



## From all of us to all of you THANKS !

To all of you who have contributed to the restoration of the Homestead, we say thanks! We couldn't have done it without you! We also say thanks to those who contributed in other ways:

- Janice Keivel, on behalf of the estate of Karl and Helen Keivel, donated a period wood-burning stove for the 1908 kitchen.
- Oakwood Rotary Foundation supplied the much-needed funds to purchase the software needed to catalog the Society collections.
- LexisNexis donated two lap top computers, one for the curating software and one for use in the archives.
- Tom Stansfield, an old friend who is moving to Michigan, gave us three books for the library and a great nostalgic framed picture for the museum room.
- Judy Stolle, a long time member, spent a lot of time on the wicker porch furniture by painting and making new matching cushions. Judy gave us three of the wicker chairs from her family. They're authentic antiques!
- Dave and Peg Atwater, new friends who attended the September open house with Ed and Evie Hermann, repaired the cane bottom on two of our chairs and donated another cane chair.
- Mary Penny, a long time Oakwood resident, gave us some great artifacts for the kitchen interpretations and a spinning wheel from her historic home on Oakwood Avenue.
- Jim and Cheryl Lee, fairly new but already involved members, donated a copper tub for the winter kitchen.
- The Estate of Mary Hayes, a long time supporter who passed away earlier this year, gave us some beautiful flowers for the garden which have been placed on the south side of the house.
- John Gray, a long time support and member, gave us the generous donation of the use of his home "The Farm" and the gardens with blooming daffodils for a fund raiser which was both a lot of fun and successful. John's tractor and wagon is seen in That Day in May Parade also.

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## A note from the president

What a great kick off for the year we've had! Look at all the reports of things happening in this issue. A president likes to look at how things have been going and smile....and I'm all smiles! We have a younger board this year – I know young when I see it – and each has a specialty we can count on.

The new museum gallery is a favorite of mine because I've been harassing the board about that back "lean to" room for years. Now, we have a bright new room with gallery style lighting, a beautiful floor, and a long wall for revolving exhibits and a smaller wall for a permanent exhibit

on the Homestead and the families who lived there.

Our restoration of the main floor of the Homestead is wrapping up. Our goal is to have it completed for the open house in July. You'll have gotten a sneak preview at the Old Fashioned Picnic in June by the time you get this newsletter. And then – we'll be ready to launch our second floor restoration in August!

Please keep us in mind as you schedule your summer calendar because we have some great events coming this year.

Harry Ebeling, President

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## Announcing a special reprinting: Oakwood: The Far Hills, centennial edition

The popular standard history of Oakwood, a the centennial edition is a reprint of the 1983 publication with an introduction scanning the 25 years since it was first published. The original book is in demand but no longer available. Many residents have a copy in their libraries and have bought them for their children and families as a priceless memory of life here.

This reprint, available in soft cover, is offered by preorder order only. Prepaid orders will be taken by the Oakwood Historical Society for delivery in April/May 2008.

Mail your check for \$25 to:  
Oakwood Historical Society  
1947 Far Hills Ave.  
Dayton, OH 45419  
Indicate "The Far Hills" on the Memo on the check  
Add \$2.00 for Postal Delivery  
You will be notified when they can be picked up

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the reprint of Oakwood: The Far Hills. Please reserve in my name.

( ) I will pick up at the Historical Society. Please notify me at the phone number below:

( ) Mail to me at the below address. Additional \$2.00 for postage is added

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Thank you for joining us as we welcomed spring!

A number of Society members and Oakwood citizens toured John Gray's home, "The Farm", on a chilly Sunday afternoon on April 13<sup>th</sup> but were greeted by over 77,000 cheery daffodils and a very gracious host, John Gray. This was a benefit event for the continued restoration of the historic Long-Romspert Homestead, and the Society is extremely grateful to John for offering his home for purpose.



77,000 Daffodils welcome spring!  
Image Courtesy of John Moraites



The Farm  
Image Courtesy of John Moraites

The event included a guided tour of "The Farm" and its gardens along with music by the Blackbird Quartet. The Blackbird Quartet is comprised of Oakwood Jr. and Sr. High School students who are members of the Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, and they were wonderful! Guests were further treated to pastries from Benham's and an invitation to pick daffodils to take home.

The Society would like to thank those who

attended the event, the board members who worked and organized the event, and those who volunteered as tour guides: Ethel Henry James, Vickie Bachman, Anne Meira, Miwako Moden, Cheryl Mahoney, Judy Stolle, Jane Brennan, Chris Vredelis, Barb O'Hara, Toni Winger, Sally Solarek, Carol Holm, Jeannine Phlipot, and Barbara Rion. A great time was had by all!

## Committee Reports

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### Archives & Acquisitions Harry Ebeling

The archives is becoming overfilled with "stuff". All the stuff that has been moved to the City Building has been organized as best as possible, but it needs redoing. Harry has started by moving the desk used for the microfilm reader into the corner against the wall where it is well lighted and near an electrical outlet and access to the city's online resources and telephone. He has also created some space and eliminated some boxes by getting a file cabinet from the city which formerly held index cards. This has many drawers and the cabinet is just dandy for video tapes cassettes and CD's. The extra space is filed with three single drawer files which allows space for some rolled up plans etc. Thus he has created a little nest for Mackensie Wittmer to use the archive data base program purchased with donated funds provided by the Oakwood Rotary Foundatino and on one of the two lap tops donated from LexisNexis!

### Website— Mackensie Wittmer

The website is growing as a resource for people inquiring about the Society and about Oakwood. We've gotten two inquires about the Oakwood: The Far Hills book via website so far and the order form from the newsletter will be put in the website, so people can just print it off and mail it to Lisa Kell. We also had an inquiry about Harman school via the website for the Centennial program at the schools for the parade.

## Committee Reports

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Buildings & Grounds—  
Marilynn Sheehan

The gardens this Spring have been beautiful. What a shame they cannot be seen from the street. The daffodils bloomed first, then the fern came up and now the iris are lovely. In the memorial garden, the poppies are a magnificent thing to see. Hopefully for Memorial Day and the picnic, the peonies will be blooming. Jonathan Pearson is working on his Eagle Scout project and with fellow scouts will be extending the brick walkway.

Thanks to the generosity of the new owners, plants were recently transplanted to our garden from the former garden of the late Mary Lange Hayes. Among the plants were some of her father's hardy mums which she loved dearly. Also recently planted were the dahlia bulbs which were a generous gift from Ruth Hager. These bulbs have the distinction of having originally graced the garden of the former mayor of Kettering, Charles Horn.

I want to thank Jamie Sheehan who does our gardens, Beth Abraham Synagogue for donating the flowers for our porch planters and Mark Risley who continues to do odd jobs that are too much for me.

Programs—  
Kjirsten Goeller

The April 13<sup>th</sup> fundraising event at the home of John Gray was a huge success...and the programs for the rest of the year promise to be exciting as well.

## Restoration update: The 1920s kitchen

The Homestead continues to go through a major facelift, and the most recent has been the 1920 kitchen. When the old linoleum flooring was taken up, we expected to find flooring that would require new linoleum...what we found was the original oak flooring! So, there was a change of plans; the floors were refinished and are just gorgeous! Next was removing the old formica counter top...and lo and behold! The original butcher block counter top was still there and intact! Another change of plans; the counter top will be gently refinished. Next came the removing of the 1960 stove and putting the more period gas stove from the 1908 kitchen into its spot. Then, Phyllis Miller, our resident artist and restoration chair, began staging the kitchen...and the results are just amazing! Now when people come in through the kitchen door, they are greeted with a bright and cheery kitchen that more accurately reflects the era in which it was built...it's a warm step back in time that makes us smile. We think it will make you smile too!



## Spring School Tours

Every year, the third grade class teachers at our elementary schools contact us for a tour of the Homestead. This sounds easy – but remember – there are two grade schools with at least four classes each. They come in groups of 20... and it's spring, and they are at an age when a field trip after being cooped up all winter is like a minor tornado! Since using the Homestead as an educational center and museum is part of our mission and one we'd like to expand our efforts to surrounding communities, we geared up for the tours this year with help from three of our board members (Harrison Gowdy, Mackensie Wittmer, and Lisa Kell) in period clothing of 1865, 1908, and 1920. They added a personal "homemaker" approach to the presentation which worked well. See some samples of the letters we received.



### Renewal Reminder

If you would like to continue receiving the  
Quarterly Newsletter  
and notices of our programs  
and events, please renew your membership to  
the Oakwood Historical Society.

Fill out the form on the back of this newsletter  
and mail it in with your check today!



# Oakwood Theater: Back in the Day



Image courtesy of Sally Dugan

In 1937, J. H. Thompson, secretary-treasurer of the Thompson Printing Company, purchased the tract of land at Far Hills between Orchard Drive and Wonderly Avenue. Thompson, an Oakwood resident at 104 Hadley Road, announced his intentions to build a business block with two storefronts and a moving-picture theater. Before the design was completed, he had signed leases with Drummond and Sloan Co. and the Gallagher Drug Co. The Drummond and Sloan grocery store had been in the Far Hills business district since 1931 in the 2400 block and had expressed interest in the new building to gain more square footage. The approximate construction cost was \$100,000.

The 500 seat theater opened in 1938 with a glass-enclosed ticket booth. The stucco walls were covered in peach flesh-tone plaster with changing hue from floor to ceiling. Art Deco light fixtures were imported from Austria. A single row balcony off the projectionist's booth provided a prime seat for the movie and to watch attendees below. John Gregory was the first manager and came to be affectionately named "Papa John" among the neighborhood children. Papa John ran Saturday morning programs for children with a series of cartoons, weekly serials, and a full-length movie for 10 cents admission. When children

would become too rowdy or disruptive, Papa John would have the projectionist turn off the movie until the children settled down.

In 1957, Jewel Theater Co. of Brooklyn, New York purchased the Far Hills Theater. The next March, the theater showed "And God Created Woman" starring Bridget Bardot. The theater received a bomb threat (which proved to be a false alarm), and more than 125 Oakwood residents attended a city council meeting to plead for action against the obscene movie advertising along Far Hills Ave. Oakwood police raided the theater in 1961, confiscating several movies and arresting the local manager. Frederick Howell, the Oakwood Municipal Judge, found the local manager Edward M. Eads guilty of showing obscene material with the movie, "Sins of Youth." He was sentenced to six months in the workhouse and fined \$2,500. That same year, Eads filed a lawsuit seeking \$1.35 million against sixteen people—including the Oakwood mayor—for a conspiracy to destroy the theater's business and his reputation. The theater closed briefly pending the lawsuits and criminal charges. When Oakwood resident protests were at their height, the city council considered a film review board, but it failed 3-2. A variety of obscenity cases were in the courts at

continued on page 6

## Committee Reports

Education—All

Harman School third graders toured the Homestead on April 15<sup>th</sup> and sent letters



1908 Kitchen

and drawings thanking us for the tour. Lisa Kell, Mackensie Wittmer, and Harrison Gowdy were all dressed in period clothing. The students enjoyed the tour. Teresa Prosser discussed the Gallery

Room and the development of the first exhibit. Five panels are being made for along the



1920 Kitchen

walls. These may then be used as revolving exhibits since they are on panels. Eventually, we hope to have a series of exhibits that can be taken to places for educational purposes such as school presentations, etc.

# That Day in May 2008: A Centennial Celebration

## Committee Reports

Restoration—  
Phyllis Miller

Phyllis Miller will shortly begin on the curtains for the 1920 living room and dining room and has worked with Mary Penny who has donated great stuff for the winter and summer kitchens. Staging and interpretation continue and should make our targeted completion date of late June. Then come July, we'll begin on the second floor!

Preservation/  
Centennial Celebration—  
Harrison Stamm-Gowdy

The Centennial Film for MVCC and CD is close to completion with a targeted introduction to the public on July 11 and 12<sup>th</sup>. Movie will be inside the high school auditorium. The version is 45 minutes and the TV version is 30 minutes. The Preservation Handbook work will be completed soon.

Fundraising—  
Teresa Prosser

The John Gray event was a huge success and yielded additional money for the continued restoration work in the Homestead. In fact, the home tour was so successful, there are plans to do a home tour every year as an annual fundraiser. Teresa will work on identifying additional possibilities. Additional funds have been received that allows for the completion of the first exhibit in the new gallery. A grant request has been submitted to the interpretative plan which will also provide the basis for the docent materials and room interpretation.



Photo by Phil Wittmer



Photos by Scott Gowdy

## Theater, continued from page 5

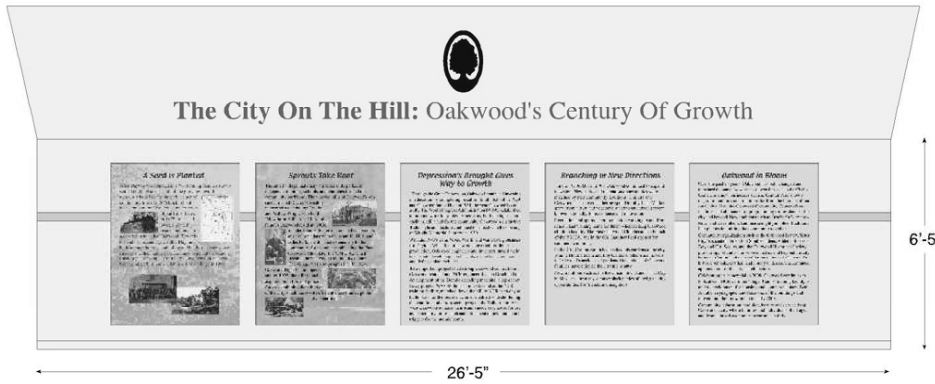
the time including a case from Cleveland Heights that reached the Ohio Supreme Court in January 1962. The court declared that Ohio's obscenity laws were unconstitutional and all charges were dropped against Far Hills Theater.

By 1965, Ralph H. Winkler and Bob Mills purchased the theater, renamed it Cinema South, renovated it, and opened it as a family-friendly theater. They reinstated the Saturday children's matinees with cartoons, serials, and movies. Dorothy Lane Market would hand out free passes to Wednesday matinees in their neighboring store. From 1965 to 1975, tradition followed that every year when the school closed for a teachers'

conference the Oakwood High School band would lead a procession from the school to the theater for a free movie.

Bob Mills purchased the Winklers portion of the theater in the 1970. The theater struggled for number of years as the city realigned parking along Far Hills from center-median parking to access road and side-street parking. By the end, the theater was being operated by Chakeres Theaters Inc. of Springfield as a second-run, reduced-admission house. In September 1984, the theater closed with a showing of "The Neverending Story." The building was razed to create additional parking for the retail shops.

# View from the Gallery



Graphic by Scott Smith

Jeanne Palermo, Teresa Prosser, and Lisa Kell have been busy designing the first exhibit to be located in our new gallery at the Long-Romspert Homestead. An overview of Oakwood history, each of five panels will depict slices of Oakwood life highlighting the people and places that through the years have made the heritage of our city so unique. These panels are being

made of durable material so they can later be included as part of an educational traveling exhibit for use in schools, libraries, and other venues.

Watch for the Grand Opening of The City on the Hill: Oakwood's Century of Growth in July with our special Centennial Celebration Open House at the Homestead - hope to see you there!

## As we go to press... some last minute news....

- We will be taking Smith School 3<sup>rd</sup> graders on the Homestead tour on May 27. This is an annual event. Harman School was April 15.
- We are planning summer education program for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> graders with help from Linda Pearson and daughter Sarah. Keep your eyes open for announcement.
- Some of the Romspert personal property has been deaccessioned by Dayton History. We will be getting some carpets and framed artwork and rocking chair this summer.
- The board has approved an Eagle Scout project for this summer. Jonathan Pearson will supervise and work at completing the brick memory walk around the side of the house to the front walk. This will make the front door accessible from the parking area. More next time.
- The reprint of Oakwood: The Far Hills, our 1983 history of Oakwood, is at the printers and expected to be delivered in early June. See order form.
- The Oakwood Register articles on the history of Oakwood by Harry Ebeling are available online at The Oakwood Register site [www.oakwoodregister.com](http://www.oakwoodregister.com) and at the City's site [www.mvcc.net/oakwood](http://www.mvcc.net/oakwood) - see Centennial Logo in top right and click on Centennial Reflections.
- We have had our spinning wheels evaluated by a professional spinner and found that they work! We hope to have a demonstration at the summer open house on July 26.
- Did you see our volunteers in That Day in May Parade? We had families dressed in costume marching and riding in our farm wagon (Thanks to John Gray).

## 2008 Programs

July 12 - Premier of Centennial Film at High School Auditorium

July 25 - Homestead: Thank You Preview Party For special donors and City Officials

July 26 - Homestead Open House Completion of Phase I Restoration

Sept. - Woodland Cemetery Tour

Date to be announced

Sept. - Homestead Garage and Art Sale

Nov. 19 - Founders Day & Annual Meeting Dayton Country Club

Dec. 14 - Holidays at the Homestead

Community invited and house tours available

## Mark your calendars!

*Last September, the Society hosted a Community Open House to highlight the early stages of the Homestead restoration.*

*Now, come see the complete restoration of the first floor!*

*July 26, 2008*

*10 am to 2 pm*

*Long-Romspert Homestead  
1947 Far Hills Avenue*



THE OAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
1947 Far Hills Avenue • Dayton, Ohio 45419

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[www.oakwoodhistory.org](http://www.oakwoodhistory.org)

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Membership Categories (please check one)

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<input type="checkbox"/> Business .....	\$30.00
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The information that you submit will be used only by the Oakwood Historical Society and not given or sold to outside parties. Please make check payable to:  
Oakwood Historical Society Mail to: 1947 Far Hills Ave, Dayton, OH 45419

