

Dum Dums, Circus Peanuts, LeRoy Ohio and Much More

by Lynne Belluscio

Last week a group of folks from LeRoy headed west on our spring Historical Society trip. Everyone knew that our destination was Sauder Village, a living history museum west of Toledo, but no one knew that I had a surprise lunch stop at a Subway in a little town, east of Cleveland, about 3½ hours from LeRoy.

Many years ago, I had taken the LeRoy Ibexes, an old-fashioned baseball team, to Columbus. We started out before dawn and arrived in Columbus just in time to play against the Ohio Muffins. They won and we piled back in the van and headed home. We changed drivers a couple of times, and we all needed to get out and stretch out legs, so I got off I90 east of Cleveland and drove a couple of miles south looking for a gas station and then I looked at the signs. We were in LeRoy, Ohio! I had never heard of LeRoy, Ohio. (Since then, I've learned that there are at least 11 LeRois).

It wasn't very big, just a crossroads – actually five roads converge at one spot. We didn't stay very long – just got a fill-up, changed drivers, and headed back home. There wasn't google in those days - - much less the internet, so I never learned much about LeRoy, Ohio. When I put together the itinerary for the Ohio trip this year, I originally planned to pick up box lunches from the D & R Depot, but then I thought, maybe we should stop in LeRoy. So I googled the LeRoy, Ohio, Subway and gave them a call just to make sure they were open. They were and I ordered a couple of party platters and told them we'd stop by about 12:30 on Tuesday.

So as we got off I90, I told everyone to look out the windows to look for signs of where we were. I think the first sign was on the cemetery. When we pulled into the Subway, the party platters were ready, and then we headed over to the LeRoy Community Center. I had called the day before and talked with Sharon Rodgers. "My name is Lynne Belluscio.



I'm the Director of the LeRoy Historical Society in New York and I'm bringing a bus to LeRoy (Ohio) tomorrow and we'd like to stop by and say "hi." So we left the Subway, went around "5 point" and headed down LeRoy Township Road and arrived at the fire hall and community center. Sharon wasn't there, but Vicki welcomed us and offered to have the guys bring out one of the fire trucks so we could have a picture. So we gathered around the fire truck.

I gave Vicki one of our LeRoy books, a Jell-O t-shirt and a new LeRoy t-shirt and an invitation to the Bicentennial on June 8. They gave us a copy of a 19th Century map with family names – which might furnish a few clues. LeRoy, Ohio is named for LeRoy, New York because some of their earliest settlers were from here. We also received a hat, a license plate holder, a lieutenant's shirt from the Fire Emergency Rescue Squad. (I proudly wore it Thursday on the way home.) So after a quick photo in front of the fire truck, we headed on our way.

At Sauder Village we had a chance to see a phenomenal quilt show - over 400 original quilts – any one of them a work of art. After a day touring the historic

village, it was on to Stoney Ridge Winery and dinner at Stella Blue in downtown Archbold.

On Thursday it was time to head back home. But we had a surprise at breakfast. A man in a blue shirt came up to me and introduced himself. "Are you the group that's headed to Spangler Candy?" "We sure are." "Well, I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Dean Spangler. I just called the factory and they said not to arrive before 10:30, because they have a group of school kids." "That's fine because we're headed over to the Pettisville Meat Market first." Spangler Candy Company makes all the candy canes in America. They also make Dum Dum suckers - -those little suckers that D & R Depot hand out. In fact, Dean's license plate reads "Dum Dum". They also make safety suckers – with the soft twisted handles. Remember Circus Peanuts - - those banana flavored soft marshmallow things? Well Spangler makes those too. As Dean says, "You either love em or you hate em."

Dean got on the bus before we left for Pettisville Meat Company and told us about the 105-year-old Spangler Candy Company. He is the third generation of the privately owned \$100 million business. He just recently turned

the business over to his nephew. He was at Sauder Village because he is president of the board of the museum. When he discovered that there was a group on the way to his factory, he wanted to make sure we were welcome to visit and to learn a little more.

He was most gracious. Most people in his position wouldn't have taken the time. When we were at the factory, on the way to take the "Dum Dum Trolley" (yes you've read that right) I met his wife who also works at Spanglers. "If you're ever over our way, I sure hope you stop by the Jell-O Gallery. We don't have a trolley, but we do have a giraffe."

I came home with three big bags of Dum Dums which we now have for sale in the gift shop. I don't think we'll have the Circus Peanuts available, although there is a Jell-O recipe (actually it is a gelatin recipe because they probably don't have permission to use the name Jell-O) on the side of the bag of Peanuts. Linda Privatera made the recipe - - strange stuff.

