

Montgomery Ruritan History

Ruritan Club Beginnings

How the Montgomery Ruritan Park & Lake Became a Reality **By Louis Kavanaugh Jr.**

Much has been written about how the Montgomery Ruritan Park and Lake came into existence but nothing has been written about how the land was purchased or how land was donated so that the Park and Lake Project could get underway. The land where the dam is located was owned by Apollinaris “Pol” Grannan along with about 120 acres all in that vicinity.

Before we talk about the land purchase, we need to talk about the individual who played a big part in researching in helping to make the park and lake project a reality. Chris O’Brian related to me how Pol Grannan started talking to him back in the early days of the Montgomery Ruritan Club about a dam that could be used on his farm as part of the Prairie Creek Watershed north of Montgomery. Mr. Grannan spent numerous hours going through the Congressional Record and in that record he found that the lake created by a dam could be used as a recreational park. A Grannan family member told me while he was researching for this article that his Dad (Pol Grannan) spend numerus hours researching the Congressional Record to find what would need to be done in order for a dam and lake to be built on the outskirts of Montgomery.

After the research and planning details was worked out Grannan asked if Chris O’Brian would present the project to the Ruritan Club to see if they would be interested. Chris told me that Mr. Grannan was great to do the work behind the scenes but he really did not want to get up in front of a group and explain all the details of the project. The Ruritan Club was interested in the project and asked Mr. Grannan and Chris O’Brian to explore the possibility of a park and move forward with the plans in that area.

Chris O’Brian and Hank Wittmer met with an official from the Department of Natural Resources and presented a map of the proposed plans for the park and lake. The DNR representative said they did not have the funding but said with a project like this it would join with the town of Montgomery and hire an engineering firm to plan and lay out the proposed park. Joe Traylor who was a Ruritan Member and also a member of the Montgomery Town Board and Bob Elliott who also was a member of the Ruritan worked for an engineering firm were included in the planning phase. This was necessary in order to secure State and Federal funds to assist in building the dam, lake and the park. To fill this requirement an agreement was signed between the town of Montgomery and the Ruritan Club on July 6, 1964 for the development of a park and recreational area around the Grannan Conservation Lake. The Agreement was supported by the Daviess County Conservation District represented by Morris Cochran and the Citizens Bank and Trust represented by Jay Myers. A loan was secured from Citizens Bank & Trust on May 6, 1965 and that loan along with interest amounted to \$88,449.22 was paid back in full by September 27, 1976. Part of the funds available to help in projects like this was in flood control legislation that was available to Daviess County Conservation District.

Now came the job of acquiring the land for the project and since Pol Grannan was so involved in the research and planning of this project he was very willing to make a deal with the Ruritan Club and the Town of Montgomery

in order to get the project underway. What the Club Members did not realized back then that some of the acreage may have been purchased from Pol Grannan Family but what some may not have known that the Grannan Family may have donated between 15-20 acres of land to the Montgomery Ruritan Lake project. In today's world that would be a chunk of change.

In my conversations with Chris O'Brian he related to me that Pol Grannan was the unsung hero of this project. He did so much work on the research and of the laws passed for flood control projects across the country and he also was very instrumental in helping to keep the costs of the project low by donating land to the lake & dam project. According to Chris O'Brian "We could not have done this project without the background work and donation from Pol Grannan and his family".

Pol Grannan passed away on March 29, 1985 without maybe receiving the gratitude of the Ruritan Club and the local community. Well we may be a little late in coming but on behalf of the local community and the Ruritan Club we would like to say a Special Thank You to Pol Grannan for what he did back then in 1964-65 timeframe. Our Community is very grateful to the Grannan Family and we may not have had this park and lake without the Grannan contribution of land and Mr. Grannan's background work in helping to secure this project.

As a member of the Montgomery Ruritan Club and the Montgomery Community I to would like to add my Thank You to the Pol Grannan Family for the work and contribution made to our local community. Without Pol's dedication back then this project may not have happened. **Thank You Mr. Grannan!**

Montgomery Ruritan History Thanks to Chris O'Brian

Everyone in Montgomery knows of Chris O'Brian and what he has done for the Montgomery Ruritan Club and for the Town and Community of Montgomery. Chris was the Postmaster here at the Montgomery Post Office for many years and was one of the founding members of the Montgomery Ruritan Club. He also was instrumental in bringing the Montgomery Park and Lake into existence.

At the age of 93 in 2017 when his health and eye sight was failing, he moved into assisted living and after collecting all the newspaper articles, pictures, letters and other items Chris was faced with having to donate this information or get rid of it. We were fortunate enough to have his son who is also in the Ruritan Club and he asked if we would want all this information of the Ruritan Club and Turkey Trot. Well we delighted to have all this history of the early days of the Ruritan Club and Turkey Trot. This collection contains pictures, newspaper articles, documents all from the early beginnings of the Montgomery Ruritan Club and the Montgomery Turkey Trot. Chris put them into a scrap book and he also had posters from those early days advertising the Turkey Trot.

We want to thank Chris O'Brian for his many years of service to our community and for preserving the history of the Ruritan Club and the Turkey Trot for future generations. Without his efforts we would not have all this information that we will post on our Ruritan Web Site. We invite you to view this History and Thank Chris O'Brian for his efforts in preserving the history and tradition of our Montgomery Ruritan Club and to show just how much progress we have made in our community. Chris O'Brian, we salute You!

The following four-page History was put together by Chris O'Brian in 2010 from his recollection of the History of the Montgomery Ruritan Club. Chris began from the beginning of the Club in 1961 to stops just prior to the Montgomery Ruritan Club celebrating their 50th Anniversary as a Ruritan Club.

Chris was one of the Founding members of the Club as there is just three locally still remaining from the original members that signed the Charter back in 1961. Jim O'Brian and Joe Traylor are the other two Charter members who still live in Montgomery. One other charter member was Tom Jones who moved away in the late 60's now lives with his family in Arkansas. Tom's wife has passed away. Jim O'Brian and Joe Traylor are still active in the club activities but not like they were as both are in their 80's.

In these four pages Chris O'Brian takes you thru the days of how the chapter was started, how the Park and Lake came into existence, how the Turkey Trot began and the building of the Ruritan Building on the Turkey Trot Grounds. This is just one of the many jewels that was found in Chris O'Brian's collection of old pictures and articles. Hopefully this History will be preserved.

Louis Kavanaugh Jr.

November 2010

Montgomery Ruritan Club History

Chris O'Brian Postmaster

Mr. Thurman stopped by the Montgomery Post Office and asked if Montgomery High School had an Agriculture Teacher. I gave him the name Tom Jones. During our conversation Mr. Thurman asked if Montgomery had any civic organizations. I told him that were church organizations in the community. He went on to describe an organization called "Ruritan" and how he would like to start one in Montgomery. Mr. Thurman explained that typical club members are farmers, business leaders, and public works people. I told him Tom Jones would be able to give him names of area farmers. He asked me to provide names of business leaders and public officials.

A small group of individuals, myself included, listened to a presentation by Mr. Thurman describing the Ruritan Club. We put together another list of individuals that we thought would be interested. The second informational meeting was held and officers were elected. Then on December 5, 1960 the Montgomery Ruritan Club Charter was signed. Twenty nine individuals were at that third meeting that signed the charter.

Pol Grannan soon began to talk to me about a dam that would be on his farm creating a lake as a part of the Prairie Creek Watershed north of Montgomery. Mr. Grannan received a copy of the Congressional Record, and in that record, he found that the lake created by the dam could be recreational. He then asked if I would make a presentation to the Ruritan to see if they would be interested in creating a park. The club asked Mr. Grannan and myself to explore the possibility of the park.

Hank Wittmer and I meet with an official from the Department of Natural Resources to discuss the possibility of building the park. I presented a map that I had drawn of the proposed layout for the park. The Department of Natural Resources representative said he did not have the funding, but he took the map to show the department our plans. He did inform us the Ruritan would need to join with the town of Montgomery and hire an engineering firm to

plan and lay out the proposed park. Members of the Ruritan club, Joe Traylor (Town Board member) and Bob Elliot who worked for an engineering firm were included in the planning phase. These things were needed in order to secure State and Federal funds to assist in building the dam and creating the park. To fill this requirement an agreement was signed July 6 1964 between the Town of Montgomery and the Ruritan Club, regarding development of a park and recreation area around the Grannan conservation lake. The agreement was supported and backed by the Daviess County Conservation District represented by Morris Cochran and Citizens Bank and Trust represented by Jay Myers.

There was an influential group called the Wabash Valley Association who was lobbying to make the Wabash River navigational. They were looking for additional support from community groups and asked the Montgomery Ruritan Club for their support. In return it was believed this group could open doors and influence State and Federal decision makers regarding funding our park project. The executive director of the Wabash Valley Association became the club spokesperson with the Department of Natural Resources in Indianapolis. We were told of a date that we would meet with the DNR in Indianapolis, however, our group arrived at the state office building only to be told that the DNR was not available. After a few phone calls word arrived that the head of the department would be able to meet with us during his lunch. Eventually the funds were secured to raise a dam for a fifteen acre lake instead of the original plan of six acres. With the lake construction secured, financial backing was sought through Jay Myers and Citizens Bank May 6 1965. The total borrowings from that period until the final payment on September 27 1976 amounted to \$88,449.22. That year 1976, I (Chris O'Brian) was chairman of the Turkey Trot.

The Ruritan Club purchased 16 acres located across the road from the park from the Montgomery family. Three Montgomery family descendents each kept 2 acres each. The three sections were in the park area adjacent to the other 16 acres. While at a wedding reception I (Chris O'Brian) talked with Margaret (Montgomery) Wichman who owned one the 2 plots. I asked if she would consider selling the ground to the Ruritan. She had hoped one of her children would use the land but called later to tell me they were not interested and would sell it to the club. Her brother Jim Montgomery who lived in Washington State owned the other 2 acre plot and after several phone calls and negotiations he agreed to sell his land to the club. The third 2 acre plot is still owned by the O'Connor family.

Before the lake was formed the road at that time went further north before turning east. It then went into a valley before turning back south to and continuing to the east. Along that original road was a large stone (boulder) that was referred to locally as Indian Rock. As the dam was being constructed it was agreed the stone should be moved from the lake area to a location in the park. I (Chris O'Brian) was contacted on the day the stone was to be moved regarding where it should be placed. I went out and selected the current location of the rock as its final resting spot and later Jim Murphy had a plaque made and attached.

Montgomery Ruritan Club Fundraising

The first event was a picnic held in Dages Grove current site of the Joe and Gladys Traylor home. The Ruritan Picnic was held for many years, and was eventually held at the completed Montgomery Ruritan Park. There were several events over the years but some of the most memorable ones were Donkey Basketball and a Minstrel Show.

A local conservation club was disbanding and member Tom Weber was also a member of Ruritan. He asked for and received the remaining conservation club funds be used to help build the park. Many local organizations made donations for the building of the park.

In 1972 the Daviess County Chamber of Commerce met with the Ruritan Club to discuss creating a countywide fall festival. From these discussions the Daviess County Turkey Trot festival was founded and later evolved into the Montgomery Turkey Trot Festival. The Turkey Trot name came from the growth of turkey farming in Daviess County. The original Chamber idea was to have the festival held at a different location in the county each year. The Montgomery Ruritan Park was the site for the first festival and the idea of moving the festival yearly did not receive support and therefore, all festivals have been held at the Ruritan Park. This festival has provided much income to allow the club to support many community needs and significant improvements to the park that would not have been possible without this income.

Montgomery Ruritan Club Projects

The organization has helped many clubs and individuals in need through the years. The Town of Montgomery was building a combination fire station and meeting room. The club, with Paul Miller in charge, purchased and installed cabinets in a portion of the

meeting room and it became the senior center. It was utilized for many years to receive meals from Generations for local seniors.

Organizations came to us not only for financial support but for our backing on their projects such as the level grade railroad crossing in Montgomery, petitioning for grants, and for support during reorganization of local utilities.

The club wanted a community building to be built at the park. We worked with the town of Montgomery to petition for federal funds and were granted the funds to build the current Ruritan Club Community Building.

The annex building was a result of an agreement with the local Purdue Turkey Company. They wanted to build a small example of a turkey barn on the festival grounds to advertise for more growers. It was agreed to allow the construction and after 2 years ownership would transfer to the club. After that the building was detached moved by crane to the current location with a new section added to more than double its length. This building formed the east boundary of the beer garden and eliminated the need for setting up a tent each year.

Ruritan club also sponsored a non-profit organization to borrow funds to build Senior Housing in Montgomery. The club members cleared two lots where four buildings with eight apartments now stand. The officers (all club members) of this organization were President Albert Kavanaugh, Secretary, Treasurer and Manager Chris O'Brian and board members Gary Graber, Jim Murphy and Tom Hughes.

Montgomery Ruritan Charter

Shown here is the Montgomery Ruritan Charter that hangs in the Main Entrance to the Ruritan Building on the Turkey Trot Grounds. This Chart was dated the 5th Day of December of 1960 and twentynine members signed the original Charter. As of this date in Dec. of 2018 four members are still living. Joe Traylor, Jim O'Brian, Chris O'Brian still live in the area but Tom Jones move away in the sixty's and now lives in Arkansas.

In the Name and by Authority of
Ruritan National
 To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting



Official Charter No. 1044

This is to Certify that the Ruritan Club of
Montgomery
 having satisfied all requirements for affiliation is hereby chartered by the Board of Directors of Ruritan National and is entitled to all rights and privileges pertaining thereto.
 We declare you a lawful club and charge you ever to conduct yourself as such.

Charter Members

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Fred W. Hoffman</u> | <u>Chris O'Brian</u> | <u>Thomas Jones</u> |
| <u>Bernard Duncheon</u> | <u>Albert Wexler</u> | <u>James W. Goble</u> |
| <u>Donald J. Trafer</u> | <u>Harlan Hindman</u> | <u>Fred P. Murphy</u> |
| <u>Charles E. McCormick</u> | <u>Robert H. Clark</u> | <u>John Haag</u> |
| <u>Charles W. Hart</u> | <u>Harold Perkins</u> | <u>Ruby W. Crandall</u> |
| <u>James O'Brien</u> | <u>Herschel Oberst</u> | <u>Virgil Clements</u> |
| <u>Clarence Still</u> | <u>Odino Hinkle</u> | <u>Leo Ryan</u> |
| <u>William Heagans</u> | <u>Walter J. Miller</u> | <u>James Thomas</u> |
| <u>Charles Steiner</u> | <u>John E. Walker</u> | <u>Halter Lowrey</u> |
| <u>James Rusk</u> | <u>Joseph W. Arvin</u> | |

In Witness Whereof, this charter is signed and sealed
 this 5th day of December 19 60

These pictures were taken from Chris O'Brian's Scrap Book. The original picture was taken in the Garage at the Ruritan Park/Camp Grounds during the visit of the National Ruritan President in July of 2012.



The picture to the left was from the July 2012 Visit of the National Ruritan President Phyllis Lewter as she visited the Ruritan Park/Camp Grounds on the yearly tour of the Ruritan Clubs in the area. This picture honors the three Charter members who were still active in the Club, Jim O'Brian, Chris O'Brian and Joe Traylor.

2012
Jim O'Brian, Chris O'Brian
Phyllis Lewter, Joe Traylor

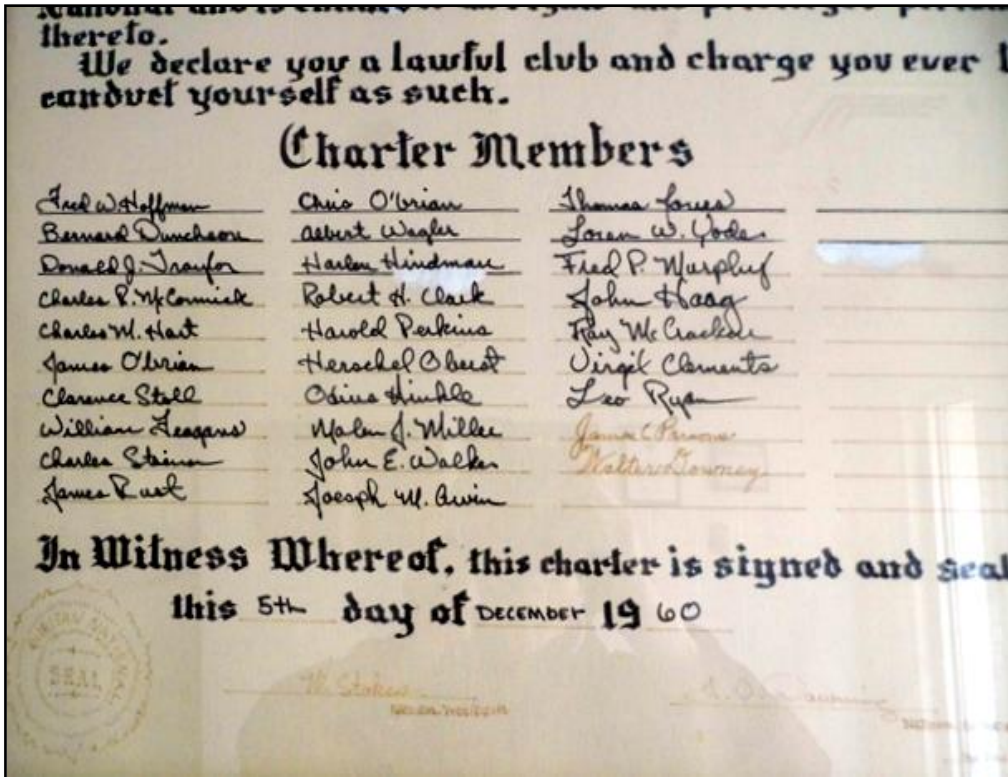
Ruritan National President honors Chris O'Brian for his 52 year of service to the Montgomery Ruritan Club and it just so happened it was the day before his 90th Birthday as his Birthday was on July 4th. Chris has served in nearly all positions of the Club from President to Turkey Trot Chairman and was responsible for getting the Club Organized back in 1960 and was instrumental in getting the park and lake built here in Montgomery. It was an honor well deserved.



2012
Phyllis Lewter National Ruritan President
Recognized me as Founding member
of the Montgomery Ruritan Club an
active member for 52 years at
the age of 90.

Original Montgomery Ruritan Club Charter Signers

See the Signatures below of the Original Signers of Montgomery Ruritan Club Charter. This Charter was signed on December 5th of 1960. Note there were two signers that were at that Charter Meeting but failed to sign. They were added later.



Charter Members Listed Above

Fred Hoffman	Chris O'Brian	Thomas Jones
Bernard Duncheon	Albert Wagner	Loren W. Yoder
Donald J. Traylor	Harlen Hindman	Fred P. Murphy
Charles R. McCormick	Robert H. Clark	John Haag
Charles M. Hart	Harold Perkins	Ray McCracken
James O'Brian	Herschel Oberst	Virgil Clements
Clarence Stoll	Odius Hinkle	Leo Ryan
William Feagans	Malen J. Miller	James C. Parson
Charles Steiner	John E. Walker	Walter Downey
James Rust	Joseph W. Arvin	

----- **These are the members who signed the first Charter for the Ruritan Club**

They were members of the community, business men, teachers, farmers and leaders of the community who was trying to make the Montgomery community a better place to live. They volunteered and did what they had to do for the success of the Montgomery Ruritan Club. They put in many hours to make it work and they got the club off to a good start and the new members since that time have continued that success to this day and the tradition of community involvement.

This meeting was held two weeks prior to the Charter signing as per the note put on this document from Chris O'Brian. Looks like the Charter was signed on Dec. 5, 1960 so this meeting was held around Nov. 20 of 1960.



Charter Members and Officers



of the Montgomery Ruritan Club Charter Number 1044

The Club is located in Davless County in the State of Indiana

The club was chartered on the 15 day of December 1960. The charter was presented by

The club was sponsored by the Jefferson Township

Ruritan Club-

THE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE CLUB ARE: (PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE).

	NAME	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION
1 - President	Joseph Arvin	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
2 - Vice-Pres.	Harold Perkins	Rt. 3, Washington, Ind.	Farmer
3 - Secretary	John E. Walker	Montgomery, Ind.	Teacher
4 - Treasurer	Tom Jones	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
5 - Director 1 Yr.	Ray McCracken	Rt. 1, Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer
6 - Director 2 Yr.	Clarence Stoll	Montgomery, Ind.	Mill Employee
7 - Director 3 Yr.	John Hagg	Montgomery, Ind.	Business

LIST BELOW CHARTER MEMBERS OTHER THAN OFFICERS:

	NAME	ADDRESS	OCCUPATION
8.	James A. O'Brian	Montgomery, Ind.	Service Station
9.	Odius Hinkle	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer & Factory Employee
10.	Chris O'Brian	Montgomery, Ind.	Postmaster
11.	Malen J. Miller	Montgomery, Ind.	Shoe Repairman
12.	Leo Ryan	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer
13.	Jim Rust	Montgomery, Ind.	Stone Yard Manager
14.	Fred W. Hoffman	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
15.	Virgil Clements	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
16.	James A. Michaels	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer & Prof.
17.	Charles Steiner	Montgomery, Ind.	Professional
18.	James Watson	Montgomery, Ind.	Teacher
19.	Bernard Duncheon	Montgomery, Ind.	Farm & Machine Op.
20.	William I. Feagans	Montgomery, Ind.	Professional
21.	Bob McCormick	Cannelburg, Ind.	Mill Worker
22.	Joe Traylor	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
23.	Walter Downey	Montgomery, Ind.	Professional
24.	William Robbins	Montgomery, Ind.	T. V. Repair
25.	Fred Murphy	Montgomery, Ind.	Mill Employee
26.	Loren Yoder	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer
27.	Charles Hart	Cannelburg, Ind.	Farmer
28.	Herschel Oberst	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer & Teacher
29.	Robert H. Clark	Rt. 3, Washington, Ind.	Contractor & Farmer
30.	Albert Wagler	Montgomery, Ind.	Service Station
31.	Harlen Hindman	Washington, Ind. Rt. 3	Metel
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43.			

*No meetings
Be sure this
official charter
meeting*
Chris O'Brian

Three Men that attended this meeting but were not present for the Charter signing just two weeks later. They were James "Gus" Michaels, William Robbins, James Watson. Jim Parsons who was not at this meeting was present for the Charter Signing. Seen other Document.

This meeting was held two weeks before the Charter was signed. Looks like three men were at this meeting around Nov. 20 of 1960 but not at the Charter Meeting on Dec. 5, 1960 when the actual Charter was signed.

This form must be sent to Ruritan National, Wakefield, Va., immediately after the Charter Night meeting.



Charter Members and Officers



of the

Montgomery

Ruritan Club

Charter Number 1044

The Club is located in Daviess County in the State of Indiana
 The club was chartered on the 15 day of December 1960. The charter was presented by
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12.	Leo Ryan	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer
13.	Jim Rust	Montgomery, Ind.	Stone Yard Manager
14.	Fred W. Hoffman	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
15.	Virgil Clements	Montgomery, Ind.	Business
16.	James A. Michaels	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer & Prof.
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27.	Charles Hart	Cannelburg, Ind.	Farmer
28.	Herschel Oberst	Montgomery, Ind.	Farmer & Teacher
29.	Robert H. Clark	Rt. 3, Washington, Ind.	Contractor & Farmer
30.	Albert Wagler	Montgomery, Ind.	Service Station
31.	Harlen Hindman	Washington, Ind. Rt. 3	Motel

These Individuals below were at this First meeting and at Charter Signing Meeting

Fred Hoffman	Chris O'Brian	Thomas Jones
Bernard Duncheon	Albert Wagler	Loren W. Yoder
Donald J. Traylor	Harlen Hindman	Fred P. Murphy
Charles R. McCormick	Robert H. Clark	John Haag
Charles M. Hart	Harold Perkins	Ray McCracken
James O'Brian	Herschel Oberst	Virgil Clements
Clarence Stoll	Odius Hinkle	Leo Ryan
William Feagans	Malen J. Miller	James C. Parson (Not at first Meeting)
Charles Steiner	John E. Walker	Walter Downey
James Rust	Joseph W. Arvin	

William Robbins, James Watson, James A. Michaels, (At Prior Meeting, Not at Charter Signing)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1981

Looking back

20 YEARS AGO TODAY
July 15, 1961

The topic of discussion at the monthly meeting of the Montgomery Ruritan Club was the lake project. Chris O'Brian heads the committee and he told of meeting with the officials of the conservation district and the Prairie Creek Water Shed. As the matter now stands, there will be a small lake made by the water shed. If the full project goes through, the dam will be raised and an additional 25 acres of water will be impounded that will provide a recreation facility of the community. It will be up to the Ruritan Club to purchase the additional acreage and deed this land to the State of Indiana. The club will then be free to use his land for the development of a park area and fishing facilities.

James Bolte, newly hired Petersburg high school band director and music teacher, has announced that the summer band program is underway.

The Cardinals beat the Hatchets 7-3 in high school baseball at Allen Field. Hardy and M. Arthur each got two hits for the Hatchets while Riestler, Wallace, Warner and Chapman collected on each. The Cardinals scored seven runs on seven errors, with Morris Petty and

Allison rapping two hits and Rimmel and Cox one each.

Almanac

By United Press International

Today is Wednesday, July 15, the 196th day of 1981 with 169 to follow.

The moon is approaching its full phase.

The morning stars are Mercury and Mars.

The evening stars are Venus, Jupiter and Saturn.

Those born on this date are under the sign of Cancer.

Dutch painter Rembrandt van Rijn was born July 15, 1606.

On this date in history:

In 1912, led by all-round athlete Jim Thorpe, the United States won the Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden.

In 1945, Italy declared war on its former Axis partner, Japan.

In 1971, President Richard Nixon disclosed plans to make an unprecedented visit to the People's Republic of China, which he did in February 1972.

In 1976, Democratic presidential nominee Jimmy Carter picked Sen. Walter Mondale of Minnesota to be his running mate. They were elected in November.

20 YEARS AGO TODAY

July 15, 1961

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*Looking Back - page 4 - Chris O'Brian
on Ruritan Lake - Page 3 - John R. Rieck
Campers meet*

Below is a Letter of Invitation to Ladies Night that used to be held each year at the July Meeting for the wife's of Club Members. Each Year in July the Ruritan Club always celebrated Ladies Night in which Club Members would bring their Wife's to a Dinner Meeting in which there was a special program or speaker to entertain the

Montgomery Ruritan Club

COMMUNITY SERVICE

FELLOWSHIP



GOODWILL

MONTGOMERY, INDIANA

Dear Mr.

The Montgomery Ruritan Club is going to celebrate its 20th year of continuous community service on Ladies' night, Thursday, July 10, 1980. A dinner will be served at 7:30 P.M. at the Heritage Inn, in Jasper.

You, as an original signer of our Ruritan National Charter #1044, and your wife or guest, are cordially invited to join with us in this celebration.

If you have any pictures, mementoes, or anecdotes from the past 20 years, please bring them to the meeting.

We are looking forward to seeing all of our Charter Members.

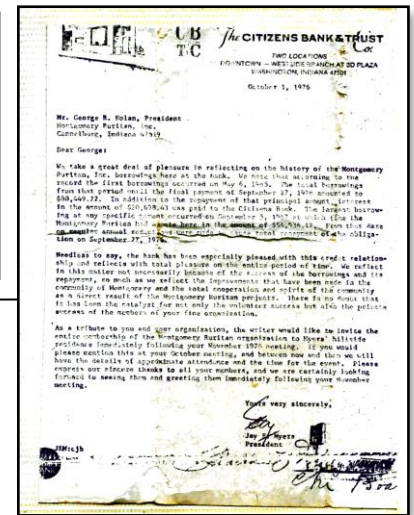
Respectfully yours,

Gary Graber

President

This particular year the Celebration was for the 20th Anniversary of the Montgomery Ruritan Club and was held on July 10, 1980 at the Heritage Inn in Jasper. Each year it was held at different restaurants or church dining halls. This was discontinued when the Turkey Trot was started and an Appreciation Dinner is held for all workers and their wife's at the Montgomery Ruritan Building. This particular letter was sent to Ruritan Charter Members by the Ruritan President that year who was Gary Graber. All Ruritan Members and people who worked at the Turkey Trot were invited to these special events. They are held in Nov. of each year.

Here is the Original Letter received from Jay Myers, the President Citizens Bank on the good credit of the Ruritan Club and what it done for the Montgomery Community. Because over the years the letter has deteriorated it is hard to read so we have retyped it for easier reading. This Letter was inviting members for a note burning at the Myers residence.



October 1, 1976

Mr. George R. Nolan, President
Montgomery Ruritan, Inc.
Cannelburg, Indiana 47519

Dear George,

We take a great deal of pleasure in reflecting on the history of Montgomery Ruritan, Inc. borrowings here at the bank. We note that according to the record the first borrowings occurred on May 6, 1965. The total borrowings from that period until the final payment of September 27, 1976 amounted to \$88,449.22. In addition to the repayment of that principal amount, interest in the amount of \$20,698.43 was paid to the Citizens Bank. The largest borrowing at any specific moment occurred on September 5, 1967 at which time the Montgomery Ruritan had a note here in the amount of \$54,936.17. From that date on regular annual reductions were made to cause total repayment of the obligation on September 27, 1976.

Needless to say, the bank has been especially pleased with this credit relationship and reflects with total pleasure on the entire period of time. We reflect in this matter not necessarily because of the success of the borrowings and its repayment, so much as we reflect the improvements that have been made in the community of Montgomery and the total cooperation and spirit of the community as a direct result of Montgomery Ruritan projects. There is no doubt that it has been the catalyst for not only the volunteer success but also the private success of the members of your fine organization.

As a tribute to you and your organization, the writer would like to invite the entire membership of the Montgomery Ruritan organization to Myers hillside residence immediately following your November 1976 meeting. If you would please mention this at your October meeting, and between now and then we will have the details of approximate attendance and the time for the event. Please express our sincere thanks to all your members, and we certainly looking forward to seeing them at greeting them immediately following your November meeting.

Yours very sincerely,
Jay E. Myers
President

This article came from a state magazine praising the local Montgomery Ruritan Club for its outstanding community service and how it has helped the community. It also talked about how this was a pilot project working in conjunction with the City of Montgomery and the Ruritan Club and the Soil Conservation Service and this has proved more successful than they ever dreamed it would be. It was a pat on the back for our local community!

A Lake Pays Its Way

Although its name is Indian Rock, most of the people who use it call it Montgomery Lake because it belongs to the town. Part of its fame was the result of being a pilot project under PL 506 and the first such development in the Middle west. When it opened in 1967, the estimates were for 19, 000 visitor days a year. Already by 1970 attendance was nearly 32,000, with visitors spending about \$3.25 per recreation day while there. Community benefits generated by the project to the local area that year were figured to be \$102,800.

It had its beginnings with the Ruritan Club of Montgomery. Morris Cochran (SCS) wrote in his report: "A small town, having an active Ruritan Club, found a project in which the whole community could participate in making it a resounding success. It was a project that brought to the Montgomery Club national recognition and visits from their national officers. "

In a brochure about itself, Ruritan is described as "a civic organization whose objective is to bring a closer social union between the farmers and the business and professional men in a community in order to make it a better place to live. It is patterned after the service organizations of the cities, but changed to meet the needs of rural people and rural communities."

The Montgomery members knew what those words meant. A group of them started going to Indianapolis meetings with some of the Prairie Creek Watershed directors. They were active members like Joe Traylor, Chris O'Brian, Charles Hart, Clyde Schnarr, and Charles Steiner who had heard that the federal government was allotting one or two recreation areas in new watershed areas. In 1961 the Club made a formal request to the watershed directors. Plans and cost estimates were ready by 1964, and the town of Montgomery, backed by the Ruritan Club, made a cooperative agreement in 1965 for recreation operation and maintenance.

Project plans set out 50 acres to be purchased, 25 acres for the water impoundment, 11 acres for the water access area around the shoreline, and 13 acres for the public park. Improvements and additions have been made every year since its opening. Additional beach area has been completed, campsites added with more electrical outlets and restroom facilities. The Club bought 21 more acres when nearby land became available.

Of the original funds, SCS put in \$12,000 for land; \$20,173 for dam construction, and \$53, 320 for recreation construction. Indiana Department of Natural Resources added \$11,000 for land, and \$11, 249 for dam construction. Ruritan members and other local people paid \$1, 600 on the land, and got a bank loan for \$54, 000.

Club members recall that they were "quite uneasy" when they found that their original loan need had jumped from \$18, 000 to \$54,000, and they wondered how the small community could handle such a debt. Then that first year they found both visitors and income exceeding their expectations. When they carried their first loan payment proudly to the bank, word went around that "Ruritan's paying. "



Gross revenue has been more than \$20,000 a year, letting the Club pay \$10,000 a year on principal while putting \$6000 into improvements. They find the most popular activity at the Lake is camping, and that the new generation of campers like to be together in a group, rather than off by themselves. Next in order of popularity are bank fishing, sightseeing, walking and hiking. One of the special events that has made the Park famous is its Turkey Trot Festival, held each September by the Daviess County Chamber of Commerce and the Ruritan Club.

Older club members have put a decade of hard work into the Lake. Now they hope younger members will begin to carry more of the load for the future because the loan has a while to run yet.

Article on Montgomery Ruritan Park & Lake from 1967

Montgomery lake project is a success for Indiana

■ MONTGOMERY, a small Indiana community of 350 people, had its biggest day in a half century last August 27. The occasion was the dedication of Montgomery Lake, the first watershed multipurpose lake in Indiana.

The Montgomery project is part of the 89,000-acre Prairie Creek Watershed in Daviess county, Ind. The Prairie Creek Watershed was authorized in March 1958. The project included 11 flood-control structures and approximately 40 miles of channel improvement work on the creek.

Blueprints for the Montgomery project called for a 26-acre lake and a 13-acre recreation park. Accompanying facilities included a beach and bathhouse with concession stand, picnic tables and shelter house, and a boat dock and launching ramp.

Other recreational facilities now include a camping area with 15 tent and trailer sites supplied with water, electricity, rest rooms, shower facilities, plus a dumping station for travel trailers.

This project did not happen overnight. Nor could the project have advanced beyond the planning stage if many local Montgomery people and cooperating federal and state agencies had not contributed untold hours of time and effort.

The idea to develop Prairie Creek Structure B-3-1, ultimately Montgomery Lake, for multipurpose recreational use started in 1962 when Public Law 566 was amended to include cost-sharing on recreation projects.

Since the Prairie Creek structure site was located in northeast Montgomery, the opportunity to include recreation facilities was presented to the town board. Board members approved, feeling recreation facilities were much needed by the town and surrounding area.

Detailed plans and specifications drawn up by SCS were then presented to the board along with approximate costs. After studying proposed costs, the board decided the project was too costly to support.

The one board member who was completely convinced that the town needed this project for development and growth would not give up. He was a member of a very active civic group, the Montgomery Ruritan Club. He presented the project to his fellow members and they voted

unanimously to sponsor the project.

The project had finally found a sponsor. But a public law was uncovered which required a sponsor to be a local unit of government with the power of taxation. The club knew then they would have to sell the town board on co-sponsoring the project.

Board members still objected to the cost. But the Ruritan Club agreed to assume full financial responsibility and also to operate and maintain the project.

On March 15, 1965, a cooperative agreement was signed between SCS, the town of Montgomery, and the Montgomery Ruritan Club. The project was finally underway.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources was asked by the local sponsors to give financial help in raising the dam and in purchasing additional land for the lake. The request was granted, and lake construction started in September 1965.

The Soil Conservation Service, working under the amended PL-566 law, cost-shared 50-50 with the local sponsors on the recreational facilities.

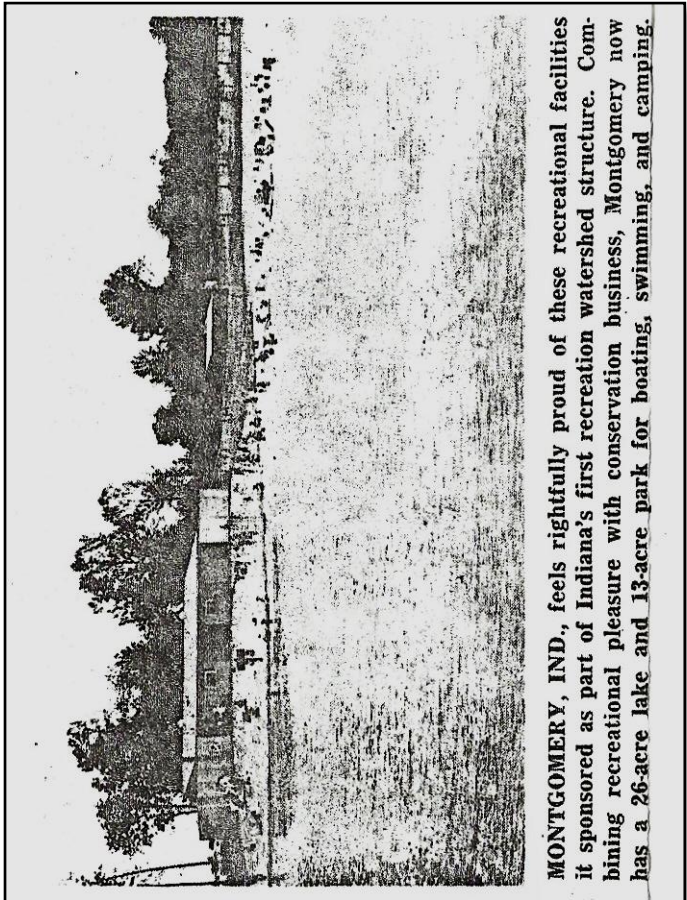
The project was completed and opened to the public on May 28, 1967. It enjoyed a most successful summer. More than 17,000 people used the facilities. Income from the sale of season passes to the beach totaled more than \$1200.

Several times the concession stand sold out of merchandise. Additional picnic tables had to be purchased to meet the public demand. On nice weekends as many as 30 campers would share the 15 permanent camp sites.

The 50-percent share of project costs which local sponsors financed came to \$50,000. It was no easy task for the Ruritan Club to raise this amount. Only thru their successful past activities and hard-working community-minded members could they persuade the local bank to loan the money.

The Ruritan Club will continue to operate and manage the park, using the revenue to pay back the debt and maintain park facilities.

Montgomery is very proud of its project and the facilities it offers. For the project got underway only by local people working together and cooperating with governmental agencies to solve their own recreational needs.—By Joe Branco, Soil Conservation Service Work Unit Conservationist, Washington, Ind.



MONTGOMERY, IND., feels rightfully proud of these recreational facilities it sponsored as part of Indiana's first watershed structure. Combining recreational pleasure with conservation business, Montgomery now has a 26-acre lake and 13-acre park for boating, swimming, and camping.

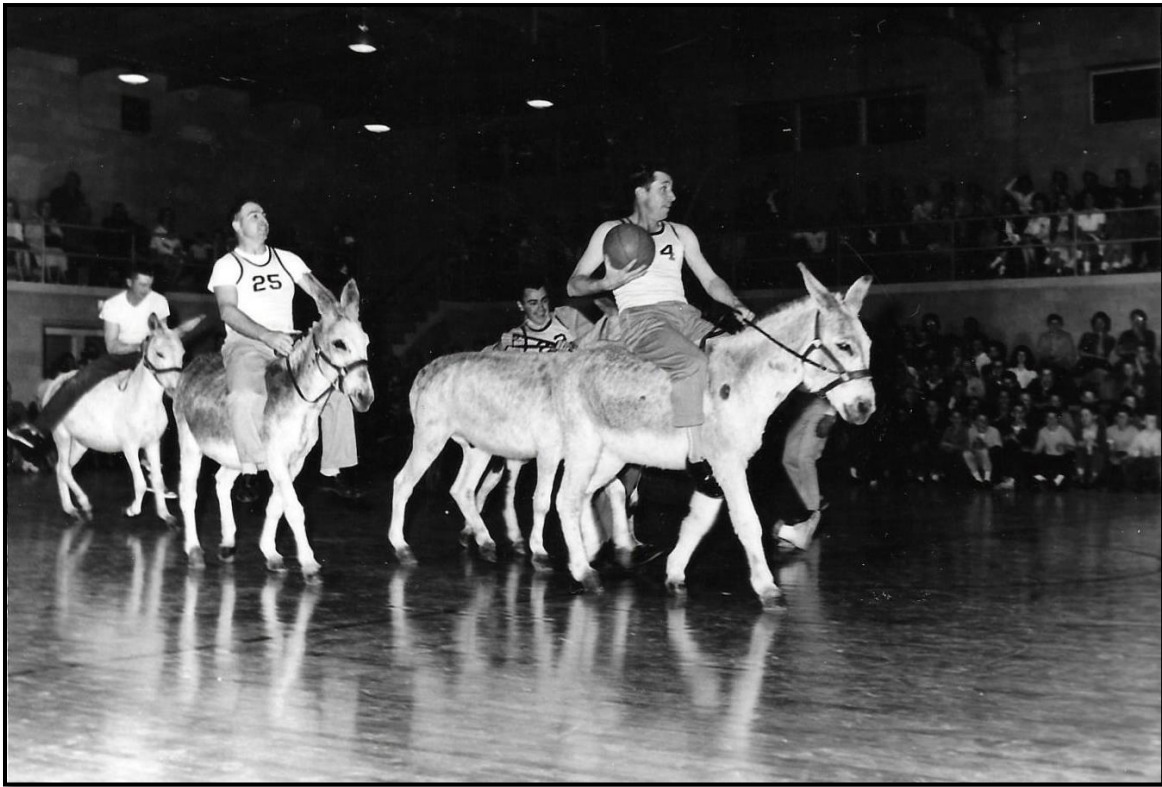
This picture and article were donated by Bob Elliott who was the project engineer on the lake/park. Bob was not sure where it appeared but thinks it may have been published in the Washington Times Herald. It explains how the park and lake came about. This picture here is not very clear but shows a lot of people at the beach that particular summer day.

According to Bob Elliott, this article gives a very good description about how the park got started via the Montgomery Ruritan Club.

The Article was written by Joe Branco, Soil Conservation Service Work Unit Conservationist, Washington, Indiana. The Soil Conservation District has a big part in helping to get this project off the ground and completed.

Donkey Basket at Montgomery High School, Now Barr-Reeve HS.

This was one of many Events held to raise money for the local High School. Even though this was not a Ruritan Club function, several of the Ruritan Members took part in this Donkey Basketball Game. I think it was held sometime in 1962-63 timeframe. On the lead donkey was the late Dave Miller, Jim O'Brian (falling off his Donkey on other side) No. 25 was Larry Wilson and the rider in back maybe Mack Wilson. Everyone had a good time!



Montgomery Ruritan Club celebrates 25th Anniversary



Plaques were awarded to ten charter members of the Montgomery Ruritan Club on the occasion of the 25th birthday anniversary of the organization. Pictured are (left to right) Joe Traylor, Leo Ryan, Jim Parsons, Jim O'Brian, Chris O'Brian, Loretta Murphy (accepting for her late husband, Fred Murphy), Odious Hinkle, Charles Hart and Bernard Duncheon. Walter Downey was unable to be present for the picture. *Tri-County News Photos by Patricia O'Connor*

The Montgomery Ruritan Club celebrates its 25th birthday anniversary this year. The annual Appreciation Dinner and Ladies Night was held Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Montgomery Community Building in the Ruritan Park, with approximately 150 people in attendance.

Albert Kavanaugh gave the invocation before the dinner asking blessing on all those present, and for the deceased members of the club, Jack Montgomery, Ralph Hudson, Roscoe Showalter, Tom Weber, Virgil Clements, Louis Clements, Louis McGee, David L. Miller, Fred Murphy and A.L. Grannan.

Joe Rademacher, secretary of the Ruritan Club, gave the roll call of members present, then gave the report on the last Board of Directors meeting. Lee Knepp read the treasurer's report, a copy of which was passed out to those present. Jim Traylor, president, welcomed all and thanked them for joining in on this joyous occasion. A special welcome was made to the ladies in the group, as the Appreciation Dinner is also Ladies Night for the club.

Denny Hughes passed out tickets to all club members for the New Year's Eve Dance prize drawing which the Ruritan Club sponsors annually. There will be three prizes given away, \$500, \$250 and \$250. Donations are \$1.00 each. Last year they had 2,000 tickets printed, and around 1,600 were sold. This year, they had 2,200 tickets printed, and Jim Traylor stated he hoped at least 2,000 would be sold. He added that this would be a big help, as toward the end of each year the club is always short on funds. He asked that everyone pitch in and help with this venture.

He told about the booth in the park being moved to the site of the beer garden, with an addition built onto it, which will take the place of renting a large tent each year for the Turkey Trot. He also brought it to everyone's attention that there will be another shooting match on Sunday, Nov. 17, and they need all of the help they can get for that.

The meeting was then turned over to the 1985 Turkey Trot Chairman, Bob Showalter. He stated being chairman of the turkey trot is a very time consuming job, as they start in

January, making plans for the event which takes place each fall. The reason for these appreciation dinners is to thank everyone who helped with the Turkey Trot in any way. He said there are a lot more people involved in the Trot than just the members themselves. This year's Turkey Trot showed a net profit of \$16,007.90, which he feels was a fantastic job on everybody's part.

Jim Traylor noted that a big thank you goes to the two park managers, Kenny and Pam Roark, who have done a terrific job since they were appointed managers. He stated they are really two dedicated people, who are helping out the park in every way they possibly can. He added it has been a pleasure to work with them this year. They have done a marvelous job for the club, for the Turkey Trot, etc., and the Board voted to give them a raise effective Jan. 1, 1986.

At this time, the meeting was turned back over to the club secretary, Joe Rademacher, who talked about the 25th anniversary of the Ruritan Club. The officers thought it would be appropriate to do something in recognition of those who not only were instigative in getting the club organized, but also in keeping it going. He pointed out that on the speaker's tables were plaques honoring the charter members of the club. At the onset, the idea was to get people organized in planning and developing a lake on the northeast side of Montgomery. That was in 1960. From that

point on, the park has been the major project of the Ruritan Club, which has also done many other things to benefit not only the town of Montgomery, but also Daviess County. The club was chartered in 1960, and there is a plaque on the wall which holds the signatures of all charter members. In February of 1961, plans were announced for the building of the lake; the club was incorporated in 1965; and the dam on the lake was completed in July of 1966. There were club members working for six years to get the dam completed. The park opened on Memorial Day of 1967; the signs on the highway were built in 1968; the Turkey Trot Festival started in 1972; the community building was built in 1977; and in 1984, the club had the house built for the park managers, by the Twin Rivers Building Trades students, who always do a good job of construction under the direction of Paul Miller.

Rademacher said that in looking back through the secretary's reports from 1965 to 1985, the club was in debt at that time about \$26,000 in 1965, and close to \$27,000 in 1985. He added it seems as though they are at least staying pretty close to even.

Rademacher also stated that in most places of business, if a person works 25 years, they receive a watch or something as a gift. There are 10 people who have been members of the club for all of these 25 years, have been through everything that has gone on, and who were a big



Pictured above are the Ruritan Club Presidents from 1961 through 1972. Left to right, seated, Jim Nolley, Chris O'Brian, Joe Traylor, Harold Perkins and Joe Arvin. Standing, Jim O'Brian, Bob Elliott, Ralph Dages, Clyde Schnarr, Bob Showalter and Charles Hart. Not pictured, Tom Jones and Charles Steiner.



Presidents of the Ruritan club from 1973 through 1985 included (left to right), seated, Jim Traylor, John Hart, P.V. Steiner, Jim Truelove, Jack Crane and Gary Graber. Standing, Darrell Eaton, Ed Theroff, Hank Wittmer, Albert Kavanaugh, George Nolan and Paul Miller.

part in getting things rolling. These ten members each received a plaque reading "In appreciation of 25 years of service, 1960 to 1985, and a charter member of the Montgomery Ruritan Club". Accepting the plaques were Walter Downey (not present), Bernard Duncheon, Charles Hart, Odious Hinkle, Fred Murphy (accepted by his wife, Loretta Murphy), Chris O'Brian, Jim O'Brian, Jim Parsons, Leo Ryan and Joe Traylor.

Jim Traylor next introduced the past presidents, asking them to come forward, starting off with the first president, Joe Arvin, who gave an interesting view of his feelings that first year. Joe Arvin was selected as the first president in 1961. He told of the first meeting, during the nominations, when someone nominated him. He said he went into total shock at that time, and didn't remember anything about it. Somebody finally punched him and informed him "We have a new president". When Joe, looking up in surprise, asked who, the answer he heard was "You!" He went on to tell how they tried to do some long range planning on the camping area. In the beginning they had planned on 15 campsites, and each campsite had a hedge fence around it to insure privacy. The first year, someone complained that a little kid jumped over the

hedge onto their lot. They started after that to get more campers each year, and the hedge fence went down the drain. He said it is everyone's privilege to change his mind, and the Ruritan Club has done a lot of changing and made a lot of improvements over the past 25 years. Their first activity was a picnic in Dages Grove on the highway.

In 25 years, no man has been president more than one time, and Traylor feels this is a great accomplishment, and in the 26th year, they will have still another president. The second president was Harold Perkins in 1962; 1963, Tom Jones; 1964, Charles Steiner; 1965, Joe Traylor; 1966, Charles Hart; 1967, Jim Nolley; 1968, Bob Showalter; 1969, Chris O'Brian; 1970, Clyde Schnarr; 1971, Ralph Dages; 1972, Bob Elliott; 1973, Jim O'Brian; 1974, Hank Wittmer; 1975, Albert Kavanaugh; 1976, George Nolan; 1977, Paul Miller; 1978, Ed Theroff; 1979, Jack Crane; 1980, Gary Graber; 1981, P.V. Steiner; 1982 John Hart; 1983, Jim Truelove; 1984 Darrell Eaton; and 1985, Jim Traylor.

All of the ladies present signed a book for the attendance prize, and the names drawn were Karen Kane and Genny Riney.

Next year's officers are Bob Ellis, board of directors; Mike Healy, secretary; Bernard

Harner, treasurer; Donald Crane, vice-president; and Russ Titzer, president. Traylor congratulated the new officers, and told them that in the next 25 years, they would recognize them for their year of service to a wonderful cause.

Even though he has some time left to complete his term of office, Traylor stated that he would like to thank the Board of Directors, his fellow officers, and all who have assisted him throughout this past year, which includes all of the club members, and especially his wife, Helen, because without her help, he said he could not have been able to do all that had to be done.

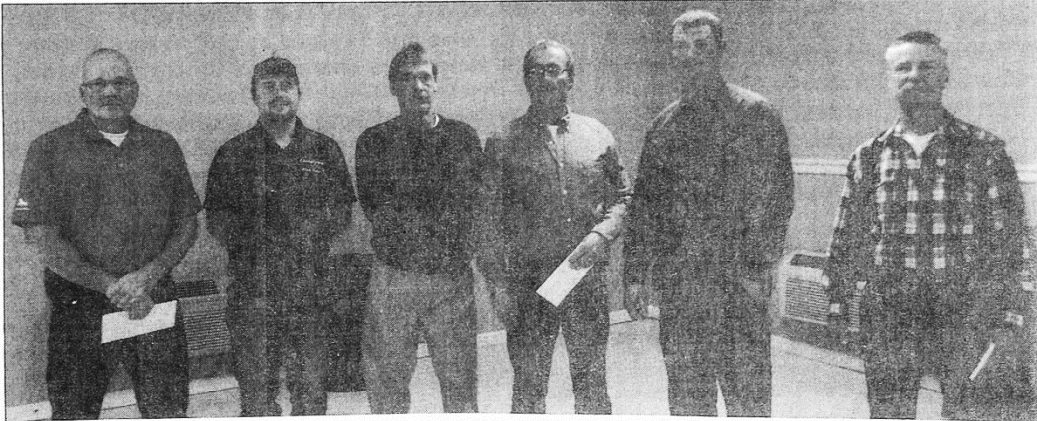


Russell Titzer, of Loogootee, who was vice-president of the Montgomery Ruritan Club, has been selected as the Club president for the 1986 year.

This is a newspaper article after the presentation of checks to local groups by the Ruritan Club at the Turkey Trot Appreciate Dinner in November of 2015.

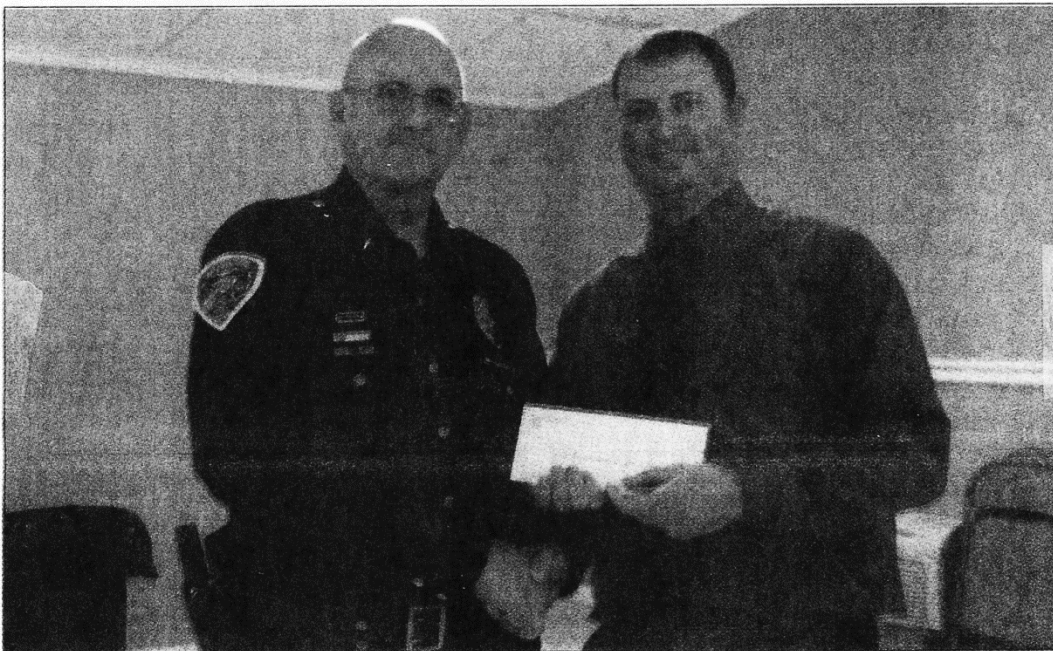
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2015 **A3**

RURITAN CLUB SUPPORTS FIRE DEPARTMENTS



ACCEPTING CHECKS of support and appreciation on behalf of the volunteer fire departments of Cannelburg and Montgomery were (from left): Marv Graber; Jordan Graber; Jeff Divine; Tim Showalter, fire chief; Kraig Knepp, Ruritan Club president; and Terry O'Brian. O'Brian gave a short but informative overview of the departments short- and long-term goals and needs, and also how they have been able to improve the capabilities and functions of the department in recent years. O'Brian summarized by saying, "While we wish our services were never needed, we know they will be and we are ready to serve our community and its members in any situation." For the year 2015 so far, the Montgomery Ruritan Club has donated in excess of \$11,000 to local school programs and projects, special needs situations and public service and safety organizations.

RURITAN HELPS COPS AND KIDS PROGRAM



Submitted photo

THE MONTGOMERY RURITAN CLUB recently used the occasion of its annual Montgomery Ruritan Club/Turkey Trot Festival Appreciation Night to present checks of appreciation and support to three local public safety organizations. Here, Washington Police Chief Mike Healy (left), on behalf of the Daviess County Fraternal Order of Police, accepts a check from current Montgomery Ruritan Club President Kraig Knepp, in support of the FOP's Annual Cops and Kids Christmas Program.