



# THE CEDAR TREE

## Newsnotes from The Historical Society of Mount Lebanon

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

[www.hsmtl.org](http://www.hsmtl.org)

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SUMMER 2007

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER:

Who wouldn't like more space—an extra closet for those clothes you *know* one day will fit again, a couple more feet in the garage for that new snow blower, another set of shelves in the bathroom for those scented soaps and candles people keep giving you.

I know the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon would sure love some more space. In fact, we'd love to get *any* space. Right now, we are making due with a filing cabinet in the library and a small space at a storage facility on Route 88. Both spaces are absolutely fine if all you want is an out-of-the-way place to keep things until you need them later. But the Society would like to show off our treasures NOW.

For years, the Society's Board of Trustees has been discussing the logistics of finding a space. Money has always been an issue as well as locating a spot that would be convenient to the public and centrally located. Our hope has always been something would materialize or that the powers that be in the community would help out. But the truth is, the two best places for us—the municipal building and library—just don't have room.

So we've come to the conclusion that the only way we are going to make a Mt. Lebanon History Center a reality is to go out and get one ourselves. In May, we held a meeting with several members of the Society's board (past and present) and some interested Society members. It was a great meeting, and a lot of ideas were tossed about. In the end, our conclusion was that we need to create a five-year strategic plan, get the commission involved, do some major fundraising, and mount a capital campaign.

We are hoping that come fall—late September or early October—we will be ready to hold a planning session with a professional planner (hopefully someone who will provide their services gratis). From there, we will start fundraising. Two events have been mentioned—an architecture tour of the community

and an "Antiques Roadshow" type event in which people can bring in items for local antique dealers to appraise.

We are also investigating the possibility of renting a space in the basement of the stucco house at the corner of Lebanon Avenue and Washington Road. The building, currently occupied by South Hills Council of Governments (SHACOG)—and owned by Mt. Lebanon Parking Authority—was once the Mt. Lebanon Tax Office and before that the home of Dr. McMillan. The space is small and will need a little spit and polish, but we think it could work—at least for the short term. As the Dormont Historical Society proves, once you have a space, you quickly fill it to the brim. Of course, it will all come down to cost—can we afford to rent the space and pay utilities? We have requested some funding from the municipality, which could help offset any rental costs, but won't know until the end of the year if we will receive it. If you would like to see a history center in Mt. Lebanon, we urge you to call your commissioner and tell them how important it is to provide the Society with funding.

So finally, after eight years in existence, we are taking steps toward finding a "home." It might be baby steps, but there is motion...even if it takes us another eight years to see it come to fruition. (I'm hoping this is what "all good things come to those who wait" means.)

We can't do it alone. We need *your* help. What you do is up to you—work on a special event, call your commissioner, help with a capital campaign—any and all help would be vastly appreciated. We know our members have a wealth of experience and knowledge that could help us obtain our goal. And, of course, we will be happy to accept donations of any size.

For eight years, the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon has been collecting and preserving pieces of our past. Now—as the community's centennial approaches (five years and counting!)—isn't it time we have a space where we can share those

items with the public?

If you're interested in helping, call Margaret at 412-561-0455. Thank you.

Margaret Jackson

### **JULY EXHIBIT AT MT. LEBANON LIBRARY**

Make sure to check out the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon's exhibit, "**The Old Man's Army**," which will run in Mt. Lebanon Public Library's display cases (on the main floor) throughout July. Board member (and past president) **Wally Workmaster** set up the exhibit, which features a small part of his personal collection of primarily 54 mm. or 1:32 scale military figures that he first began to gather when he was a rather young boy in the summer of 1940 and still continues to acquire. Carved wooden examples of small soldiers have been found in the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs while life-sized clay figures of men in the army of a Chinese emperor unearthed around 1980 are considered to be archaeological treasures in a different culture. For centuries, toy soldiers were the playthings of children who grew to become emperors, kings, and other rulers or nobility . . . they played a role in learning the art of warfare.

Flat and semi-round military and civilian figures, made of metal and packed in sawdust inside wooden boxes, began to be offered widely for the children of everyday citizens by toymakers in Nuremburg, Germany, during the 19th-century, but an English toy firm, W. Britain, Ltd., eventually triumphed after it introduced hollow-cast, fully rounded, metal figures in 1896.

Nonetheless, W. Britain, Ltd., faced stiff competition from other manufacturers at home and abroad. Hyde in Germany, Johillco and Crescent in Great Britain, Mignot in France, and a proliferation of American firms fought for a share of the market. The latter, in particular, produced cheaper "dime store" figures in a larger size for mass consumption.

Today, well-sculpted, carefully hand-painted military figures exhibit the varied history of military uniforms and the distinguished units that wore or wear them in addition to careful artistry, although the less expensive ones are machine-painted.

Lead-free pewter often has replaced lead to avoid safety concerns here and abroad, although the figures are no longer recommended as playthings for children.

Some credible plastic figures also have been produced by certain manufacturers.

Certain especially skilled collectors either assemble and hand-paint figures from kits, which at their best may be "connoisseur figures," or create "conversions" from commercially available figures. A few even cast their own figures or parts.

Perhaps one of the best-known 20th-century collectors of military figures was businessman and publisher Malcolm Forbes; however, his remarkable collection now has been dispersed.

Almost all of the figures in "The Old Man's Army" exhibit will reflect the relatively recent toy soldier tradition. Manufacturers that may be represented will include W. Britain, Beau-Geste, Blenheim, Bulldog, Dorset, Ducal, Imperial, Marlborough, Steadfast, Tradition, and Trophy with perhaps several American Manoil and Barclay "dime store" products for comparison.

These are among the things that captured the imaginations of many of yesterday's children and some of today's adults in Mount Lebanon and elsewhere

### **UPTOWN HAPPENINGS**

This summer, look for Society members at Mt. Lebanon's **First Friday** and **Sidewalk Saturday** events along Washington Road. We will have our note cards and other items for sale, as well as a binder of old pictures for the curious to peruse.

### **MT. LEBANON NOTE CARDS FOR SALE**

The Society is selling sets of eight note cards featuring different buildings and scenes of Mt. Lebanon for \$10 a box. The sketches were drawn by local artists and all funds benefit the Society.

Cards are being sold at **Josephine's** on Castle Shannon Boulevard, **Planet Art Gallery** on Washington Road, **Blooming Dahlia** on Beverly Road, **Mt. Lebanon Pharmacy** on Mt. Lebanon Boulevard, and **Borders Books and Music** at Norman Centre, Mitchell's Corner. Our thanks to the shop owners for helping us with this fundraiser. Cards will also be sold at Society programs and at the Society's table at First Friday and Sidewalk Saturday events along Washington Road this summer.

### **CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE**

The Society has a Web site at [www.hsmtl.org](http://www.hsmtl.org). It contains old pictures, information about upcoming events, some of our old newsletters, and other interesting facts. And please be sure to sign our newly added **Guestbook!**

## **RESEARCH THE HISTORY OF YOUR MOUNT LEBANON HOME!**

Ever wondered who built your home? Ever wondered who designed the original plans? With the value of the architecture and design of Mt. Lebanon homes – most built in the early years of the last century – being rediscovered and recognized, the Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon is joining with the Mt. Lebanon Public Library to assist residents in finding out who built and designed their homes. Because the records are fragile and irreplaceable, Historical Society trustee and Cultural Resource Survey volunteer Lori Humphreys will be at the library twice each month to help you research the information. Please call the library at 412-531-1912 to make an appointment as the schedule may change. **NOTE:** There will be no appointments during July and August. Scheduling will resume in September.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

To **Dave Redding**, for providing the Society with his 1960 Chevy Impala convertible for the Memorial Day parade. We were really noticed in that beautiful car! And thanks for doing the driving, Dave!

To **John McDonough** and **Sky Bank** (on Cochran Road) for purchasing the books for the Society's History Book Award, presented in May at the high school. (See item below)

To board member **Marty Carney** for supplying the refreshments at the May program.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** - The Society's next program is 7:30 p.m., **Wednesday, September 12**, at Mt. Lebanon Public Library, Meeting Room A. The last program for 2007 will be held November 7.

## **BOOK AWARD**

In May, the Society presented its sixth annual **History Book Award** to Mt. Lebanon High School junior **Maria Grinko**. **Karen Cahall**, past president of the Society, presented the book at Mt. Lebanon High School's Awards Evening. A second copy of the book, inscribed with Maria's name, was given to the high school library. Maria was chosen by her teachers for her broad perspective, willingness to examine issues with an open mind, impressive writing ability, and her desire to find connections by applying classroom learning to real-life situations. This year's book was "Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age" by Marcus Rediker, a University of Pittsburgh professor. The book investigates the "golden

age" of piracy (1716 to 1726) and the pirates' set of values, codes of honor and taboos. Karen reports that Maria was pleased with the book's topic, as her AP history class had studied pirates and the ways they challenged the social, race, and gender roles of their time. **Sky Bank** co-sponsored the award, and bank manager **John McDonough**, who knows the author, suggested the title.

## **RECENT DONATIONS**

We received two very special donations in the last month.

**Virginia Nicklas**, a Society board member, presented us with three scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings and programs from local events (including a Mt. Lebanon Memorial Day program from 1936, items from the American Legion Auxiliary South Hills Unit No. 156, and a Woman's Club of Mt. Lebanon bulletin from 1937). The items, which cover the period 1930 to 1938, are all related to Virginia's father, John Nicklas, and family. The scrapbooks, which were compiled by Virginia's mother, are contained in a lovely wooden box. We thank Virginia for donating this treasure trove of history to us.

The second donation came from the estate of **Roy Dear**, a Parker Drive resident who died in February. Roy, a local historian and collector, was born in Dormont and moved to Mt. Lebanon in 1940. There are far too many items to list here, but the collection includes 66 Mt. Lebanon High School yearbooks—several are duplicates—from the very first one in 1931 to 1990. This is a HUGE step toward the society's goal of obtaining every Mt. Lebanon High School yearbook.

Also donated was a wonderful album of old pictures and newspaper clippings relating to Mt. Lebanon—87 pages total!

Other items include:

- Old newspaper articles
- A 1985 street map of Mt. Lebanon
- A framed photo of the June 1932 Mt. Lebanon High School graduating class
- A 1960 calendar issued by Rollier's
- A board game called: "The Game of Mt. Lebanon"
- A 1932 High School diploma presented to Charles William Herald
- A Mt. Lebanon High School theater program from 1932
- Several Lebanon Lanterns (the high school

paper) from the 1930s and 1940s

We thank **Marie** and **Eleanor Carpenter** for donating these wonderful pieces of our past.

### **WE NEED DONATIONS**

Speaking of **Mt. Lebanon High School yearbooks** (aka The Log), we still need the following yearbooks: 1932, 1934, 1935, 1940, 1942, 1948-1951, 1966, 1982, 1984-1987, 1989, 1993-1997, 2000-present.

We are also seeking **Mt. Lebanon magazines** from 1981 and 1982.

If you have any of these items—or anything pertaining to Mt. Lebanon's past—and would like to donate them, please call Margaret at 412-561-0455.

### **VISITING ENGLAND ON MT. WASHINGTON**

David J. Vater, Registered Architect and Member of the American Institute of Architects presented a wonderful slide-illustrated program, "Chatham Village: A 75-Year Old Planned Community," at the Society's May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Chatham Village, which has been described as "a little bit of England cloistered on Mt. Washington" and a "neighborhood where peace and harmony rule," has attracted international attention since the Buhl Foundation hired two notable New York City planners, Clarence Stein and Henry Wright to design it in 1932.

Executed in Georgian Colonial Revival style, the 197 compact red-brick row house units are grouped around three common greens. Clipped hedge rows, stone stairways and walls, pocket gardens, and archways evoke a fairy-tale setting. Almost 30 acres of its grounds are devoted to wooded trails, playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, and a picnic area grouped around the historic Thomas Bigham mansion that serves as a community meeting place. It was Pittsburgh's first all-gas community and all utilities are buried.

Chatham Village is observing the 75th anniversary of its attraction.

Architect David J. Vater has been described by the Pittsburgh "Post-Gazette" as the "go-to guy for village history." He views Chatham Village as "a unified campus." To residents, it's a quiet place "with lawns you don't have to mow, stately trees pruned for you, gutters cleaned on schedule, and a staff of handymen who fix what's broken." Chatham Village was awarded National Historic Landmark status in 2005.

Thank you, David, for your enlightening program on this historic "cozy pocket" in Pittsburgh.

### **THANK YOU TO NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS – APRIL 2007 –JUNE 2007\**

Eleanora M. Thomas – Senior (Renewal)  
Cynthia & Jerome Richey – Benefactor (Renewal)  
Ralph E. and Ruth B. Burkhouse – Family (Renewal)  
Joan M. Fisher – Individual (Renewal)  
Emmy Lou Ducray – Individual (New)  
B.Zinkham – Senior (Renewal)  
John Conti – Individual (Renewal)  
Martha H. Towns – Senior (Renewal)  
Bernard & Betsy Laquinta – Family (Renewal)  
Lucille Fuehr – Senior (New)  
Patt Grubb – Senior (Renewal)  
Steve & Amelia Dean – Family (Renewal)  
Clarence & Helen Betzler – Family (Renewal)  
Nicholas Lamprinakos – Individual (New)  
Patricia Lang Watso – Individual (New)  
Nicklas Watsula – Individual (New)  
John & Carol Ferguson – Family (New)  
Michelle Patrick – Individual (New)  
William Cooper – Individual (Renewal)  
David & Charlotte Borland (Family – New)  
Rita M. Roegge – Individual (New)

### **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  
Mr. Glenn Morrow – SEE MEMORIUM ARTICLE  
Ms. Virginia Nicklas  
Bertha Abbott Thomas

#### **Benefactors: - Community Pioneers**

Beatrice Finke  
William Lewis  
Barbara and Robert Logan  
Mr. & Mrs. James B. Lutz  
Maggie McDermott  
Wilma Novogradac  
Cynthia & Jerome Richey  
C. Bryson Schreiner  
William J. & Kathleen Simpson  
Mr. & Mrs. George C. Smith  
Elaine Wertheim  
Wallace F. Workmaster  
Ruth G. Foltz

**A GLIMPSE BACK:**

The 1931 Lebanon Log—the first yearbook for Mt. Lebanon High School—contained the following story.

**HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS OF MT. LEBANON**

As early as 1749 the pioneers of this section felt the need of a school and constructed the one-room log structure which was lately moved from its original site to its present one in Mt. Lebanon Park [*Editor's Note: that log structure was razed in the 1950s*]. As the population grew rapidly, a larger school, the Academy, was built on the street which now bears its name. After the outbreak of the Civil War, the Academy was used little for school purposes but served as a skating rink and dance hall. Soon afterward, two small school houses were constructed; one back of the present United Presbyterian Church property and the other on what is now the Rousch property. These schools served their purpose quiet well until time rendered them unusable. Plans were made for a larger building and, during its construction, school was held in Dr. Phillips' home under the supervision of William Bell. A white frame school-house, located at the corner of Washington Road and Cedar Boulevard, was completed about 1895. At first the building housed 250 pupils with eight regular and a few special teachers. By 1921 the enrollment of this school had grown to 395 pupils. This relatively small building was soon overcrowded and the Mt. Lebanon citizens took a step forward, voting to build a huge school building of eighteen rooms which would "take care of the pupils forever," as they said. This building, the Washington School, was rightfully marveled at by the people. However, enrollment of the school increased very rapidly, and in 1925 an elementary building, the Lincoln School, was constructed on Ralston Place and a Junior High School was organized at the Washington Building to meet the demand for higher education of the Mt. Lebanon children. As early as 1926 the walls of the Washington Building began to bulge, and a wing of eight rooms was added to relieve the situation. In 1927 a kindergarten system was organized in both schools. The next year the organization of a Senior High School was begun. As the population of the township was spreading widely, two more elementary schools, the Edwin Markham in Beverly Heights and the Julia Ward Howe in Sunset Hills, were erected in 1929. Not long after this a bond issue was floated to make possible a separate high school building, one unit of which was completed by

the fall of 1939 and is now occupied by the Junior High. The academic unit, to be completed by September, 1931, will take care of the Junior-Senior High School of approximately 1200 students and with it a dream of many years will come true.

In this our first Year Book, it is more than fitting that we should pay tribute to a group of men and women whose foresight and effort have made possible the present advantages of this, our wonderful school system.

To the present Board of Education whose unceasing effort has brought us to a real High School building, we wish to express our most sincere gratitude and appreciation. The present Board is as follows:

- Mr. E.E.E. Stewart, President
- Mr. A.C. McMillan, Vice President
- Mr. J.W. Howell, Secretary
- Mr. H.M. Johnson, Treasurer
- Mrs. Lena Z. Kenney
- Mr. S.A. Schreiner, Solicitor for the Board

**WELCOME**

The Mt. Lebanon Historical Society would like to welcome **Mel Bickel** to its Board. Mel steps in for the departing Bill Lewis.

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY TRUSTEES**

- M.A. Jackson, president
- Marty Carney, vice. president
- Lori Humphreys, treasurer
- Dick Price, secretary
- Lynn Geyer Banbury
- Jeanne Bereznicki
- Mel Bickel
- Maggie McDermott
- Virginia Nicklas
- Wilma Novogradac
- Bill Simpson
- Wally Workmaster

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(detach here)

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE MT. LEBANON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY COMPLETING THIS FORM  
AND FORWARDING TO THE ADDRESS LISTED.

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check applicable membership level:**

<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$20</b>	___
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$35</b>	___
<b>Benefactor</b>	<b>\$100</b>	___
<b>Youth</b>	<b>\$15</b>	___
<b>Senior</b>	<b>\$15</b>	___
<b>Life</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	___

**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*

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