

New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society

October - December 2024

NEW ALBANY VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

by David Gerhardt

In the last quarter of 2023, the New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society (NAPTHS) established a committee to explore the possibilities of erecting a Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Committee members are: NAPTHS President Dennis Keesee, Doug Brahler, Tim Butsko, David Gerhardt, Dave Halsey, Monica Morgan, Jerry Rees.

For too many years, the American service members who fought and died during the Vietnam War have gone unnoticed. This included Albert (Mike) Butsko, New Albany's lone fatality. A proposed life-size bronze statue that depicts Mike's mother, Eleanor Butsko, placing a Gold Star Service Flag on the windowpane of her front door was proposed by Dennis Keesee. The deadline established to complete this project was set for September 2025, in time for the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. The design represents Gold Star Families from all wars and is to be placed in New Albany's planned two-acre Veterans Park. David Gerhardt and Dennis Keesee (both authors with previous books) are co-authoring a book on the New Albany Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated to the memory of Mike Butsko. It will include the names of donors and name(s) of a relative or person they would like to honor.



On September 14th and 21st, the NAPTHS held a kickoff event at the Ealy House Museum in New Albany titled, "The Vietnam Experience." Uniforms, combat gear, photographs, medals, and displays filled the first floor and basement of the Ealy House. (Pictured above are the uniform and documents of Admiral Ulysses S. Grant Sharp Jr. and the coat and beret of Medal of Honor Recipient Master Sergeant Roy Benavidez.) Included were artifacts and printed explanations of Gold Star Pilgrimages, Gold Star Mothers and Families of World War II and Vietnam, and letters of past wars to parents from the War Department notifying them of their son's ultimate sacrifice. The original front door from the Butsko home was on display as was the Gold Star Banner that Mrs. Butsko hung in the windowpane of that door.

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***** UPCOMING EVENTS *****



BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 21 (Thursday) -- 6:30 p.m.
Franklin Church, 7171 Central College Rd, New Albany

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

NOVEMBER 24 (Sunday) -- 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Ealy House Museum, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany
Tour the Ealy House with festive decorations throughout.

HOLIDAY DINNER BUFFET

DECEMBER 4 (Wednesday) -- 6:30 p.m.
New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany

All members are invited to this fun event that includes a Christmas story and music by NAPTHS members. Salad, baked spaghetti, and meatballs will be catered by Eagles Pizza, followed by dessert.

Dinner is free but a donation to the New Albany Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund would be appreciated. Bring cash or check made payable to NAPTHS and "Butsko Fund" written on the memo line.

Reserve early. Space is limited. Reservations due no later than November 26.
Call or text Betty Maynard at 614-596-5035 or email bettymayn@yahoo.com

HAPPY NEW YEAR PARTY AND PLANS FOR 2025

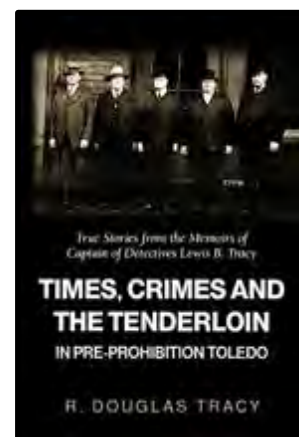
January 8 (Wednesday) -- 7:00 p.m.
New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany
Snacks, drinks, contests, and prizes.
Don't miss this fun night with fellow Society members!

THE VIETNAM WAR AND HOW MUSIC INFLUENCED YOUTH, POLITICS, AND MILITARY STRATEGY

February 5 (Wednesday) -- 7:00 p.m.
New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany
Presentation by NAPTHS member David Gerhardt. Event is free and open to the public.

TIMES, CRIMES AND THE TENDERLOIN IN PRE-PROHIBITION TOLEDO

March 5 (Wednesday) -- 7:00 p.m.
New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany
Presentation by NAPTHS Board member Doug Tracy of his new book with 22 astonishing true stories from Toledo's notorious Red-Light District prior to 1920.
Event is free and open to the public.



Check www.newalbanyhistory.info for updates
Notice of meetings and cancellations will be sent by email

Vietnam veterans Dave Halsey and David Gerhardt brought personal artifacts and photos and set up a display outside (Tim Butsko and David Gerhardt at right). It included items and photos demonstrating the aftereffects on soldiers and civilians of Agent Orange, a defoliant with harmful dioxins used to spray jungles and farmland in Vietnam.



On September 14th, sculptor Michael Kraus traveled from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Cheryl, and set up a display (at left), answering questions about his role in this one-of-a-kind bronze statue. Tim Butsko (Mike's brother) greeted guests and answered questions. Tim also displayed family mementos from his mother and Mike (below). As visitors arrived, they enjoyed 1960s and 1970s music set up by Doug Tracy.

The kickoff was well attended (below, left to right: veterans Bob Pipes, Dave Halsey, Jerry Roberts, David Gerhardt, Roger Childers; top row: Tim Butsko and sculptor Michael Kraus). Vietnam veterans and families told stories of their experiences. Other visitors recalled family members and friends who served in the Vietnam war, some who are



suffering or who have died from the aftereffects of Agent-Orange-caused diseases. Visitors left with a better understanding of what it means to be a Gold Star Mother or family member — the initial shock, the sadness, and the pride that a single flag hanging in a window brings to them.



News of the campaign continues to spread on social media, through displays at local establishments (special thanks to Eagles Pizza), and by word-of-mouth. Committee members are sending letters and calling on local businesses. As the word of this worthy cause spreads, contributions are increasing. National organizations such as the American Gold Star Mothers (AGSM), Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) are being contacted. To date, we have received more than 25% of our goal. Most donors have listed a family member who is an active military soldier, or is a veteran, as their honoree. Many of these veterans served in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam and have passed away, but their loved ones want to cherish their legacy.

To donate, visit our campaign page: <https://givebutter.com/butskofund>. If you prefer to make a gift by check, please mail to: New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society, PO Box 219, New Albany, OH 43054-0219. Write "Butsko Fund" on the memo line. Names of donors and their honorees will be listed by category in the upcoming book. Categories are: Gold Star Sponsor, \$10,000; Blue Star Sponsor, \$2,500; Silver Star Sponsor, \$1,000; Bronze Star Sponsor, \$500; Statesman Sponsor, \$100; Patriot Sponsor, \$50; Freedom Sponsor, \$25. The drive will be suspended once our goal is met.



ANNUAL POTLUCK IN SAVESON BARN

Delicious food and great company were enjoyed by 29 of us on August 17th. We sang Happy Birthday to Marty Saveson (at left with daughter Catherine Saveson) and ate a tasty, decorated cake in

celebration of her August 6th birthday. We enjoyed visiting with Marilyn Regrut and granddaughter Maddy Regrut who grew up in Telluride, Colorado. After graduation from the University of Reno, Maddy was visiting her grandmother on her way from Reno, Nevada, to New York, New York, where she is hoping to live. New member Jim Thompson and his friend, Sylhet Eberhardt, were introduced. Jim is a very busy man who is interested in several historical societies in the area and is president of the Heart of Ohio Studebaker Chapter of which Sylhet and five other NAPTHS members also belong.



(L to R) 1st Row: Valerie Bevelhymer, Catherine Saveson Dennis Keesee, Marty Saveson, Helen Pestel. 2nd Row: Mike Lahmann, Phoebe Lahmann, Rick Otten, Dennis James, Emily Eby, Frank Knore, Beckie Knore, Betty Maynard, Marilyn Regrut, Maddy Regrut, Jim Thompson. 3rd Row: Debbie Tracy, Doug Tracy, Mark Baranoski, Dave Maynard, Marcy Steckman, Debbie Dean, Robert Dean, Theresa Kempker, Neil Kirby. Top Row: Robert Goodrich, Sylhet Eberhardt, Steve Bevelhymer. Not Pictured: Monica Morgan.



HALLOWEEN FAMILY DAY

A Halloween Family Day was held at the Ealy House Museum on October 27th, a chilly but beautiful fall day. Many children, as well as adults, were dressed in costumes and greeted by Richard Whitelock (far left). After the children tried their hand at a couple of games, he presented them with an "Ealy House Museum" wristband. All enjoyed the free hot dogs, snacks, and treats given out by Dave Maynard (left). Dennis Keesee (below left) told the legendary story of PIG BEAR while children petted the furry replica (at right with Dennis) created by Debbie Dean. Visitors toured the Ealy House and marveled at the vintage Halloween decorations displayed by Doug Brahler (below right). Thank you to the many volunteers who made this event an enjoyable day!



A few words from Society member Douglas Brahler:

Twenty-five years ago, I had the crazy notion to start collecting vintage Halloween decorations and ephemera...What a fun journey it's been!

(artifacts relating to popular American culture) since my early school days, as well as a liking of graphics and artwork from days gone by, vintage Halloween turned out to be the perfect collecting arena for me. Coupled with the vibrant and eye-catching colors, along with the extreme rarity and the thrill of the hunt, the search was on.

By way of a quick history, the celebration of Halloween as a holiday really took off in popularity around 1900 and was culturally significant in America up through the 1950s. Before the World Wide Web, TV, mass automobiles, and even pre-dating radio, Halloween gatherings and parties, as well as door-to-door visits, were important social and entertainment events in the lives of children and young adults, that they looked forward to every October 31st. In fact, Halloween parties in the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s, were among the few social events where young men and women might even meet and find a spouse. And what Halloween party would be complete without at least a few spooky decorations?





Dennis Keese & Doug Brahler

This is where American companies like Beistle, Dennison, Whitney, Gibson, and Hall Bros (Hallmark), quickly went into mass production of absolutely stunning and colorful party lanterns, candy containers, postcards, die-cuts (large wall decorations), invitations, place-cards, noisemakers, table covers, plates, napkins, and more! The variety is seemingly endless and varied, with the only common thread being ingenious and exciting artwork of the highest caliber, wonderful and vibrant colors, and a charm and quality that simply can't be found in any of the modern, "made-in-China," stuff that fills the shelves of big-box stores these days. On top of that, such items from the first half of the 20th century were

delicate and ephemeral by their very nature, meant to be used for one Halloween season, and discarded thereafter, making these decorations true rarities, sometimes taking years or even decades to locate a particular example. My collecting is a way of preserving these pieces, and of celebrating the artistry and imagination of the unknown designers who came up with these astonishing and fantastical decorations.

So I was very pleased to be asked to exhibit a portion of my collection at the amazing Ealy House in New Albany. This historical gem, built by one of the very earliest New Albany families and dating back to 1860, is lovingly cared for and maintained by the Historical Society, and provided an ideal setting for showing off these wonderful Halloween treasures of days gone by. Thanks to all who showed up for this great event!



THANKSGIVING-CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS -- ATLANTA, GEORGIA, 1949

by Richard E. Whitelock

After all is said and done, in the end, all we have left are our memories either in the minds of people who knew us or in the things we have written. Below are memories of mine of a time and place that I hold very close to my heart -- Atlanta, Georgia, 1949.

The wonderful holiday season began with a Thanksgiving celebration at Uncle Joe and Aunt Florie's home in Athens, Georgia. On a good gathering, as many as 23 relatives attended the celebration. After a delicious lunch and before the turkey and tryptophane put us into a holiday slumber, my family would kick off the holiday season with the drawing out of Uncle Joe's hunting cap our Secret Santa gift recipients. After Thanksgiving came the long wait of school letting out for the Christmas holidays and the night of all nights, Christmas Eve.

In downtown Atlanta, around two weeks before Christmas, the city would come alive with Christmas cheer hung on every lamp post and shown in every store front window. On every street corner and in front of major department stores like Rich's and Davidsons, would be found a Salvation Army Red Kettle hanging on a tripod, and a volunteer ringing a bell soliciting cash donations to support the work of the Army. In really busy places, there would be choirs dressed in the Salvation Army Blue and occasionally a few brass musical instruments supporting the choir. I always enjoyed the French horns.

The department stores were all gaily decked out in their Christmas best, and the merchandise just pleaded with every shopper, "Buy me, buy me." And the salesladies were dressed to the "nines." They wore well-tailored two-piece suits with fluffy white blouses, hair in a tight bun, and white gloves that rendered impeccable service. Now the sales help at Woolworth and Kress were not as dignified. They were mostly comprised of high-school-age girls' intent on chewing bubble gum and always checking their makeup in their Helena Rubenstein Cosmetic case with mirror. You ladies know where I'm coming from.

You have read about the Fred Harvey Girls and the New York City Radio Hall Rockettes. Well, there was a group of ladies in Atlanta that put them all to shame. They were known as the Otis Elevator Company Operator Queens. These were the ladies that operated the elevators that sometimes went as high as six floors in Atlanta's larger department stores. They were impeccably groomed and dressed beautifully. They operated the elevator up and down as if they had driven the Indianapolis 500 with their eyes closed. They were professionals and they had a language all of their own that went something like this. "Going Up or Going Down, step to the back of the elevator, no smoking or chewing please, make room for our riders, 1st floor ladies' lingerie, lounge sets and fragrances. Second floor leather handbags and accessories, and on and on and on. These "Elevator Queens" of the Otis Elevator Company knew what merchandise was on which floor and they directed holiday traffic flawlessly in and out of those cramped elevators all day long.

Soon the holiday season had passed, we opened all our presents, school began the day after New Years, and the opening day for the Atlanta Crackers Southern Association baseball team seemed like a lifetime away. What was there left to live for? It saddens me that those days and kinfolk are long gone. All that remains is the memories of them and the times we spent together. And yet in the great hereafter, if I were allowed to take only one thing with me, it would be my Christmas memories of Atlanta back in 1949 when I was nine years old. They say you can't take it with you. And I say in reply, "just try to take my memories from me. Just you try and I'll show you what for!"

Happy Holidays to all my Society's friends. "And may all your memories be merry and bright."



WORLD WAR II LETTER FROM MY UNCLE

by Dennis Keesee

Everett Linwood "Mike" Keesee (funeral card at left) attended New Albany Schools until his sophomore year when his family moved to Columbus. He graduated from North High School. As a member of the 749th BS, 457th Bomb Group, he was a co-pilot on a B-17. On the few missions he flew he was shot down three times. His letter (below, retyped word-for-word) written to my grandparents describes being shot down the second time on March 16, 1944. He was shot down a third time three days after he typed this letter on March 26th and spent the rest of the war as a Prisoner at Stalag Luft 1. Google my uncle's name on the Library of Congress website if you would like to hear a voice recording of his whole war experience.

26/3/44

Dear Folks,

It has been a long time since I have written you and quite a bit has happened since then.

Today is Sunday. It is Spring here and the air is mellow and full of birds' songs. Just like back home.

We were supposed to work today but the mission was scrubbed.

On the 16th we had a long trip into Germany. We hit the target O.K. and the trip was uneventful until we hit the French coast on the way back. We had let down to 1,400 feet because our oxygen was low. There was a layer of stratus clouds about 12,000 feet. We were the last ones in formation and our group was the low group. Suddenly the air around the cockpit was filled with little puffs of black smoke. It sounded like a tin-roof in a hailstorm. Six Me-109's had ducked into use and had gone back in the clouds. It lasted about 10 seconds. The tail gunner was hurt by flying glass. We had received direct hits on #1, #2, and #3 engines. Also a 20mm. shell had exploded in the control stand and the ignition burned out #2 engine was on fire and No.1 was on fire. The flames reached back about 20 feet. The ball turret gunner had to get out it was so hot. We called the group and Air Sea rescue on the radio. In 3 minutes after we hit we were in the water. #2 had burned completely off and #3 was also on fire. The cockpit was full of smoke and fire couldn't hardly see.

We did everything wrong but it worked out to be the right thing after all. We stalled it out about 1 foot off the sea and dropped in at about 80 mph. They were standing up in the radio room and no one was hurt. Some one had gotten panicky, and pulled the liferafts to soon. One had worked and was wrecked. I pulled the other one out after chopping a hole in the plane with a hatchet. We had to pump the raft up by hand and put the 6 men who couldn't float or swim in it and sent them out to see what was the matter with the other raft. Normally a B 17 floats about 1-1/2 or 2 minutes but ours stayed afloat about 15 minutes. While they were out in the other raft, the plane sank and we had to swim about 100 yds. The water was certainly cold. The rafts are supposed to carry 5 men. We had 8 in ours and 2 of us hung on the outside. There wasn't hardly any of the equipment in the raft and we threw about everything overboard that was there. After about 30 minutes we couldn't stand the cold any more and they pulled us on the raft. That made 10. About 45 minutes after we had ditched 2, Spitfires picked us up and circled us. They dropped 2 rafts. One was too far from us and the other one was punctured. We were still 10 on a raft. Then a Walrus, a single engine Biplane, flying boat appeared and landed. It took 8 of the enlisted men and was loaded so heavily it couldn't take off so it started taxying back to England. The Spits left and we were all alone again. We took some dye and trailed it behind us. About an hour later 2 Mustangs picked it up and another Walrus picked us up. That was at 1800 hrs. and we had been down 3 hours. We had drifted within 8 miles of the French coast. We could see it clearly. The Walrus was shot at as it circled to pick us up. We were taken to an R. A. F. base. The medics worked on my feet for about 3 hr. before they thawed them out. They are still numb. I got an R. A. F. uniform out of the deal and a 6 day leave. I went to Scotland and had a swell time in Edinburgh. I saw all the castles and palaces, the Firth of Forth bridge, Greyfriar where Greyfriar Bobby is buried and his master, Sir Walter Scott's father and the Covenanter's Prison. The town is very nice saw a boy I went to C. M. T. C. with. I guess I can say like Col. Scott, that God was our co-pilot. He is the only one that could have brought all 10 of us through as we did. When I was about 200 feet off the water I was very busy and still without me thinking of it, the first lines of the 121st Psalm popped into my head. My thoughts at that time were indeed far from my Lord but I know that he was with me. The 23rd Psalm seemed to ring through me and I knew everything would be all right. It was then No. 2 burned off and fell into the water. One of the factors that kept the plane afloat as long as it did.

The tail gunner gets the Purple Heart and some of the rest of us get the Air Medal. Some say we should the D. F. C. but as soon as I forget the whole thing I will feel better. I have to go to bed now in case of a mission tomorrow I want to have plenty of sleep. Well, so long for now and don't worry, I don't.

Love to all

Lennie



EIGHTH GRADERS TOUR EALY HOUSE MUSEUM

by Valerie Bevelhymer

On August 28th, September 3rd, and September 5th, a total of 346 eighth-grade students from New Albany Middle School were welcomed to the Ealy House Museum. Each year, students in first and eighth grades from New Albany Schools tour the museum and many of this year's students were excited to share fond memories of also having visited in first grade.

Tours of this 1860s era home support the school Social Studies curriculum and help students develop an understanding of local hometown history along with what life may have been like over 150 years ago. Many students were amazed at how families survived with the lack of indoor plumbing and electricity. They also learned about the long days of hard work for every family member at that time in history.

Docents Valerie Bevelhymer, Nichole Foreman, Stacie Miller, Helen Pestel, Marcy Steckman, and Doug Tracy conducted rotating tours of each area of the house, with Beckie Knore helping to prepare the museum and greet students.

NEW ALBANY'S HALLOWEENS PAST

At the October 2nd meeting, NAPTHS President Dennis Keesee told spooky stories of the New Albany Jaycees' haunted house (below) and Halloween celebrations over the years.



NAPTHS BOARD

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NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Betty Maynard & Marty Saveson

**ETHEL SCHLEPPI
PAINTING**

This beautiful screen was painted by local artist Ethel Schleppe in the early 1900s. Thank you to her family for the donation to the New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society.





New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society
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(614) 855-9861
www.newalbanyhistory.info

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Grant funds provided by the City



In October, we had a rare sighting of PIG BEAR behind the Ealy House. He was up in a tree and then ran behind a log. Check our website and facebook for rules and more coming soon about the New Albany PIG BEAR naming contest.

OCT – DEC 2024

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