

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Jan 2025

SAVE THE DATE

Please join us on Wednesday, March 12, from 6:30-7:30 pm at the Eagle Municipal Building, 820 E. Main Street, for a program called "Remembering the Greatest Generation" as we mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

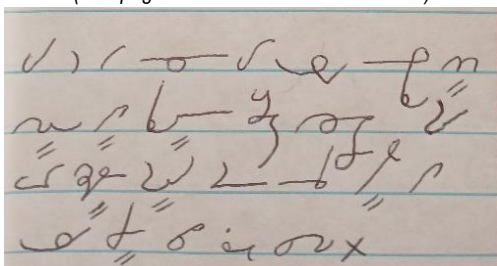
Musical historian Ed Pierce and the Kettle Moraine Blues will take us back to the perilous days of the 1940s when storm clouds gathered over the Atlantic and Pacific. The audience will be invited to sing along to classics like "God Bless America" and "Over the Rainbow."

The Eagle Historical Society will display artifacts from the museum, and refreshments will be served. This program is especially relevant for students and history buffs of all ages. Admission is free.



SHORTHAND QUESTION

(See pages 2 & 5 for translation/answer.)



THANK YOU,
Karen and Gordon Erikson,
for your very generous gift.

CASH DONATION

We received \$250.00 from Citizens Bank as part of their program to support nonprofit organizations. It was used toward the purchase of a new computer for our conference room. Thank you!

EARLY BIRD MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL WINNERS

Prizes: \$25 gift certificates to:

- * Jim & Michele Grotjan—
Red Roof Station
- * Eunice Kelso—
The Hen House
- * Richard & Nada Moeller—
Eagle Public Market

EHS QR CODE

We now have a QR Code allowing our readers access to our website. Go to page 8 and hold your smart phone over the square containing our code while in camera mode.

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Sending out a **BIG THANK YOU** to our generous sponsors and **APPRECIATION** for members who have already responded to our end-of-year membership drive. As a reminder, the year after the name on your address label indicates the year that you are paid up. Anyone with a 24 or earlier is requested to renew their membership. If you have any questions, please contact Gina Neist at: 262-594-8961 or curator@eaglehistorical society.org.

BAKE SALE



Thank you one and all for another awesome bake sale. Ellie and Diana Hall and Pat Hawes have once again gone above and beyond by sharing their baking and planning talents.

EHS MUSEUM

262-594-8961

OPEN HOURS:

Wednesdays: 9 am-Noon

Fridays: 9 am-Noon

Saturdays: 9 am-Noon

WEBSITE:

www.eaglehistoricalsociety.org

FACEBOOK: Like us at
Eagle Historical Society

Pumpkin Party

by Carrie Peavy



Photo by Barbara Lee.

We had sunny fall weather and another great turnout for the annual Pumpkin Party. Ten activities were set up at the museum and enjoyed by

kids of all ages. Craft project memories were created inside. Trivia questions were asked on the patio. Gangster Scott kept crowd control. Mother Earth Janet partnered up with Milwaukee Brewers Fan Steve to supervise the Monster Smash, and Good Witch Pat shared unscary stories with eager listeners. T-Rex Art invited guests along Main Street to our party and also challenged brave souls to a dinosaur hop-scotch match. All in all, a fun day!



Photo by Carrie Peavy

Mystery Artifact

We are excited to add a new feature to our newsletter. Each issue will present a mystery item for you to identify and determine its purpose. Here is our first puzzle item donated by Kathy Mich Oswald.



(Continued on page 5)

EHS Tour

by Carrie Peavy



Just as many of our school children become fascinated using our interactive artifacts, St. Theresa's Fr. Jordan enjoyed testing some of them out in December. He is seen above pausing from his tour to call his secretary via our working vintage rotary telephone. Photo by Elaine Ledrowski.

(continued from page 1)

Shorthand Question Translation:

What is the name of the last major WWII German offensive campaign fought on the Western Front from mid December to late January 80 years ago? (continued below and on p 5)

EHS Board

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Jeff Nowicki, 2026
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2025

- Scott Bovee
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- Gina Neist
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2027

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- Richard Moeller
- Carrie Peavy
- Carolyn Rosprim

Curator

Elaine Ledrowski
262-594-3301

Newsletter Editors
Art & Carrie Peavy

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Shorthand Answer: The Battle of the Bulge (aka the Ardennes Offensive) began on Dec. 16, 1944 and ended on January 25, 1945 during extremely harsh winter conditions (freezing rain, thick fog, deep snow, brutally cold temperatures) throughout tall, dense forests, open plains, towns, villages and waterways in France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. The 'bulge' refers to the shape (depicted on maps) created by German troops that had wedged westward in the Ardennes Forest into the Allies front line and was coined by American correspondent Larry Newman. After this defeat, Nazi forces could only retreat for the remainder of the war. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Bulge

Senior \$8

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 Barbara Lee
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 Peggy Moots
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 Thomas Richardson
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Citizens Bank
 Tom Day
 Ellie & Diana Hall
 Allen & Martina Wegner

by Mike Rice



Photo above is from EHS archives and taken in the 1940s.

It was a sad day for many in Eagle, Wisconsin, as an historic icon closed for good. The Eagle United Methodist Church held its final service on Sunday, December 29, 2024 and was decommissioned on December 31, 2024.

The historic final service may be viewed by visiting eaglehistoricalsociety.org.

For 153 years, its weathered walls had been a witness to joyous weddings, provided solace during funerals, and celebrated new life through baptisms. Generations of families worshipped within its sacred confines; their laughter and tears have been etched into this very sanctuary.

But time, relentless and unyielding, had taken its toll. Over the past few years, the congregation dwindled to only a few as old folks passed on and were not replaced with new members. The church, once a sentinel of faith and tradition, finally faced the harsh reality of its closure. It was a decision made out of necessity, but it did not come without a profound sense of loss.

On the final day, the old wooden doors opened one last time and the pews held the weight of history and the sadness of its people. Older members, who had been

baptized and married here, whose children and grandchildren had walked these same aisles, wept. The church was more than just a building; it was a sanctuary of shared memories and collective faith.

As the final hymn echoed through the church, many eyes were filled with tears while people sang. Old friends clasped hands, their hearts heavy with the realization that they were saying goodbye not just to a place, but to a cherished part of their lives. The church doors closed with the echoes of their voices still lingering in the air.

Though the building stands silent and still, its spirit lives on in the hearts of those who found comfort within its walls. The memories it holds, the love it has witnessed, and the community it has nurtured will remain etched in their hearts forever.



At the last EUMC free community lunch on Dec. 17, EHS recognized this current group of faithful servants with heartfelt appreciation and a Christmas centerpiece. After meeting with some of the ladies and receiving their blessing and guidance, St. Theresa Catholic Church plans to carry on this longstanding tradition starting with a lasagna lunch on Jan. 21. *Photo above by Jim Neist.*

Semanko, Gay

Oct. 6, 1951—Apr. 19, 2024



Gay Semanko, 72, of Bloomington, passed away on 19 April 2024. She was born 6 October 1951 to Mabel and Robert Finney.

Gay is survived by her husband, Michael, her daughter Alissa (Andrew) and son, Tristan.

Having a determination to help people and inspired by her brother, Mark, who had a minor speech impediment, Gay pursued a career in Speech Pathology. She attended the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, where she honed her skills and passion for helping others.

After moving around with her family to find the right position, Gay and her family settled in Bloomington-Normal, where Illinois State University became her professional home.

Gay formed lifelong friendships in the Speech and Language department at Illinois State University, where she also touched many lives by mentoring students. Her students fondly remember her dedicated guidance and the impact she had on their lives. They will all remember, 'The Score Sheet', where her insightful feedback was highly respected and valued. Even after her retirement, she still attended parties and lunches with many of the friends she had from the Illinois State Speech and Language group.

She was a long-time active member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal where she held various positions over the years. Gay was devoted to her involvement with the UUBN congregation, contributing her time and talents to its mission.

Gay's warm smile and genuine kindness touched the hearts of all who knew her. Her generosity, talent, and unwavering com-

passion will be cherished and remembered by those whose lives she enriched. Though she may be physically absent, her spirit will forever live on in the hearts of those who loved her.

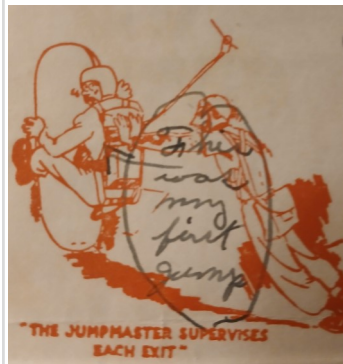
A Service of Celebration of Life for Gay Semanko was held on Sat., November 2, 2024, at 11:00 AM at the Eagle United Methodist Church officiated by Pastor Hyo-Won Park.

(Continued from page 2)

Mystery Artifact Answer: The seven-wheeled nonprinting portable adding machine was made in the USA in the 1940s by Lightning and was used to add numbers up to seven digits. By putting a stylus into the proper slot and turning the dial all the way to the right and then adding more numbers the sum appeared in the small windows above. Answers were cleared by either pulling the lever at the left or turning the dial all the way back to the nine. This 'calculator' was given to Betty Mich, by Eloise Richards after one of many bank takeovers.

(continued from pages 1-2)

Shorthand Answer Extra: In a letter from a teenage Army private dated Aug. 8, 1944, he thanks his older sister 'a hundred and a hundred times' for sending him the best food he's had in seven months followed by a gamut of emotions. He apologizes for not writing sooner, promises to write more often, and hopes she will also. Excitement about his paratrooper training and pointing out his first jump on the stationery. Proud to be getting his wings in a few weeks if he completes all of his jumps. Eager anticipation for his furlough home soon. Notice of him going overseas after that visit. Guarded reassurance of his safe return. Love to all of the family. On Jan. 11, two squads of 3rd Platoon/F Company (many recent replacements on Dec. 31) were ambushed and pinned down in Ottre, Belgium. Most did not live to hear news of the Allied victory two weeks later including this letter's author. The soldier was my Great Uncle George (the youngest of 11 siblings), and his sister was my Grandma Carrie. This treasured family keepsake provides a glimpse into a brief, yet important, life ended while serving our country in the Battle of the Bulge. *by Carrie Peavy*



Kilian, Elmer H.

Mar. 15, 1932—Nov. 17, 2024



Elmer (Red, Bud, & Buddy) Harold Kilian, age 92, of Main St. in Eagle, Wisconsin, (the former Eagle Hospital) died November 17, 2024.

Elmer was born March 15, 1932, in Waterloo, WI, the first of 12 children of the late Harvey and Alice (McGovern) Kilian. He graduated from Waterloo High School and served in the Marine Corps for two years including deployment to Korea where he witnessed the signing of the 1953 Korean Armistice Agreement. He married his beloved Carolyn Helen Heiser on May 10, 1958. They were married for 58 years when she passed away in 2016.

Elmer was employed as an inspector with the Wisconsin Dept of Agriculture - Bureau of Weights & Measures. A career he thoroughly enjoyed. After his retirement with the state Elmer worked for the city of Racine in a similar capacity for a couple of years before finally retiring.

Never one to sit still, Elmer was a pillar in his community having served for 30 years on the Palmyra-Eagle School Board, played in the Eagle Horseshoe League for 40 years, and had been an active member of St. Theresa Catholic Church for over 50 years. As a school board member he was proud to sign and be able to award each of his children their diploma from high school. He also did his neighbors' taxes for more than 40 years. When the Internal Revenue Service sought to make him and other tax

preparers get a license, he bravely sued the IRS and won.

At home he was a gardener, canner, vintner, and hair braider. He enjoyed puzzles, a good card game of Euchre and bowling on various local leagues. He loved hunting deer, turkey and elk with his son.

Elmer is survived by his three daughters, Cynthia (Tom) Harkness of Woodstock, IL, Diane Kilian (Philip Finkle) of Hilton Head Island, SC, and Mary (Evan) Nieder of Murrieta, CA; two grandkids, Angela Erickson (Caleb Brown) of Shelbyville, KY and Darby Nieder of Murrieta, CA; four great grandkids, Angel Erickson (Dustin VanEnkenvort) of Watertown, WI, and Coraline, Cyrus, Carver Brown of Shelbyville, KY.

He is also survived by his siblings James Kilian, Rose Trow, May (Lawrence) Lins, Grace Howard, Joseph (Lynda Kirt) Kilian, Patrick (Pam Dienberg) Kilian, sister-in-law Carol Kilian; and wife's siblings, Marvin (Judy) Heiser and sister-in-law Michelle Heiser. He was loved and will be remembered by many other relatives and dear friends.

Elmer was preceded in death by his wife; his son, Brian Kilian; his grandson, Dennis Erickson; his parents and in-laws Roman and Caroline (Dischler) Heiser; his siblings Robert (Emily) Kilian, Charles (Shirley) Kilian, Catherine (Edward) Updike, Lawrence Kilian, Irene (Clarence) Katzenberger; and wife's siblings Margaret (Frank) Lucht, Bernard Heiser, Valeria (Thomas) Griffith, Clarence (Delores) Heiser, Victor Heiser, Viator Heiser, Roman Jr. (Florence) Heiser, LeRoy Heiser, Melvin Heiser and Kenneth (Ann) Heiser.

The burial mass for Elmer was held in December at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Plain, WI.

Rosprim, Gerald "Jerry" E.

May 6, 1939—Jan. 5, 2025



Gerald E. "Jerry" Rosprim, 85, of LaGrange, WI, passed away in the early hours of Sunday, January 5, 2025 at his home.

Jerry was born on May 6, 1939 in Houston, Texas the son of James F. and Gertrude (Altenburger)

Rosprim, Sr. He grew up in the Houston area and after high school, began attending the University of Houston. After one year of college, Jerry left school to serve his country in the United States Army and was stationed for the majority of his service in Germany. After an honorable discharge, Jerry returned to the University of Houston and finished his undergraduate degree. He would then move to Milwaukee to begin his career in Engineering working for the Nordberg Manufacturing Company and would also pursue his Master's Degree in Engineering from the Milwaukee School of Engineering. After moving to Milwaukee, Jerry met Carolyn Bude in 1965 and the two would later marry on October 28, 1967 at St Matthias Catholic Parish in Milwaukee. God blessed Jerry and Carolyn with a son, Timothy James. Jerry worked as a Diesel Test Engineer for the Nordberg Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee for the majority of his working career, retiring in 2001. He enjoyed his work and was very skilled at his job. Jerry was a quiet and well-mannered person. He was polite and easy to get along with. His interests included working in his vegetable garden, doing yardwork, photography, and relaxing while reading a copy of Time Magazine.

Jerry was also an involved father and led his son's Boy Scout troop for a few years. Jerry will also be remembered for his commitment to his Catholic faith. He, along with his wife, Carolyn were long-time active members of St. Theresa Catholic Church of Eagle and always willing to help the church in many different ways. Jerry was a good man and he will be sincerely missed by those he leaves behind.

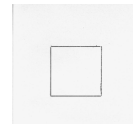
He is survived by: his loving wife of 57 years, Carolyn Rosprim of LaGrange; his dear son, Timothy (Sandi) Rosprim of Alamogordo, NM; his grandson, Samuel "Eli" Rosprim; his siblings, Anne (Lee) Jurecka of Fayetteville, TX, Michael Rosprim of Houston, TX, and Claire (Kenneth "Butch") Klotz of Houston, TX; and his sisters-in-law, Etta Rosprim of Houston, TX, and Sharon Rosprim of Lago Vista, TX. Jerry is also survived by a number of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents, his daughter-in-law, Mary Alice, and his three brothers, David at a young age, James, Jr., and Daniel.

A Visitation for Jerry took place from 5:00PM until 7:00PM on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at the Gibson Family Funeral Home in Eagle, WI. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at 11:00AM on Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at St. Theresa Catholic Parish of Eagle, WI. Fr. Jordan Berghouse officiated the mass. Visitation took place from 10:00AM until the time of mass at the church. Jerry was laid to rest in St. Theresa Catholic Cemetery with full military honors immediately following the mass.

Gibson Family Funeral Homes of Eagle and Palmyra, WI served the family. Online condolences were placed at gibsonfuneral.com.

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.
217 Main Street
P.O. Box 454
Eagle, WI 53119-0454



Visit our website



Eagle Community Lunch

During the economic downturn of 2008, Pastor Larry Turner asked the members of the Eagle United Methodist Church to provide a monthly lunch to anyone in the community that would be available for a free will donation. The Eagle church has now merged with the Palmyra United Methodist Church, but St. Theresa's Catholic Church will continue to serve the community in its handicap-accessible Fellowship Hall on the third Tuesday of the month, September through May. Please join your friends and neighbors for a home cooked meal on the following dates: Feb. 18, Mar. 18, Apr. 15, and May 20. Lunch is served from 11 am—1 pm. Guests may park behind the church for the handicapped accessible door. All of the church doors will be open for those who park in the side lot or on the street.

★ ★ UPCOMING EHS EVENTS ★ ★

- Wed., Mar. 12 “Remembering the Greatest Generation” Musical Program with Ed Pierce and the Kettle Moraine Blues
6:30—7:30 pm at the Eagle Municipal Building
- May 9-11 Brat Sale at EHS during the EBA Annual Community Rummage Sale
- Sun., Jul. 13 Ice Cream Social and Palmyra/Eagle Community Band Concert
1:30—3:00 pm in Eagle Village Park Pavilion