



THE CEDAR TREE

Newsnotes from

The Historical Society of Mount Lebanon

P. O. Box 13423, Pittsburgh, PA 15243 (412) 561-0455

www.hsmtl.org

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SUMMER 2009

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The Mt. Lebanon History Center opening, held the first weekend in June, was a big success. We estimate about 250 to 300 people visited during those three days to see our first exhibit—What We Wore—learn about what we will be doing at the Center, and enjoy refreshments donated by local businesses and our members. For those of you who were not able to attend, what follows is part of the speech presented before the unveiling of the Historical Society sign (created by Dick Price) that now stands at the end of our walkway...

“You could say that the Mt. Lebanon History Center is the culmination of eight months of work... as we signed the lease last October. Or maybe the seeds of this center were planted 11 years ago when a group of Mt. Lebanon residents founded the Historical Society of Mt Lebanon. But, seeing this is a history center, we probably should say that it has been growing since 1912 when local residents voted to split from Scott Township and form their own municipality.... or we could go back even further to a day in the mid 1800s when Rev Joseph Clokey brought two Cedar of Lebanon trees back from a trip to the holy land and planted them in his front yard.

But no matter when you date the center's beginning, it was a product of a lot of work by a lot of people. In the Society's 11 years of existence, there have been many board members and volunteers who should be credited for getting things off the ground and moving things forward. Wally Workmaster, the society's first president, oversaw the initial efforts of getting non profit and tax exempt status and dotting the I's and crossing the T's on the society's constitution, bylaws, and collections policy. Karen Cahall, the society's second president, kept us on course and brought new ideas and energy to the society.

But when I became president four years ago, it was apparent that the society needed to do something to move forward or else it would stagnate. We had a

storage locker full of items that residents had donated, but no idea of where anything was or even what we had. We needed to find the society a home and get those donations out on display so the public could see them, appreciate them, and learn from them.

So many people have helped get this center to the point it is tonight—from volunteering to paint to donating office supplies—that it would be impossible to name them all right now. However there are a few thanks yous that should be mentioned:

To the Mt. Lebanon commission for its past—and, I hope, future—financial support.

To the Society's board members and volunteers—both past and present—for their dedication and commitment to our local history.

To YOU, our members and our supporters. This center would not have been possible without your ongoing support. We hope you will continue to support us and that you will tell your friends, neighbors, and family about us. We are here to protect and preserve your past.

I think it is fitting that the Society's first board chose the Cedar of Lebanon tree to be its logo, because I hope the center will, like a tree, continue to flourish, grow, and branch out...like a family tree in which the name of every resident adorns a limb.”

M.A. Jackson, President

HISTORY CENTER HOURS

The Mt. Lebanon History Center is located at the corner of Washington Road and Lebanon Avenue (across from Southminster Church); our entrance is 200 Lebanon Avenue. Hours are: **10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursdays; 9 a.m. to noon, Saturdays; and 6 to 9 p.m., the first Friday of every month though October.** If staffing allows, we will take reservations for special tours (such as reunion groups). Call 412-563-1941 to make an appointment or to ask a question.

If you have donations for the Society, please drop them off during office hours, or call to arrange a drop off.

HELP US GET FUNDING

Last year the Society came very close to losing its municipal funding. This year, with the current economic woes still affecting us all, we are worried that the commission will cut the Society out of the budget altogether for 2010. In July, the Society will send a letter to the commission requesting \$5,000 for 2010 to help us pay our rent. But the Commissioners will not seriously consider the appropriation unless they feel the Society is a community asset worthy of municipally support.

That's where you come in. We are begging our members to help us by calling, e-mailing, or writing their commissioners to express how important it is to preserve our local history and how much the Society needs their support. It is something that should take just moments of your time, but will have a lasting impact on the community.

The easiest way to contact your commissioner is to log on to www.mtlebanon.org and click on "government" (just under the picture) then click on your commissioner's name (if you do not know who your commissioner is, a ward map is available on the website, or call or call 412-343-3400). Once on your commissioner's website page, you can press "contact commissioner" and his e-mail will appear. **Please contact your commissioner before the end of July.**

Thank you!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Our next free, public program is **7:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 23**, and our speaker is Muriel Moreland, president of the Dormont Historical Society. Muriel will talk about Dormont's 100 years of history.

Our last program for 2009 is **Wednesday, November 4**. The speaker will be announced later.

And please note that we have tentatively scheduled **Wednesday, October 14**, for our annual dinner.

You will receive flyers about these events closer to the dates.

"FIELD TRIP" REVIEW

On May 27th, Trustees and Members of the Historical Society met at the Gilfillan House in Upper St. Clair for our May program. It was a pleasurable and rewarding experience. The docents were knowledgeable and well-informed about the Gilfillan family and the property. Not much had changed since the day Alexander Gilfillan brought his family to this home. The farmhouse built in 1857 was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. In 2001, Margaret Gilfillan died at the age of 101. Her will stated that the

farmhouse and 156 acres on which it stands was to go to the Upper St. Clair Historical Society. In 1976, she had given 60 acres to the Township. This land is known as Gilfillan Park. Both tracts must be preserved and cannot be developed.

About 45 people crowded into the late 1850's farm house to hear Jean Brown, President of the Upper St. Clair Historical Society, describe life on the farm and profile members of Alexander Gilfillan's family. The group then toured the house and had ample time to look at the furnishings (which are the original furnishings of the family) and family heirlooms. Following the tour, members were given an opportunity to ask questions and get information on some of the artifacts and valuable antiques. The USC Historical Society has opened the farm house and barns to the public as an educational facility. The farm is a working farm with some livestock and antique farm equipment. It was a great evening to get a glimpse into history some 125 years ago. For more information, call Jean Brown at 412-833-2323.

SEEKING

The Society is looking for **memorabilia with the names of past and current Washington Road businesses** for our next exhibit: "Washington Road, Mt. Lebanon's Main Street." Calendars, advertising pieces, matchbooks, rulers, pencils, and boxes with the business name are just some possibilities. For example we have a coloring book produced by Mt. Lebanon Federal and a paint stirrer and calendar from Rolliers.

If you happen to have any photos of buildings and businesses on Washington Road, they would be helpful as well. We also are looking for volunteers to serve on the exhibit committee. If you have anything you would like to loan or donate for the exhibit or if you want to volunteer, e-mail or call Lori Humphreys at marieh6@verizon.net or 412-561-6649. Or contact the History Center at 412-563-1941 or info@hsmatl.org.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

If you have any experience working in a museum or in collections management, we'd love to hear from you. We also need volunteers to man the center. You can pick your hours—an hour a month to several hours per week. You can sit and welcome people and, if the center isn't busy, we will have some easy tasks—sending out thank you letters, returning phone calls, filing, and working on some special projects—to keep you occupied and help the Society. Center during the opening weekend events.

We also are open to ideas for new project ideas that you'd like to work on. And, we need the following:

* Someone familiar with PC computers to help with data entry of our collection. We will train you in how to use our software.

* Someone with typing skills who could transcribe our oral history tapes.

* Help with the exhibits.

* Someone to keep the membership database current (we will provide training in our software).

If you are interested, call 412-563-1941 and leave a message or e-mail info@hsmtl.org.

CONGRATULATIONS

To member **Eleanor McHugh**, who won the “Best of Mt. Lebanon” raffle basket at the History Center opening event.

The basket contained several gift certificates to area businesses, and we would like to thank them for supporting the Society. They are: Bistro 19, Blooming Dahlia, Coffee Tree Roasters, Rollier’s Hardware, Salon Vivace, and Scoops on Beverly. Thanks also to Monique Fontaine for putting the basket together.

DONATIONS

Display cases: **Carol Humphreys Gordon** (in memory of Robert Nelson Humphreys and Gustavus Nelson), **Virginia Nicklas** (in memory of John B. and Dorothy S. Nicklas), **Bette Ruh** (in memory of Dr. Edwin Ruh), and **Bill Simpson**.

SPECIAL THANKS

To the **Mt. Lebanon Police Association** for its donation...to **Dave Borland** for getting us pencils and shirts with the Mt. Lebanon Historical Society logo on them...to **Dick Price** and **Bill Madden** for painting the Center’s signpost...to **Mark Reis** for ongoing computer assistance...to **Dave Redding** for once again driving Society members in the Memorial Day Parade...to the exhibit committee **Lori Humphreys, Kent Miller, Jim Lutz, and Mark Johnson** and to everyone who donated an item to the “What We Wore” exhibit: **Jeanné Heid Bereznicki, Alice Crocco, Lucille Heckman, Mark Johnson, Jim Lutz, Susan and Hal Morgans, Linda Plummer, Kathleen Simpson, Ed Davies and Kevin Maehling** of the Mt. Lebanon Fire Department, **Tammy Sampson/The Fabric Place, Cassie Gillen/Josephine Florals, Susan Wulff/Finder’s Keepers, and Anne Kemerer**...to the gala opening event committee, **Lori Humphreys, Marty Carney, Wilma Novogradac, Maggie McDermott, and Monique Fontaine** for their hard work and attention to detail and to everyone who donated items and food for the opening event: **Rania’s**

Catering, Potomac Bakery, Uptown Coffee, Helen Betzler, Maxine Bickel, Nancy Sofis, Potomac Bakery, The Fabric Place, Party Cake Bakery, Market District, Virginia Manor Giant Eagle, Kuhn’s, Shop ‘N’ Save, PSH & Associates Horticultural Services/Scott Jackson...to Karen Cahall for her help with the History Book Award...to **Melissa Evans and Nick Sfakianakis**, who are updating the Society’s Then and Now pictures....To **Bea Finke, Lucille Heckman, Jim Wojcik, and Nancy Sofis** for volunteering to work at the History Center during the opening weekend events.

BOOK AWARD PRESENTED

In May, the Society presented its annual History Book Award to Mt. Lebanon High School junior **Katherine Mashek**. Every year the Society presents an award to a high school junior—selected by the high school’s social studies teachers—as a way to recognize that student’s passion for and interest in U.S. History and to encourage future study of our nation’s past. We also present a copy of the book to the High School library in hopes of enlightening and edifying other students.

This year’s book—“DISUNION: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859” by Elizabeth R. Varon—is a bracing reinterpretation of the origins of the Civil War.

We chose this book that examines the paradox of a slave-holding nation founded on a charter of freedom for a reason. For her research paper, Kate’s topic was the current debate in the Cherokee Nation on the status of former freedmen. Her paper—titled “The Great Native American Contradiction”—played off the inconsistencies of founding a nation that is anchored in slavery on the basis on liberty. Kate’s research spanned 160-plus years of history and she managed to weave together competing interests and themes with depth and maturity. U.S. history teacher Pete DiNardo says it was one of the top three essays he read this year. “Her attitude and approach impressed me greatly as did her growth in confidence and intellectual skill,” Mr. DiNardo says of our winner.

ORAL HISTORY

We can always use a few good hands at the Oral History Corner. Anyone interested in videoing or taping residents should call Marty at 412-531-0616 or Lori at 412-561-6649.

GOING TO MOBILE?

Will you be driving to the Mobile, Alabama area sometime in the next few months? If so—and if you think you’ll have a little extra space in your trunk—would you consider picking up some donations for the History Center? Jean McMillan, whose family once lived at 111 Bower Hill Road, has several items she’d like to donate to the Society. However, some of the items are large and unwieldy and Jean is worried the cost to mail the items may be prohibitive. So we thought we’d throw this request out there. If you think you can help, call 412-563-1941 and leave a message. We will get you Jean’s contact information, so that you can discuss the particulars with her.

A LITTLE GIFT

While the Society needs some big ticket items for its History Center (a \$250 metal bookshelf and a \$2,500 alarm system come to mind), we realize many people are on fixed incomes. **But you can help the Society without breaking the bank by donating stamps and Office Depot gift cards.** A roll of stamps costs \$45 and would help us immensely as we mail out five program flyers and four newsletters annually. (And we will happily accept even a book of stamps!) And we always need items at Office Depot—such as ink cartridges and paper for our printer. A gift card for any amount will help us defray the costs of buying those supplies. And if you buy the cards at Giant Eagle, you’ll get fuel perks. So in a way, you’ll be helping yourself as well as the Society!

RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS:

Life Memberships - The Green & White

Mary Ann Depalma Burnett
Mr. & Mrs. David Fasulo
The Donald D. Mateer Foundation, c/o Charlotte
M. Stephenson, Trustee –The Green & the White
Virginia Nicklas
Bertha Abbott Thomas

Benefactors: - Community Pioneers

Ruth G. Foltz
William F. Lewis
Kent S. Miller
Jeanne & Scotti Mulert
Stephen Patrick
Cynthia & Jerome Richey
George & Barbara Schoeppner
C. Bryson Schreiner
Iannuzzi and Emeil Shenouda

William J. & Kathleen Simpson
George and Margaret Smith
Eleanor M. Thomas
Toni Tierney
Elaine Wertheim
Wally Workmaster

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS FOR THE YEAR 2009 (APRIL, MAY, JUNE)

Nancy Sofis – Senior (N)
Lucille Heckman – Senior (N)
Gwyn Cready – Individual (N)
Rita Levine – Individual (N)
Bruce A. Murray – Youth (N)
Sue Laver – Individual (N)
Nicholas G. Sfakianakis & Melissa Evans – Family (N)
Judy Macoskey – Individual (N)
Carol Fryday and Dan Kamin – Family (N)
Edgar and Carol Gaston – Senior (N)
Betty Mucha – Senior (N)
Jeanetta Lee – Individual (N)
Paul Dudjak, Jr. – Individual (N)
Nancy Bucey – Senior (N)
Mardi Centinaro – Individual (N)
Lou Gorski – SHACOG
Sue Dawson – SHACOG
Rich Sahar – Mt. Lebanon Parking Authority
Mark S. Johnson

HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEES

M.A. Jackson, president
Marty Carney, vice president
Bill Simpson, treasurer
Wilma Novogradac, secretary
Lynn Geyer Banbury
Jeanné Heid Bereznicki
Mel Bickel
David Borland
Lori Humphreys
Maggie McDermott
Virginia Nicklas
Jehnie Reis
Wally Workmaster

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
MOUNT LEBANON BY COMPLETING THIS FORM AND FORWARDING
TO THE ADDRESS LISTED:**

**THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MOUNT LEBANON
P.O. BOX 13423, Pittsburgh, PA 15243**

Please check applicable membership level:

Name: _____	Individual	\$20	___
	Family	\$35	___
Address: _____	Benefactor	\$100	___
	Youth	\$15	___
City/State/Zip _____	Senior	\$15	___
	Life	\$1,000	___

Phone: _____ **E-mail** _____

Date of Application _____ **New () Renewal ()**

Membership runs January 1 to December 31.

Life Memberships are recognized upon payment of total amount within any single 12-mo. period.

Names of donors will appear in newsletters and appropriate membership announcements and mailings.

The Society is classified as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable organization.

***Enclosed is my tax-deductible check made payable to: The Historical Society
of Mount Lebanon.***