

# New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society January - March 2025 Newsletter

## PRESENTATIONS BY NAPTHS MEMBERS



### LETTERS AND LOVE STORIES OF WWII November 6, 2024

Dennis Keesee wonderfully introduced us to the softer side of WWII, reading love letters from home and soldiers at war. Giving this talk inspired Dennis to finish his book on one New York family and as this newsletter is going to print, he will be in Brooklyn, New York, continuing his research.



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

February 5, 2025

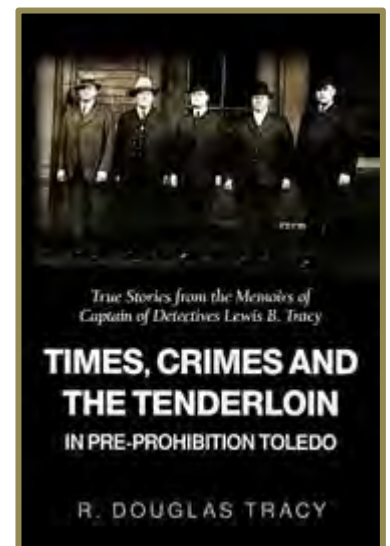
David Gerhardt (far right) gave an emotional presentation about music of the era and his time in Vietnam that mesmerized the full house of attendees. His book will be for sale at New Albany History Day on April 26<sup>th</sup> at the library.



### TIMES, CRIMES AND THE TENDERLOIN IN PRE-PROHIBITION TOLEDO

March 5, 2025

Doug Tracy (at left with wife Debbie) delightfully introduced a large crowd to his new book written about his detective great-grandfather and a seedy time in Toledo before an order from the War Department during WWI ended the red-light district he patrolled. His book will be for sale at New Albany History Day on April 26<sup>th</sup> at the library.



# **\*\*\* UPCOMING EVENTS \*\*\***

## **NEW ALBANY HISTORY DAY**

**APRIL 26 (Saturday) -- 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**  
New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany  
Columbus Metropolitan Library in partnership with the  
NAPTHS. See back page and NAPTHS website for details.



## **HONOR FLIGHT COLUMBUS**

**May 7 (Wednesday) -- 7:00 p.m.**

**New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany**

Join us for an informative presentation by Honor Flight Columbus, with an overview of the organization's mission. It is dedicated to ensuring that Veterans have the opportunity to visit their memorials in Washington, D.C. that honor their service and sacrifices, at no cost to them. Event is free and open to the public.

## **NAPTHS 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY PARTY**

**June 4 (Wednesday) -- 6:30 p.m.**

**New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany**

Look back at and celebrate the first 50 years of the New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society.  
Event is free and open to the public.

## **FOUNDERS DAY**

**MAY 17 (Saturday)**

**Parade -- 11:00 a.m.**

**Open House -- 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**Ealy House, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany**

## **OPEN HOUSES AT THE EALY HOUSE**

**SUNDAYS IN JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST**

**(except July 6) -- 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Ealy House, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany**



## **BOARD MEETINGS**

**APRIL 2 (Wednesday) -- 6:30 p.m.**

**New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany**

**MAY 22 (Thursday) -- 6:30 p.m.**

**Franklin Church, 7171 Central College Rd, New Albany**

Check [www.newalbanyhistory.info](http://www.newalbanyhistory.info) for updates  
Notice of meetings and cancellations will be sent by email



**THANK YOU!**

We are very grateful to City Council for approving a \$10,000 grant for the New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society for 2025. The funds will help us maintain the Ealy House and New Albany's Historical Collections and also host events and open houses.

Our organization used the 2024 funds toward the replacement of the Ealy House back porch and ramp; purchase of a computer, two monitors, and software; expenses for events and open houses; and assistance with the Statue Committee's fundraising costs.

### **NAPTHS YEAR IN REVIEW – 2024**

Applied for 2025 City of New Albany Grant (July) – Awarded \$10,000

Members Marjorie Keesee (June), WWII veteran Jim Bryant (November), and John McDonald (December) passed away

Terms of reelected Board members commenced on November 1:

Trustee Dennis James and Co-Curators Beckie Knore and Doug Tracy

9 persons joined our Society in 2024

Began meeting in the fall at the New Albany Branch of Columbus Metropolitan Library on first Wednesday of each month

Special donations received:

A beautiful screen painted by local artist Ethel Schleppe in the early 1900s and a quilt handmade in 1950 by Ruth Hilbert who was a member of the Doran family and last resident of the Ealy House Statue Committee was hard at work raising funds for New Albany Vietnam Veterans Memorial

#### **NEW ALBANY SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS:**

Tours of the Ealy House:

8<sup>th</sup> Grade (346 students – August 28, September 3 and 5)

1<sup>st</sup> Grade (330 students - November 6 & 7)

#### **PROGRAMS:**

"History of New Albany" by Dennis Keesee (January 31)

"History of the Taylor Farm" by Dennis Keesee & Doug Tracy (April 11)

"New Albany's Halloweens Past" by Dennis Keesee (October 2)

"Letters and Love Stories of WWII" by Dennis Keesee (November 6)

#### **EVENTS:**

Founders Day Parade with Robert and Debbie Dean in their 1937 Studebaker Coupe, and Open House (May 11)

Independence Day Parade with Tim Butsko and Vietnam Veterans David Gerhardt and Dave Halsey in Army Jeep, and Open House (July 4)

Society Potluck at the Saveson barn with belated celebration of Marty Saveson's birthday (August 17)

Summer Open Houses at Ealy House every Sunday during June, July (except July 7), and August

The Vietnam Experience Open House (September 14 and 21)

Halloween Family Day and Open House with vintage decorations display (October 27)

Holiday Open House (November 24)

Holiday Dinner Buffet at New Albany Library (December 4)



## A GREAT CHAPTER FOR DENNIS AND TERESA KEESEE

by Dennis Keesee

I have always believed that life has many chapters and at the end of it all, you are blessed to have had more good chapters than bad. In 2024 my wife Teresa and I (at left) were fortunate to add another great chapter to our lives when we were invited to Belgium by West Flanders Governor Carl Decaluwé at the request of our good friend Tomas Termote to take part in a memorial service for two sunken WWI submarines. Ironically the events that led to our historic and honored trip aboard the German Navy's corvette-class warship F-260 Braunschweig, was a very bad chapter in the lives of many German families during WWI.

Most everyone who knows me can readily agree that I love to talk and rarely know a stranger. And so it was, about ten years ago when I was selling as a vendor at a military show in Louisville, Kentucky, called the Show of Shows. It is one of the largest shows of its type, where collectors come from all over the world to buy and sell military uniforms, letters, accoutrements, and everything ever used in

war. When you are there for a four-day show you meet a lot of people. During this particular show, across from my tables were the tables of Paul Kaparoff of Cleveland, Ohio, and around the corner was one of his friends, Tomas Termote of Belgium, with his parents, Dirk and Mei Ling. By the end of the four-day event we had all become well acquainted. We have the same tables year after year, and by 2017 Paul, Teresa, and I were all headed to Belgium to hike WWI battlefields and visit with the Termote family. It is funny how in life we pass by thousands of people yearly, but now and then one of the many becomes a very good friend. Paul and Tomas and their families fall into that category.

Now it is also funny how when getting to know someone you learn a little at a time. So, it was with Tomas Termote (at right, being interviewed on the Navy ship). I knew he sold militaria for a living and traveled between many countries doing so, but the more we talked the more I learned. In fact, it was during our 2017 trip I realized I had become friends with a man that the *New York Times* calls "The Indiana Jones of Belgium." Indiana Jones as in treasure? No wonder we became fast friends. Who doesn't love hunting for treasure whether it is a civil war bullet I just dug from a battlefield or for him a ship from the 1700s?

Not only does Tomas buy and sell militaria, but he is also a world-renowned underwater archaeologist and expert on the German U-boat fleet of WWI. He had started diving on shipwrecks with his father Dirk when only a boy and graduated from the University of Bristol with a Master of Arts in Maritime Archaeology and History. It turns out my friend has been credited with finding the UB-29 in 2017, the UB-32 in 2019, and the UB-27 in 2022. Every year we would listen as he told of his diving exploits and finding another submarine that had been lost more than a century ago.



Then in February of 2024 at that year's Show of Shows, Tomas told us about two more subs he had identified during 2023, the U-5 and U-14. I had missed all of the other memorials, and we let it be known that if the German Navy was going to sea for these, Paul, Teresa, and I would love to get an invite. Tomas said he would try.

The memorial was to take place on August 24, 2024, yet by August 13<sup>th</sup> we had not received an official invitation from Belgium. We thought we were not to be invited, when at the last-minute Tomas called and told us to hurriedly send the clearance documents to the Governor's office, and with only a few weeks to spare we were accepted.

With not much time we secured our plane tickets and Paul found an apartment near the Zeebrugge Naval Station to stay for the week. Teresa and I left the United States on August 21<sup>st</sup> and arrived in Brussels the following morning. Paul met us at the airport and all drove to the Belgium port town of Zeebrugge where during WWI the occupying German Navy launched their feared U-boats against British and allied shipping in the North Sea.

The U-5 was sunk from an unknown accident on December 18, 1914, with 28 sailors on board, and the U-14 sank after hitting a mine on October 3, 1917, with 17 sailors on board. Considering that Tomas had recently found the graves of 45 German sailors it is no wonder that Germany thought these men should be recognized.



August 24<sup>th</sup> started as many days did in Flanders, wet and rainy. We three Americans rose early and walked the one-half mile to the War Cemetery Zeebrugge, where an outdoor ceremony (at left) was to start early that morning. German, British, and Belgium admirals and generals spoke of peace between the countries today but also the terrible loss of life during WWI as we stood in the rain adding to the somber event. After an hour outside, we entered the large church there and listened as the names of the 45 sailors were read and music and prayers mixed in with more speeches by politicians and the like. Afterwards we all left for the Belgium Navy Yard to board the Braunschweig. As we three had to walk back

to get our car to drive to the base, all were waiting for us to arrive. We walked down the gangplank to the deck as the last onboard but were warmly greeted by the captain of the ship and other dignitaries who commented they were pleased to have some Americans in attendance. In fact, there were only 72 invitations, so we were very honored to be there. We found Tomas and his family and walked around the ship as it slowly moved out to sea. As land disappeared, I thought, how could anyone find a small sunken ship in this much water and space, let alone find the more than 1,200 ships that Tomas and his father Dirk had found in their lifetime, including 30 WWI submarines.

The German sailors were all wearing white dress uniforms and with the German flag flying and armament all around it was quite a patriotic display. We soon found out that three German families of the fallen sailors of WWI were in attendance and it was very nice to meet them knowing we were all there to pay tribute to their family members. Finally, we anchored about three miles from shore and then not only did more speeches begin but also with the storm the large vessel began rocking with the waves. Up and down, we went as speakers hung on to the podium so as not to be blown away while photographers filmed and photographed the event. At last came the lowering of wreaths from the different countries into the sea (at right) and bundle after bundle of bright flowers were soon floating away to be lost forever like the sailors below.



With the sea ceremonies complete, we returned to the naval base where a nice dinner had been prepared for all by Belgium Navy cooks. And then we thought it would be over, however speeches started again, though this time not about the WWI sailors but our dear friend Tomas. In fact, a representative of the German War Graves Commission delivered to Tomas the 13<sup>th</sup> German Presidential coin to be awarded by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier for his service to Germany in his research of German U-boats of WWI. August 24<sup>th</sup> was soon over and Teresa, Paul, and I were very honored to share this incredible day with our good friend Tomas Termote of Belgium. Maybe in another story I can relate how his father, Dirk, was one of thousands that fled Dunkirk in a small boat at the beginning of WWII as German planes strafed and bombed them on their journey to England.

With 2025 now here, I wonder what chapters of life will unfold for you or me. I am hoping for another fun and exciting chapter. What about you? To read more about Tomas Termote see, "The Hunt for the Notorious U-Boat UB-29" in *Smithsonian Magazine* May 2018 or the book *War Beneath the Waves* by Tomas Termote 2017.

## IN MEMORIAM

**JIM BRYANT**, 98, was born on May 14, 1926, in Twila, Kentucky, into a coal miner's family. After growing up in Harlan County, he left Kentucky for Ohio where at the age of 17 he joined the Navy. He served on the USS Marcus Island as an aircraft mechanic and crew chief. His carrier group supported most major battles that repelled the Japanese invasion during WWII.



Returning to the Cincinnati area after the war, Jim met and married Wilma Lois Bowman. They moved to LeSage, West Virginia, to be closer to Lois's family and then in 1964, Jim moved his family to Columbus, Ohio. A few years later they moved to New Albany, Ohio, where he resided for 50+ years and was active in the Lion's Club, Kiwanis Club, and New Albany Businessmen's Breakfast Club. On August 27, 2022, Jim was honored by the New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society as "New Albany's Last Remaining WWII Veteran." Go to [www.newalbanyhistory.info](http://www.newalbanyhistory.info) to read the article in the July-December 2022 NAPTHS newsletter.

Jim passed away on November 5, 2024. He was preceded in death by Lois, his wife of 56 years. The services on November 12<sup>th</sup> were concluded with military honors and interment at Maplewood Cemetery in New Albany.



**JOHN McDONALD**, 92, of New Albany, Ohio, was born on February 8, 1932, in Cherokee, Iowa. He attended the University of Iowa where he played on the golf team and graduated in 1954 with a BS in commerce and a major in economics. After spending two years in the US Air Force, he continued his education at the University of Iowa's School of Law, earning his JD with distinction in 1958.

John went to work for his uncle in the securities business of McDonald & Company Securities, Inc. in Ohio, where he would spend his entire 40-year career, becoming a partner in 1966 and retiring in 1998. Along the way, this Hawkeye became a Buckeye fan and John enjoyed attending the Ohio State football games well into his 80s. He remained an avid golfer until a stroke in 2020 confined him to a wheelchair. He and

Patricia made friends at church, on the golf course (in Ohio and Southwest Florida), around the bridge table, on their many travels, and in their neighborhood of Pickett Place. He also made friends and fans on his chair volleyball team at Wesley Woods senior living facility. John passed away on December 11, 2024. He is survived by his wife of 20 years, Patricia McDonald.

**LIZ FEICHTER** passed away on February 8, 2025. Our deepest sympathy is with her family. More details will be printed in a future newsletter.

## HOLIDAY DINNER

Our December 4<sup>th</sup> gathering at the New Albany Library was enjoyed by 41 adults and 3 children. A delicious baked spaghetti dinner buffet was provided by Eagles Pizza (thank you!) and was followed by cookies for dessert. Dinner was free; however, donations to the New Albany Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund were appreciated.



Betty Maynard read the NAPTHS Year in Review - 2024. Some members shared special Christmas memories. Conductor Richard Whitelock (far right) took us on a fun trip aboard The Polar Express. The Society's very talented members (right) - Chandler Kiesel (violin), Catherine Saveson (guitar), and Rick Otten (banjo) - accompanied a singalong to end the evening.



## HAPPY NEW YEAR PARTY

January 8<sup>th</sup> was a fun night for 22 members at the New Albany Library, beginning with pizza and salad provided by Eagles Pizza (thanks again!). A delicious cake was shared by Mike and Connie Carr (at left) while we sang Happy Birthday to Mike. We enjoyed several contests for chances to win scratch-off tickets and historical books. One contest was "Questions to Win a Million" that consisted of 20 questions about New Albany and Plain Township. Robert Dean had the most correct answers. We all look forward to our next gathering.

## FIRST GRADERS TOUR EALY HOUSE MUSEUM

by Valerie Bevelhymer



On November 6 and 7, 2024, docents welcomed 330 first graders from the New Albany Early Learning Center to the Ealy House for school tours. Students were invited to travel back in time to the 1860s to discover furniture, hand tools, quilts, toys, and kitchen items from the era. This year they were also presented with Ealy House Museum wristbands (at right) as a memento of their visit.



The students were intrigued to hear about small one-room schoolhouses from early New Albany. Docents explained that several grades were all taught in the same room back then and that there was an outhouse and no cafeteria. Students were able to view a vintage school desk, a leather-strap "bookbag," a metal dinner bucket, slates, ink quill pens and of course, Helen Pestel's favorite, the paddle, or in her words, "the board of education." Students were relieved that this memorable implement is no longer in use today. First graders particularly enjoyed observing the antique corn sheller in action,

along with other farm tools in the basement. The beautiful New Albany quilt was also a special point of interest, and all enjoyed trying to locate recognizable geographic icons. Students were surprised to hear about all the daily chores for which the children of the home were responsible. Most students decided that they did not want to travel back in time to live like the Ealy family, but many were quite excited to return during the Holiday Open House with their families to explore the attic.

Docents included Valerie Bevelhymer, Nichole Foreman (top left in center), Stacie Miller, Helen Pestel, Marcy Steckman, and Doug Tracy. Beckie Knore greeted student groups as they arrived and facilitated the vital job of keeping us all on time.

### HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

Many visitors enjoyed the festively decorated Ealy House on November 24, 2024. They were greeted in the front parlor by carolers and docent Chandler Kisiel (at right). Thank you to the volunteer decorators and docents.



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dave Halsey & Cindy Cheely  
Linda Honaker

### NAPTHS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Would you like to get more involved? We're looking for volunteers to help host events or be Ealy House Museum docents. For example, the museum will be open every Sunday in June, July (except July 6), and August of 2025 from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. If interested, please email Beckie Knore at [bknore@insight.rr.com](mailto:bknore@insight.rr.com) or call at 614-855-1950.

### NAPTHS BOARD

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Betty Maynard & Marty Saveson



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## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Grant funds provided by the City



### **NEW ALBANY HISTORY DAY -- APRIL 26 (Saturday) -- 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Columbus Metropolitan Library - New Albany Branch, 200 Market Street, New Albany**

In partnership with the NAPTHS, join us for a day of history programs and activities. Go on a walking tour of Historic New Albany. Learn about the upcoming Veterans Park. Listen to local historians talk about New Albany's connections to the Vietnam War. Hear the story of the large-scale quilt, depicting 19<sup>th</sup> century New Albany, designed and created by the Heritage Quilters.

#### **JAN – MARCH 2025**

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