FLASHBACK

THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MARCH 2025

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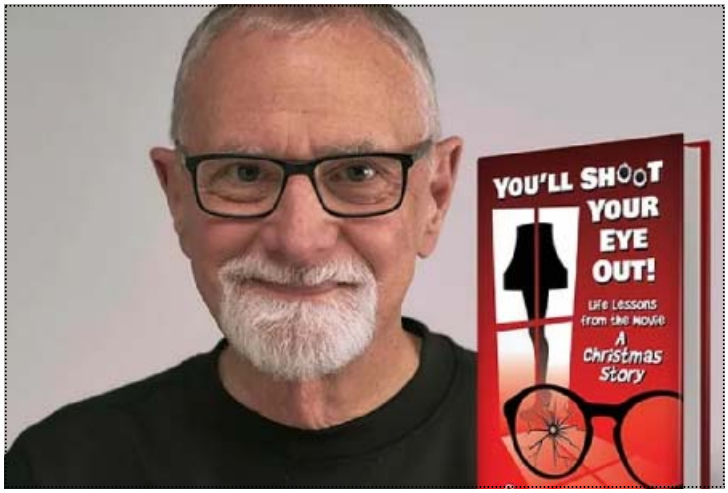
Author Quentin Schultze

YOU'LL SHOOT YOUR EYE OUT!



Life Lessons from the Movie— A Christmas Story

FEATURED MARCH PROGRAM—

Dr. Quentin Schultze taught storytelling with screenwriter Jean Shepherd and learned how Shepherd transformed his life experiences growing up in Hammond to universal "parables" with amazing life lessons for us all. Schultze's new book reveals the secrets for the first time: "You'll Shoot Your Eye Out! Life Lessons from the Movie 'A Christmas Story.' "

Now you won't need a decoder ring to learn why the Old Man's leg lamp is his "trophy wife," why the bully is named "Scut," why there is a "Bumpus" in all of us, why Mom and the kids give a "Bronx cheer" after singing "Jingle Bells" in the Olds, and so much more.

Take a fun-loving and insightful romp through 20 life lessons in the Christmas classic, based exclusively on the author's friendship with Shepherd. Includes trivia questions, line drawings, and a special appendix on Shepherd's 7-step process for telling humorous stories; perfect for teachers, pastors, writers, leaders, and the like.
P.S. Turn on your leg lamp to read this amazing book.

NEWS BRIEF

Time is quickly passing on the remainder of our Program Schedule for the first half of the year. Next month's program is an Oral History Workshop for seniors with Samuel Love. Our Annual Dinner will be held in May. Details have yet to be announced. The location, date and time will be published in the FLASHBACK newsletter once the plans have been finalized.

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THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Founded 1960

Our Next Scheduled Meeting ———

Saturday 10 a.m. March 1st, 2025

In The Community Room of The Hammond Public Library 564 State Street Downtown Hammond, IN

Featured Program— "You'll Shoot Your Eye Out!" Life Lessons from the Movie— A Christmas Story

With Guest Speaker—
Dr. Quentin Schultze

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

A Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. prior to the general meeting. All officers and board members are asked to attend the board meeting.

Editor in Chief — William J. Uzdanovich
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OTHER BUSINESS / OTHER NEWS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd, 2024

The Board of Directors of the Hammond Historical Society met at 9:06 a.m. on Saturday, November 2nd in the Community Room of the Hammond Public Library. There were 13 board members and officers present.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Minutes from the last board meeting were distributed prior the meeting. The minutes were reviewed and accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer's Report was presented and reviewed by the board and approved. Also of note: The Cemetery Tour will need to formulate a budget ahead of the next tour.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Was not available

NEW BUSINESS/OLD BUSINESS: Groundwork has begun on the formation of committees. They will be chaired and populated over the holiday break. They will report to the board with the first meeting of the New Year on January 2025. It was noted that every committee will need a working budget. Committee sign-up sheets were passed out during the meeting. An announcement will be made in the January Flashback to recruit members to partake in the committees as well. A motion was made by Amanda for an expenditure of $150 to the HLP Gala. The expense will be taken out of the Program Budget. It was seconded by Mark and approved. An Abstention was made by Brian. Lastly, we are looking into the possibility of selling some of our history books at the Indiana Welcome Center. This is exploratory and in the initial stages.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Secretary, Will Uzdanovich

IN REVIEW— 19th Century Life Through Artifacts

From our February Meeting

In case you missed last month's meeting, here is a brief summary.

Brothers Michael and Mario Bovino enlightened us on their unique hobby of bottle digging, also known as privy digging. Bottle/privy digging is an historical practice of searching for old bottles and other artifacts usually in old abandoned privies located on private properties and old garbage dumps.

Why would people dig for old bottles? Bottle digging can help you learn about the history of a particular area. People can sometimes discover valuable bottles. Diggers may discover thousands of dollars worth of antique bottles. Besides bottles, diggers can also find stoneware, clay pipes, marbles, buttons, doll parts, combs, and other objects which are usually damaged or broken.

The brothers concentrated their digging in the city of Chicago. There they would dig into old abandoned privies located on private property or residences. They were sometimes able to dig on construction sites, which was considerably easier, since much of the excavation work was already done for them.

In order to find probable sites, the brothers would research old Sanborn fire insurance maps. These old maps would show where old homes and structures were once located, and thus help them to locate a potential privy site.

After the presentation, Michael and Mario fielded questions from the audience and invited them to come up and take a closer look at the items that they recovered, which were on display.

If you feel adventurous, check out their videos on You Tube: *The Chicago Bottle Diggers*

Photos:
Hammond Historical Society

Brothers Michael and Mario Bovino.

Many in the audience were quite intrigued.

Here are just a few of the objects they found.

Clay pipes, ceramic doll parts and pottery.

METALS REFINING COMPANY

The story behind the success of the Metals Refining Company dates back to 1916, when William Wilke, a metallurgical engineer of great experience, erected a one-story structure in Hammond for the production of antimonial lead. The equipment consisted of one blast furnace and a few kettles. Mr. Wilke was the plant superintendent, chemist, bookkeeper and sales manager, all in one.

From a modest start, the plant grew rapidly until it occupied a 20-acre tract and became one of the last completely equipped units of its kind in the world.

The plant was recognized as one of the dominating concerns of its kind in the country. It was once the largest producer of type metals for newspapers and publishing houses in the United States.

Operating under the trademark of "Wilke's" the company produced the famous Wilke's type metals, which were used extensively by virtually every metropolitan newspaper in the country. It also manufactured a number of other Wilke's lead products for use in the production of batteries, radios, caskets, paints, and a great variety of other well-known articles.

So widespread was the reputation of the Metals Refining Company as a manufacturer of high-grade lead products that it was absorbed by the Glidden Company, of Cleveland Ohio, an industry powerhouse that produced a wide variety of paints and varnish products in various plants throughout the United States.

Metals Refining Company at Summer Street and Hump Road.

GLIDDEN COMPANY

The Glidden Company acquired the Metals Refining Company in 1928 as a part of its program to expand and diversify its pigment business. At that time, the Metals Refining Company was engaged primarily in the smelting and refining of lead and lead-bearing alloys from secondary materials. The plant was considered to be one of the most modern secondary lead smelters in the mid-west.

Believed to be the only factory in the world producing high-grade cuprous oxide by pyrometallurgical methods, the Metals Refining Company, of Hammond, a subsidiary of the Glidden Company, had perfected the product for paint manufacturing that specialized in anti-fouling and sip bottom coatings.

The first unit was constructed at the plant for the production of this material in 1934, and was enlarged three times since then. Company researchers had devised an entirely new and original process to turn out pure cupric and cuprous oxide.

In addition to those materials, the company also developed a new process for the production of pure copper powder. Copper powder had found a large use in the production of pressed metal objects, such as generator brushes, oil-less bearings, brushings, and the like. These pressed metal parts are self-lubricating and are used in many industries, including auto making, farm implement producers, washing machine factories, airplane manufacturing, textile machine firms, and refrigerator and air-conditioning plants.

View of the expanded Glidden Company on Summer Street.

THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Hammond's Old "SMOKESTACK INDUSTRIES"

HAMMOND BRASS WORKS // HAMMOND VALVE

Hammond Brass Works

Founded in 1910, Hammond Brass Works was a part of the city's early industrial history. J. H. Lammering and a group of Hammond residents started doing business at a location that was very close to the downtown in the northeast corner of the city. It was at that time a jobbing foundry making special castings for local industries. This was before WWI, when the foundry had just started to manufacture valves.

The company specialized in manufacturing brass and bronze castings for the steel mills' needs, and its high quality and workmanship was widely recognized throughout the industry. Most of its customer base was located in the Calumet Region; however it did ship orders to other parts of the country.

In 1918, the company had secured a contract to make 81,000 brass pieces. The bulk of the contract was radiator valves and connections. This was said to keep the current crew of eighteen busy for a whole year.

In 1925 a massive fire consumed the facility along with the neighboring Paxton Lumber Company. The Hammond Brass Works loss was estimated to be around $110,000 to $125,000. The building was completely destroyed. It was noted that the brass inside of the plant could be recovered and salvaged. Fortunately, the losses were covered by insurance. As luck would have it, the company had already purchased a site on Summer Street because it was quickly outgrowing its original plant. Plans were fast forwarded to build a new building on the Summer Street property.

Hammond Valve

The company changed its name to align with its core product line. In 1960, the company was purchased and became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Condec Corporation. It was renamed the Hammond Valve Company.

During WWII the plant was in wartime production mode, as it turned out thousands of bronze valves mostly for the U.S. Navy.

The plant as shown here was located at 1844 Summer Street.

During the company's first fifty years it had evolved from a brass foundry to a heating and plumbing valve manufacturer, but the company's marketing position remained rather limited until its takeover by Condec. Under that ownership, Hammond Valve's distribution channel was revamped and broadened. Hammond Valve's reach would expand and supply major valve requirements for scores of leading American organizations and government branches.

A further addition to Hammond's Valve Company's line came in 1966 when it unveiled its iron valve line. Technically known as "iron body bronze trimmed" valves, those devices scaled as much as one-third ton and stood as high as over four feet tall.

Source information and photographs: NWI Times via Newspapers.com