



AN OLD PHOTO ALBUM in the Last Indian Rain Museum holds the memories of generations of Decatur County residents, most of whom are documented in the museum's genealogy records. The museum has many

displays of photographs whose subjects haven't been identified, and visitors are encouraged to let the staff know if they recognize the people and place.

Museum celebrates 55th anniversary year

Members of Oberlin's Last Indian Raid Museum crowded the front parlor last Tuesday for snacks, updates and of course, a tour of the premises to see what's been brought out of storage for the museum's 55th anniversary.

Catching up around a spread of cakes, cookies and sandwiches, the group ranged from former County Commissioner Gene Gallentine to business owner Dick Carmen, along with many others keen to hear the updates on Decatur County's central source for all things historic.

Byron Hale, an agent of the Twin Creeks Extension District, and a museum board member, opened up the meeting by talking about the last year, most notably last year's big project – the four new museum signs on U.S. 83 and U.S. 36 approaching Oberlin. The project raised about \$5,500 for the signs, which point people to the museum from all four directions.

Mr. Hale said that one new member had joined the museum board, retired teacher Dave Olson. The members re-elected board members Chris Koerperich, Joy Russell and Judith LaBash.

After that, it was Mr. Carmen's turn to give the financial report, which unlike some previous years, was nicely balanced.

Some of the money that the museum uses, he said, comes from the county and the City of Oberlin. The county works the museum into the budget because it acts as a repository for county

records, which in turn saves the county money. The city gives the museum about \$3,500 a year to help out with electric and utility expenses.

In 2012, 57.8 percent of the museum's income came from grants, donations and memorials, Mr. Carmen said. The remaining 42 percent was from admission fees, memberships, sales, events and the city and county money.

Every year, he said, the museum depends more on donations, so the continued generosity of residents is greatly encouraged.

After the financial report, museum Director Sharleen Wurm was introduced by Mr. Hale and stood to tell everyone what was in store for the museum's 55th year.

"I like to call Sharleen my 'crazy mother,'" Mr. Hale said, "because of all of her crazy ideas. She lights a fire under us, and that's a good thing. We love her for her crazy ideas, most of which she pulls off."

Mrs. Wurm had a long list of crazy ideas for this year, the first of which is the annual rummage sale this weekend.

If you have any old stuff lying around that you would like to donate to the sale, she said, you can drop it off between 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. up until the start of the sale.

"All proceeds go to keeping the doors open at the museum," Mrs. Wurm said. "We accept anything except large appliances – we don't want

someone to bring in a refrigerator or stove – and no exercise equipment. But we take furniture, knick knacks, good-quality clothing, children's clothing and toys. We also take garden supplies and decorations.

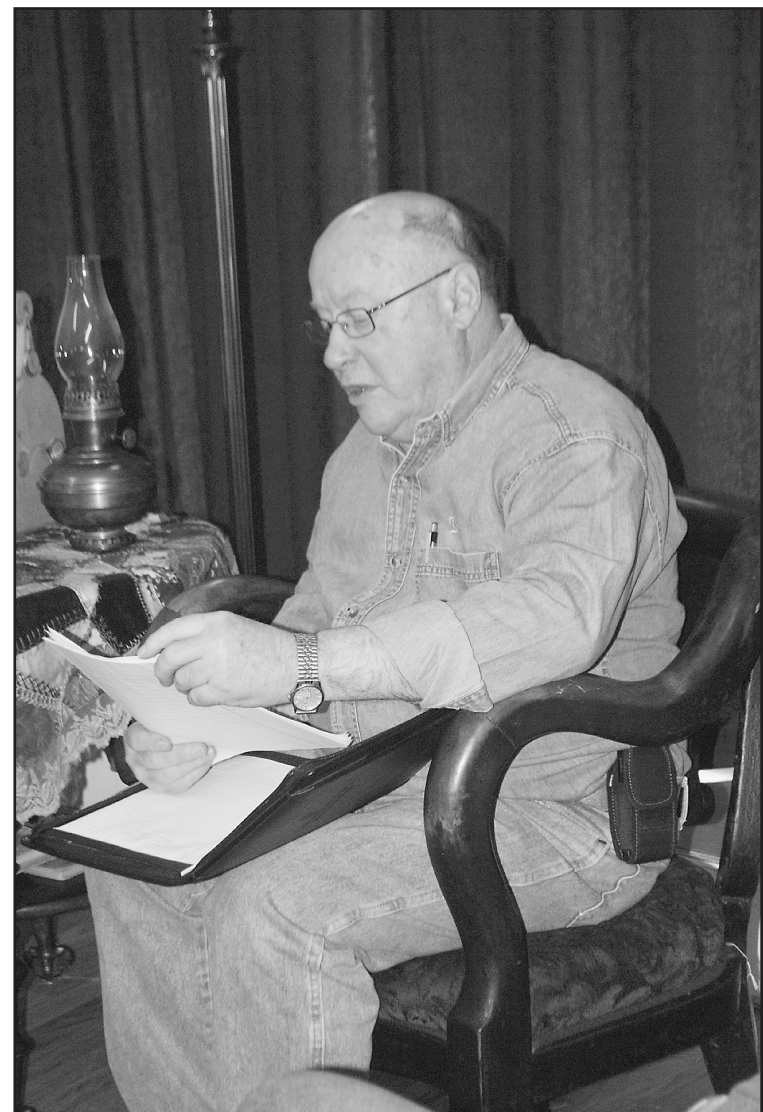
"If you don't want to have your own garage sale, we're the place to bring your stuff to."

The museum plans presentation events starting in May, Mrs. Wurm said, including a picture presentation, one on "farming the hard way," before technology changed the agricultural landscape, and an apron presentation by Leanne Martin, who also spoke at the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting in February.

For the annual Mini Sapa Day this October Mrs. Wurm said, she's working on getting a group of authors, all of whom have written books on Kansas history and culture, to speak.

To become a museum member, annual dues are \$15, Mrs. Wurm said, and for a family, it's \$25. Membership includes free entry to the museum, access to all of its genealogy records, a monthly newsletter and special invitations to all museum events.

"Membership mainly helps us keep our doors open," said Mrs. Wurm, "and helps with daily operating expenses and the maintenance and development of exhibits."



BOARD MEMBER Dick Carmen gave the financial report to museum members during the annual meeting, which showed a good year.



MUSEUM MEMBERS JoAnn Lerew and Julie Gallentine dug in to an assortment of cookies, sandwiches and sweets during the meeting, which also allowed for free tours of the museum's many buildings.



DIRECTOR SHARLEEN WURM said she has big plans for this year, including the annual rummage sale this weekend.