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Living history presented

By MICHELLE HALUDA

Life in the 1800s was on display for visitors during the annual Crossing Trails Rendezvous at Life Station in Mishawaka.

Seventy campers from across the Midwest gathered in tents and lodges to bring history to life. Prior to 1880, a rendezvous took place wherever trappers and fur traders gathered after a season-long hunt to sell their trapped furs and to trade for supplies. The re-enactments offer activities for families. They showcase crafts and skills of long ago.

"We do it because we like to educate people," said John Penick. "We want to show people what things were like years ago."

John and his wife, Sharon, attended up to a dozen rendezvous each year.

"It's a very addictive lifestyle," John said. "There are some of the most fun you'll ever meet in your life. It's understanding what it was like to be a pioneer in different clothes."

These people are, in the truest sense, living historians," said Phil Whitfield, president of Support For a Club based in Ohio. "We're not any good unless people tune in here and ask us a question."

Most rendezvous are benefit systems," Whitfield said. "Everybody does something to contribute. If you need help, these people will go out of their way to help you. It



It always seems like family when the settlers get together at the annual Crossing Trails Rendezvous at Life Station Christian Youth Center.

It really is a family event."

"This event is for public awareness," said the Rev. Debbie Elwell, director of Life Station. "It is designed to be a fun event, but it is also educational and fun for families. It helps get people out here and makes them aware of the place."

The "place" is Life Station Christian Youth Center, a year-round ac-

tivity center for teenagers. The programs are designed to promote standards and morals through activities and service projects.

"I wanted to get these interested in things out of their environment. I had a dream of a place where we could do this all time," she said.

Her dream became Life Station six years ago. The programs at the center can handle up to 80 participants per week. They hear about the center through friends and

churches; some are referred by the courts. The programs include animal therapy programs, horse programs, wilderness skills and sports programs.

Life Station is financed entirely through the donations of individuals and churches. Their hope is that the vision for Life Station will spread across America. For more information about Life Station, call (219) 358-0111.



The five generations are Anna Tompos, daughter Mary Ann Maryfield, granddaughter Julie Ann Rowland, great-granddaughter Teri Ann Rowland, and great-great-granddaughter Teri Ann Rowland.

Tompos family visit joins five generations

Fortunate is the person who can pose in a five-generation picture.

That happened recently when Anna Tompos was visited by daughter Mary Ann Maryfield, granddaughter Julie Ann Rowland, great-granddaughter Teri Ann Rowland, and great-great-granddaughter Teri Ann Rowland, all of Mishawaka, Ind.

Tompos was born on July 1, 1907, in Gersdorf, Austria, and came to the United States in 1920, along with her sister, Mary. She learned to speak English while she worked at the Russian Apartments on Washington Street, across from Central High School.

A teacher at Oliver School — Miss Anderson — lived at the Russian and took a special interest in Anna. Miss Anderson helped her learn new words every day. Anna became a citizen of the United States in 1924. She worked in the foundry for 25 years at South Bend and she retired at age 74 from South Bend.

On May 22, 1996, she married Louis Tompos. Two of their children died in infancy. Their other two children are Mary Ann and Andy Tompos of South Bend. She has seven grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and Teri Ann, her great-great-grandchild.

St. Jude Parish celebrates with annual summer fest

St. Jude Parish had its 10th annual festival on July 29-30.

It has become a summer highlight for many residents of South Bend. The main purpose of the festival is to celebrate the community and to provide families with fun activities.

Proceeds are used for capital improvements at the church and its school. This year, a live band, Flipside, was the main entertainment. Activities included a 5-on-5 basketball tournament, pony ride, carnival rides and a wide variety of food and craft booths.

Each year, a parishioner has come forward to take on the responsibilities of planning and conducting the festival. A function of this magnitude takes hundreds of volunteers who generously give of their time and talent to create this fun and exciting weekend.

St. Jude parish had on having activities for the whole family — ages 1 to 101.

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Buckskinners live in past — by choice

By MICHELLE HALUDA

The Crossing Trails rendezvous at Life Station was organized by the Brothers of the Wind. The club has been together nearly 16 years.

"We're a family club," said Kathy Koles, treasurer. "We camp for organizations who need it."

The best way to describe what the Buckskinners do is to say they stay back in time for the weekend. All cooking is done over an open fire. They sleep in tents and dress in period clothing.

Deconstruction of culture from the period prior to 1880 includes hunting, fishing, weaving, spinning and basket weaving. Traders are on hand to sell their wares, and they spend a lot of time talking to people to teach them history.

"We learn about the period mostly from reading, although you can pick some things up from the movie series. We have a lot of fun listening to other Buckskinners," Koles explained.

All of the clothes and many of the items used at the camps are hand-crafted. The outfits range from simple cotton shirts to elaborately beaded deerskin dresses.

Each camp is run by a head Buckskinner. He is the keeper of the rules of the camp. The Crossing Trails headskinner is Harry Koles.

"We have our own security system at the camps," Koles noted.

planned. "In the old days they had the soldiers who would protect the camp from outside invaders. Some of the kids act as junior dog soldiers. They must earn the right to hold that position. They are taught to become the future dog soldiers of the camp."

The club consists of 25 to 30 families, although only 10 to 15 actively camp on a regular basis. They come from all occupations, among them doctors, mechanics, security guards, factory workers, hair stylists and secretaries. Just to name a few.

We do it to get away from phones, television and anything modern," Koles said. "We would love to have new families join our group. We try to encourage families with little children to join our group and experience this type of camping. Buckskinners are different than modern families."

At the rendezvous, the whole camp becomes a family. It's a very rewarding experience."

Most of the Buckskinners go by their Indian names at the rendezvous. A name is earned and it is awarded by the group around the campfire. A council fire is a bonfire at which campers share their lives. It is held gradually after the public has left the grounds.

"It's really different," Koles said. "You see these people at the rendezvous and you may only know them by their Indian name. You really ask what they do for a living or even where they come from. You really have your own era life behind and step into a whole different world."

Throughout the year the Brothers of the Wind put on two rendezvous. The first is held at Perritts/Bunge Creek County Park in May. The second is the Crossing Trails rendezvous at Life Station in June. They also held at Lowmyer in Mishawaka. Many raised at these events go to the sponsoring organizations.



Phyllis Bortner shows off the old-fashioned ways of weaving.

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"If you wanted to, you could go to a rendezvous every weekend," said Harry Koles. "You don't have to be a member of a club to come to camp at the rendezvous."

The club meets once a month at the Perritts/Bunge Pavilion. For more information on the Brothers of the Wind, call Harry and Kathy Koles at 359-6522.

Artist touches 'em all with baseball art

By KEN BRADFORD

For years, Gus Stangas has been drawn by baseball.

In the past few years, in a sense, baseball has been drawn by Stangas.

The amateur artist and baseball historian has been assembling an impressive portfolio by sketching the faces of some of the game's greatest players, and he has room in his collection for some of his personal favorites too.

"You know there aren't any cracks in the Hall of Fame," says Stangas. "You may have missed his other great interest is in the Greek heritage. 'Milt Pappas was probably our best ballplayer.'"

Just for good measure, he's drawn two more Greek-Americans from baseball history, a couple of guys that might feel your memory. Gus Triandis and Harry Agapiou.

Some of Stangas' many sketches are on display this week in the third-floor lobby at the St. Joseph County Public Library. It gives people something to look at, and maybe they'll stop in to read a book too," he says.

Stangas' talent as a sketch artist is becoming well-known in the area. He and his brother, Tom, both drew, and their works have appeared in area newspapers. Their sketches have been in the days decades ago when illustrations appeared in daily newspapers to accompany stories about sports events.

Actually, the Stangas brothers began drawing as children, partially out of their love of the comic. Gus Stangas kept around in his portfolio a sketch he made of the original Batman, after he borrowed the comic book from a friend.

He dreamed in those days of being a cartoonist. After he served in the medical corps in England in World War II, he chose a different career. Given the choice of being a cartoonist and putting food on the table, he went off to Purdue University to become an engineer.

In his years at Purdue, he enjoyed working on such projects as the First Super Salver. "It was the first production aircraft that flew faster than the speed of sound," he recalls.

New retired, he mainly enjoys doing around with his drawings of sports figures and other faces from the past. He works from pictures of his subject, found in such places as books, magazines and album covers.

"I can finish one of these in about a day," he said. "Usually it takes me longer to find a picture to work from than it does to draw it."

The key, he says, is to get the eyes right. Everything seems to flow from there.

Drawing baseball players is a special challenge because the faces are so familiar already to generations of fans. "Some guys draw portraits of sea captains or things like that," he said. "I'll be a little drawing, but you never really know whether it's really 'sea captain.'"

He drawing of Mickey Vernon, however, is different. Some guys with Willie Mays and Roberto Clement. Over there are Hank Aaron and Jim Palmer.

In some ways, Stangas really doesn't choose his subjects. They choose him. But he looks through an old baseball record book and find a statistic that starts him. He starts to wonder: Who were the first third basemen and the first catcher ever admitted to the Baseball Hall of Fame?

As he thumbs through more books, he comes across a picture of someone he needs to draw. He carries out themes. He has his all-time favorite Chicago Cubs team. He has the best players

born in Indiana. He's done a couple of sketches of Stanley Coveenski, the Hall-of-Famer who claimed South Bend as his home after his baseball career ended. "Unless you know the history, you don't really know the whole game of baseball," he adds.

One of his goals is to get some of his drawings on display in the Hall of Fame. "I've set in some things, but they say they already have more items than they have space to say," he said. "You see them stop and get a closer look."

For now, he's happy to have a display at the library. "I tried to pick out what other people would find interesting," he said. "You see them stop and get a closer look."

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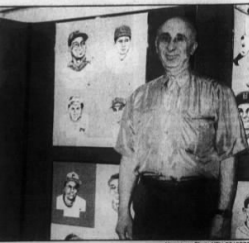
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