The Ohio Local History Alliance is off to a great start in 2012 with exciting new plans for Alliance members and friends. Plans to outdo the Alliance’s great 2011 state-wide annual meeting are already in the works, the Ohio Historical Society’s new History Fund matching grant program for local historical and historic preservation organizations is gearing up, and the Alliance will (Continued on page 3)
As in nature, winter is a time when we have the chance to focus on planning all those spectacular events. Of course, we have the chance to learn from our peers, too, at the many panel sessions and workshops at the meetings. In addition to networking, you’ll also learn about a new and never before available grant program, the History Fund. The History Fund is a grant program created by the Ohio Historical Society that will benefit history organizations, like yours and mine, across the state. The opportunities on pages 1 and 6 share a few details about the program. This spring, as the majority of Ohioans are working on filing their state tax returns, the main thing to remember is this: Many contributions — large grant fund = cool history projects all over the state. The more Ohioans who check the OHS box and provide the Ohio Historical Society with the tax refund they can make, the more the Ohio Historical Society will be able to support. OHS has promised to create this grant fund for us since it first proposed the “tax check off” in 2006. Now we have it — let’s build it up!

Christie Weininger
President, Ohio Local History Alliance Executive Director, Wood County Historical Center & Museum, Bowling Green (419) 352-0676, director@woodcountyhistory.org

Ohio Local History Alliance
Organized in 1960 under sponsorship of the Ohio Historical Society, is comprised of local historical societies, historic preservation groups, history museums, archives, libraries, and genealogical societies throughout the state dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting Ohio’s history.

The Ohio History Center
2004-360, 17th Avenue, Columbus, OH 43212-2497, as a beneficiary of the Ohio Historical Society, 800 East 17th Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2497, and under the guidance of its strategic plan, one of the Alliance’s “New Year resolutions” is to promote the History Fund, the new official name for the “tax check off” program. In this article, we ask you to personally contribute to the Fund. The greater the amount of money donated to the program, the more the Ohio Historical Society will have to re-grant for local history and historic preservation projects across this great state.

“Contributing” means donating a portion of your tax refund, look for NEW—Ohio Historical Society in red letters and fill in the boxes! (Thanks) Ohio taxpayers who do not receive refunds, but want to support the program, can help by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Ohio Historical Society ATTN: History Fund.

Meetings
Meetings, too! These meetings provide local history groups both small and large, and expanding and new, with vital information and resources to help Ohioans preserve and share the past of their places. Meeting participants continue to rave about the value of the meetings, saying, for example, that “the ideas were really broad and great” and “one of the most informative programs I’ve attended as part of the regional meetings.” Ohioans refer to the “oatmeal cake,” as well as “the opportunity to network [and] hearing what is going on in other communities.” Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend 2012!

Christine Moon, Editor
Wood County Historical Center & Museum, Bowling Green
(c) 2012 Ohio Historical Society

REGIONAL MEETINGS

2012 Regional Meetings... We have a new website later in 2012. It is an exciting time to be a member of Ohio Local History Alliance! The Alliance will carry out its mission this year to inspire, connect and educate by offering fantastic professional development opportunities at the 2012 Alliance’s regional meetings, too! These meetings provide local history groups both small and large, and expanding and new, with vital information and resources to help Ohioans preserve and share the past of their places. Meeting participants continue to rave about the value of these meetings, saying, for example, that “the ideas were really broad and great” and “one of the most informative programs I’ve attended as part of the regional meetings.” Ohioans refer to the “oatmeal cake,” as well as “the opportunity to network [and] hearing what is going on in other communities.” Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend 2012!

Regional Meeting Agendas
Under the guidance of its strategic plan, one of the Alliance’s “New Year resolutions” is to pave the way for Ohio’s historical organizations to adapt to 21st century changes in such areas as technology, audiences, membership, and volunteer administration (among others). To carry out this resolution, the Alliance’s regional meeting theme is “Inspire or Expire: How to Remain Relevant in the 21st Century” and “Enlighten Your Community” and “Unsublimating Online Marketing Techniques” as well as “How to Transform a Menagerie of Architectural Artifacts into a Museum Exhibit that Inspires and Educates.” All sessions were created by your peers and feature speakers from across the state. We offer many opportunities to discover new resources, increase your knowledge of local historical society management, success stories, and network with other people dedicated to local history when you attend the Alliance’s Regional Meetings.

Meeting Dates & Registration
See the meeting schedule elsewhere on this issue. The 2012 regional meeting brochure should have already arrived in your mailbox. Meetings started on March 17 and will continue through April 21 and always take place on a Saturday. We have scheduled two regional meetings on each Saturday (except March 31). All meetings begin at 9 a.m. with registration and continental breakfast and end by 4 p.m.

OLHA members are welcome—and encouraged—to attend meetings in any region (besides your own) that suits your needs and interests. Members are also welcome to encourage colleagues and friends so they can benefit from the camaraderie and resources the Alliance offers. To register online, go to www.ohiohistory.org/register or by phone by calling toll-free 1-800-858-6878. For a complete meeting schedule, go to www.ohiohistory.org/historyfund. For any questions about the History Fund, contact communications from the Ohio Historical Society. Thanks!
Jonathan Wotring is the new executive director of the Lakewood Historical Society. He was formerly an independent consultant in the field of historic preservation and director of preservation at the Historic Second Church in Cincinnati. Mr. Wotring has degrees from the University of Cincinnati and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He has completed post-graduate, continuing education programs in Museum Administration and History of the Arts and Crafts movement at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and an internship in Irish architectural conservation practices with the Dúchas (Irish Heritage Services) in Ireland. He takes the place of former long-time director Mazie Adams, who retired from the position in 2011.

For more about the Lakewood Historical Society, go to: http://lakewoodhistoricalsociety.org/

Jack Shortlidge has been promoted to senior program officer at the Ohio Humanities Council in Columbus. He is responsible for the Council’s major grants program ($5,001-20,000), as well as its K-12 Teachers Institutes and Media grant lines. He also assists in the review of regular grants ($2,001-5,000). Jack has been with the Council since 2000.

David Merkowitz joined the Ohio Humanities Council’s staff as a program officer in August 2011. He came from Otterbein University, where he taught American history and western civilization courses. He earned a M.A. and Ph.D. in history at the University of Cincinnati. David is responsible for the Council’s mini-grant program (grants up to $2,000), assists with the review of regular grants, and is active in OHCS’s heritage tourism initiative. David takes the place of Frank Dunkle who administered mini and regular grants, helped develop OHIO CHAUTAUQUA, and maintained OHCS’s popular Speakers Bureau. Frank left the Council to take on a new career as the pastor of a church in southern Ohio.

For more information about grants and programs from the Ohio Humanities Council, please visit http://www.ohiohumanities.org

Congratulations to Kathy Fernandez, executive director of the North Canton Heritage Society and Ohio Local History Alliance treasurer. Kathy was honored by the Canton-Sterk County Soroptimist Club as its 2011 “Woman of Distinction.” Soroptimist is an international organization for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls, in local communities and throughout the world. To learn more about the North Canton Heritage Center, see: http://www.northcantonheritage.org

The Ohio Local History Alliance is saddened to report the death of Jim White, a winner of an Outstanding Individual Achievement Award (from the Ohio Association of Historical Societies of Museums in 2010). Jim received the award for his long and distinguished service to Oberlin Heritage Center. He had served as the Heritage Center’s president from 2005-2010 and was one of the first Endowed Life Members of the Oberlin Heritage Center. Since 1999, he recorded 1,400 volunteer hours with the organization and was a dedicated fundraiser for the organization. During his tenure on the Board, the Oberlin Heritage Center became accredited by the American Association of Museums, built its endowment, donated the Burrell-King House for use as Oberlin Conservatory of Music’s Community Music School, and developed/implemented two ambitious five-year Strategic Plans. Describing him in OAHSM’s award nomination, Oberlin Heritage Center Executive Director Patricia Murph recalled that “Jim epitomizes courtesy, sense, civility, and fun...and I count having the opportunity to work with him as a great honor, pleasure and joy.” For more information the organization Jim White so ably led, go to http://www.oberlinheritage.org

WELCOME
The Ohio Local History Alliance welcomes five new regional representatives to its board, beginning in January 2012.

Christie Evans, Gahanna Historical Society; Jessica Goodnote, The Castle (Marietta) (appointed in August 2011); Margaret Parker, Meigs County Historical Society; Kate Smith, Spring Hill Historic Home (Massillon); and Brenda Stultz, Clyde Heritage League

THANK YOU
The Alliance is grateful for the service of the following regional representatives, trustees-at-large, and board officers, whose tenure on the Board, the Oberlin Heritage Center became

What do people like?
Quizzes, competitions, and special announcements!

What do people like?
When people go to your website and/or social media page, they want to know what your organization is doing at that very moment. Get your online audience involved in your work by sharing information about projects you are working on (such as new artifact acquisitions or developing a new exhibit). Don’t just tell them about it, though. Give them details about what you have discovered, ask questions, and give them the ability to participate by offering helpful information. People love to get a “peek preview” of new exhibits or artifacts so be sure to post images!

It’s even easier and faster to create engaging content by posting quizzes or competitions with small prizes (buttons, posters, and bookmarks are always popular and inexpensive!) to test people’s knowledge of local history. Once your audience is engaged, you have the opportunity to share even more information about the topic. For example, the Ohio Historical Society Collections Blog asked the question, “Why Don’t People Smile in Old Black and White Photos?” People were eager to get involved and share their own answers and OHS staff were able to share images from the Society’s collections and provide fascinating information about how long it took to take a photograph in the late-1800s. In addition, posting images of an artifact and asking people what they think it is can be used for are always popular posts.

Plan ahead
Yes, it is possible to plan your content ahead of time much like a newsletter but it costs less time and effort to produce. In a Word document (or on your website) develop a list of fun facts and quizzes, program announcements, interesting artifacts in your collection, guest author articles, local history stories, photos, etc. Plan on posting one new, short article on a designated schedule. It is recommended that articles be between 1-4 paragraphs but no longer than that. Some organizations may be able to post once a day; others, only once a week. Compile all your topics for about two weeks’ to one month’s worth of articles so it will take you less than a minute of your time to post it.

Respond to your audience
Always try to respond to your audience when they ask or answer a question or post a comment. Successful websites and especially social media pages are great at engaging people with conversations with your audience so they can interact with you and other followers. Don’t make your audience feel like they are talking to a wall! Offer encouragement, post links for additional information, congratulate contest winners, and give them your contact information so they can get in touch with you. It takes very little time to respond and it can be done by staff, interns, or volunteers.

Encourage user-generated material on social media sites
Getting your audience to post their own photos, quotes, and links is a great way to keep your followers engaged and conversing with one another while also alleviating the need for you to constantly create new content. Make sure to ask people to post their own content such as images of family heirlooms, photos taken while visiting a historic site, favorite quotes, and website links. When you have followers adding new content on a regular basis, you know your site is successfully engaging your online audience.

Don’t be afraid of the silence
Not getting any responses to your questions and articles? Don’t worry! It often takes a little while to get people to respond, especially until you have a steady following. Oftentimes people are reluctant to be the first to post because they don’t want to be seen as being something “dumb. Consider having another staff member or volunteer be the first to respond to get the conversation started and show your online audience that people are welcome to engage on your website or social media.

In addition, make sure your questions are interesting and encourage discussion. Post a provocative question (but not too controversial!) or an interesting quote.

Answered by Kristina Kuehling, Development Officer, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus
By Jack Shortlidge, Senior Program Officer, Ohio Humanities Council, Columbus

Starting in June, 2013, the Ohio Humanities Council will sponsor an exhibit called Journey Stories, an exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS). This exhibition was developed especially for small institutions and rural audiences that typically do not have access to traveling exhibits. OHC invites applications from historical societies and museums, libraries, or other institutions with the requisite resources for hosting Journey Stories.

EXHIBIT SUMMARY
Journey Stories, or tales of how we and our ancestors came to America, are a central element of our personal and national heritage. From Native Americans to new immigrants and regardless of our ethnic or racial background, it is a story of how they came to live where they live. The reasons behind those decisions move them to a new place.

Our transportation history is likewise more than boats, buses, cars, wagons, railroads, and trucks. The Museum on Main Street exhibit Journey Stories will examine the connection between our modes of travel and Americans’ desire to feel free to move. The story is wide-ranging and focuses on immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom.

It is a accounts of immigrants coming in search of promise in a new country, as well as oral and family stories of Africans and Native Americans forced to move. Journey Stories also recounts stories of fun and frolic on the open road. The exhibit uses engaging images with audio and artifacts to tell the individual stories that illustrate the critical roles travel and movement have played in building a diverse American society.

EXHIBIT DESIGN
For Journey Stories exhibit installation will examine how residents and their ancestors came to live in or near the host community, as well as about memorable trips that people have taken. The Ohio Humanities Council has worked with other institutions to create programs that will be available to most exhibit hosts.

Each Host Institution Will Receive:

- An exhibition support manual detailing installation, public relations, and promotion
- Promotional materials such as posters, brochures, banners, and a press kit
- Workshops on program planning and exhibit installation
- Consultation with OHC staff for project planning and implementation
- Access to OHC’s mini-grant program

Each Host Institution Will Be Required To:

- Pay a $1,000 cash fee to the Ohio Humanities Council to offset rental and shipping costs
- Identify a staff member or volunteer who will attend all planning meetings and act as project director
- Maintain and publicize regular exhibition hours (no less than 25 hours per week)
- Conduct locally-based public programming during the exhibit’s stay. OHC will select host institutions based on factors such as geographic distribution, ability to provide public access to the exhibit, and interest in community programming.

The Ohio Humanities Council partners with the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum on Main Street to sponsor the Journey Stories exhibit and the Ohio Local History Partnership. For more about Journey Stories, visit the Smithsonian’s Museums on Main Street website: http://www.museumonmainstreet.org.

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New Exhibit from MoMS and the Ohio Humanities Council, Journey Stories

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The Advocacy and Public Awareness Committee is responsible for evaluating entries to the Ohio Local History Alliance Outstanding Achievement Award program. We recognized the winners in the last issue, but not the judges. Thanks to the following: Kathleen Addlesperger, Richland County Museum; Leianne Neff Heppner, Summit County Historical Society; Craig Holbert, University of Akron Archives; Kristina Kuehling, Ohio Historical Society; Bill Lawson, Mahoning Valley Historical Society; Andy Verhoff, Ohio Historical Society (Coordinator). In 2011 the Alliance’s award program received 18 nominations and gave 12 awards. Awards nomination forms 2012 will be sent in April; the deadline for nominations is August 1, 2012.
New Outta Space: Best Practices in Storage and Space Planning Registration now open!

The Ohio Connecting to Collections survey in 2009 identified inadequate storage space for cultural heritage collections as the number one preservation problem statewide. This day long workshop will provide ideas and best practices on how to address space issues at your institution. Professionals from libraries, museums, archives, and historical societies and conservation communities will discuss how they evaluated space conditions at their institutions and the space planning methodologies and practices they have adopted. Featured speakers include Wes Boomgaard, associate professor and preservation officer for the Ohio State University Libraries, who will provide the keynote, and national expert on facilities design for special collections Christian Dupont, providing practical advice on space and workflow considerations.

Two identical workshops will be offered, one for the south half of the state and one for the north.

Tuesday, April 17, 2012
Cincinnati Museum Center
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
In conjunction with the 2012 Ohio Museums Association Annual Conference

Wednesday, May 15, 2012
Akron-Summit County Public Library
9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
In conjunction with the Ohio Preservation Council Annual Meeting

For more information contact state librarian Mary Berbatchenko at mberbatchenko@ohiohistorian.org or call (614) 297-2528. National History Day in Ohio can be found online at www.ohiohistoryday.org.

Interested in learning more about History Day while experiencing student achievement firsthand? Sign up to judge for regional or Ohio History Day! Judges evaluate students’ efforts, work in teams, and decide which projects move on to the next level of competition. Judging typically starts at 8 am with an overview of the program and training and is done by 1 pm. Judges are provided with continental breakfast and lunch.

Regional events take place Saturdays in March. The statewide Ohio History Day competition is April 28, 2012 at the Ohio Union at The Ohio State University.

National History Day in Ohio is a yearlong program for students in grades 4-12. Students conduct research around an annual theme and create historical papers, performances, documents, exhibits, and web sites. The 2011-2012 theme is Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.

Judge sign up forms can be found online at: http://www.ohiohistorian.org/ohistoryday/judge.html

For more information contact state librarian Mary Berbatchenko at mberbatchenko@ohiohistorian.org or call (614) 297-2528. National History Day in Ohio can be found online at www.ohiohistoryday.org.

National History Day in Ohio: Looking for Judges!

It seems like Facebook is everywhere. In the news, on your phone, even Hollywood has made a movie about Facebook! I used Facebook personally for many years and so when I arrived at The Castle in Marietta, Ohio as a brand-new volunteer, and learned that The Castle did not have a Facebook page, it was surprising. For me, as a member of the technology-obsessed generation, it seemed like The Castle was missing an important tool for reaching members of the community that was forward thinking and technologically savvy. Just because our focus is history, doesn’t mean our approach to advertising, reaching new members and contacting volunteers has to be archaic as well. But a lot of the tech tools that make running a historical society or museum easier needs a little explanation for those who are not as familiar with the tools around with new technology. This article explains the details of starting a Facebook page for your organization.

How to get started:

- You will need a personal Facebook page to create your organization’s Facebook page. You will need a personal Facebook account. Go to www.facebook.com. You need a personal Facebook page because your organization’s pages will need to change to pictures, post new events, and get more likes.

- Once you have set up a personal page, you can create your organization’s page. Go to the organization’s page and click on ‘Create a Page’.

- Then you will choose which type of page you want to open for your organization: The Castle uses ‘Local Business or Place’. You choose a category (The Castle is under Museums), put the name of the organization, website address, and phone number.

- You must agree to Facebook terms of service. After all, for the use of this free service, you have to play by the free service’s rules.

Once your page is created you can:
- Add a picture of your organization.
- Remember, if you are going to post pictures of anyone make sure you get their permission.
- Add events, and you can get as specific as you want
- Add open hours and contact information
- Invite friends to ‘like’ your page. The more ‘likes’ you have, the wider your range of influence! Facebook influence travels through people; invite a lot of friends to ‘like’ your page. When they ‘like’ it, it will show up on THEIR ‘friends’ pages and then those friends may ‘like’ your organization too.

For tips on how to keep people interested in your page, see the “Dear Local Historian” columns in this issue.

The short answer is update often! Post pictures, statuses, events, comments, and notes. You can write about your local places that are important to your historical society, post pictures of events, write about the people who used to live in your home, and advertise the events that you have. The more information, the better.

A great example of how The Castle uses Facebook is our Victorian Wake and Funeral reenactment. The event is a favorite of our volunteers who have dressed in period clothing, decorated the house in memorial decor, and written about the Victorian Superstitions of Death. We always do this as a special October event, and this year we wanted it to be big so we started a month early. We chose a fictitious resident to “die” at The Castle. And on Facebook, we updated about how her illness progressed. Each week we would add something about poor Mistress Charlotte Bell’s weakening spirit. We also added “did you know” facts about Victorian mourning rituals to garner interest. Soon we had a following of people wanting to know how ‘Mistress Charlotte’ was doing. Finally, a few days before our event, Mistress Charlotte passed away. We then invited everyone to visit The Castle (dressed in mourning clothes if they so desired) and give their condolences to this event this most more than doubled and we had many people expressing their interest in next year’s wake. Connecting in such a way to The Castle’s fans would not have been possible without Facebook. Facebook is easy to use, but it does require a little time and effort. But once you embark on this journey, the possibilities are endless and completely up to you! Check us out at: www.facebook.com/castle.marietta
Thank you
Renewing Members

Individual

Christy Evans, Gahanna
Nancy Gracely, New Bloomington
Edward J. Hall, Jr., Kent
Sharon Hays, Canton
Joshua Mann, Mentor
Elizabeth Swartz-Khan, Kent

Organizations

Lakon Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN
Alliance Historical Society, Alliance
Amherst Historical Society, Amherst
Auglaize County Historical Society, Wapakoneta
Audubon Town Historical Society, Austintown
Belpre Historical Society, Belpre
Butler County Historical Society, Hamilton
Butler-Clearfork Valley Historical Society, Butler
Crosby Township Historical Society, Harrison
Dayton Police History Foundation, Dayton
Delaware County Historical Society, Delaware
Delaware Historical Society, Cincinnati
Erie County Historical Society, Sandusky
Friends of Kennedy Stone House, Blue Rock
Friends of White Water Valley Village, Cincinnati
German Village Society, Columbus
Geauga County Historical Society, Burton
Granville Historical Society, Granville
Hardin County Historical Museum, Kenton
Harrison County Historical Society, Cadiz
Hebron Historical Society, Hebron
Highland County Historical Society, Hillsboro
Historical Society of Old Northfield, Northfield
Kidron Community Historical Society, Kidron
Lake Township Historical Society, Eaton
Linton L. Jones Museum, Jackson
Little Rond School Historical Society, Willoughby
Livingston House Society, Reynoldsburg
Madoc Ford for Welsh Studies, Rio Grande
Maritime Museum of Sandusky, Sandusky
Meigs County Pioneer & Historical Society, Pomeroy
Miami Valley Historical Society, Miami Township
Middleburg Heights Historical Society, Middleburg Heights
Mingo County Pioneer & Historical Society, Pomeroy
"Soldiers’ & Sailors’ Monument Grp., Cleveland"
Spring Mill Historic Home, Massillon
Stow Historical Society, Stow
Surth Museum, Warren
Swiss Community Historical Society, Bluffton
Toledo Lucas County Public Library, Toledo
Underground Railroad Museum, Piqua
Western Lake Erie Historical Society, Ottawa
Worthington Historical Society, Worthington

Thank you
New Members

Individual

Rebecca Bailey, Crestview, KY

Organization

Hebron Historical Society, Hebron

News from the Regions

Region 3

Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, and Summit Counties

The Oberlin Heritage Center announces the recent installation of a new comic book, "Oberlin: Origins and Osyra!" by Bentley Boyd of Chester Comics. According to a Heritage Center press release, the comic provides an "informative, broad introduction to Oberlin and its rich and diverse history." The press release then adds, "The comic was a collaborative process." The news release continues, "Oberlin started with an initiative launched by the Oberlin Heritage Center and then worked his creative magic." Staff of the Heritage Center served as editors; Center volunteers assisted with research and reviewed drafts. "Oberlin: Origins and Osyra!" sells for $6.95 per copy. To learn more about the Oberlin Heritage Center visit http://www.oberlinheritage.org. For more on Chester Comics, visit http://www.chestercomix.com.

Region 4

Ashtabula, Geauga, Mahoning, Portage, and Trumbull Counties

Carroll, Columbiana, Hancock, Holmes, Jefferson, Stark, Tuscarawas, and Wayne Counties

Under "the every little bits" department, the Winter quarter newsletter of the Lake Township Historical Society near Hartville, reports two fundraising programs. The first is an effort to collect old printer inkjet cartridges. The society sends the used cartridges to an organization called Recycle4Charity and receives in return a set amount of money per cartridge, depending on manufacturer. The second is the local Acme Fresh Market's Community Cash Back Program. Shoppers turn in their register receipts to the LTHS and the society in turn submits the market. The market then makes a donation to the historical society based on a percentage of the amount of the purchase. For more about the society, go to http://www.lakehistoricalsociety.org.

Region 5

Ashland, Crawford, Erie, Huron, Marion, Morrow, Ottawa, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, and Wyandot Counties

In 100 words or less, do you have outstanding news to share about your organization? Please email it to your regional representative for the next issue of The Local Historian. Contact information for the representatives in your region is on page 2 of this issue. Of course, you are welcome to forward your news directly to the editor of The Local Historian at velford@ohiohistory.org. Rather than serving as a calendar of events, items for News from the Regions are chosen with the intention of inspiring, connecting, and educating the Alliance’s members all over Ohio and celebrating notable and iteration-worthy accomplishments of Alliance members.

Region 6

Allen, Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Lucas, Putnam, Van Wert, Williams, and Wood Counties

Mesopotymia, the Winter quarter newsletter of the Seneca County Courthouse, in 1884 and listed on National Register of Historic Places is no more. Despite the efforts of interested Seneca Countians and Ohio’s historic preservation community, the courthouse was razed in early January by a victim of maintenance deferred too long, the county commission voted two to one to remove the landmark. Seneca County had been the only county in Ohio to tear down its courthouse since 1970 and the only one to demolish a courthouse listed on the National Register. For more on the story as it unfolded, see http://www.ohiolodgesblades.com/senecacountyhome.html.

Region 7

Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Meigs, Montgomery, Preble, and Shelby Counties

The Shelby County Historical Society is forming collaborations this year with its bookstore and sister organizations. Further, the society will host an event in the county to tell its story. In cooperation with the community historical societies of Anna, Botkins, Jackson Center, and Fort Loramie, the Shelby County organization will be publishing historical articles about these communities in its new bookstore and hosting public events. For details, go to http://www.shelbycountyhistorians.org.

Region 8

Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton, Highland, and Warren Counties

The year 2011 was filled with accomplishments at the Butler County Historical Society in Hamilton. In the Spring the society received a Community Appearance Award from the Greater Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, in large part thanks to area’s Master Gardeners, who maintain the historical society’s grounds. The society also hosted six events to accommodate their Spring! Calendar. As the society dug into digitized historical records, they updated the society’s web site, and developed an exhibit about the Meise family company, from Hamilton. The society updated its inventory of its museum collection. Many grants supported the society in 2011, including (but not only) those from the Hamilton Community Foundation and from Herbert T. and Olive Randall for construction of the research library addition to the Benninghoff House Museum, and from the Lexis-Nexis Foundation and Microsoft Corporation for computer hardware and software. There will be a grand opening and formal dedication of the research library addition in the spring of 2012. To learn more, go to http://www.hcbhm.org/about.html.

Region 9

Athena, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton Counties

The Jackson Historical Society, manager of Leo Pettigrew’s Memory of the Ohio Historical Society, recently took steps to provide accommodations for its winged visitors, in addition to those that are bipedal. The Jackson Historical Society installed bat houses on the site. This was to divert bats from the human shelter house, which the bats had previously inhabited and left great quantities of guano and annoyed picnicgoers and other visitors. For more about the Jackson Historical Society and Leo Pettigro, go to http://www.jacksonhistoricalsociety.org and http://ohowsh.ohiosociety.org/portal/places.shtml.

Region 10

Belmont, Coshocton, Guernsey, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, and Washington Counties

Join the Ohio Local History Alliance...

...or connect a sister organization to the Alliance and ask it to lead, in your region, efforts in new directions...

Organizational Member

Get six bimonthly issues of The Local Historian, save when you register for your Alliance regional and statewide local history meetings, receive periodic email updates, and save on Ohio Historical Society services for organization, including speakers too educational and training workshops. Best of all, when you join the Alliance as an Organizational Member, your membership includes all benefits outlined in the Individual Member category— they will all qualify for discounts on registration for the Alliance’s regional and statewide meetings, and when you join the Alliance as an Organizational Member...

Individual Member

Get six bimonthly issues of The Local Historian, save when you register for your Alliance regional and statewide local history meetings, receive periodic email updates. To join go to www.ohiohistory.org/ resource/uhall/members.html.

In celebration of African American History Month in February, see these on-line resources to guide your exploration of African-American History in Ohio and nationally.

http://blackpast.org, according to site "http://blackpast.org" is a 10,000 page reference center that is dedicated to providing information to the general public on African American history in the United States and on the history of African Americans around the world. It includes an online encyclopedia of hundreds of famous and lesser known figures in African American history as well as biographies of various people of African ancestry and particularly the history of African Americans in the West. BlackPast.org also has full text primary documents and links to Web sites for computer users interested in African-American history in the United States and Canada." http://dbs.ohiohistory.org/ africanam is a link to the digital collection "The African American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920." According to site this digital collection illuminates specific moments in the history of Ohio’s African-Americans and provides an overview of their experiences during the period 1850 to 1920 in the words of the people that lived them.
The Ohio Local History Alliance has sponsored many great programs since it began in 1960. Some of those programs are still vibrant and serving the needs of the majority of Ohio's local historians—such as regional meetings. Some, like the Certification Program, have run their course. If your organization still sports a “Certified by OAHSM” logo in its newsletter, please consider removing it. The program does not exist anymore.

As of January 31, StEPs enrollment nationally stands at 354 organizations. Top enrollment states are Washington State (35); Texas (30); Connecticut (27); Ohio (21); California (15); Pennsylvania (13); and Kansas, Maryland, Michigan and Tennessee (11 each). Enrollees in Ohio include the:

- Athens County Historical Society & Museum (Region 9)
- Auglaize County Historical Society (Region 7)
- Belpre Historical Society (Region 10)
- Canal Winchester Area Historical Society (Region 6)
- Cincinnati Observatory Center (Region 8)
- Cincinnati Public Library (Region 8)
- Clark County Historical Society (Region 7)
- Cleveland Masonic Library & Museum (Region 3)
- Clinton County Historical Society (Region 8)
- Lakeside Heritage Society (Region 2)
- Lakewood Historical Society (Region 3)
- Logan County Historical Society (Region 7)
- Mahoning Valley Historical Society (Region 4)
- McKinley Museum / Stark County Historical Society (Region 5)
- Milan Historical Museum (Region 2)
- National Cambridge Collectors, Inc. (Region 10)
- Oberlin Heritage Center (Region 3)
- Ross County Historical Society (Region 9)
- Sandusky Library/Follett House (Region 2)
- Summit County Historical Society (Region 3)
- Wood County Historical Center & Museum (Region 1)

While a certification program for local historical societies in Ohio ended in 1999, the goals of the old program—consistency, accountability, responsibility, and creativity—live on in a nation-wide program launched in 2009, the Standards and Excellence Program (StEPs) of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). StEPs is not a certification program in the way the old OAHSM program was, but it does on a nation-wide scale recognize excellence. Recognizing adherence to professional practice, and using it as one lever to raise funds and friends, was a reason behind OAHSM’s certification program. The great thing about StEPs is that it is national program: organizations participating receive state-level kudos through the Alliance, but national recognition through AASLH. That looks good on grant applications!

StEPs Enrollees in Ohio / StEPs Certificate Earners in Ohio

By Andy Verhoff, Local History Coordinator, Local History Office, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus

Congratulations!

Of these, three have earned certificates for meeting the following StEPs standards:

- **Athens County Historical Society & Museum** (Region 9), Bronze certificate for meeting all the “Basic” performance indicators under the Audience standard.
- **Milan Historical Museum** (Region 2), Gold certificate for meeting all the “Better” level performance indicators under two areas: the Stewardship of Collections standard and Audience standard.

For information about “bronze” and “gold” certificates (and silver), performance indicators, specific standards, and on StEPs in general, go to: [http://www.aaslh.org/steps](http://www.aaslh.org/steps) or contact OHS’s Local History Office ([local-history@ohiohistory.org](mailto:local-history@ohiohistory.org); 1-800-858-6788, or 614-297-2340)