

# Newsletter of the MASON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Mason, Ohio

and Alverta Green Museum

May 2023

## MASON'S FAMOUS THUMB

### Marble Champion Johnny Cunningham

Sally Sherman Caudill, Editor

Eleven-year-old Johnny Cunningham from Mason was the center of all eyes as he walked into the lobby of the Breakers Hotel in Atlantic City. It was June of 1928, and scores of guests gathered around and congratulated him. Waiters speeded up service in double-quick time for the small-town boy "who showed 'em something."

All this because of Johnny's very talented thumb.

John Mount Cunningham was born in Mason on May 11, 1917 to Mary Jane (nee Huskey) and Richard Thomas Cunningham. Their farm was located on 42 near Snider Road, and Johnny grew up with older sister, Mary Elizabeth, and younger brother, Dick.

Like every other child his age, Johnny loved to play marbles. He and his friends would hand-draw a circle in the dirt, dump out a little bag full of marbles and be entertained for hours. It turns out Johnny had a gift for the game, and when a school tournament beckoned in April, 1928, he easily won with his agate (translucent quartz) marbles known as "aggies." Johnny went on to the Warren County tournament and won again. He was now headed to Hamilton to take on the champs of Butler and Clermont Counties. And... once again he scored an easy victory at the Tri-county tourney. Besides a gold medal and trophy, Johnny and two other district winners (from Cincinnati and Northern KY) were awarded an all-expense-paid trip to Atlantic City to compete in the National Marble Tournament. This tournament for 8-15 year-old "mibsters" (marble shooters) began in 1922.

Merchants from Mason and Lebanon, and the Lebanon Rotary Club outfitted him with a whole new wardrobe from

head to toe. Family, friends and supporters chartered two buses to see him off on his big adventure. *The Cincinnati Post* sponsored the competition and the newspaper spared no expense. They arranged for the boys to ride in a private Pullman railroad car named the "Marble Shooters Special." It had an observation deck, all lower berths, and each champ got his own personal porter to attend to their every need. They were riding in style! The boys would be chaperoned by trainers and *The Post's* marble editor. (Yes, they really did have an editor on staff specifically to cover marble stories.)



Johnny sporting his medals, 1928.



*The Cincinnati Post*, June 22, 1928

Johnny (at left, holding hat high) waves from his private, luxury rail car before departing for Atlantic City. The rear of the car was adorned with large photos of the boys and a lighted sign reading, "Marble Shooters Special."

The big day came on June 22nd, and the three champions arrived at Union Terminal together. As they entered the platform, they were greeted by hundreds of family members, friends, schoolmates and well-wishers clapping and cheering. A large brass band from St. Joseph's Orphanage festively played, and a cameraman from Clarence Runey's movie studio filmed all the excitement. This cameraman would travel along with the boys and film throughout the week. (Clarence Runey owned a famous Cincinnati movie studio during the early 20th century.)

*story continues on next page*

The Mason Historical Society and Alverta Green Museum are located in the heart of downtown Mason, Ohio. Established over 40 years ago, the Society's aim is to promote and preserve the history and heritage of Mason.

### TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Join the Mason Historical Society at

[Masonhistoricalsociety.org](http://Masonhistoricalsociety.org)

Call: 513-398-6750

Email: [mason.oh.historical@gmail.com](mailto:mason.oh.historical@gmail.com)

### MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum is open from  
2-5 pm every Thursday,  
and by appointment.

## Johnny Cunningham, cont.

As the B&O train traveled through West Virginia and across Pennsylvania into Philadelphia (with a stop in historic Valley Forge), Johnny and Edward “Eddy” Grossheim, the Cincy champ, entered into an eating contest. Johnny broke all records in the dining car by eating a \$3.75 dinner (\$65 today).

When they arrived at the famed Breakers Hotel in Atlantic City, *The Post* reported that the boys “owned the place.” They went on to say “they broke all laws of hotel conventions and invaded the sacred precincts of the kitchen.” They met world-renowned French chef Omer Bondoux who “waved his magic fork” and produced for them a strawberry shortcake that covered a large table and was over two-feet high. The boys dove into another eating race and once again Johnny came out on top when he cleaned his plate in record time.

In between practices with their trainers, Johnny and his new friends took full advantage of the beach, the many amusement piers, and all the entertainment features available in Atlantic City. He met other boys from all over the country as well as around the world. For an eleven year old who’d never been out of tiny Mason, Ohio, he must’ve wondered if he was on another planet. Out of all the competitors, Johnny had the distinction of being from the smallest town represented in the tourney.

During the elimination series on the first day of competition, Johnny set a world record for marble champs by winning 18 of 20 games. After his feat, as he walked through the lobby of the Breakers, he was treated like royalty as people clamored to him with hearty congratulations. He remained very down to earth, taking all the attention in stride. Pretty amazing, when you think about his photo and news about him appearing in many newspapers across the U.S.

He and Eddy, his food contest buddy, were roommates and became fast friends. Johnny told the reporters “If I can’t win, I want Eddy to get the crown.” Johnny won his division and reached the semi-finals, but through hard luck, was eliminated. (Eddy had the same fate.) However, Johnny had the satisfaction of knowing that he was one of the 10 best marble players in the country.

On their return to Union Terminal on the 4th of July, the boys were greeted at the station with busloads of supporters and the Mason Band, under the direction of Charles McNeely. All three were honored with a parade through downtown Cincinnati streets. Afterwards, they were “whisked to Mason where an all-day jollification was arranged.” A committee of Mason citizens appointed by Mayor J.L. Davis arranged the celebration. *The Post* reported, “Mason’s new fire truck awaited the arrival of the town’s famous son at the outskirts of the village and led the parade through the principal streets.” That’s right, even “Old Betsy” who was a newbie at the time, got to join in on the fun and excitement.

The parade ended at the Town Hall, and Johnny was presented with a gold watch and chain. The band struck up a high-spirited rendition of “When Johnny Comes

Marching Home,” and prominent officials extended their official welcome. *The Post* reported, “Hundreds turned out to pay tribute to the thumb that made Mason famous thruout the world.” A luncheon was held and the boys had a holiday like no other with “a barrel of good things to eat and hundreds and hundreds of persons beaming at ‘em all over.” *The Post* also wrote about the fantastic welcome the boys received from the tiny town. They wrote that the Mason, O. folk are “particularly proud of their Johnny.”



Some of Johnny’s “spoils of the sport.” *left* Beautiful silver relief plaque awarded to Johnny in Atlantic City for winning his division, 1928.

*center* Gold watch and chain presented to Johnny in 1928, by the town of Mason at his welcome home event.

*right* Loving cup trophy from the Rotary Club in 1928.

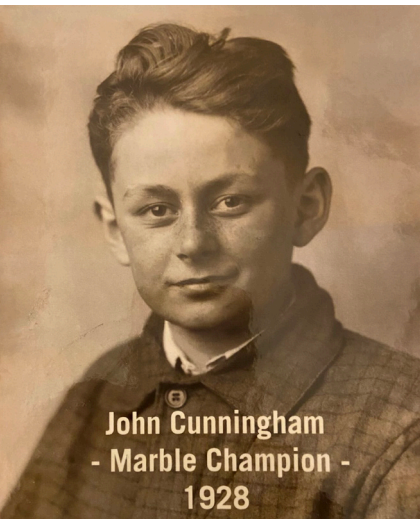
Later that month the movie “Kings of Marbledom” premiered all over Cincinnati. The Clarence Runey film detailed the boys trip to Atlantic City, including their exuberant sendoff, their high-stakes marble games, fun in the east coast sun, and finally their return trip home. Runey arranged for two special screenings in Mason, at the Methodist Church and Town Hall. At the latter, a *Post* representative presented a large photograph of Johnny to Mason Schools.

John’s daughter, Norma Jean Blankenship, told me that her dad took it all in stride. After all the fanfare died down, Johnny’s dad would make him practice, practice, practice. He wasn’t happy about that at all, as he loved playing the game... but he REALLY hated to practice. For him it took all the fun out of the sport. His younger brother, Dick, would soon be eight, and eligible for the tournament, so Johnny tutored him in the art of keeping his knuckles down when “shooting the ducks.”

As spring of 1929 rolled around, Johnny and Dick competed in the school tournament and both moved on to the Warren County competition, where the brothers would go head to head. Norma Jean related that before the tourney, Johnny told his father he was going to ‘hold back’ so that Dick could win and hopefully have the experience of going to the Nationals. While that would have been a selfless gesture, R.T. Cunningham explained to his son that as in everything, he should always give his very best. Johnny followed his father’s advice and won the tournament. Dick placed second in Warren County.

After another consecutive win at the Tri-county meet, where 5000 boys played in the elimination games, Johnny  
*story continues on next page* 2

## Johnny Cunningham, cont.



This large photo of Johnny was presented to Mason schools by *The Post*, and it hung in the hallway of the high school (now Central), the entire time Johnny was a student there. It was centered right between the portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

was once again headed to the Nationals. This time they would play in Ocean City, NJ where the tournament had moved.

Twelve-year-old Johnny was the only returning champ from the area and would travel with new Cincy and N.Ky champs. Their sendoff from Union Terminal was just as ebullient and exciting as it had been the year before. A well-wisher interviewed by *The Post* stated, “when we played marbles in my day, we got spanked for wearing holes in our knees. Now the kids get a free trip to the ocean.” As the boys boarded their private train car, “they looked nifty in white duck pants, white sweaters, and blue ‘peanut’ caps.” The Post reported, “Johnny, of Mason, where they raise ‘em big, is two years younger, but a half-head taller than his 14-year-old companions.” After seeing the boys get kisses all around

from their parents, the man who used to get spanked, shook his head and said, “I’ll be doggone!”

Over 500 people greeted the boys when they arrived at Ocean City. Johnny checked into the palatial Flanders Hotel, and rubbed elbows with millionaires spending their vacation at the resort. Well over 3,000,000 kids across the country had competed for this tournament, and yet, here he was again.

Unlike the previous year, the tournament got off to a slow start for Johnny. He was “trailing along at .250 pace.” Last year, when he’d broken the record, he had a .900 percentage of wins. After the games that day, the organizers took the boys out for a relaxing afternoon of crab fishing in the bay. This must’ve sparked something in Johnny, as he came out the next morning ready to play. He “drove up from the cellar in his league” to first place. He was almost perfect, winning eight of nine games in the semi-finals. But his remarkable comeback

wouldn’t last. The next day in a nail-biter, a player from Springfield, IL took him down the line and captured the league title. He received a gold marquis strap watch as winner of second place in the league. He spent the rest of the tournament up in the stands cheering on the Akron and Youngstown boys, hoping to have an Ohio champion.

Johnny returned to Mason and once more resumed his life. Marble tournaments were in his past so he was back to being a “regular” boy. As a teen, he sounds like he was a bit of an adventurer. His daughter told me that while he was in high school, he climbed halfway up the WLW tower (that’s 400 feet, folks), before having to come down. After his MHS graduation in 1935, he and best friend, Al Barnes, took off and went to Iowa. Al’s uncle had a landscaping company and the boys hoped to make some money. They didn’t last long there and came back home. Within a few years, both boys had married and settled down.

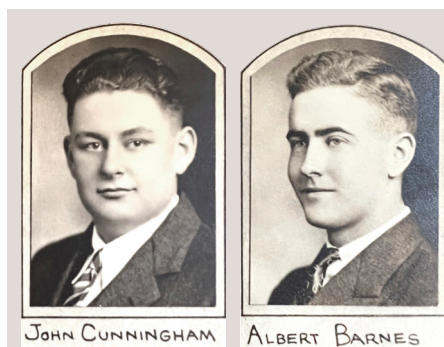
In 1940, John married Norma Montgomery, who was from Dayton, and raised three daughters, Norma Jean, Cheri, and Barbara. He served in the Navy during WWII (working with morse code), and after the war, was a policeman in Amberley Village. A couple of years later the family moved out to San Bernardino, CA where John continued his career as a policeman. After about seven years, he came back to Ohio to be closer to his parents and settled in Preble County. He owned and operated his own feed mill in Camden, and a food locker in Trenton.

John M. Cunningham, aka the “Thumb that put Mason on the Map,” died at the age of 77 on September 4, 1994, near his home in West Elkton, Ohio. He left a lot of great stories and a wonderful legacy for his children, grandchildren, and many friends. Way to roll, Johnny.

A huge thanks goes out to Norma Jean Cunningham Blankenship for her time and many stories. Thanks also to Barb Barnes Pettyjohn for her stories and for introducing me to Norma Jean.

*The Cincinnati Post*, April 23, May 28,31, June 14-15,21-22,25,27-29, 1928 & June 4,22,26-27, 1929

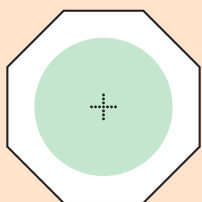
*The Western Star*, June 28, July, 26 1928 & April 25, 1929



1935 senior photos of John, and his best friend, Al Barnes. John and Al met in school at Western Row and lived close by. As adults, their friendship grew and the couples traveled together. Their families spent so much time with each other, that the kids were more like cousins. John and Al remained best friends for the rest of their lives.



Johnny’s father, Richard Thomas “R.T.” Cunningham, served as Mason’s mayor from 1948-1950. Johnny’s great grandfather, local lawyer Richard Hamilton “R.H.” Cunningham also served as the town’s mayor from 1856-1860.



The official game of the tournament is “ringer.” It’s played in a 10-ft. ring with 13 marbles placed in a cross form in the center of the ring. Kneeling outside the ring, the first player to shoot seven marbles out of the ring wins the game.

# THEIR FINEST HOUR

## Mason High's 1962-63 Basketball Team

Sally Sherman Caudill, Editor

*Thanks to Dan Campbell for this story idea. He felt this was Mason's version of "Hoosiers" due to the fact that there were only two classifications at the time (AA-big schools, A-small schools). The previous year, Mason had been in the A category, but moved up to AA in the fall of 1962 because they were just a couple of boys over the small school limit. Thanks also to Dick McCurley for his recollections.*

It was 60 years ago this spring that the 1962-63 Mason Comets basketball team made history by advancing to the District finals. Their first game in the District AA tournament in Middletown was against Kings, but the Comets proved the Knights were no match, walloping them 74-62.

Next up for Mason was defending district champs Hamilton Garfield. In a stunning upset, our boys spanked the top-seeded team in the district in overtime, winning 61-56. Four of the five starters (Rich Fox, Bill Ferrell, Jim Wright, and Dick McCurley) scored in double digits. Mason then took on Reading and squeaked out a win of 40-35.

The underdog Comets were now on their way to the semi-finals against defending state champs Hamilton Taft. Let

me tell you folks, this game was a thriller! It was neck-and-neck all the way – at half time the Comets were down by one, 21-20. At the end of regulation play the score was 47-47, and after the first OT, it was 51-51. But the mighty Comets stomped the Tigers in the second OT with a final score of 59-53. The awesome twosome of Rich Fox\* (with 34 points) and Bill Ferrell (with 20 points) dominated on the court, scoring almost all of Mason's points. *See sidebar on page 7 about the Hamilton Taft fans' response to this loss. It's a doozy!*

The highly anticipated district finals were held at the UC Armory Field house and the Comets met their fiercest competitor yet...undefeated Middletown. Unfortunately though, Mason would lose a heartbreaker to the Middies with an overflow crowd in the stands. *The Cincinnati Post* reported, "Middletown had too much over-all strength for Mason's well-drilled but smaller club." The Comets had played all five-tournament games in just over ten-day's time, and in many games, most of the starters didn't leave the court for the entire game. They played their hearts out but ran out of steam. Final score was 60-38.

The Comets finished the season with an overall record of 17-6, and earned the respect of all who had an opportunity to watch them compete.

*\*Rich Fox was featured in our March 2022 newsletter*

*The Cincinnati Enquirer, Mar 8, 10, 14, 16, 1963*

*The Cincinnati Post, Mar 18, 1963*

*Title of article taken from the 1963 Masonian Yearbook*



Mason Comets Basketball Team 1962-63:

*kneeling in front:*

Dave Jayne, Bill Ferrell, Dick McCurley\*, George "Hub" Wilburn\*, Guy Popplewell, Jim Wright

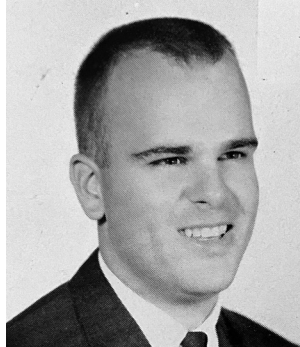
*standing in back:*

Coach Lee Carey, Bob Clingner, Bob Ferrell, Rich Fox, Bruce Walker, Tim Lichtenburg, Charlie Simons

\*co-captains

## TOM LICHTENBERG MEMORIAL PROJECT

If you remember our story in the September 2022 newsletter about the 60th anniversary of Mason High School's first football team, you'll remember that Tom Lichtenberg was part of that story as Mason's first HS football coach. We have recently discovered that a group of former players and alumni are leading an effort to raise funds to create a Memorial Plaque dedicated to Coach Lichtenberg. The funds will be used exclusively for the concept, design, artwork, sculpting,



bronze casting and installation of the memorial plaque. The football-shaped plaque will be approximately 40" tall by 21" wide and will be proudly displayed at the main entrance to Dwire Field. The goal is to raise \$25,000 for the project. Any excess funds will be placed in the Mason High School's "Ken Reed Athletic Scholarship Fund."

The memorial is being designed by Cincinnati sculptor, Tom Tsuchiya. Mr. Tsuchiya is responsible for the statues of the Cincinnati

Reds players at the Great American Ball Park and plaques for the Reds Hall of Fame display. In 2009 he was commissioned to create the "Madden Most Valuable Protectors Award" which is given out annually to the

*story continues on next page 4*

## Tom Lichtenberg Memorial, cont.

National Football League's best offensive line. He also designs the plaques for the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY.

As Mason's first football coach, Tom took a group of boys from a small town and its surrounding farms and built a winning tradition. Many of those on the early teams knew nothing about football. One early player stated, "the first football game that I saw, I played in!" Lichtenberg's teams won three championships in their first five seasons and never finished below second. His teams and their success were instrumental in building the foundation for the future success of Mason Athletics.

Tax-deductible donations may be made through the Mason Historical Society. Checks should be made out to: **Mason Historical Society** with a memo note referring to the **Tom Lichtenberg Fund**. Donations should be sent to: The Peoples First Savings Bank, 225 Reading Road, Mason, OH 45040.

The plaque is scheduled to be completed and installed on Friday, October 20, 2023 for the last home game of the season. Contributions of any amount are greatly appreciated.

For more info contact Mike Pugh at 513-543-9526.



Mike O'Bryant, Scott Stemple, Bruce Crutcher, Paul Schutte, and Bill Federle at the future location of the memorial plaque at Dwire Field.

## A HALF CENTURY OF SERVICE

### Mason Lions Club Hits the Big 5-0

Sally Sherman Caudill, Editor

We want to wish hearty congratulations to the Mason Lions Club. This month, they will be celebrating their 50th year of service to the Mason community since being chartered on May 25, 1973. Lions Club International is the world's largest service organization.

Their main mission when they were chartered, was to help the visually impaired in the community and beyond. This is thanks to none other than Helen Keller. In 1925, she attended the Lions Clubs International Convention and challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." The Lions accepted her challenge in a very big way. Since that time, they have worked to eradicate blindness and prevent vision loss through a wide range of programs. The eyeglass project has given many, many millions of glasses to those in dire need.

Since the inaugural days of the Mason Lions, they have expanded their worldwide mission to include childhood cancer, hunger, our environment, and diabetes.

Now, just to give you a short rundown on their local community service... each year, they recognize students from Mason High, Junior High, Intermediate, and St. Susanna who exemplify that spirit. The Citizenship Award winners exhibit leadership qualities – those students that excel outside the classroom and commit their time to the community. Additionally, for the last 40 years, they have provided the Harry Cook/Cy Strosnider Lions Club Scholarship to a graduating senior.

The Lions have always been a big sponsor and supporter of the Heritage Festival and many of the festivals in days past (remember "Bicycle Days"...). They also sponsor families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and they help with community recycling, among many other things.

The full extent of what they do for the community is waaaayyy too long to list here, but you get the picture.

The Lions Club's motto is "We Serve," and they've lived it here in Mason for 50 years. It's no wonder a group of lions in the wild is called a "pride." That's a very appropriate term for this wonderful organization.

*Note: If you are interested in joining the Lions Club, please contact Jim Cook (president) at 513-518-6328, or Sheila Libecap (membership chairperson) at 513-373-6750.*

Thanks to Ed Strosnider for the story idea and all of this great information.



Five of the original charter members at the 20th anniversary dinner in 1993: Cy Strosnider, Vern Pace, Clyde Burns (still with the Club today), Don Mollman, and Bob Turner.

### Mason Lions Club Charter Officers

Bryan Strosnider, Pres.  
Carl Rogers, 1st VP  
George French, 2nd VP  
George Cholmondeley, 3rd VP  
Kenneth Smith, Secy.  
James Kimmel, Asst. Secy.

Donald Mollman, Treas.  
Phillip Evans, Tail Twister  
Hershel Ledford, Lion Tamer  
Vernon Pace, Chaplain  
Alfred Lautenslager, Director  
Roy Spencer, Director

# MHS Monthly Events

**MAY**

## THE HISTORY OF KINGS ISLAND\*

**MON. MAY 15TH @ 7 PM**

**Evan Ponstingle**, author of "Kings Island: A Ride Through Time" will be at the Museum to discuss his book, and to share the story behind this magical playground and how it has changed over time. His talk offers us a history that is as fascinating as the attractions we've loved all our lives.

## GARAGE SALE AT MUSEUM\*



cool  
stuff

**FRI./SAT. MAY 19-20TH @ 10 AM - 3 PM**

**JUNE**

## MUSIC IN MASON

**BEGINS FRI. JUNE 2ND @ 6 PM**

**Note:** MHS will be having a booth at this event on **June 9th**. Stop by and see us then!

\* Events held at the Alverta Green Museum. Parking available in church lot across the street and (on Monday night events only) in Two Cities lot (enter at white gate).

# HISTORY OF DWIRE FIELD

The crowd was a raucous and harmonious mix of old and new Mason on April 17th. MHS Vice-President Perry Denehy provided an interesting and informative program about the hard work and sacrifice of many, to get a Mason football program off the ground.

Dwire Field got its start in 1962, when Emerson Brown was principal of the High School. He was integral to bringing the football program and Dwire field to fruition. Mr. Brown, now 93-years-young, came down from his home in Bellefontaine, Ohio to attend the program and share some recollections with the audience. Others who shared stories were: Don Eberhard, George "Hub" Wilburn, Greg Elfers, and Mike O'Bryant.

Mason's current Athletic Director Scott Stemple and Varsity Football Coach Brian Castner stressed how proud they were of the history of the program, and how they strive to make it relevant to their players today, about a dozen of whom were in attendance. The whole team couldn't all be there since there isn't enough space. Believe it or not, Mason's current football team has 80 players, a far cry from 1962.

**1962** cost of uniforms for entire team - \$632

**2023** cost of uniforms for **one player** - \$500

Thanks to Jeff Hill for filming the program.

# Ice Cream Social & Baked Goods Auction

Join us at the Alverta Green Museum, 207 W. Church St.

**Monday, June 5th at 5:30 pm**  
**Auction begins at 6:30 pm**

Featuring Local  
Auctioneer  
Gene Steiner



Your baked goods donations continue to make our annual Ice Cream Social one of our best annual fund-raising events!

Baked goods may be dropped off at the museum on Sunday 6/4 from noon-1 pm or Monday 6/5 from 10-noon.

Please call or email us if you need to arrange another time to drop off your donation.

Your assistance is always greatly appreciated.

email: [mason.oh.historical@gmail.com](mailto:mason.oh.historical@gmail.com) or call: 513-398-6750



Thanks to all of our wonderful bakers out there who make this annual tradition such a successful fund-raising event for the Museum and MHS.

## MHS Basketball 1962-63, cont.

### BEATING THE STATE CHAMPS

It would be an understatement to say that the Hamilton Taft fans were not exactly in a congratulatory mood towards Mason after the game. Things got pretty heated but fortunately no one was hurt.

Dick McCurley recalled that he was sitting on the rim cutting the net down, when a Hamilton Taft fan picked-up a basketball from the ball rack and

threw it right at him. Luckily he wasn't hit. Dick also recollected that during the game, Mason's Bill Ferrell had made a number of shots from the corner. One particular Taft fan had not been happy about that at all. After the game, he came out of the stands and punched Bill.

The ire of the Taft team was directed at the fans as well. Jim Spaeth recalled someone throwing a lit firecracker into his car as it was pulling out of the parking lot.

## The Board Report

Jay Meibers, President



May reminds me when I was in school that summer break was near. Weather would be warming up and the baseball season would be in full swing.

I also remember that the end of the school year meant that a new senior class was now on the prowl looking for new freshman. I remember my brother Chris being a new freshman in 1970 walking home from Mason Central in his underwear. Seniors caught him, took his pants and ran them up the flag pole at Central. Knowing Chris, I'm sure he had a few choice words for them.

The summer I was a new freshman in 1976, we had many sightings of a car load of seniors slowly driving through the neighborhood looking for freshmen. Fortunately, I was always near my house but a number of my classmates were not so lucky and were chased down and were soon missing their pants. It was all in good fun until Mason schools began cracking down hard on hazing in the late 70's.

In June, we will roll out our 2023 Rally Around MHS Raffle. We will be sending out raffle tickets to our members and ask that you please consider purchasing and/or selling the tickets. This is one of our major fund-raisers for the year and we hope you can support the raffle.

June 5 is our annual Ice Cream Social and Baked Goods auction at the museum, rain or shine. Weather permitting we will be outside but will move it inside if needed. Gene Steiner will once again be our incredibly entertaining auctioneer. We will also introduce the winner of the 2023 MHS \$1,000 scholarship.

We have already received a few brick orders. We will wait until late May to order the bricks from our vendor which allows more time for anyone interested to get your orders in to us. These make great gifts.

Thanks again to everyone who have already sent in their 2023 membership dues. Memberships are due now. However, we will not make any changes to our NL mailing list until July 1, so you still have a little time to renew. If you have any questions on your membership then please call or email us at the museum.

Stay safe, stay well!

## THIS MONTH IN MASON HISTORY

Excerpts from *Around Mason, Ohio: A Story*, Rose Marie Springman

**1886:** The first commencement was held after the grade system was adopted in the township. High school students had to complete three years of study to graduate. On Friday, May 21, seven graduates, Myrtle Bursk, Sadie Mahon, Kate Valentine, Hester Keever, Gilbert Dom, Joseph Bursk, Jr., and Peter Ross, gathered with their friends and families at the local Presbyterian Church and received their diplomas from Dr. J. M. VanDyke.

**1909:** A group of local racing fans were formulating a plan for horse racing to be held at the local fairground racetrack every other Saturday afternoon during the summer. (*The fairgrounds were at Wykoff Woods, in the area of Grace Baptist Church on Hamilton-Mason Rd.*)

**1918:** The young men in the Mason area found a place again to play baseball and a team was formed to play against teams from other towns in the area. A typical team was made up of Farland Dwire, Jack Scales and Blair Runyan as catchers, Barney Kroger, Howard Dwire, Toad Bowman, Ike Heiberger and James Dumford as pitchers, Vern Bursk at second base, Donald Dwire at first and Jimmy Thompson and Edgar Hoss at third, Charles Tompkins at shortstop and Walter Parker, Howard McClung and others in the outfield.

**1928:** Mason High School junior class took the 14 members of the senior class to Cincinnati by bus to attend a movie. When the group returned to Mason, they all went to Hutchins Drugstore for sodas.

**1930:** The 45th annual meeting of the alumni of Mason High School was held on May 16 at the school and Freeman Williamson of the class of 1895 was the oldest member present. The school had graduated 373 and 68 graduates were present.

**1932:** On May 14 Hazel Shumaker wrote in her journal that "a man from Tennessee fell 350 feet from the new radio tower at WLW and was killed. The tower is 870 feet high and is said to cost \$400,000."

**1957:** A *Cincinnati Enquirer* article quoted a Mason Community leader as saying, "In the morning half the people here get in their cars and roar away. We don't see them again until night." The village was designated a bedroom community.

# BUSINESS MEMBERS *and* PARTNERS

## LIFETIME MEMBERS

Air Authority Heating and Air Conditioning  
Al's Heating and Cooling  
American Legion, Post 194  
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 194  
Brunk Excavating, Inc.  
Chris Champ – State Farm agent  
Jeff Hill Video  
Mitsubishi Electric Automotive  
People's First Savings Bank  
R.E. Middleton Construction LLC  
Senour-Flaherty Insurance  
Shorten and Ryan Funeral Home  
Voorhis, Slone, Welsh and Crossland, Architects  
Walldogs – Mason Sign Company  
Yost Pharmacy, Inc.

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

Artis Senior Living of Mason  
Heritage Awards  
Lt. Robt. N. Mount V.F.W.  
9622 Aux.  
Minuteman Press of Lebanon  
Mueller Funeral Home  
Terry's Lawn Care, Inc.  
Warren County Historical Society

## PARTNERS

City of Mason  
Culver's – Mason  
Mason City Schools  
Mason Community Grange  
No.1680  
Mason-Deerfield Chamber  
Mason Public Library



Army SP4 Marty Gruber, KIA, Vietnam, August 8, 1968

