



Wabash Plain Dealer

Wabash County's only daily newspaper



Print Page

Program brings history to life

By JOSEPH SLACIAN

History came to life last week at the Wabash Historical Museum.

Wabash businessman Michael Beauchamp, dressed as world renowned lion tamer Terrell Jacobs, spoke to about 30 people during the museum's History Hunters program.

Beauchamp, of Beauchamp McSpadden Insurance and owner of Modoc's Market, detailed Jacobs' life from his birth in Grant County to the time he spent living in Wabash and Peru. At age 15, he hitchhiked to California and eventually landed his first job training circus animals. Jacobs is buried in Falls Cemetery.

After telling Jacobs' story - as well as the story of Jacobs' famed elephant, Modoc - Beauchamp opened the floor to questions and comments from the audience.

"This is the fun part," he said, noting he often hears stories from those who were alive and witnessed part of the hunt for Modoc, who bolted from a circus at Wabash High School and roamed the countryside of Wabash and Huntington counties for five days before being recaptured.

This talk was no different.

Beauchamp heard a story from a woman whose brother was on a date the night Modoc escaped. Her sibling, she said, had trouble leaving his girlfriend's house because Modoc blocked the path to her brother's car.

Held every other month, History Hunters began in 2006 after the museum opened the second floor.

"We had just built this museum and wanted to share it with everyone," Museum Director Tracy Stewart said. "Our programming committee, knowing how busy many people are, had a feeling that there were some out there who had an hour at lunch who might really enjoy putting that time to use. So they came up with the idea of having a speaker and inviting people to bring a brown bag lunch to eat while they learn something."

Past event include programs on African safaris and a program on pioneer life.

Overall, Stewart said, the program has been well received.

"The event consistently has about 25 to 30 people," Stewart said. "Some people come to every one, but each time we seem to attract a group of people who are specifically interested in the topic of the day.

"Almost every time we have an audience member who shares a story relating to the topic, like the woman who told about her brother calling home to say he would be late because there was an elephant blocking his car. It is often a two-way learning experience: The speaker learns something new about his or her own topic."

The next History Hunters program will be March 26. A speaker on a topic related to Abraham Lincoln is expected.

Stewart said the museum is always looking for speakers interested in presenting a History Hunters program.

"We are looking for people who have a topic of historical interest to present for about 40 minutes," she said, noting that allows time for questions and

audience participation.

"It doesn't necessarily have to be about Wabash County, although many of them are," she continued. "But we've also had presentations about other museums in the area, about quilts, sports in Indiana and so forth."

3/7/2009

Print Version

People interested in presenting can contact Stewart at the museum, 563-9070, or via email, director@wabashmuseum.org.