

THE ENGINEERS CLUB NEWS

Summer 2018 issue

Dayton, Ohio

Birthplace of Aviation

Newsletter Benefactors

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Centennial celebration of the clubhouse, aglow with class, history and wonder



Stepping into the Engineers Club at almost any time, one can be impressed with its classic old English Tudor style, handsome, grand and warm. But on the June 9 evening celebration of the centennial of the clubhouse, one seemed to walk into an illumined time warp, aglow with class and wonder—history half-alive for the occasion, after which it would settle back and be still again.

As in castles and manors of old, banners hung from the walls. Strings of lights flowed along the rich wood of the lobby staircase and elsewhere. A grandly set table in the center of the Wright Room offered appetizers. Display cases shared artifacts of history—a “guest register” page bearing the signatures of Orville and Katherine Wright, for example. Easel-held photos outside the rooms displayed the building’s messy, gritty birth and rise into grandeur.

The dining room tables were graced with flowers and lights in high centerpiece vases, with first-class settings and plates with chargers. Monogrammed “spirit” club centennial glasses—to be filled with champagne along with bourbon, wine or water for the toast to the club—were among the keepsakes given the attendees.

The real date of the clubhouse opening was February 2, but **Gina Papa**, who coordinated the work of the planning committee and was master of ceremonies for the dinner, said that the planning for the hundredth-year event began in August 2017 and the extra time was put to good use.

During the annual business meeting that followed the dinner, the Deeds-Kettering Award, usually given to a member for exceptional service to the club, was upped three more notches. For the first time since the award was established in 1988, it was presented not to one person, but to four, the main event planners who with other helpers carried out the ten-month project: **Heather Fugate, Gina Papa, Joan Seifert and Susie Walton**.

Those who came to this celebration made a little history, and got to relive some as well—in the meals, created from menus reflecting foods served at the club’s original banquets; in the presentation of the construction; and with the story of the dynamic era in which the clubhouse was built, a time in which Dayton’s future was shaped in large measure by our co-founder, **Col. Edward Deeds**. These stories follow.

Engineers Club members’ names are **boldface** on first mention in EC News stories.

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The clubhouse's 1918 banquet was, uh, totally not replicated. Shocking? Not at all.

The 2018 centennial banquet took a page out of the old menus and displayed the history, but toastmaster **Gina Papa** and her committee chose not to replay the excitement of the 1918 event.

Gina explained why:

"According to the newspaper account of the event on Feb 2, 1918... this room was filled with 300 men, each wearing a silly paper hat; they were ready to 'party.' DP&L had wired the 'clubhouse' with lights that flashed on and off wildly. There were siren shrieks ringing throughout the halls.

"Plus, the long tables that were in this room were covered with table cloths where randomly 'hidden' batteries were placed such that a remote operator could activate them to provide a brief "shock" when an unsuspecting diner placed his hand or arm on the table. They would shriek out suddenly, which just led to the merriment!"

"There were wires strung from the ceiling over which they threw paper streamers which formed a labyrinth over all the tables. Rubber balloons floated and popped around the room! Further, each diner was given an 'engineers hammer,' which they used on the

tables to 'hammer out their approval' of the speakers, food, whatever.

"There were plenty of speeches and toasts," Gina said. "A cabaret performance concluded the 'supper,' after which they retired to the auditorium where they began the evening's 'proper opening exercises' with the singing of 'America the Beautiful.' In summary, jubilation predominated, mostly in the form of song, nonsense and noise,' according to the record."

The diners in 2018 weren't given hammers, but were given golden keys, representing the gold keys given to co-founders **Charles Kettering** and **Edward Deeds** as tokens of appreciation. **Orville Wright** also received a ceremonial key to the building on behalf of the members.

Comparatively, one would say this event was low-key, but the toast this time had a hundred more years of respect behind it than did the lively first one.



A shared beginning: Danis built the clubhouse. The building and builders remain.

The construction of the Engineers Club building was one of B.G. Danis's first projects, Rob Lupidi pointed out in his presentation at the centennial anniversary banquet. Lupidi, Director of Business Development for Danis Building Construction, mentioned that the company was founded in 1916 by B.G. Danis, started building the clubhouse in spring of 1917 as hired by Col. Edward Deeds, and finished the job in February 1918.

That was fast and intense work, Lupidi pointed out, given that construction was more difficult compared to today's methods. "The workers gave it their all, five-six days a week, to help make the Engineers Club what it is today," Lupidi said.

The construction cost \$300,000, Lupidi said, which would be \$7 million in today's dollars, although rebuilding the clubhouse today would cost much more due to all the details and custom finishes.

The building was high-tech for the time, Lupidi said. It had city steam heat/ventilation, electric lighting, a synchronized clock system, an integrated vacuum system, and a Servant Annunciator System (intercom).

Attending the February 2, 1918 grand opening were Col. Deeds, Charles Kettering, John Patterson, Gov. James Cox, Orville Wright, B.G. Danis, along with another 300 men. Orville Wright was given symbolic "keys" to the building on behalf of the members. Lupidi mentioned that B.G. Danis ate lunch daily at the club after its opening.

Still privately owned, Danis is the largest construction company in the Dayton region with 500+ employees, headed by CEO John Danis, B.G.'s grandson. Other notable Dayton landmark projects include the Kettering Tower, Premier Health Partners Building, Fifth Third Field, Schuster Center, Sinclair Buildings 1-7, UD Arena, the Dayton Air Traffic Control Tower and various healthcare projects, among others.

Lupidi mentioned that Deeds and Kettering also hired Danis during the same time period to build the manufacturing plant the Dayton Wright Airline Co. used to produce battle planes for the U.S. during WWI. In 1918, 8,000 people produced 40 planes a day in that building.



celebration menu cooked up 1918 and 1919-styled choices

For the 100th year celebration dinner, Chef **Laura Cotton** chose to take diners through the dramatically different food choices at the club's 1918 dinner and the 1919 banquet. The club opened in the choking grip of World War I, but celebrated its first-year anniversary of the clubhouse in a reviving, adjustment period of peace and rebuilding.

Laura said that "the first entrée of the dinner was prepared following the menu **Gina Papa** found in the archival record of the grand opening of the Engineers Club, which they called the Clubhouse back then.

"I wanted to combine the recipes, first because the 1918 menu was based on wartime options. They turned more to fish and poultry, so we went with turkey, the same as at the inaugural celebration. We included a soup, because in 1918 people used soups to stretch available meatless ingredients."



First course: *Corn Chowder*

Second course: *Roast Turkey with Sautéed Green Beans & Wax Beans, & Stuffing*

"The second entrée (the third course), Laura said, "was based on what they served at the club's 1919 one-year anniversary."

Third course: *Sliced Beef Tenderloin, Creamed Peas, & Potatoes Wedges*

"When World War I ended in 1919, the food availability bounced back rather quickly to enjoy some of the finer things, and I wanted the diners to sense how far the people in the Engineers Club came in one year's time. That's why I had in the second entrée the roasted tenderloin and the peas. Once you had housewives growing their Victory Gardens, even when the war ended, many of those ladies kept it up."

Laura added, "Many of the meatless-meal recipes from those days were passed down to later generations and can be found online. Even to this day people are getting back to the roots of wanting home-grown things."

Fourth course: A Variety of desserts

.....

state of the club improved by leadership and the 1918 capital campaign

"Under the direction of the Board of Governors and the very capable leadership of Club Manager **Darbie Kincaid**, the club is stable and sustainable for the future," **Harry Seifert**, Vice President of the Club Foundation Board, reported at the annual meeting following the building centennial dinner. "Darbie has been able to adjust the operations of the club to the changing conditions in the marketplace. As a result, the dues are one of the best bargains in town.

"Thanks to the club foundation and to the five-year 1918 capital campaign, our building is in excellent condition," Seifert said. "While we were just short of our fund-raising objective, we were able to meet the needed repairs."

Diane Buchanan Johnson, who with **Melinda Nutter** co-chaired the capital campaign to help restore and repair the clubhouse for the next century, reported that the effort has brought in \$309,781, including \$97,000 in grants. She noted that 110 members participated, with 84 donating the full amount of \$1918.

The total expenditure over four years was \$301,015. Major repairs and improvements were new air-handling units (\$61,350), roof rebuilds (\$98,000), carpets (\$51,000), and a power wash of the building (\$1,600).

Harry Seifert



Diane Buchanan Johnson





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The Build

Credit: Courtesy of Danis Building Construction. Photos restored by Brown & Bills, Architects, for the club-restoration groundbreaking on Sept. 19, 1996.



1. Looking southeast, with Memorial Hall in the background, March 15, 1917.



2. Looking west down Monument Ave. Two houses are yet to be razed. The Miami Conservancy Building is at the corner, and beyond that, Steele High School.



2b. Looking north from the alley, excavation for the foundation. May 25, 1917.



3. The first floor of the dining room and building, looking north from the alley. July 25, 1917.



4. The west side of the dining room, facing north.



5. Looking southward at the concrete mixer.



6. Walls waiting for the roof. July 25, 1917



7. Cut stone in the west yard. The "Engineers Club" stone engraved for the top of the front door sits in the near left corner. Oct. 5, 1917.



8. Looking east, with the house on the left yet to be demolished. October 15, 1917.



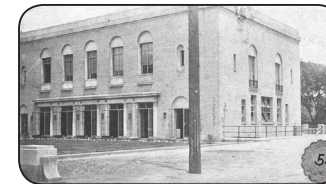
9. Looking north at the east end of what the front section that the architects called "the main room." Nov. 6, 1917.



10. Looking southeast on Dec. 6, 1917.



11. The eastward view, including the Miami Conservancy District in the foreground, Dec. 6, 1917.



12. The dining room, looking northeast at the rear, with doors (now fixed windows) that opened for warm weather dining, except this was Jan. 10, 1918.



13. Looking northeast at the west side of the building. Jan. 10, 1918



14. Looking at the club completed, Jan. 10, 1918.

In the transforming, tumultuous period in which the clubhouse was built: Edward Deeds' masterwork

By Brady Kress

President and CEO of Dayton History

Excerpted and edited from his talk at the centennial celebration of the opening of the clubhouse

If you look at 1913 and when the club opened in 1918, it might give you a sense of each of the incredible figures involved in creating it. This was a community coming out of the death of their favorite son, **Wilbur Wright** in 1912. This was a community that in that time period had just learned that **John Patterson**, the owner and founder of the largest employer in Dayton, NCR, was indicted on federal charges, along with Edward Deeds, Thomas Watson and 27 other NCR officers.



In eight weeks after that happened, the community raised privately \$2.15 million—the equivalent of \$54 million today—to make sure this would never happen again.

After a few months of hearing that news in 1913, four trillion gallons of ice-cold water flooded into Dayton. Just two blocks from here, an entire piece of the levy broke and sent a tsunami of water down the Dayton streets, picking up and tossing anything in its way through store windows—wagons, trolleys, automobiles, horses, humans. It killed 350 people, destroyed more than a thousand homes, and left 1,420 horses dead in the streets, with a damage estimate of a hundred million dollars.

In eight weeks after that happened, the community raised privately \$2.15 million—the equivalent of \$54 million today—to make sure this would never happen again.

Just before the flood, Dayton's James A. Cox won, then lost, then re-won his seat as Ohio governor. By 1914, Dayton launched a number of grand experiments. One was the city manager form of government. We weren't the first, but we were by far the largest city to experiment with having, as John Patterson suggested, a professional manager rather than a politician run the city government. And Dayton pushed for Ohio's first conservation law, which was passed and signed into law by James Cox.

The Miami Conservancy District was created, a historical first; and Dayton, under Col. Deeds' leadership, created the first taxing district to pay for the flood control, rather than have other Ohio cities pay for it with collectively. Their attitude was that it was Dayton's flood; it was Dayton's problem.

By 1915, just a few years after his brother's death, Orville Wright decided to get out of the airplane business. He sold his interests to the Wright Airplane Company for about \$500,000, in today's value, about \$4 million.

In 1915, the Dayton Police Department decided to invest in an automobile. They owned it for one day—before it was stolen from its parking spot in front of City Hall. Oddly enough, 1915 also was the year prostitution was no longer legal in Dayton. (I don't think there was any connection.)

In that same two-year period, the Dayton Triangles were formed, one of the first charter members of the American Football Association, which became the NFL. The Business and Professional Women's Club and Dayton Chapter of the NAACP were organized. Just in time to build the Engineers Club, the Danis Company was formed.

Also, in the same period, Edward Deeds and Charles Kettering sold the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Company, DELCO, to the United Motors Corporation which eventually sold it to General Motors. That may have given them the extra cash to construct the club.

Across the street from the Club, Col. Deeds had already constructed the Miami Valley Conservancy Building. That was a testament to Deeds' faith in flood prevention—that he would build and personally pay for two structures just down the street from where the levy broke in 1913.

In that same window of time, World War I started and 2,000 Daytonians signed up to fight. DP&L was building the Tait Station along the river south of Dayton.

Deeds is probably one of most understated architects of the Dayton, Ohio that we live in today. He had been sentenced to six months in prison because of NCR's sales acts. That was overturned on appeal. Think of the mental strain that would have had.

Continued on page 6

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He ended up being the longest serving chairman of the Miami Conservancy District. John Patterson was the father of it, but Deeds was the one at the table, the one who made it happen, who was hiring the engineers and the chief engineer to make it work.

If you are familiar with how the dry-dam system works, you know it does a lot to protect the people south of the dams. It requires a sacrifice of the people north of the dams in that the dry-dam system holds waters north of town and slowly releases it so that our waterways can handle it going through town. That means that farm fields north had to be acquired. Some were bought for recreational use, as at the Englewood Dam. But Deeds and Patterson also wanted the land around Huffman Dam for airfields to assist in future research of aviation developments. Deeds grabbed more than he needed to make sure there was plenty for this new idea they had about research in serving aviation.

The first thing Deeds did when he started to campaign for conservancy land was ask for the list of the “ones saying they want to kill me.” He showed up on their porches. By the time he finished, he convinced every one that this was the right thing to do for the region.

Because of the sacrifice farmers had to make, a lot of people had a price on Deed's head. Some said. “If that Edward Deeds fellow shows up at my farm, I'm going to kill him, I'm going to shoot him” The first thing Deeds did when he started to campaign for conservancy land was ask for the list of the “ones saying they want to kill me.” He showed up on their porches. By the time he finished, he convinced every one that this was the right thing to do for the region.

Another example of Deeds' character and efficiency: In the two months after the flood, citizens donated more than \$2 million toward a flood-control solution before the conservancy taxing district was formed. When the “Great War” started, the feds told Deeds that he could not hire contractors or buy materials for the flood-control dams, since both were needed for the war effort. So Deeds started companies that would build the dams with surplus materials.

When they finished in the early 1920's, the conservancy flood-control system not only came in ahead of schedule, but also under budget. Deeds saw to it that any subscriber they could find would be refunded his or her part of the two million dollars donated in the two months after the flood.

In World War I, Deeds was made a colonel and put in charge of all the aircraft for the Army Air Corps. During his tenure he chose the Dayton-Wright Airplane Company to be one of the four American manufacturers of DeHavilland 4 light bombers.

Also, to improve the warplane, he recruited two engineers and had them locked in a hotel room in Washington D.C. until they came up with a design for a better engine. They invented the Liberty Engine used in the DeHavilland 4s, though most of the American-built planes didn't arrive in Europe until the end of the war. Still, the Liberty Engines became the go-to aircraft engines for the next 20 years, an advance made by Deeds' leadership and his pushing the issue.

Along with all that, Deeds helped site and build the Engineers Club, located across the river from McCook Field, the first American aviation-testing field, which, thanks in large part to his groundbreaking foresight, later was reincarnated as Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

We are the recipients of a tremendous gift. We live in a basket of prosperity that was woven by the engineers, scientists, and the entrepreneurs that put their capital and reputations at risk to build the Dayton we know today—the city of 1,000 factories, the city with more patents per capita than any other, the city we love.

Thank you.

Getting to know Mitch Heaton

Interview by Hap Cawood

Tell me about your growing up, including the interests and experiences that led to your profession?

I love sports, laughing a lot, and having something to smile about. I've also always had good, caring people around me. Generally, all of the things I like centered toward having a bunch of people near me, literally. With that, I found myself in positions of being lucky enough to have a fair amount of friends and people I care about.

The more I learn/learned, the more I want to be a part of positively impacting their lives. This has led to being captain of my baseball teams, being voted class clown in high school, and now standing in for my pastor when he's out of town. Life has been good to me.

'My career path will not sound typical to anyone.'

And your family?

Growing up, I was (and still am) the youngest of three brothers. My mom is from Dayton and my dad from Springfield, and I lived in the same house for the first 18 years of my life. My brothers are 6 and 8 years older than I, but even with the difference in age, we're all still very close. They stayed close for college, and then I stayed close as well, but moved away for about 18 months about nine months after graduating from Wright State. My wife and I found ourselves driving back here three hours nearly every weekend for birthday parties, cookouts... you name it. We quickly moved back because family is everything to us.

From your recent work at Wright State and now the Dayton Development Coalition, not to mention your presidency of the Engineers Club Board of Governors this last fiscal year, you are a very engaged guy. What was your career path, and what were some highlights?

My career path will not sound typical to anyone. Newspaper delivery, Baseball Player, Admissions Outreach for Sinclair, and then the front office of the Dayton Dragons for 4.5 years—all before I was 23 years old. Then I left to help run a baseball bat company in West Virginia—an engineering masterpiece – wooden barrel with a metal handle to decrease the amount of broken bats, but still hit with wood.

I came back to Ohio and worked in sales of interconnect, passive and electromechanical parts. After eight years there, I told my wife I didn't love what I was doing and wanted to have an impact on the lives of more people. I went to my alma mater and worked



in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at Wright State doing corporate relations and personal fundraising.

When the Dayton Development Coalition had a role open up, I remembered how much I loved seeing the faces of the happy people at the Dragons games and realized I wanted to do all I can to help impact the future of the region.

What are your passions and other interests?

Family. Friends. Fun. I'm simple.

What brought you to the Engineers Club, and what do you like most about it?

When I started working at the College of Engineering and Computer Science at Wright State, College of Engineering and Computer Science Dean **Nathan Klingbeil** and I decided to be members almost immediately. **Harry Seifert** and I established a good friendship and he asked me to serve on the Board of Governors. The rest is history.

Speaking of history, I love the building and the people, but I love what the club stands for and how and why it was created. I tell the story during every tour I lead.

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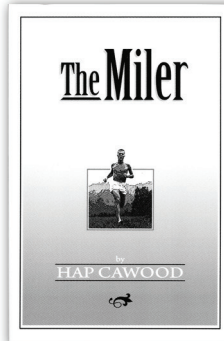
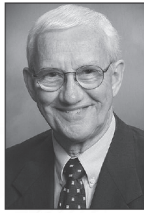
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