



Sainte Marie Foundation News

To celebrate our very special hometown's spring season 2011

Volume 4, Issue 2

-Some coming events:

- Sunday, May 8, the **American Legion's** annual **Mother's Day Breakfast**, 7 - 11 a.m.

-Saturday, May 28, **Sainte Marie Community Club's** annual, village-wide **Garage Sale**, 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Breakfast burritos/porkburgers/brats offered by the Sons of the American Legion.

Terquasquicentennial ?????

Found on the Internet, a news release from Texas titled **TERQUASQUICENTENNIAL TEXAS** that starts off: "Ya'll just try and wrap yur tongue 'round that seven-syllable word in the title. I double-dog dare ya. That big ol' two-dollar word means 175 years. 175 years of Texas, of course."

Well, Sainte Marie (SM) has the choice to use that title too, Next year, 2012, will be the village's 175th anniversary. The Community Club is meeting to discuss date and program and whether that Latin term *Terquasquicentennial* will be used (some critics say it's not even a Latin term). Rumor has it that a 5K



run, a big parade, and Sainte Marie Chicken are planned. (Yum!) The Foundation will provide the historical side to the event with summer exhibits.

Here's a picture of **Chlorine (Ochs)** and **George Kirts** from the 1987 Sesquicentennial, when all residents were asked to dress like early SM residents.

Many of the men grew beards, and George even rented this fancy suit. Do you have a similar picture from your involvement in this event? We'd like to have it for our Sesqui exhibit.

We Get Letters

From **Joyce Keller Decker** (Daughter of longtime SM teacher, **Vince Keller**, Joyce is often in SM to visit her mother **Louise** who still lives in their rural family home.)

*You asked for stories about Ste. Marie resident and teacher, **Christine Alblinger**. She was my high school English and Literature teacher -- a wonderful*

person. I remember always getting A's in her class where I always wanted to do well. She was also my homeroom and study hall teacher. She must have known how badly I needed money! One day, she asked me if I could do some typing work for her. I immediately said yes! I typed up her tests (not for my class) and then was released from study hall to go down to the principal's office to run them off (the old-fashioned way--took a while). I remember the first time she paid me. I received a dollar a page! I thought I had died and gone to heaven. She made me feel so important. I was 16.

From **Kathy Null McFarland**, Joliet, IL

*I would appreciate receiving the newsletter via email. My mom (**Evelyn Radke Null**) was surprised to see her photo in the last newsletter. She is a fantastic person, very loving and giving. Thanks for making her day! She is very proud of Ste Marie and what you are doing. We would like to stay at the Foundation House sometime. Great, Kathy. Just call Maxine Calvert 618-455-4227 to book the house.*

From **Gloria Zuber Schwartz**, Belleville, IL: *This morning I was thinking, "I wonder if any of you expected the Foundation to grow to what it is today when you started out?" (No, Gloria, we were just operating on blind faith, I think, as well as the knowledge that SM folks are just good people who we thought might respond.) I am amazed at the people who are ten and more years older or younger than I who are interested and enjoy the newsletter. I thought it was only people around our age who stayed closer to Ste. Marie, went to CYO, skated and had fun parties. I think it's something all former Ste. Marie people should be proud of. I forwarded the newsletter to my two sons and said it shows what a small town with good family values, good educations, church upbringing, etc. can take away to new communities in and around the world. Thanks for all your work.*

From **Rita Fisher Lewis**, Supply, NC

I got your email address from the SM newsletter that my sister Ann forwarded to me. It is wonderful! I appreciate how difficult the task is because I used to do one for my principal when I was teaching high school in Shallotte, NC. Anyway, I just wanted to thank you. I will go through my pictures when I get

home (I'm currently spending the winter months in south Texas--no snow and cold for me, thank you--and won't be home to coastal NC till early April). I'll also search around for any keepsakes or "antiques" that might be useful in a museum. I do have a stainless steel cookie jar and a white bowl and a bottle opener that Hartrich's Grocery gave away when I was a kid. You can have those if you want them. (We said YES, because we hope to do a museum exhibit next year on advertising giveaways from SM businesses. We already have about six in the collection.)

From **Jean Huff Gala**, Lincoln, IL
I just finished reading the winter newsletter and feel so proud to have been a part of this community during my formative years. My pride comes from learning about so many others who share this same background and have made such profound contributions to society. Ste. Marie is and was a great place to call home!

New Board Member

At a recent Board meeting, **Kevin S. Parker** was appointed to the Sainte Marie Foundation Board.

Parker has been Jasper County State's Attorney since 2008 and was the county's Resident Circuit Judge from 2005 – 2008. He is a member of the **Sons of the American Legion in Ste. Marie**, as well as the Newton Rotary Club, the Newton Knights of Columbus (both 3rd and 4th Degree Councils) and St. Thomas Catholic Church. A Newton resident, Parker also serves on the board of the Sunrise Community Center and is vice president of the Jasper County Chamber of Commerce.

"I don't want to see places like this little jewel of a town disappear," said Parker, "so I am pleased to join the Board of an organization that is determined to maintain the village's history as well as its contact with many former residents who still love Sainte Marie and want to help it succeed."



Sainte Marie Foundation Board members include (Back Row l – r) **Ron Kirts**, Vice President; **Mike Hartrich**, Secretary; new board member **Kevin Parker**; (Front Row) **Maxine Calvert**, Treasurer, **Pat Reis**, President, and **Annette Hahn Kirts**.

Growing the Flower Baskets



Tammy Bailey Frye and **Maxine Calvert** (l-r in picture) check out the 14 flower baskets that they planted in mid-February.

The baskets are warm and comfortable in the **Shady Maples Greenhouse**, a relatively new facility about nine miles north of Oblong. Owners Leslie and Lydia Yoder are an Amish couple who raise glorious plants, so our baskets are in good hands. We intend to hang the baskets on Main Street by the end of May. Thanks to all the sponsors who made this possible.

News Notes

-In mid-February, the home of village trustee **Brad Ochs** and his wife **Annie** burned in a vicious fire that consumed the newest house built in SM (east of the PO). Brad and Annie grabbed their three children when they realized their attached garage was on fire that Saturday afternoon and fled the house (Brad without shoes!). Everything they owned burned, including three cars that were in the garage. The family is now renting the **Paul Keller** home in rural Newton. We hope they will soon be back in SM.

-Resident **John Michl** grows those fantastic SM tomatoes that we all love, but this year John says that he is cutting back on his gardening in order to devote more time to his "bee business". Yes, John is into bees *big-time* – he registered as a beekeeper with the state of IL, read a LOT, found a mentor and joined a bee club. He builds his own hives and has a number of colonies established. He hopes to be selling some of his honey (from wild bees) by next fall. Since bees are so essential for pollination of crops and because bees are rapidly disappearing (a parasitic mite is one reason), we think what John is doing is exemplary – and cutting edge. Maybe SM could become the bee capital of the Midwest. Well, why not? According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, about one-third of the human diet is derived directly or indirectly from insect-pollinated plants and about 80% of this insect pollination is accomplished by honey bees. So keep at it, John.

-The new **Villas of Holly Brook**, an assisted living facility at the west end of Newton, houses a number of former Sainte Marie residents, including **Ed and Angela Hahn**, **Paul Mullinax**, **Betty Ochs** and **Lois**

Ochs. It's a beautiful place and a facility that Jasper County has needed for a long time. The address is 101 S. Gregory, Newton, IL 62448.

Getting Ready for the Concert

Saturday, September 3, 1 p.m., St. Mary's Church.

That's the day when mezzo-soprano **Dorothy Helregel Mathious** returns to her hometown to do a benefit concert (\$\$ to go for landscaping the Foundation House's South Garden).



She will be joined by her daughter **Jenna Mathioudakis**, (pictured at left with Dorothy) a musical wonder in her own right. At the age

of 10, she was judged the "Best Little Singer in Burbank (CA)". She sang her way through high school and graduated from the University of Southern California with a degree in Opera performance. Shortly after, she moved to New York City to perform in various operas. But then tragedy struck. In 2001, Jenna collapsed and was found to have an inoperable, stage 4 brain tumor. After surgery and treatment, Jenna was sent home to CA with a diagnosis of four months to live.

"With diet, treatments, strong faith and her music, Jenna went into remission and is still with us nearly 10 years later," Dorothy says. "She feels that life is all about living each day to the fullest and sharing with others all of the gifts that God has given to us."

How fortunate that Sainte Marie will benefit from both Jenna and Dorothy's musical gifts. They will be accompanied by Newton musician **Karen Sainer** as well as some other "surprise" performers. This will be a "don't miss" event (like **Jim Litzelman's** last year). More details in the summer newsletter.

Tickets are the same as last year: \$10 adults; \$5 students. Reserve now by contacting Annette Kirts at anett8@hotmail.com or wait until June when they will be available at local banks.

Foundation House Update

Thanks to **Ron Kirts** and **Maxine Calvert** who checked on the house throughout the winter. Everything looks fine, and we are ready to pursue some finishing touches that have been postponed for far too long – like finishing the floor stain on the sun porch, painting a final coat on the remodeled garage, stripping porch doors, and more painting, etc.

Therefore, we have scheduled workdays for **Friday and Saturday, 9 – 3, on May 13 and 14 and**



Saturday, June 25.

(Left: Foundation House with magnolia in bloom)

Actually, there will be someone at the house with a work list from **May 10-16 if you would rather come on**

a weekday. We can even put you up overnight if you are coming from a distance. Just let us know. Call Maxine Calvert 618-455-3227 or e-mail patreisprpr@yahoo.com.

To Book the Foundation House

Plan ahead, if you and your family wish to stay at the Foundation House this spring or summer. Make reservations with **Maxine Calvert 618-455-3227**.

The Museum – We are accepting items of interest for the museum, which will be housed inside the first floor. Thanks for recent items given to us that include:

Mary Hartrich – Some advertising specialties from local businesses; George Hill's "special police" hat. *Note: George Hill served as constable in SM for many years during the 1940's to early 60'. He was armed with a very rough, loud voice (most likely heard if you ran the stop sign!) and a "billy club" (a policeman's stick).*

Estate of Mary Jean Huss – wedding dress; other items

Transitions

We send condolences to SM's **Susan Kautz Phillips** whose mother **Ethel Kautz** recently passed. Susan is active in the Community Club and most recently co-chaired the "Welcome Bag for new SM Residents" and the "Garden Walk" committees.

Pictures Wanted

We still have some grant funds left to copy your old pictures for our museum. We especially want wedding pictures, SM school class pictures, pictures from the 125th and 150th centennial celebrations.

Sainte Marie Foundation
P.O. Box 186
Sainte Marie, IL 62459

SAVE THE DATE

Sept. 3 – Dorothy Helregel Mathious Concert
1 p.m. with reception to follow

WORKDAYS AT THE FOUNDATION HOUSE

Friday, May 13

Saturday, May 14

Saturday, June 25

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch provided.

Wear old clothes and bring gloves.

NEEDS:

-Typist to put stories on computer

-Display cases for the museum

The Sainte Marie Foundation newsletter is published quarterly. Send comments to writer/editor Pat Reis, patreisprpr@yahoo.com. The Foundation is a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization, duly recognized as an Illinois charitable corporation. Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Do you have a Sainte Marie story you would like to share? Write your own and/or contact Pat to be interviewed. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Stories Wanted

We have started collecting stories from the past – as we may possibly publish a book of these stories for the 175th. We were especially taken with a 22-page loose-leaf book written by **Freda Kirts Reynolds** (Dubuque, IA) that she titled “The Sainte Marie Connection.” In it, Freda writes the history of her family, starting with her great-grandparents leaving France and Germany and how they eventually ended up in SM. She even came across some research that implied that some of her Valbert ancestors may have been pirates!! Now that is a special story!

I especially liked her stories about her father, my seventh and eighth grade teacher **Henry Kirts**. I always considered him one of the reasons I did so well in high school and college – we just learned so much from this man who made teaching his lifetime career. I never knew that he did not have a degree, that his professional education was two summers at “Normal School (*now Eastern Illinois University*) plus years of extension courses.” But after reading what Freda said about him, I realized that he was self-taught and *never, ever* stopped learning. He was a good example for us all!

Here’s an excerpt from Frieda’s book: “*This was the time of the Great Depression (1930’s). Daddy (Henry Kirts) still had a job, albeit a poor paying one. We had the produce from the garden, the milk, butter and cheese from the cow, eggs and fried chicken and all the fruit we could eat from Grandpa’s fruit trees. We picked wild blackberries for jellies and jams, and Mother knew where all the nut trees were on her father’s and relatives’ farms. We hunted mushrooms and persimmons. And Mother’s brothers and cousins often brought wild game. Fred (Freda’s brother) had a rabbit trap at the end of the garden, and many times he proudly furnished the meat for the evening meal.*

And we had Ed Barthelme. He owned the village store, had a heart of gold, and carried most of the population during this time. He would let us charge what we bought to be paid at the end of September when Daddy got his first check. He also saw to it that the children had their treats. Any child that went into his store with a penny came out with a big bag of candy.....”

Like her father, Freda became a teacher (Bachelor’s degree from EIU and Master’s from U of I) as did her brother Fred, now a retired teacher from Oblong HS. Both benefited from WW II – Freda started teaching in the Bend with no training because all experienced teachers had gone to war or to better-paying jobs. Fred used the GI Bill to pay for his degree at EIU. Their sister Ruth joined the Cadet Nurse Corps during WW II and, with the free training, became a nurse.

SPRING 2011 BONUS PAGE (FOR E-MAIL AND SM RESIDENTS)

From the Sainte Marie Foundation, Box 186, Sainte Marie, IL 62459

Continuing the Family Stories

For those of you who might like to write your family history, consider what **Freda Kirts Reynolds** says to her family in the Prologue of her book, *The Sainte Marie Connection*:

... "Perhaps, as you read this, you will see bits of yourself. When you meet adversity or perceived social slights, could it be the Valbert pride that lets you lift your head up high and push ahead? When you pant in enjoyment from an evening of dancing, did that love come from your Yager ancestor who spent many a night dancing until the morning light? Did those tears you experience when you see a sad situation come from Grandpa Kirts who had such a tender heart? Did your strong sense of right and wrong come from our father, Henry? And your love of family – did that come from your grandmother Spenser? They are a part of you; it would be well for you to know something of them.

Caught up in making a living and surviving, we seldom think of those who have gone before us. They seem remote and unreal. But they were very real..... And their lives were relevant and had more of an effect on our lives than we might be aware of. In order for you to know and appreciate these people who have contributed to your lives, I offer this family history."

And Freda goes on to write 22 8½ x 11 single spaced pages about her family. Terrific story too!

Another chronicler of family history



SM resident Maurice Calvert decided about 10 years ago that he wanted to leave something in writing for his grandchildren. "I just wish my parents had left some of their stories in writing. So much got lost," he

says. So he started writing a page every now and then that he put into a notebook. Today, he has compiled many stories about his growing up years. With the Foundation's help, we are publishing some in the *Newton Eagle*, the free companion-newspaper to the *Newton Press Mentor*. Here's something that we recently submitted to the *Eagle*:

OLD DAYS

By Maurice Calvert

We kids didn't have anything in the way of toys – or toys from the store anyway. One of our favorite handmade toys was a stick horse. A broomstick or any kind of stick would do. We would grab hold of one end of the stick, throw one leg over and let the other end of the stick drag the ground. You could walk, trot, gallop, or run your horse, and you would do this with your two feet. Sometimes we would tie a piece of cloth or baler twine to the head end of the horse, and that would be a bridle.

Another fun toy, and I don't think it had a name, was a metal ring off the hub of an old wooden wagon wheel. Any metal ring would work if you could find one. The wheel needed to be from 10 inches to two feet in diameter. To make the wheel work, you took a piece of wood, about 1 x 2 inches and three or so foot long. On the end you nailed a 1 x 2" about 8 inches crossways. Then you had a stick with a crosspiece on the bottom. With this, you pushed the wheel and got it moving. There were all kinds of ways to start the wheel rolling. The best was to place the crosspiece inside the wheel and push forward. Then, we took the crosspiece out and starting pushing the wheel with the stick.

I would roll my wheel all the way to Buck Grove School, about ¾ mile north of our farm. I made that trip hundreds of times. All the kids had one of these "outfits". In the summertime and when the weather was good, during recess and lunchtime, we would have races around the school house with the stick and wheel. We did tricks, going up ditch banks and the like. It was great fun.

The WPA

The WPA (Works Progress Administration) program started during the Depression. It was a program to make jobs for people who were out of work. You see, the stock market had collapsed in 1929, and everything started going downhill. The 1920's were a high-flying time, with most everyone having a job and making money. People thought it was going to last forever, just like in our time in the 1990's. When times are good too long, people's heads get messed up; they think things won't change. Well, things did change, and the nation went into a very bad depression.

Several programs were started around 1934 to give people jobs. One of the jobs was to build outdoor

toilets at all the country schools in the nation. Ours at Buck Grove was a really nice one. It had the best of pine wood, was well constructed and painted. I don't know what was there before the WPA toilet, but I'm sure it needed to be replaced.

Another WPA job was road building. During this time most of the nation's roads were dirt. Anyone with a team (2) of horses and a "slip scoop" was needed to grade up roads and move dirt around. The river grade north of the Embarras River in Newton was built with horses and slip scrapers. Can you imagine the number of teams and the time it took to complete the grade?

The workers who did not have horses helped with the building of bridges across the highway. Routes 33, 130, 49 and the Ste. Marie spur were built during this time, and it took a lot of workers to get the job done. There were no backhoes or heavy equipment then; it all had to be done the hard way, with pick and shovel. This went on all over the nation, and it gave people jobs.

Hadacol and Mineral Oil

About my freshman or sophomore year in high school a salesman came through the community selling Hadacol, a "patented medicine", and mineral oil. I never did hear the sales pitch, but it must have been good. I don't know what was in it, but it was supposed to make you feel better. Soon everybody, and I mean everybody, (but mostly women) was taking Hadacol. Both men and women were taking mineral oil. You would take one tablespoon of the oil and one or two glasses of Hadacol daily. The Hadacol made you feel better shortly after taking it. Mineral oil prevented constipation. This was the rage of conversation among the women. I don't remember how the product was delivered, but it was probably by the salesman. I remember a dozen or more boxes of Hadacol (four gallons per box) stacked up in our wash house and about four or five boxes of mineral oil. This went on for a few years.

Guess what! An article came out in the newspaper that Hadacol had alcohol in it. I don't remember what percent, but it was probably around the same as beer. Just think, all those little old church-going women were "getting a buzz" out of Hadacol. The phones were busy for a while. I don't think this hurt anyone, but usage began falling off.

Maurice Calvert , Sainte Marie, was born in 1932, "a depression baby," he says. He and his wife Maxine (the Foundation treasurer) have lived in SM for over 25 years. For the

last ten years, he has been writing short "stories" of his life for his grandchildren and others. The stories are edited by Pat Reis, president of the Sainte Marie Foundation. Reis is collecting stories for a book to be published for Ste. Marie's 175th anniversary in 2012.



We still have this great 60's desk and chair available. We are taking "best offer" so let us know if you are interested. This was NOT an original SM piece. Call Maxine 618-455-3227.

REMEMBER THAT THE FOUNDATION RELIES ON YOUR DONATIONS TO SURVIVE.

If you have not yet sent in your 2011 donation, we hope you will do so soon. You can make the contribution in memory of one or more of your loved ones or you can honor someone still living who you think deserves the recognition. We are a charitable organization with 501(c)3 status. Because we have no paid staff, your donation goes directly to the good of Sainte Marie.

**Send checks to:
Sainte Marie Foundation
PO Box 186
Sainte Marie, IL 62459**