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Notes from our President, Ralph Smucker

First I would like to pay tribute to Joseph Irvin who passed away December 9, 2016 and was the first president. He served for 20 years but had to resign in 2010 due to his health. Harold Downey then took over as president and had the pleasure of working with Joe. Harold focused on the buildings and took care of organized matters and helped with the collection of artifacts. For a person who did not particularly care for antiques, Joe was instrumental in getting Harold involved with the Smithville Community Historical Society. It had become an important part of his life ever since. Harold served as president for 6 years and resigned in January, 2017 due to health reasons. Ralph Smucker, who served as vice-president became president. Joe Irvin's son, Mark, became vice-president.

In late fall of 2016 the basement and foundation for the log house was completed. The main log frame and roof was erected and enclosed with plastic to begin chinking the outside walls when weather permitted, in 2017.

Harold remained the building manager and worked diligently to see the progress of construction of the log house with porch and handicap ramp. Harold and Nita helped to supervise the front sandstone steps and arranged the sandstone around the building for flower beds.

Harold passed away on August 9, 2017 after a bravely fought battle with cancer. He is missed and we will carry on with the help of his wife Nita and the many volunteers. The board unanimously voted to name the new structure the Downey Pioneer Visitors Center in his honor. A plaque was made and presented to him in July, 2017.

The Zehr property at 188 E. Main St. was purchased and renovated by volunteers. The parking lot was graded and packed down with ground asphalt. Doug Spence is our tenant and has gotten involved with the Historical Society. He is a chalk artist and is currently working with Dave Sollenberger painting pottery. Work needs to be done on the siding and a large tree behind the house removed before it falls.

A big event with a lot of good publicity was October 8 and 9 hosting the Wayne County Farm Foliage Tour. The visitors were amazed at our facilities. Thank you to everyone who

helped make this event a success.

People who attended our Open House Events commented on how nice our village is and that they had no idea of all the things that are there. Thanks again to all of you volunteers who make this all happen. It couldn't happen with out you!



Historic Church of God Celebrates 150th Anniversary

We are so fortunate to have so many talented members of our society. Eric Mast, Norma Trotter and Heather Carr provided leadership and instrumental music to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Historic Church of God on the evening of April 3.

Building manager Dana Keirstead gave a history of the church and it's membership. Old pictures of the church were viewed. The stories told of the significance of the church in our community and the changes it has undergone. A more important issue is the preserving of the structure for future generations. The church constructed of hand made bricks and then stuccoed over has had ongoing issues and is demanding immediate attention and repairs. It will require the repair of the outside and then we will need to address the inside. The front doors are also going to require a new heavier finish to maintain their beauty. The church and a number of other structures are being inspected to determine their needed repairs. We will have to determine which order the repairs will take place in. We will need funds, looking into grants and possible fund raising which will be determined by the Board of Trustee.

