

## 'Ropewalk' premier and aftermath a success

By Mark Martel



At the April 25 premiere of *Ropewalk*, Bill Hagenbuch and daughter Kate enjoy the recognition plaque presented by the Engineers Club Foundation.

The *Ropewalk* documentary World Premiere on April 25 was a rousing success. Attendees filled the dining room and the better part of the auditorium. Soundtrack composer Bruce Dalzell performed live, and at a reception afterwards the crowd got to meet other participants like Athens filmmaker Steve Fetsch. The movie's narrator, Club member **Bill Hagenbuch**, enjoyed friends and family who came from as far as Oregon and Switzerland to attend.

The film describes Xenia's forgotten cordage industry and the possible future of rope technology. Since "opening night" *Ropewalk* has reached cordage professionals, museum curators and rope enthusiasts around the world.

Thanks to generous donations of money and volunteer work, the project was self-funding. Over 280 DVDs have sold and another 250 copies have been donated to libraries, museums, universities and historical societies. This helps fulfill the educational mission of the Engineers Club of Dayton Foundation, through historic preservation and education in science and technology. DVDs are available at the Engineers Club, or at [www.filmbaby.com](http://www.filmbaby.com).

After WWII work in radar, Bill Hagenbuch spent his career making natural and synthetic rope at the Xenia, Ohio Hooven & Allison Company — one of the last natural fiber rope companies in America until its 2004 closing. This forgotten industry once employed thousands locally.

Since his retirement in 1986, Hagenbuch kept the local history alive with community presentations. The new *Ropewalk* film preserves that history through extensive archival footage, photographs, and a companion website, [www.storyofrope.org](http://www.storyofrope.org).

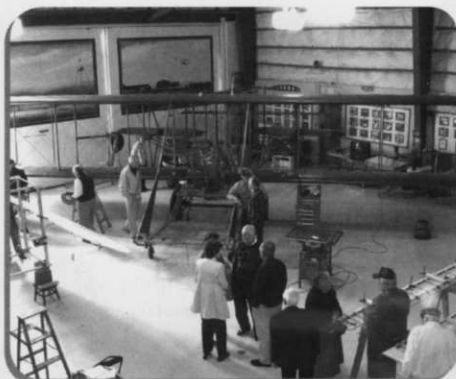
The film contains strong relevance to today, showing how earlier globalization drove the need to innovate, while corporate consolidation sparked antitrust reform. *Ropewalk* ties together such unlikely topics as prehistoric tools, Ben Franklin, the Industrial Revolution, railroads, hemp agriculture, drug laws, WWII, globalization, plastics, carbon nanotubes, and space travel.

## Barn Gang outing programs

**SCHUSTER** Club members on April 15 saw and heard how the Schuster Performing Arts Center was built and how it works behind the scenes.



**DAWNE DEWEY** Dawne Dewey, Head of Special Collections and Archives at the Wright State University library, on June 17 showed Club members the diary of Milton Wright and other photos, letters and artifacts of the Wright brothers in their extensive collection.



**WRIGHT B FLYER** Barn Gang members on April 29 at the Wright "B" Flyer hangar where Walt Hoy heads up the volunteer team building the transportable "B in a Box" replica of the historic flying machine.

Barn Gang photos by Hap Cawood.  
Annual meeting photos by Dick Palmer.