

Chesaning Area Historical Society & Museum

June Meeting - Monday June 11
6:30pm at the Museum

Guest: Monte Lawton will speak on Archeology Digs

602 W Broad St - Chesaning MI

June 2018 Newsletter

*HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO EACH & EVERY ONE OF OUR
GREAT DADS. We are so thankful for you. Love to all ..*

LAST MONTH AT OUR MAY MEETING

We welcomed Ken Bueche who took us on a walk through the years of our CAER Center development here in Chesaning.

Ken began by telling us "This was inspired by God, it was not anything I did".

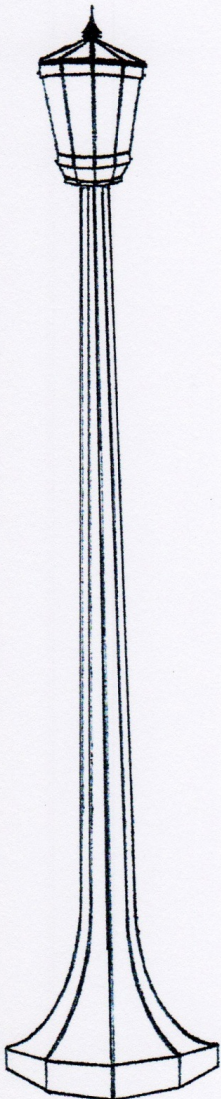
It involved a lot of people, it didn't involve just me. A lot of people made CAER happen.

Jerry Guziak was the manager of a Senior Center in Chesaning in 1980. This was just a Social Center, there was no meal site or activity center. Then Sister Rita heard that a man in Oakley was living in a truck &

needed food. We decided we needed to call all the churches in the area & see what they thought about setting up a food pantry. That was the seed that was planted that became CAER.

We called - they cared. So we started a food pantry. Sister Rita of Our Lady of Perpetual Help had clothes in the school basement.

Ed Finestein offered to run a clothing center with donated clothing. We set up in a spare room at Line Street school. Now we had a Food Pantry & Clothing Center & that was the real start of CAER as we know it today.



We did that for about a year & I remember at that time Fr. Jim Falsey who was at Our Lady said "You know you're going to have to have a building". But wait — We didn't have a building & we didn't have any money, just a bunch of volunteers running around. There was no financial backing or anything except for donations — So now it wasn't long & we got talking. We needed something more.

This all happened within 2 years. I went through the Lay Ministry program & then made a commitment of what to do when I came back out into the community.

I didn't know, but said I would work with seniors & I would help struggling families "that would be my commitment to the community". I had no idea where that was going.

I had a furniture store & we sold carpet & there was a promotion: You buy a carpet & pad & your name is put into a drawing for a vehicle". So "I end up winning that vehicle". I told Carol, when I won, "I gotta give that to CAER, that's not mine".

Now this thing was going too fast for me, I didn't know what I was doing so I gave the vehicle to CAER & we had a raffle in the community, a \$100/ticket raffle. We had 200 tickets we were going to sell & we made \$19,000. We told Sister Ruth it was for our building fund.

Things. began to. progress and Showboat gave us a little money.

Then my father died in 1985 & at that time Tom Thiel was tearing down the school where our building is now. I talked to him & he said he would sell the land for \$10,000. I talked to my family & we wanted to have this be a memorial to our parents, so we bought the land.

Bill Streng is a builder & he knew Nancy Schneider, who drew house plans & she drew the plans for the building, but how were we going to keep up a building?

In my mind I had an agenda: I went down to the Commission on Aging in Saginaw. Bill Quinn was there at that time & his brother, John, was the head of it. He said if I would build a building, H would look at the plans & they would rent it at \$400 a month. Well that would be enough to take care of our lights & utilities, so we had a source to maintain it.

In 1986 or late 1985 we broke ground for a building, they approved it & we had a Senior Activity Center & a Food Center for the seniors, so along with the basement we had our facility.

We financed \$30,000 to finish the building, paid that in 5 years just by donations & having pancake & spaghetti suppers. Our volunteers were trying to raise funds. Randy Horner & Steve Rgiel set up a C-3 corporation.

A non-profit organization, so people could take it off their taxes.

CAER began as a small food pantry with just "15 Bucks" to start with.

I've been retired from CAER for a year now, but we have 2 ladies who are co-directors, Marsha Westrick & Jeanine Ryder.

When I left, we dealt with about 600 families. The last year I was there we gave out about 115,000 pounds of food. It's just amazing & the clothing center is very active, which serves a dual purpose, as it gives people a place to donate their clothes & small items.

If you want to donate anything and have questions, the answer is if you had a need for it, so will someone else.

We help people all the way to the southern part of Saginaw county, including St. Charles, Albee & down near Shiawassee county.

We give people a "made-up" box of food, they can have it only once a month. We have funds of about \$35,000 that we can use to help families financially, but we can only help them once a year. We have no source of income, all of the money comes from donations.

During the years that I had run CAER, I had never campaigned for money, but at one time we had to fix our parking lot and got a Grant from Saginaw.

We also have a Foundation in Saginaw "The Harvey Wicks

Foundation" that in the last few years as been giving us \$5,000 at Christmas time, we did not seek this out, they just gave it to us.

Ken then answered questions:

(1) The Saginaw County Commission on Aging rents the upstairs of the building space they use from us. It's about \$400 a month, I think. That pays for our lights and water bill and some of the maintenance, now, getting with the insurance it doesn't quite cover it all, but we get money from our United Appeal and some of that is designated for our Building Fund which all these costs are under.

(2) We have 2 funds.

- Building Fund: All costs of keeping the Building up and running.
- General fund: The money people donate always goes into the General Fund (unless you specify differently) and all General Funds go to help people, we don't use any of that money to take care of our building or anything, So far this is working.

(3) We do have an Out-Reach Program for people who do provide help in specific & private ways -. We are THANKFUL for that help.

(4) I want to say that this is a 100% volunteer organization. They

come & go as no one is tied down to it. They help as they can.

(5) We get the food from a couple of sources for the food boxes we give each family once a month"

- Lots of people donate. St Peter's & the Methodist Church collect food donated by parishioners.
- We get food from Hidden Harvest, food from stores that have dating getting near sell by date.

(6) FOOD BOXES are made up of items we purchase:

- Peanut butter, Mac & cheese & spaghetti, not just random items but things that can make a meal. We include cans of fruit, vegetables, cereal & laundry soap, toilet paper & essentials needed. We also have baby food, if requested & diapers. We do keep track as once a week is about all we can do in order to limit it so there is enough. Often these people come in because it's an emergency.

(7q211q) I think the majority of people who really need help are hesitant to come, we are careful but do not require proof of their problems.

- I think it's really hard for people to ask for food and essentials because they cannot afford it.
- This is not a government program so we are not required to require proof of income. All that they need from us is free.

CAER is the only facility like this in Saginaw County that does not have a paid Director.

The Senior Center is open at CAER M-F 9:30am - 1pm, 15 to 20 people usually attend & we have room for more. They have good meals & the cost of meals are donation of choice. It also is a place where people can reach out to each other. They play cards, Bingo & have a pool table. A good place to meet & make friends.

Ken compared the growth of CAER to the story of the mustard seed. He is of the belief that it is our duty to help each other. We see this as he still does his Meals on Wheels.

MANY THANKS to KEN, he is humble BUT we know he is GREAT.....

April 2018
Board Meeting Minutes

OLD BUSINESS

- Nancy has completed our latest Brochure & it has been accepted
- July - NO monthly meeting
- Annual Picnic August 13 @ Showboat Park

NEW BUSINESS

- All supplies for Museum ramp are ordered