

Summer  
2025

# Museum Moments

**History. Heritage. Hometown**

*A newsletter of The Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum*

## Museum Launches New Website ● ● ●

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

Tim Stiffler started as a diesel mechanic but shifted careers after an injury led him to discover photography, which became his profession for 25 years. Over the years, he's worked in various roles—mechanic, youth minister, carpenter, graphic designer, and for the past two decades, a web developer. He now works for Jasper Plastics and its sister companies, juggling web design, brochures, photography, and video. In 2023, museum board member Ross Heil invited him to build the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum's website, a project he took on to honor his late brother, Michael, a librarian who loved museums.

The site, which launched in April, will highlight local history through pages on people, places, and things, with resources for deeper research. Board member, Ann Garceau, contributed a significant amount of historical information to the website. Stiffler lives near Dewart Lake with his wife, Robin. They're active in their church and have two children and four grandchildren.



# WOODEN BOAT FINDS PERMANENT HOME

by Ann Garceau

A circa 1930s era wooden lapstrake boat anchors the newly created nautical section of the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum. Donated by Doug and Karen Grant of Lake Wawasee, the beautifully restored antique boat was awarded the Commodore's Cup in the 1998 Wawasee Flotilla and won first place in the antique division at the White River Yacht Club boat show in the Indianapolis area that same year. A unique feature of the boat is three-position steering; it can be directed from the steering wheel in front or levers in the middle and back of the boat.



Ownership of the boat has been verified at least as far back as Jesse A. Dietzen, who owned bakeries in Kokomo, Marion, Muncie, Richmond and Anderson, and resided on the south shore of Lake Wawasee. Pictures of his grandchildren in the boat in the 1960s have been donated by the family. The museum will continue to research the boat's history and welcomes all information patrons may have.

The museum envisions developing exhibits based around the boat which will enable future generations to discover the rich nautical heritage of the Syracuse-Wawasee community.





# ***A note from the director...***



Hello! I'm excited to introduce myself as the new director of the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum. I officially stepped into the role in November, and it's been a wonderful start to what I know will be an exciting journey.

As I settle into this position, I'm diving into local history, getting to know our collection, and working on some new displays and programming that I can't wait to share with you soon!

This summer is shaping up to be a busy one at the museum, and I'm looking

forward to welcoming both longtime supporters and first-time visitors through our doors.

One of the things I'm most excited about is connecting with more members of the community. I'd love to hear your stories, your memories, and your ideas for what you'd like to see at the museum. This space belongs to all of us, and your input is a vital part of shaping its future.

I hope to see you at the museum soon!

~Ali Schuldt



## ***Summer displays***



**The  
Wawasee  
Belle**

**ABRAHM  
JONES  
CENTENNIAL  
FAMILY**

**The  
Spink**

# YOUTH HISTORY CAMP

The Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum invites local youth to travel back in time this summer at its annual Youth History Camp! This engaging, hands-on program is a fantastic way for children to connect with history through fun, creative, and educational activities.

Two sessions are available for families to choose from:

- Session A: June 10, 11, 12, 13 – 1:00-3:00
- Session B: July 15, 16, 17, 18 – 1:00-3:00

Campers will enjoy a variety of exciting activities including:

- Cookies and Canvas
- Working with Clay
- Archaeological Dig
- Tie Dye

This is a free program, but registration is required. Parents can sign their children up by emailing [director@syracusemuseum.org](mailto:director@syracusemuseum.org) or calling 574-344-3805.

Please note: Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult during the program. Don't miss out on this memorable opportunity for your child to explore history in a fun and interactive way. Spaces fill quickly, so register early!



## Historical CRUISES

in partnership with Chautauqua-Wawasee

**Saturday, May 17 @ 1:00**  
**Lake Wawasee Points of Interest**  
**Departs from the Frog Tavern**

**Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00**  
**Lake Wawasee "Then and Now"**  
**Departs from the Frog Tavern**

**Tickets available at**  
**[www.chqw.org](http://www.chqw.org)**  
**For more information contact**  
**Chautauqua-Wawasee at**  
**574-377-7543 or**  
**[info@chautauquawawasee.org](mailto:info@chautauquawawasee.org)**



# WAWASEE PREMIER OF *Blind Logic*

by Ann Garceau

The Pickwick Theatre, Syracuse, was 'sold out' Tuesday evening, July 23, 2024 for the premier showing of 'Blind Logic' the Ralph Teetor story. Due to an overwhelming response, a second showing was held the next evening. There was free admission to the film, with donations accepted benefiting the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum.

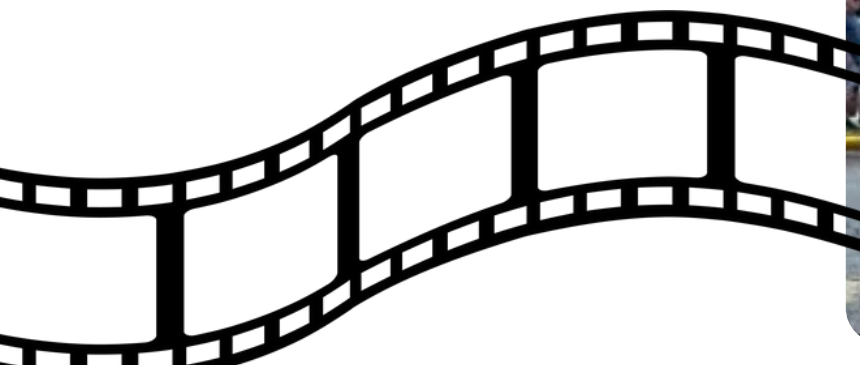
"Blind Logic," is a new documentary about Wawasee's own Ralph Teetor who first signed the Sargent Hotel registration book on July 27, 1915. Seeking a more convenient place to keep their speedboat, it wasn't long before his parents bought a cottage in South Park, beginning over a century of the family summering on Lake Wawasee. His great-grandchildren still enjoy the property today.

The documentary follows the extraordinary journey of Teetor from childhood blindness through his life of fierce determination and distinctive mental vision to become an inventive, insightful leader and philanthropist.

Teetor's life spanned the entire development of the American automobile industry. He became president of Perfect Circle Piston Ring Corporation in Hagerstown, and his modern cruise control invention makes driving much more relaxing.

Teetor's cousin Dan had a home in Vawter Park (pier 467) from 1936 until the mid-1960s. Ralph's uncle, C. N. Teetor, built in Vawter Park (pier 469) in 1929. Two other Perfect Circle executives lived or rented on the lake.

In addition to featuring the Teetor family enjoying Lake Wawasee, the credits include three of Dan Teetor's grandsons who often visited the lake: Composer Jim Andron (former music director for The New Christy Minstrels), photo editor Daniel Teetor and writer, director and producer Jack Teetor.



# CENTENNIAL PROGRAMS

By Ann Garceau

If the walls of the Spink could talk... the history of the property on the north shore of Lake Wawasee could fill a book or script a TV mini-series... its history includes the following: Miami Indians, a clubhouse for prominent men who enjoyed fishing, followed by a high-society inn standing on the high bank – both of which burned to the ground prompting digging out the hill and building a fireproof structure at lake level.

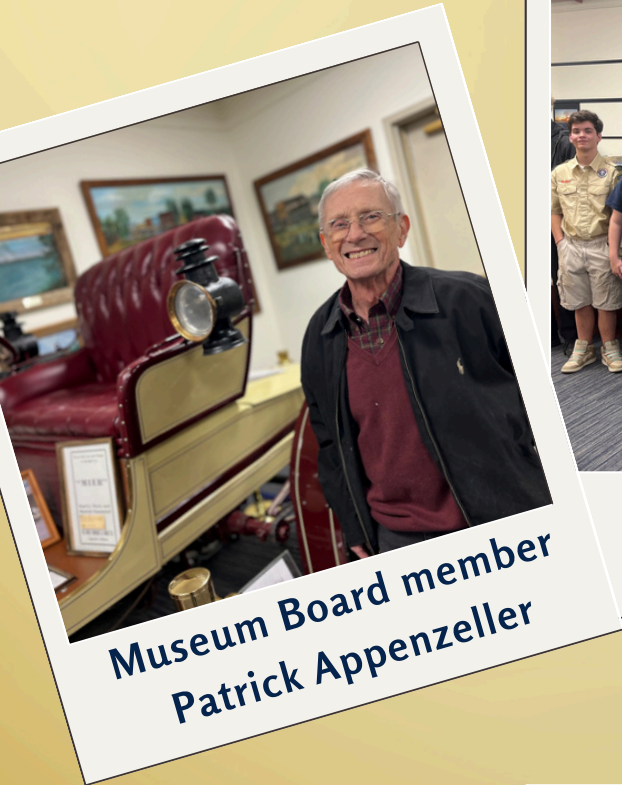
The Spink hosted Al Capone, Abbot & Costello, the parents of the Queen of Siam, sports figures, entertainers, the rich and famous and the not-so-famous; it transitioned to a Catholic seminary and prep school, and today, the Spink experiences a renaissance as a luxury condominium complex. Join us at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, July 12 at the Syracuse Community Center to learn more about “100+ years on the Spink Property.”

In July 1893, the Milford Mail reported: “The new club house at Vawter Park will be a fine affair. This enterprise is being pushed by those who own cottages at this beautiful resort. Vawter Park may well become the “Saratoga” of Indiana.” Join us at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, August 9 at the Syracuse Community Center to learn more about Vawter Park, its remaining 100-year-old homes, and perhaps a few other Centennial Homes.





# around the **MUSEUM**



Museum Board member  
Patrick Appenzeller



Local Scouts  
Visit the Museum



Young visitors enjoying our  
artifacts display



Parks Department and  
Museum's Family Game Night



Peggy Schuldt volunteering  
at town Easter Egg Hunt



Makayelynn Toumey  
Winner of our Winter  
Photography Contest





# NEW

## PHOTO RAIL

The museum is pleased to recognize and thank Gary Green for his generous donation of both time and materials in the installation of new picture rails throughout our exhibit spaces.

Thanks to Gary's skill and dedication, the museum now has the ability to display a greater portion of our treasured collection of historical photographs.

These new picture rails provide a flexible and secure way to present rotating exhibits, allowing us to share more of our rich local history with the community. The museum is deeply grateful for Gary's continued support and commitment.



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