Ms. Ida L. Greenfield
Mr. and Mrs. Robert K. Howie
Mr. and Mrs. G. William Madden
Mr. William A. Mueller Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Rhea
Mr. and Mrs. J. Richards Weems
Mrs. Carol Cozad White

Family - \$25

Mr. and Mrs. William J. Braun
Dr. and Mrs. Aiden Ferry
Mr. and Mrs. Pershing Griffith
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hostetler
Mr. and Mrs. David F. Meek
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Rhodes
Dr. and Mrs. William Wagner
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Whittington

Regular - \$20

Mr. and Mrs. John Dennis
Mrs. Jane Schroyer

Senior - \$15

Mr. Jack C. Rubicam
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. Roszell, Jr.
Mrs. Ruth Wampler

Hieronymus Mueller Museum

Noon-5 p.m. Thursday-Sunday

\$1/adults; \$.50 ages 17 and under

Located in the Scovill Zoo Complex

61 S. Country Club Rd.

Group rates available by calling 217/423-6161.

An Evening with Hieronymus & Fredericka

We don't have the date set yet, but we have the plans. The program is going to be called "An Evening with Hieronymus and Fredericka." Or maybe "An Afternoon with Hieronymus and Fredericka."

For the past two summers, John Arnold and his wife, Paula Cross, have spent a summer day in June in a Decatur cemetery.

Maybe it's the muttonchop sideburns or the powdered grey hair or the gold cane. Or maybe the similar German heritage. But whatever the reason, John plays an amazing Hieronymus. His wife, although much too slim to resemble Fredericka physically, is equally as mesmerizing in her role as the soft-spoken wife.

They are so good that the Heritage Commission of Decatur-Macon County, which sponsors the annual event, asked them to make a return appearance this year due to their outstanding interpretations last year during the first tour.

In addition to their presentations during our special event, we plan to debut the brand new video made from the lantern slides used in the Mueller Company's 75th Anniversary celebration.

Approximately 160 slides were found in mint condition in a box in the basement marked "On Loan from the Mueller Co." and have been turned over to Steve Turner of Niantic, who is making them into a video.

The original text was also found and the writer talks about "... and then Father [Hieronymus] did this ... " and had to have been written by one of the four remaining children: Robert, Adolph, Leda or Oscar.

The script also indicates what music should be played when. (Of course, we haven't heard of half of the songs.)

Although the slide show was made for the Mueller Company's anniversary in 1932, great detail and a number of slides are dedicated to famous Decaturites and their homes, making this video a "must see" for persons in Decatur who wish to learn more about the history of the city.

We are very excited about this project and hope to have more information in the next newsletter. Following the debut of the video, it will be shown on an ongoing basis in the museum. We guarantee you will be enthralled with this rare find.

Take a Mueller Moment

A perfect gift for a Mueller friend is a membership in the Hieronymus Mueller Museum. One of the perks members receive is this quarterly newsletter. Memberships range from \$15 for seniors and students to \$1,000. Why not take a moment and give a unique gift to a friend?

Annual Membership Information

Student/Senior Citizen: **\$15**

Free admission for member and one guest, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

Regular Membership: **\$20**

Free admission for member and one guest, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

Family Membership: **\$25**

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Support Membership:** **\$50**

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Sponsor Membership:** **\$100**

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Patron Membership:** **\$500**

Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, recognition on museum donor board.

***Benefactor Membership:** **\$1000**

Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, recognition on museum donor board.

Please circle the type of membership preferred.

* A portion of these membership fees are tax deductible.

Please send this form and payment to
HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

61 South Country Club Road
Decatur, Illinois, 62521
(217) 423-6161

Name _____

Address _____

The Hieronymus Mueller Museum is a privately funded non-profit museum and depends upon donations for its operations.

Do You Remember?

H.B. (Whit) Wittington, who worked 32 years at Mueller Co. (joined 1926), was late to work only once, and that was for only one minute. ☞ *Main Connection*, April, 1958

Terry McCoy received the Silver Beaver Award from the Lincoln Trails Council-Boy Scouts of America in 1987. Terry works in the Specialty Department as a Manufacturing Service Engineer. ☞ *The Line Stopper*

Billy Dill was Mueller Co.'s first salesman to travel. He joined Mueller Co. in 1891 when he was 20. He kept books and acted as a buyer. His office was on the first floor, and the foundry was on the third floor in downtown Decatur....His territory was the entire United States. In 1920, he transferred to California and in 1942, retired from Mueller Co. as general manager of the Los Angeles factory. Billy hired several "young squirts" including: **Dan R. Gannon**, **Lloyd Logsdon** and **Leroy J. Evans**. All three men went on to become Mueller Co. vice presidents. ☞ *Mueller Record*, May 1963

In 1911, Mueller Co. was giving a Christmas gift to employees just as it usually did. The gifts 60 years ago included: the choice of ham and bacon; a box of cigars; a box of handkerchiefs or \$2 worth of magazine subscriptions. Due to World War I, the company couldn't give hams in 1916 and substituted 600-700 live, squawking geese. ☞ *Mueller Newsletter*, January, 1972

Firearms were confiscated by Hamilton County, Tennessee, law enforcement agencies and destroyed March 27, 1974 and dumped into one of Mueller Co.'s sixty ton electric furnaces where they ended up as shiny fire hydrants. ☞ *Mueller Record*, Winter 1974-75

In 1903, the H. Mueller Manufacturing Company was the largest factory in the area, and with its 500 employees, it had the reputation of being the largest manufacturer of water and gas brass goods in the world. ☞ *Mueller Newsletter*, December, 1973

HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

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