



# PAILEONTOLOGY

## A Brief History of the Lunch Pail

*by Peggy Marker*

While on vacation a couple of years ago, my husband and I took a tour of a coal mine located in the Appalachian Mountains. The mine operated in the late 1800's and was closed in the early 1900's; but, the mine remains open for visitors to see first hand what it was like to work in a coal mine. Our guide related stories of the men who worked miles underground in dark, wet, and very dangerous conditions. He showed us tools, lights, shovels, and other apparatus used by these men. One of the items, the miner's lunch pail was particularly interesting to me. It was a large metal cylinder shaped object. The lower part served as the water supply for the miner, the next compartment held sandwiches, and the top layer, which looked like a pie pan, held dessert. To the miner, his water supply was his life. To discourage other miners from stealing his water, a coal miner might drop his false teeth into the pail. This tidbit of information

brought smiles and laughs from his audience along with the thought of taking a long drink of water from a pail with someone's false teeth staring back at you.

This particular object also brought the desire to look a little closer at the lunch pail. We have several in the Museum so a little background check on these objects was in order.

First of all, people have carried lunches or food since the dawn of time. Oiled animal skins and parts (stomachs, bladders) were used to carry food. But let's fast forward to the 1800's and the Age of Steel. These metal boxes could withstand the most demanding treatment and harsh environments. Carrying a lunch box during this time period attested to the fact that you were a working man. You got your hands dirty and carrying your lunch saved some of your hard earned cash. Children, however, during this time carried their lunch in recycled con-

tainers. Biscuit tins, lard cans, and even tobacco boxes could be used to carry their lunches.

It wasn't until 1902 that the first "real" lunch pail was introduced. It didn't highlight cartoon or TV characters but showed children playing or engaged in some activity. These lithographed boxes are desirable by collectors today. The Mickey Mouse lunch box was introduced in 1935 but it wasn't until the 1950's that the lunch box hit the craze level. A Nashville company called Aladdin brought the lunch box to its all time high in popularity. I remember this time well, because I walked home for lunch everyday. I envied the kids who lived such great distances from school that they had to bring their lunch. Even though I had a hot home cooked lunch everyday, I really wanted a lunchbox. Peter Pan, pirates, the VW Bus, and the Disney Schoolbus were the most popular at

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that time. Aladdin also followed the lead of the automobile industry with their planned obsolescence theory. These heavy metal boxes were indestructible. If you bought one, it lasted a lifetime. So style, characters, and the ever emerging and changing TV scenes caused people to keep up with the stars and buy lunch boxes more frequently to show those ever changing times.

Other companies emerged to give the Aladdin some competition, including, American Thermos out of Connecticut. The cowboy rage took front stage with Roy Rogers, Trigger, and Dale Evans. Brightly colored lithography on all sides of the lunch box made Aladdin take notice and in 1962 they introduced their trademark 3-D feature. Over

120 million lunch boxes were sold between 1950 and 1970 and then decline of the metal box began. The last metal lunch pail was manufactured in 1984 and featured Rambo on the box. But even Rambo couldn't help Aladdin hold on to the majority market share. The plastic box began to emerge.

The vinyl lunch box phase, however, was aimed at the female market. While Barbie, the Beatles, and Bobbie Soxer were popular, the durability of the box was poor and they did not last. Very few of these boxes have survived.

All the well-known companies of the 50's and 60's are now gone, but American Thermos is still making lunch boxes. They have introduced

a few retro metal boxes aimed at the baby boomers but their standard box is still made of plastic with a sticker or two pasted on its sides. Fabric insulated bags are also being manufactured.

If you feel the need to go back in time and reminisce about the lunch box you carried to school, check out the few we have here at the Museum. We have one like your grandmother might have carried as a child or your grandfather carried to work. Sorry, we don't have the miner's metal lunch pail, but, we do have some false teeth!

Source: [www.wholepop.com/features/lunchboxes/paileontology\\_history/steel\\_history.htm](http://www.wholepop.com/features/lunchboxes/paileontology_history/steel_history.htm)



## Summer Intern at the Museum

As a result of an ArtsEverywhere Initiative of the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County matching grant award, the Museum was able to hire summer intern, Ruth Melin, to help with the replication of the Children of the Holocaust A Special Exhibit: Children in Crisis reflecting on Children in Crisis exhibit.

In the following paragraph Ruth tells us a little more about herself and what she is doing at the Museum this summer.

After graduating from Mishawaka High School in 2008, I headed down to Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis to study art history. This school year, my junior year, I

will begin a Museum Studies minor, preparing me for a future career in museum work. This summer I have begun putting together a book that travels with the exhibit, documenting damages and organizing installation and deinstallation. Other duties include framing the pieces and packing them for shipping. This summer has been and will continue to be a learning experience that complements my education while allowing me to contribute to the Mishawaka community.



# 2009 2010

## Was a Very Good Year!

**Tours:** While our total number of school tours was down from past years, a total of 182 tours were given. This total included Survive Alive tours, Mishawaka Historical Bus tours, Mishawaka history tours, Japanese Tea Room tours, walk, talk, and touch tours, now and then tours, and specialty tours such as: inventors, the history of flight, and children of the Holocaust.

**Membership:** Our membership numbers remain constant, which is good during this slowing economy. The overall giving in this category was up from last year enabling us to add to the Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum Endowment Fund. A new membership program is being considered to increase our membership. Look for membership information in your September mail.

**Accessions:** Approximately 100 items have been accessed into the Museum's collection. Our revised Mission Statement has helped to guide us in accepting items that fit the mission of the Museum.

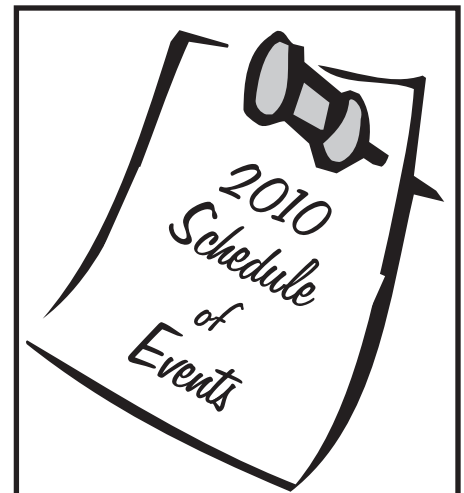
**Accomplishments:** Director, Peggy Marker, was awarded the following: 1) a School City of Mishawaka Education Foundation grant to help create the exhibit Children of the Holocaust A Special Exhibit: Children in Crisis Reflecting on Children in Crisis. 2) The Kurt and Tessye Simon Fund for Holocaust Remembrance grant to attend the Arthur and Rochelle Belfer Conference for Educators 2010 at the United States Memorial

Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. 3) Received an ArtsEverywhere Initiative of the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County matching grant to replicate the Children of the Holocaust exhibit for loan and travel to area venues and organizations. 4) Received an in-kind donation from the Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center to create and publish the booklet compiling the Joint Services Campus Program students' art and poetry included in the Children of the Holocaust Exhibit.

**Mission Statement:** The Mission Statement committee met and completed its task of writing a statement to help guide the Museum in its quest of acquiring artifacts for its collection. This statement appears on our newsletters, stationary, website, and other Museum publications.

**Our Mission Statement is:** *The mission of the Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum is to provide a collection of unique artifacts that encourages families to explore, learn, and enjoy the history of the Mishawaka area.*

**Volunteers:** Our volunteers were celebrated at our annual volunteer luncheon held on June 14, 2010. Forty-one volunteers helped in the Museum this year doing a multitude of tasks from serving on committees to decorating the Museum for Christmas. Over 1,000 volunteer hours were expended to help the Museum be the best that it can be.



**Now – December 16, 2010:** *Children of the Holocaust A Special Exhibit: Children in Crisis Reflecting on Children in Crisis through Art and Poetry.* This exhibit was made possible by a grant from the School City of Mishawaka Education Foundation. Students from the Joint Service Campus Program share their insight about the children of the Holocaust through art and poetry.

**October 29, 2010:** The Museum will be closed.

**November 25–26, 2010:** The Museum will be closed.

**November 12 – December 17, 2010:** *It's Christmas Time in the City. The Museum becomes a winter wonderland.* Over 1,000 Christmas lights and several Christmas vignettes will delight visitors as they walk through the streetscape of Mishawaka c1890. Visitors will also enjoy a Victorian Christmas in miniature in the Guske Dollhouse.

**December 17- January 3, 2011:** The Museum will be closed.



## Museum Advisory Board 2010

Eva Jojo, *president* • David Eisen, *vice-president* • Karen Jackson, *secretary*  
Connie Saltzgaber, *treasurer* • Ashley Bennett • Peter DeKeever • Lisa Gartee  
Linda Irish • Irene Maenhout • Michael Marien • Paula Meersman  
Lucy Minnix • Randy Squadroni • Daniel Towner • Ellen West  
Emeritus: Emmy Cokewood, Betty Hans, Jane Weaver



1402 South Main Street  
Mishawaka, IN 46544  
Telephone: (574) 254-4540  
FAX: (574) 254-4585  
Peggy Marker, Director  
www.hlcm.com

### Museum hours:

Tues. - Fri. 9 AM to noon & 1:00 to 4 PM,  
(closed whenever school is not in session in SCM)

**Admission charges:** \$2.00 - visitors 5 years and up;  
\$1.00 - Visitors 2-4 years old;  
No charge for Museum members



## 2010 – 2011 Artifactors

### Hall of Fame 15+ Years

Bryan Chiropractic Center  
Dr. Atef M. Tawadros  
Garden Patch Market  
JPD Controls, Inc.  
Schindler-Richard Insurance Agency

### 11 – 14 years

Edgewater Floral & Gifts, Inc.  
Gary's Barber/Style Shop  
Interiors, Etc.  
Magrames Motor Sales  
Michiana Accounting Service  
Weber Electric Inc.  
Woodcox Cleaning & Restoration

### 6 – 10 Years

Draperies Etc., Inc.  
1st Source Bank  
Gherardi Frame & Design Co.  
Hard Surface Fabrications, Inc.  
Key Bank  
Lake City Bank  
Merrill Pharmacy  
Schindler, Olson & Currey

### 1 – 5 Years

Bonnie Doon Ice Cream Corp.  
Culver's of Mishawaka  
Frame-It  
George Mighion D.D.S.P.C.  
Magrane Peg Medical Center  
Mishawaka Business Association  
Princess City Dental Care  
Quality Dining, Inc.

### Special Project Donors

Beta Gamma Chapter of Tri Kappa, Inc.  
Mishawaka Kiwanis Club  
St. Joseph Regional Medical Center  
Tri Kappa Mishawaka Associate

*Thank you  
for your support*



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