

# The Rooster Herald

All the news that's fit to crow about!



*Renfrew Museum and Park*

Volume 1, Issue 2

November 2015

## Christmas On The Farm



*Renfrew Museum House,  
Christmas 2014*

Bask in the warmth of the holiday season at the Royer Farmstead on Dec. 4th and 5th for Christmas on the Farm!

This annual event transforms the museum house into a lovely winter wonderland with beautiful decorations in every room, and the house comes alive with the sights, sounds, and smells of Christmas. From the moment you walk in, the spirit of Christmas will envelop you.

A cheery fire in the Museum House kitchen hearth will greet you. In addition, one of our interpreters will roll out dough to bake goodies in the Summer Kitchen. As you walk up to

## Thank You Sponsors!

We wanted to give a HUGE thank you to the following people for sponsoring the cost of the newsletter to have it printed again!

Terry and Linda Barkdoll  
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the house, the sounds of a choir singing Christmas carols from the balcony will fill the air. The scent of pine will follow you throughout the house as you see trees in every room.

It is truly a wonderful time of year, and a visit to Christmas on the Farm is a perfect way to start your holiday season. We welcome you to take inspiration from the house to your own homes and to share our joyous mood!

In the Visitors Center there will be a one-act play presented by John Shindledecker and his troupe of actors to portray the long standing German tradition of celebrating the holiday season. Cookies and cider will be available.

We hope you will join us for this magical event! It is free to members. There is a small admission fee for non-members of \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 ages 7-18, and free to ages 6 & under.

If you have any questions about the decorations in the house, please feel free to ask Barb McCracken or her decorating team of Shelley Benchoff, Marjorie Seilhamer, Jane Birt, Twila Flohr, and Dave Hykes. All are busy this whole month prepping the house!

Please check the Calendar of Events on page 4 for the event times.

If you see these sponsors around, be sure to thank them for their generosity to make another printed copy possible!

The newsletter will also be available on the website under the newsletter tab, and via email.

Renfrew Museum and Park  
1010 E. Main Street  
Waynesboro, PA 17268

Phone: 717-762-4723

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

### Fun Fact of the Month:

GERMANS BROUGHT THE TRADITION OF CHRISTMAS TREES IN THE HOUSE TO AMERICA.

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## The Geiser Bicycle

Many of us remember dreaming about or receiving our first bicycle. From the thrill of Christmas Day or working various jobs to save money to purchase a bike, the feeling is the same. However it happened, these two-wheeled wonders can be one of our first chances to feel a sense of freedom and independence.



*An advertisement for Cleveland Bicycles circa 1897.*

During the 1880's the bicycle boomed in popularity. The more traditional form of today's bicycle was designed, which was easier and safer to ride for both men and women. The bicycle served as not only a toy for children but a faster form of transportation for all ages. The development of pneumatic bicycle tires made vast improvements for a much smoother ride on paved streets.

Nothing could be less true for the bicycle on display that was owned by Mr. Norris Daniel Geiser. He always

used this Cleveland bicycle as his main mode of transportation as he never learned to drive an automobile. When Emma Geiser Nicodemus was a young girl she would ride on the handle bars of this bicycle with her dad. He was an avid fisherman and knew the best fishing was on the east branch of the Antietam. They often rode to the former Royer property to catch trout for the table. Emma would dream about one day owning the big looming stone house along this peaceful trout stream. Fast forward to 1942 and her dream came true! Thanks to Emma Geiser Nicodemus' sense of collecting and saving items of importance, her father's bicycle was stored in the upper barn for us to unearth in 2012 and display in "as found" condition today.

The Cleveland Bicycle was manufactured by the H. A. Lozier Company of Cleveland Ohio in 1897.



**Top:** Mr. Geiser's bicycle  
**Bottom:** The Cleveland Bicycle logo  
**Left:** A close look at the bike bell

Look for us in the Christmas Parade on November 21st in downtown Waynesboro! Renfrew will have a float in the parade for Christmas On The Farm!

## The Board Members of Renfrew

We thought it would be a great idea to let you know who is on the Board at Renfrew. The Board helps us keep the museum and park running so efficiently! Below is a list of the board members of RCI (Renfrew Committee Inc.) and of REC (Renfrew Executive Committee):

### RCI Board Members:

Allison Kohler, President  
David Hykes, Vice President  
George Buckey, Treasurer  
Connie Huet, Secretary  
Alice McCleaf  
AJ Benchoff  
Greg White  
Dade Royer, Staff

### REC Board Members:

David Hykes, REC Chairman  
Terry Barkdoll  
Bob Benchoff  
Doug Burkholder  
Bill Conrad  
Connie Huet  
Allison Kohler  
Barb McCracken  
Richard Mohn  
Tom Moore  
Alice Noll  
Virginia Rahn  
Jim Rock  
Rick Shindle

### Shutter Project

You might have noticed this past season that the museum house is missing its signature shutters over the windows. We are working to replace all of the shutters for the museum house in an ongoing project.

These historically accurate shutters made by Kestrel Shutters in Stow, PA will cover all 22 windows of the house. They are being prepped by Gene Kelley and will be installed by Brad Royer.

This project was made possible through a very generous donation of \$8,000 by the Paul K. and Anna E. Shockey Family Foundation and a \$12,000 donation from Alma Oyer.

The shutters are made of Sapele mahogany wood and will match the Fahnestock House shutters.

*This printed newsletter was made possible by the sponsorship of:*

*Bill and Anne Conrad*

*&*

*David and Diane Hykes*

### Ed's Corner

*All stories are told by Ed Miller from his perspective to Lindsay Dukes.*

The holidays were always a wonderful time at the Nicodemus household. Emma and Edgar loved entertaining friends, especially for Christmas time. From overseeing the food preparations to the simple decorations furnishing the house, Emma was meticulous and always did a marvelous job of planning her party.

Her planning would start in June when she would begin making her rumtopf. For those of you that don't know, rumtopf is a delightful (and boozy) German concoction made from fruit, sugar, and rum. All you need is the time to make it! Using one of her John Bell crocks (numbers 34 or 62 in the Visitors Center collection), she would start with a layer of strawberries, a layer of sugar, and a layer of rum. She'd put the lid on and wait for the next fruit to come into season. As each fruit came into season (raspberries, cherries, blueberries, peaches, and

oranges) she would layer with the fruit, the sugar, and the rum. When the crock was almost completely full she would put the lid on, and then set it aside until the holidays rolled around.

For the household, Emma always enjoyed the simplicity of natural decorations. I would go to a farm a little down the road and cut cedar pine trees for the house, which are common for this area. We'd put up three trees, one in each living room and one in the downstairs hall. Cedar has such a natural aromatic smell and it penetrated the whole house; Emma just loved it. The trees would stand in John Bell crocks (very carefully mind you). I'd put a board on the bottom of the tree, stones in the crock, and water them regularly.

When it came to decorating the trees, Emma never put lights on her tree. She would put candles on them but never light them. Old fashioned bulbs and ornaments, gingerbread men, and maybe some strings of cranberries and popcorn around the tree would round out her decorations. A picture of St. Nick would always be at the top of the tree. She would also order holly and put sprigs and fresh pine limbs on all of the mantelpieces. All of this took about a week to get the house ready in time for

the party.

On the night of her party, Emma would have fires lit in all of the downstairs fireplaces and use candles to provide the majority of her light source for the evening. It was my job to tend the fires, which was an easy job. I would just throw on a couple of apple wood logs and they'd burn for hours. Dinner was always served first, starting with a wonderful crab soup made with fresh crab picked up from Lexington Market in Baltimore, MD. Then we'd move on to ham and turkey served with all of the trimmings. Dessert was her amazing homemade vanilla ice cream topped with the rumtopf. I've never to this day tasted ice cream as good as hers, and I'm 91. That's a lot of ice cream over the years. I helped her make it every year and she always used to tell me, "Ed, churn until you can't turn." That ice cream always turned out incredibly rich and creamy, and was made even better with the rumtopf.

After dinner, the party would turn to conversation and drinks, with each flowing as freely as the other. Subjects ranged from the more important to the whimsical. After many long hours, the party would wind down. Emma and Edgar would always treasure their evenings with friends. Everyone would leave for home happy and filled with holiday cheer, just waiting for the next party to come!

*Ed Miller  
shares stories  
of his experi-  
ences with  
the Nicode-  
mus family  
for Ed's  
Corner.*





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### Pumpkin Festival

Last month, Renfrew Institute and Renfrew Museum joined forces again for the 22nd annual Pumpkin Festival!

The day was filled with lots of fun activities for folks young and old alike, with the pumpkin chuckin' trebuchet a crowd favorite as always.

Preliminary numbers indicate throughout the day around 1,042 individuals enjoyed the festivities. The event raised a combined total of at least \$9000.

The proceeds will be split between the two organizations.

Many thanks to all of the committees, board members, and the 198 volunteers that made this event possible, and for everyone else that came out to support Renfrew!



*Enjoy some pictures of the event taken by Trey Gelbach.*

*"Pumpkins"-Top Left*

*"Stew Crew"-Top Right*

*"Scarecrow Holding"-Bottom Left*

*"Hay Ride"-Middle Right*

*"PumpkinFest"-Bottom Right*

### Calendar of Events

**December 4**-Christmas on the Farm; Tour the Museum House fully decorated for a traditional 1800s Christmas. 5:30pm-8:30pm. Non-Member Admission Fee.

**December 5**-Christmas on the Farm; Tour the Museum House fully decorated for a traditional 1800s Christmas. 2pm-8pm. Non-Member Admission Fee.



*A memorial bench was donated by Bonnie & Frank Damazo in honor of Dick McCracken.*

### Memorial Bench

As many of you know, Renfrew has multiple beautiful spots throughout the park. Benches placed around these areas create a great place to sit and enjoy the nature around you.

Some of these benches have been dedicated to loved ones or family members. We welcome you to do the same should you want.

If you are interested in having a memorial bench, please contact Dade Royer for more information.

## QR Project

If you've walked around the park in the last few weeks, you may have noticed boxes around the property marked "QR".

Thanks to the help of Mike Cermak, a virtual tour of the outbuildings is now a reality through QR technology.

When you scan the code inside the box with a smart phone or tablet, you are sent to a video link. The

link provides you a look inside of the building and a short history lesson about the site from our own "Quentin Royer".

You can download a QR reader app on your smart-phone or tablet for free. When you open the app, just point the camera to the code and it will automatically send you to a video link for viewing.



## Needs of the Museum and Park

We hope to reconstruct a full set of bed hangings for the new bed in the Urban Bedroom. The cost of fabric and labor is about \$800. If you are interested in donating, please contact Cindy Fink.

We are also on the lookout for more sponsors for the newsletter. Each printing costs around \$450. The newsletter would feature your business card or simply a "sponsored by" section with

your name if you do not have a business you wish to represent.

Please contact Dade Royer or Lindsay Dukes if you are interested in sponsoring.

If you are interested, you do not have to donate the full amount. Any amount is welcome and very appreciated!

*This printed newsletter was made possible by the sponsorship of:*

*Terry and Linda Barkdoll*

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## Tree Planting

Last month, Renfrew was part of a community project, **Trees for Tomorrow**, hosted by Senator Richard Alloway and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

The event covered multiple counties including Franklin County. The goal was to plant a total of 10,000 trees

throughout the counties to reduce run-off pollution and to make a healthier environment.

Thanks to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Antietam Watershed Association, Penn State Mont Alto Forestry faculty and students, Senator Alloway's office, and all the volun-

teers, 75 trees were planted at Renfrew on the Blue Heron Trail.

Dr. Doris Goldman was in charge of the event, and helped choose the various species of trees planted to ensure they were native to the area and fit right in with Renfrew's ecosystem!



*Volunteers planting and protecting the saplings*



Renfrew Museum and Park  
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Waynesboro, PA 17268

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**John Curfman,**  
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Maintenance

***Our Mission***– Our mission is to preserve, enhance, promote, and interpret the Royer family Pennsylvania German farmstead, the Nicodemus and Bell collections, and the surrounding Park.

***Our Vision***– Our vision is to be a welcoming and memorable destination where everyone can walk back in time.

***Our Values-***

***Integrity***–With honesty and truth, we will adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards in all our endeavors.

***Authenticity***–We will interpret with historical accuracy all of our exhibits, collections, programs, and events.

***Excellence***–We will be exceptional in everything we do.

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***To renew your membership or to become a member, please contact Judy Elden or visit our website and go to the “Join” tab for more information.***

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