

The

Cedar Tree

Vol. 17 No. 1 Winter 2014



200 Lebanon Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa 15228 • 412-563-1941 • info@lebohistory.org • www.lebohistory.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Hopefully by the time you are reading this the bitter, below zero cold in early January is starting to fade from your memory and you're looking forward to a balance of 2014 where the weather won't impact your plans or activities.

Our first event of the year was a presentation on January 15th by Dr. John Donoghue, a Mt. Lebanon resident, former Mt. Lebanon High School History teacher, and currently a professor of history at Loyola University in Chicago. (Imagine that weekly commute!) John was a great speaker; the subject matter very interesting (how radical Puritans in the English Revolution shaped life in Colonial America); and best of all, the room was packed. Over 100 people attended! The range of attendees' ages was from 6 (the speaker's 1st grade daughter) to over 60. What was especially inspiring was seeing about 35 Mt. Lebanon High School AP History students in the audience along with their teacher, Mr. Pete DiNardo. The students were not "just there" but actively participated in the event; asking some very detailed and insightful questions. As I looked across that room full of people interested in history and investing a few hours of their precious time, it reinforced my belief that what the Historical Society of Mount Lebanon does is important and brings value to this community.

In this issue of the newsletter you will read about another opportunity the Society had to bring Mt. Lebanon History to about 80 Jefferson Middle School students last fall. Making history come alive is an important part of what we hope to do not only for our students but for all of us. It's good to learn something new every day, no matter how old we are.

The programs planned for the balance of the year in our Speakers Series are detailed inside. The lineup of impressive speakers and subject matter will give us an opportunity to learn

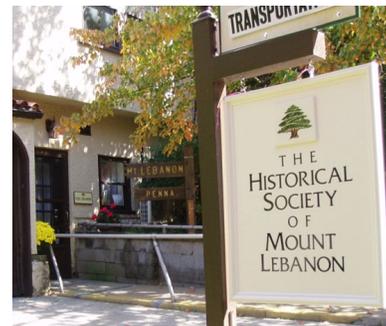
something new several times this year. Please note that we have moved the starting times for the series to 7 p.m. so that we are not so rushed afterwards to leave the library.

We have in our History Center a great exhibit dealing with the impact that WWII had on our community. If you haven't seen it yet, you are missing out. If you already have seen the exhibit, I urge you to come back again because I guarantee you will see or read about something interesting that you missed your last time through. (For instance, during the war the Mt. Lebanon Shop class built 80+ models of allied aircraft to aid anti-aircraft gunners in identifying friendly or hostile aircraft.) On display is a copy of the December 8, 1941 *Post-Gazette* and a video of some period newsreels, propaganda films, and training films. In the newsreel you will see a propaganda film about tail gunners in B-17 Bombers. Take a close look at the pilot in the B-17; he's Ronald Reagan. He didn't get top billing in the movie; that went to Burgess Meredith, who was the tail-gunner! This exhibit will continue at least through April.

We are moving along carefully and methodically in our quest to acquire, restore, and occupy the building we currently use as our History Center. Rest assured we are not going into this blindly. We continue to work with the municipality to reach an agreement that is fair to the taxpayers of our community as well as our membership.

It's an exciting year to be president of the Historical Society. Exciting and challenging times lie ahead. Without your help, financially and through your involvement, comments, and encouragement; much of what we have accomplished and what we will accomplish is not possible. So thank you, thank you, and thank you.

Jim Wojcik, President



MT. LEBANON HISTORY CENTER

200 LEBANON AVENUE

HOURS

10 A.M. TO 1 P.M., THURSDAYS &
9 A.M. TO NOON, SATURDAYS

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**WE LOVE REUNION GROUPS!
CONSIDER SCHEDULING A PRIVATE TOUR OF THE HISTORY CENTER AND A WALKING TOUR FOR YOUR REUNION.**

Many thanks to Jim Zelenka, the founding principal of the Baran James Company, an independent financial planning firm, for sponsoring this month's newsletter.

If you or your company would like to sponsor an upcoming newsletter, please call 412-563-1941 for information.

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the historical society of mount lebanon . . . looking forward to the past

annual dinner a great success!

Fifty-nine members and guests of the Historical Society gathered at St. Clair Country Club in late October for its annual Dinner. The event generated over \$3,600 in funds for the Society. Action was heated surrounding the silent auction and raffle tables throughout the evening. Following a patriotic theme red, white, and blue prevailed throughout the dining area. Individuals who served in the military were recognized and applauded for their service. The highlight of the evening was the outstanding talk given by Todd DePastino; sharing stories of Mt. Lebanon residents who served our country during WWII.

Many thanks go out to the dinner committee: Stacey Jo Bonenberger, Dave Redding, Matthew Clark, Dick Price, and Wilma Novogradac, who worked tirelessly before, during, and after the event.

Photographs by George Mendel



Top: Mt. Lebanon Ward 2 Commissioner Steve Silverman and State Rep. Dan Miller.

Bottom: Wilma Novogradac, who created the table centerpieces, and Society member Bette Ruh.

Top: Once again, St. Clair Country Club outdid themselves on creating an inviting atmosphere.

Middle: Joel Cluskey, president, RSH Architects, and Karen Petrucelli, president, KP Consulting, shared some of their research observations regarding the acquisition and restoration of the McMillan House.

Bottom (from left): Society President Jim Wojcik, Vice President Dave Redding, and speaker (and Society board member) Todd DePastino.

MEMBERSHIP

**MANY THANKS TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS
(BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2013 AND JANUARY 4, 2014)**

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Holiday Adair | William and Nancy Kennedy |
| Nellie Ambrose | Elaine Kitlowski |
| Katie Anderson | Matt Kluck |
| Jean Baldwin | Nicholas Lamprinakos |
| Lynn Banbury, | Richard Lerach |
| Nancy Barkman | Mary Frances Lucartorto |
| Helen & Clarence Betzler | Lois Martin |
| Mel & Maxine Bickel | Edward McClain Jr |
| Louanne Brunenmeister | William McGrane |
| Claude Carson | David & Cecelia McKibben |
| Mardi Centinaro | Dan Miller |
| Helaine Cetorelli | Robert & Joan Mitsch |
| Matthew and Heather Clark | Jane and Sam Morton |
| Michael Crupi | Bette Mucha |
| Barbara Cusick | John Mucha |
| Todd DePastino | Edward and A.J. Pajak |
| Jath DiCecco | Alfred and Mary Bridget |
| Jacqueline Doyle | Pelaez |
| Emmy Lou Ducray | Richard Price |
| Paul Dudjak | Michael Romano |
| Bill and Claire Emery | William & Kathleen Simpson |
| Rick and Donna Erisman | Peg Smith |
| Ruth Foltz | Judith Sutton |
| Eleanora and George Freas | Helen and Thomas Taylor |
| Marilyn Freed | Eleanora Thomas |
| Lucille & Ralph Fuehr | Judy and John Williams |
| Richard Gaetano | Jim & Peggy Wojcik |
| Frank and Sandra Gagliano | Wallace Workmaster |
| Sylvia Garlitz | Andrew Zeedick |
| Charles George | |
| Tom Giordano | |
| William Goodboy | |
| Pat Grubb | |
| Margaret Hendrix | |
| Walt and Cynthia Henry | |
| Kim and Wayne Honath | |
| Lori and David Humphreys | |
| Jane Johnson | |
| Ben Joos | |
| Amy Kaminski | |
| Paulette Kelly | |
| Anne & Chris Kemerer | |

LIFE MEMBERS

- Mary Ann DePalma Burnett
- Mr. & Mrs. David Fasulo
- The Donald D. Mateer Foundation
- Virginia Nicklas
- Bertha Abbott Thomas
- Jim and Nancy Lutz
- Rollie & Donna Kae
- Simmons Thomas
- Nadine Bogнар
- Toni Tierney



Above: Mt. Lebanon metal work artist (and Society member) Stephen Douglas donated several of his pieces (inset) for the auction table.



Above: Society members Robert and Lorelei Stein.



Above: Former municipal manager Bill Baldwin, and his wife, Jean. Bill is a frequent volunteer at the History center.

Board of Trustees Changes

The New Year usually brings a few changes to the Board of Trustees of the Society. Many thanks go out to Mel Bickel and Stacey Jo Bonenberger for their dedicated service as members of the Board. You may know Mel as the person whose paratrooper boots and many other objects are prominently on display in our current exhibit, *Mt. Lebanon Goes to War*. Stacey Jo is the enthusiastic person with the great smile manning our table on Washington Road many First Fridays and helping with the annual dinner. While no longer serving as board members, they both plan to continue to volunteer and help in the future.

Replacing Mel and Stacey Jo are Amy Kaminski and Hal Morgans. Both enjoy and appreciate history and have strong ties to Mt. Lebanon. Amy brings to the board a strong background in developing and implementing governmental strategies at the local, state, and federal levels for non-profit and education clients. Hal has many years experience in running his own management consulting company that provided many services including strategic planning. Thanks to both for agreeing to serve on our Board.

Did You Know Grete?

Norma Raiff, president of the Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania, is seeking information about the late Grete Evans, the Orchid Society's founder and former Colony Circle resident. If you knew Grete, and have some remembrances you can share, please contact Norma at normaraiff@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendars for Our Upcoming Speaker Series Lectures

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE AND START AT 7 P.M.
AT MT. LEBANON LIBRARY
REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19 Join us for an amazing story of survival and escape from war-torn Korea in the 1950s when Ock Soon Lee and her daughter, author Katie Schell, present their new book *Love Beyond Measure: Memoirs of a Korean War Bride*, Ock Soon Lee's incredible true story of survival and redemption during the Korean War. Orphaned at age seven and farmed out to households as a slave, Korean peasant Ock Soon Lee experienced near-starvation and capture by the North Korean Army but somehow survived to fall in love with an American GI. She became one of a small handful of Korean War brides to make it to the United States, where she settled in Moon Township in the 1950s.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21 Professor emeritus and art historian Julie Agar presents *The Life and Art of Norman Rockwell*. A personal friend with Rockwell, Julie will share her knowledge of the artist's fascinating life and iconic work, including his *Saturday Evening Post* covers. Four Freedoms series that defined the nation during the 1930s and 1940s. She will also discuss her take on the controversial new biography of Rockwell. What is your favorite Norman Rockwell painting?

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, On the 152nd anniversary of a famous Pittsburgh disaster, author Mary Frailey Calland will present the story of her novel, *Consecrated Dust*. On September 17, 1862, an explosion at the Allegheny Arsenal in Pittsburgh killed seventy-eight girls who were rolling bullet cartridges for the Union army. News of the catastrophe is buried, however, beneath the horrendous casualty reports from the Battle of Antietam, fought on the very same day. Inspired by these two real-life tragedies, *Consecrated Dust* tells the story of four young northerners—feminist Clara Ambrose; soldier Garrett Cameron; industrialist Edgar Gliddon; and immigrant Annie Burke—friends, lovers, and bitter rivals. In the teeming streets and factories of Pittsburgh, and on the battlefields of the Army of the Potomac, they struggle to survive, forced to choose between love and duty, sacrifice and greed. Their choices ultimately lead to their presence at both the Arsenal and the Antietam battlefield on that fateful September day, a day that reveals the true meaning of courage—a day not all of them will survive.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5 In honor of Veterans Day, historian Todd DePastino will give the history of *Mt. Lebanon in World War II*, including the remarkable and sometimes harrowing war stories of a few outstanding residents—details he picked up while curating the Historical Society's recent exhibit about Mt. Lebanon's community's experiences during World War II. Mt. Lebanon was surprisingly slow to embrace the war effort, but many of its residents gave all.

A Day to Remember

The tragedy of World War II and the sadness it brought to Mt. Lebanon became real for sixth grade students at Jefferson Middle School when they visited the current exhibit at the Mt. Lebanon History Center. As a part of their study of the novel *Stepping on the Cracks*, their October 25 field trip to the center, arranged by teachers Kristin Hertzog and Jamie Siegel, allowed them to see artifacts from World War II and photos of Mt. Lebanon citizens who participated in the war. The saddest photos were portraits of more than 50 servicemen from the community who were killed during the war. Other exhibits included books of ration coupons, propaganda posters warning against spreading rumors, books of directions for spotting enemy planes, air raid warden helmets, and an army foot locker and paratrooper uniform donated by former Society Board member Mel Bickel, a veteran of the war and longtime resident of Mt. Lebanon. Children looked at a December 8, 1941, newspaper headlining the December 7 attack on Pearl Harbor, and perused a photocopy of the whole newspaper filled with details about what else was happening on that day seventy years ago.

Judy Sutton, Historical Society docent, discussed the artifacts and their importance to Americans during the war years. Students were fascinated by stories of air raid drills which sometimes required students to hurry home in case of a possible bombing attack. Of special interest was a photo of Morton's farm, site of the present Keystone Oaks High School, where dozens of local families cultivated Victory Gardens, which helped the home front food supply. One special exhibit pictured teachers and administrators of the Mt. Lebanon schools who served in the military, while other photos showed vintage airplanes and the local airmen who flew them.

The young people were given time to examine the exhibits and ask questions of Judy and Dick Price, a Historical Society volunteer, who was in sixth grade himself during World War II. Playing in the background during the visit was a video of a film starring a youthful Ronald Reagan, used during the war to recruit young people to



Participating in the Jefferson Middle School field trip to the History Center are Kaitlyn Rychcik and Caroline Zappone (front) and Nicholas Maloney, Brian Petrencs, and Matthew Clevenger



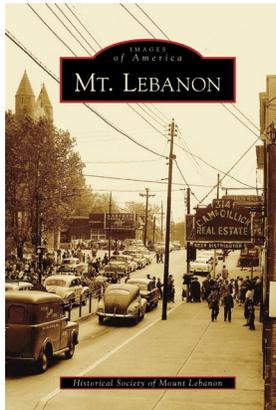
Viewing exhibits at the Mt. Lebanon History Center are Jefferson School sixth graders (from left) Aiden Restelli and Ethan Mackey.

join the air force, and a video depicting the propaganda machine of Hitler's Nazi regime and another of anti-Nazi propaganda cartoons shown in movie theaters during the war. Cartoons by Bill Mauldin, the war's most famous cartoonist, are part of the exhibit, as well as a book entitled *Bill Mauldin: A Life Up Front* by Society Board member Todd DePastino, a Mt. Lebanon High School graduate, who lives in Mt. Lebanon and teaches at Waynesburg University.

The field trip was intended to help the students in their understanding of *Stepping on the Cracks*, a novel by Mary Downing Hahn, set during the war and dealing with young people who are protecting a family member who has deserted his military post. As part of the experience, students were dressed in World War II costumes. The Historical Society volunteers commended the teachers and staff of Jefferson Middle School for the excellent arrangements, which required precise timing for busing several groups of well-behaved students to and from the school. Dick Price called the young people and their teachers "very impressive," and Judy Sutton commented that "it was a delight to work with such motivated and engaged students and educators." The Historical Society looks forward to collaborating on such projects in the future.

Following their visit, students wrote thank you notes to the Historical Society. Annika Ohrman wrote, "I really appreciate your taking time to teach us. I learned a lot. I didn't know that there was a black market. It was very interesting to look at the artifacts such as the scrap metal and propaganda posters. I also didn't know that they had to change the speed limit during the war."

Only a few months remain to visit the World War II exhibit, which has been one of the Center's most popular attractions. Please make time for a visit!



If you love old pictures, make sure to get a "Mt. Lebanon" book filled with 127 pages of black and white photographs. Books are \$23.50 at the History Center and the municipal building, 710 Washington Road. Or order online at www.lebohistory.org. **THEY MAKE GREAT GIFTS!**



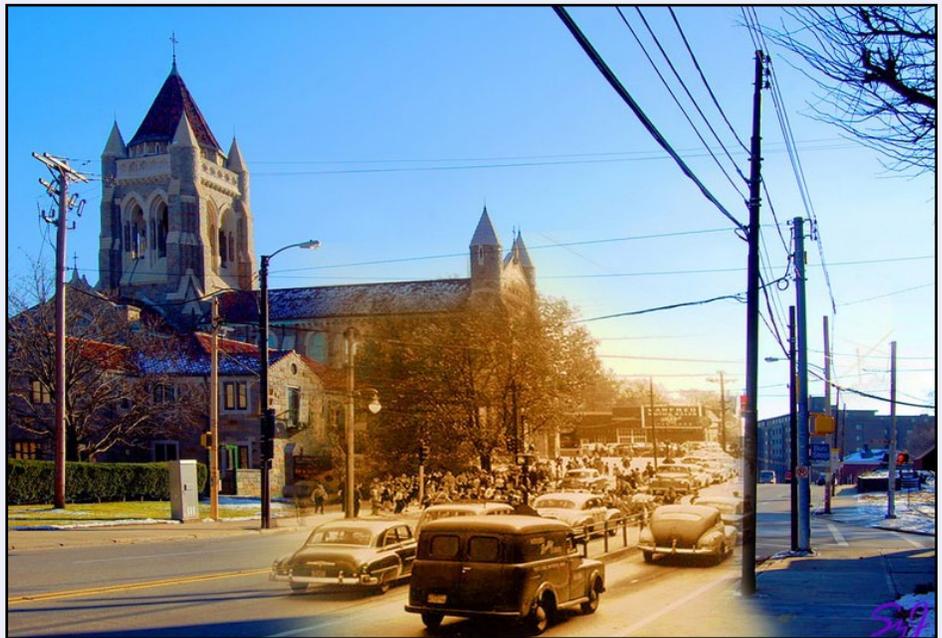
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR
 M.A. Jackson



We'd like to share the following email and photos we recently received.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jozsef Szajko, I am a high school teacher from Hungary. I have been visiting Mt Lebanon for about 5 years now and I have grown to love this beautiful suburb. The locals are friendly, the town is beautifully landscaped, it is a pleasure to stroll around Uptown and Beverly shops and enjoy different events. My hobby is photography. I have had a few exhibitions of my photos in Hungary and last year in Ligonier, Pa. One of my favorite topics for my photography is finding an old time photo and locating the same in present time, take the photo and blend the two together. This was the topic of my latest exhibition in Hungary, it was called "Double Vision".

I have found some old photos of Mt Lebanon—they are small, though—and I took the same photo now. Hereby, I am sending you the end result photos. If you think they would be interesting, feel free to share them.

Sincerely, Jozsef Szajko

