



Annual Fall Dinner Meeting



The Rush County Historical Society had their fall dinner meeting on November 14, at the First Baptist Church in Rushville. Besides enjoying a tasty Thanksgiving style meal, members were treated to “Voices from the Past.” This program organized by Carol Holzback and Marianne Scott brought to life some key figures in Rush County history.

Despite her best efforts, no new talent was discovered.

Next was Raymond Gibson (Bob Bridges), 4 term mayor of Rushville. Some colorful political times were revisited. Then Edith Willkie (Lou Starkey) stopped by. She explained that she went to school in Rushville and her roots here are why Wendell Willkie chose Rushville as his campaign headquarters.



Carmelita Geraghty (portrayed by Marianne Scott) showed up to talk about her career in silent movies. She even gave the membership some acting tips.

Not only can Rush County claim famous individuals, famous animals came from here. The “smartest cow,” Toots (Barb Drake) made an appearance. Hailing from Noble Township, Toots could pump her own water. She traveled as far as Chicago entertaining crowds and was named the “Smartest Cow in the Nation.”



Our final guest was Knowles Shaw (Brad Berkemeier). His family moved to Rushville from Ohio when Knowles was just weeks old. Brother Shaw played the violin and was known as the singing evangelist. He is probably best known for the lyrics of “Bringing in the Sheaves” which he wrote in 1874.



Quilts of Valor

Quilts of Valor Foundation is a national organization whose mission is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor. The Foundation was founded in 2003 by Blue Star mom Katherine Roberts when her son was deployed to Iraq. Katherine felt she lived 10 seconds away from panic every day. Katherine had a dream about a quilt comforting a troubled soldier and from there QOVF was born with the message, quilts=healing.



There are many QOVF groups across the country and in January 2024 the Rushville Quilts of Valor Group was formed. Rush County Historical Society members Sharon Creager, Becky Webb, Priscilla Winkler, Libby Smith and Marty Connerly are among the Rushville Quilts of Valor Group founding members. Patty Caudill is the Rushville Quilts of Valor group leader.

Quilts of Valor quilts are donated through individual volunteers and quilt guilds. The quilts are not purchased and the Quilts of Valor Foundation provides guidelines in making the quilts. A Quilt of Valor quilt is a quality made quilt, hand stitched or machine quilted. Veterans are nominated to receive the quilts and the quilts are bestowed to the veteran or active-duty service member. The quilt unequivocally says, "Thank you for your service, sacrifice and valor in serving our nation."

Active Rush County Historical Society members who have received Quilts of Valor include Bob Bridges, Charlie Fields, Steve Mahan and Jeff Houser.



Locally, some of the quilts have been provided to Rushville Quilts of Valor Group by the Heart and Hand Guild. Heart and Hand Guild was established in 1991 with current active members from Rush County, Indianapolis, Brookville, and Ohio. Rush County Historical Society member Sharon Creager is active in this guild.

Although they don't keep an official count, Heart and Hand Guild has proudly donated at least 15 quilts to Quilts of Valor.

In addition to Quilts of Valor, Heart and Hand Guild donates to Rush Memorial Hospital and Rushville Chapter DAR.

Lap quilts, totes and other handmade items were donated to the hospital. Five quilts were donated to Rushville Chapter DAR for the Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon.



Things Done and Things To Do

Over the last couple years significant repairs have been made at the museum. Termite damaged beams under the sagging first floor were replaced and reinforced. The 2nd floor porch railing was replaced and the roof in that area repaired. Basement windows were sealed. The furnace was repaired. The flagpole was replaced.



Just like your own home and out buildings, Gowdy house and the carriage house constantly need repairs. It is often more costly to perform maintenance in order to keep the historical integrity. Memberships help cover monthly operating costs such as utilities, security and office supplies. However, dues do not accumulate to levels required to fund restoration and major repairs.

For large projects, donations, volunteers, grants and corporate sponsors are needed. Some of the current projects in-process and being researched are porch floor replacement, iron fence repair, tuck pointing of Gowdy house and carriage house, repair of cracked walls in the children's room (upstairs of Gowdy house), and window repairs.

Other things deemed less critical yet need to be done are roof repair of loom room, peeling paint on Gowdy house and gutter covers.

In addition to maintaining our historic structures, valuable and rare items would benefit from restoration. For example, the RCHS owns a rare Penny-farthing bicycle in desperate need of attention.

If you can help in any way, it would be greatly appreciated.



Corporate Sponsors

Please extend your appreciation to these corporate sponsors of Rush County Historical Society.

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Officers and Board Members

President Lou Starkey *Vice President* Kristen Hass
Secretary Barbara Drake *Treasurer* Maria Bridges

Charlie Fields Carol Yager Joe Jarman Bob Bridges
Julie Newhouse Carol Holzback

We extend a huge thank you to Becky Webb and Jeff Houser who completed multiple terms on the board in December 2024. Becky served as treasurer for over a decade.

We also wish to recognize RCHS member, John Wilson, as Rush County's Historian. John has agreed to serve in this capacity another 3 years. Thank you, John.

Spotlight on New Board Members



Julie Newhouse is one of two new board members for 2025. Julie graduated from Rushville Consolidated High School before heading to Indiana University in Bloomington. Julie went on to earn her JD from Valparaiso University. She is currently an attorney in Rushville.

Julie has been married to her husband, Tracy, for 37 years. They have one daughter, Paige. Paige is a PhD history candidate at the University of Michigan.

Julie has always loved history. Her undergraduate degree was in history and her father is a past president of RCHS.

She invites others to join the Society of Indiana Pioneers and travel to historic sites in Indiana.



Maria Bridges grew up in Rushville on Jackson Street, then attended Indiana Wesleyan University. She currently works in the field of human resources. She holds certification from The Society of Human Resource Management. She also works for the city of Rushville, Board of Public Works.

We are glad Maria has returned to Rushville from Ohio and now has her own home on Jackson Street.

Maria has one son, Eli, who is a 2024 graduate of Rushville Consolidated High School. Eli is attending the University of Indianapolis.

Maria has agreed to take on the demanding role of Treasurer.

Membership

Please remember to submit your annual dues *and invite a friend to join!*

Provide the following information along with your check in the desired family participation level amount. You may visit our website to download a PDF of the form below. Your check should be made payable to the Rush County Historical Society.

Send to: Rush County Historical Society Museum, P.O. Box 302, Rushville, Indiana 46173

Name: _____ Laughlin Family Level \$25
 Newby Family Level \$50
Address: _____ Arnold Family Level \$100
 Gowdy Family Level \$250
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Kennedy Family Level \$350
 Willkie Family Level \$500
Phone: (____) _____ - _____ E-mail: _____

Tentative Calendar

Check website for updates: www.rushcountyhistory.org

- April 6 Doll House Day (Open House at museum) 2-4pm
- April 10 Spring Member Dinner, Moscow Christian Church 6pm
- April 27 Teas and Trees (member painting event) 2-5pm
- May 4 Open House 2-4pm
- May 10 Work Day 9am-noon
- May 18 Conner Prairie Trip

Gowdy House Museum Hours



The Gowdy House Museum is open Monday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Open Houses are scheduled the first Sunday of the month from April through November from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Tours, meetings, and other special times can be requested by contacting one of the members listed below.

Lou Starkey (317) 502-5047

Steve Mahan (317) 753-1928



Rush County Historical Society

Gowdy House Museum

P.O. Box 302
619 N. Perkins St.
Rushville, IN 46173
(765) 932-2492

“Come – be a part of history!”

Web Page: www.rushcountyhistory.org

Email Address: rushhistorical@gmail.com