

NEWSLETTER

Palestine Preservation Projects Society

March, 2015

The Shows—The Shows!

The Fife is open again—after 102 years! The first show featured Teri Obst and Bob King with the Kingpin band on Dec. 27. Teri sang a variety of blues with some featured spots with friends Joli Finkbiner and Barb Shimer and her sister. Bob King started the show with a variety of his favorite music. Not only did we sell out, we could have sold maybe another 100 tickets!

The second show featured Dick Shoulders and seventeen of his music all stars on Feb. 7. Big band music filled the auditorium - with Joli Finkbiner singing some favorite old songs. Somewhere Over the Rainbow was a real crowd pleaser.

One more concert is scheduled on Friday, March 27 at 7pm — HighRoadIII, the award-winning Appalachian gospel group from Nashville, Tennessee. Tickets and info are available on line www.fifeoperahouse.org and at The Village Framery in Palestine. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door.

The annual Tea Party was held Super Bowl Sunday with Frozen as the theme. Elsa and Anna were there to visit with the attendees and get photos with the little girls. This was our biggest tea party ever with 283 people attending!

This year several weddings are booked in the Opera House theatre. What a great

Information

- For rentals of the Opera House call Don or Karen Purcell— 586-5437
- For rentals of the Harper House call Rosemary Ellis - 586-9802
- Every Thursday morning, meet at 9am to volunteer
- PPPS meets the 3rd Monday at 6pm every month



Left—Teri Obst—opening show Dec. 27.

Top—Anna and Elsa sign autographs at the tea party Feb. 1.



We are on the internet
www.fifeoperahouse.org

PPPS has no salaried individuals working for our organization. We are all volunteers.

Preserve our history!

More to do! We are not finished with the theatre. We still have several projects to do.

The first one is to rebuild the stage—a permanent stage big enough for plays, concerts, etc.

Another project is wainscoting the theatre.

We still have more electrical work to do and need to install one more air conditioner upstairs.

There are still 2 more rooms backstage that need major work.

Several windows need attention—some upstairs, some downstairs.

Discoveries! Recently Max and Joan Fulling

discovered a box of WW2 medals at the Opera House. A newspaper clipping in the box credited these medals to Eugene Darrell McDaniel, 23 years old who died on a life raft in the Atlantic Ocean after his ship was sunk by a German torpedo.

Max did some research in the library and discovered more articles about Eugene's story. The article said he was a brother to Retha Jennings, wife of Fay Jennings. We contacted Nancy and Gene Jennings who did want those medals and mentioned Gene was named after his uncle.

Eugene was in the Merchant Marines where he served as a cook and was intently interested in his work so says the article. He was the first definitely reported death of a local boy in WW2.

Eugene died Oct. 7, 1942 eleven days after his ship was sunk. On Nov. 5, his close friend and shipmate, Gerald Eugene McQuality from Elkhorn, Wisconsin came to Palestine to fulfill a promise he made to "Mack" - to present a coast guard ring that belonged to Eugene to Eugene's father and tell him the circumstances of Eugene's death. "Mack" gave his friend the ring when death seemed near. "Jerry" carried the ring on his finger until he could give it to Mack's father. Jerry said after all they went through, he felt closer to him than most brothers.

When the ship was sunk, 21 men boarded the life raft. All the other life rafts were blown apart by shrapnel. Blasts of shrapnel killed two men in their raft and Eugene was hit in the right arm. Jerry McQuality did the best he could to tend to the wound. Even when no more bandages were available, he used his T-shirt and the T-shirts of the other men. Through it all, Eugene did not complain and showed remarkable courage. He was always appreciative of what was done for him and talked a lot about his family and friends in Palestine. But gangrene set in and eleven days later Eugene died. Salt water sprayed the men most of the time and only speeded up the effects of the infection. In the next few days, three more men died. Thirty-one days later, the life raft reached the coast of Brazil with 15 of the original 21 men who boarded the raft.

A memorial service was held at the First Methodist Church and was an event of community-wide interest and grief. Survivors included his father, Frank, his sister Retha Jennings, and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. John McDaniel. His mother died years earlier.

PPPS members are proud to return this little black box of medals to Eugene's nephew. His story reminds us of the many sacrifices people have made for our country.