

HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION NEWS

Number 16

Next Meeting: Nov 28th

It's tradition! Please join us! The trustees invite you to attend the annual meeting on November 28th at 7 p.m. at the Old School Baptist Church on Main Street. Dinner is provided by the trustees. Please come with a "hearty" appetite and if you would like, "a piece of your history" to share with the members. After dinner, we "show and tell" about the "treasure" we have. It could be a picture, artifact, or "anything" you would like to share. Or just join us for the evening. Just come, its going to be fun!

2002 Meeting Date:

FEBRUARY 27
APRIL 24
JUNE 26
SEPTEMBER 25
NOVEMBER 20

SRH&PS Officers

Donna Rafano
President
Paul Goepfert
Vice President
Edwin Roginski
Treasurer
Stephanie Bartz
Secretary

President's Message

by Donna Rafano

As I complete my last few months as President of the Society, I would like to take the time to thank the Trustees and the Executive Board, Paul Geopfert, Ed Roginski and especially Stephanie Bartz, for all their efforts in making the past two years so successful. It has been a wonderful two years, and I have enjoyed the experience. Don't worry you haven't seen the last of me, I will continue to produce this

newsletter and work closely with the new President in an effort to bring South River's rich history to our community. My last request as President is that you spread the word of our Society and bring new members through our doors, because I know that there is so much more for us to learn from those in and around our town. God bless, be well and stay safe.

EARL WENGER

SRH&PS Member Extraordinary

If one were to be asked to give an example of an "ideal" volunteer, Earl would be the first person to come to mind.

Earl has been a member of the Historical Society since its founding in 1988, serving first as Secretary for eight years and then as President for two.

He spent countless hours researching the founding of South River and, when the 1851 VanDyke Reid map of Washington (South River) was found on the second floor of the OSBC, Earl took on the task of finding a place to have it evaluated and restored. Then he applied for, and received, a grant to help fund the restoration. But, he didn't stop there — for the evaluation and restoration, Earl had to take the map to the Art Conservancy in Philadelphia twice.

When the rehabilitation and restoration of the OSBC building began, Earl was there, keeping track of the progress with his camera.

He did the same for the restoration of the Frazee urn in the OSBC cemetery, even going to the actual workroom to see how it was being done.

Earl was always available to pick up donated articles, clean them if need be, and find storage space for them if there wasn't room at the Museum.

When the elementary schools were closed,

Earl, and several other members, went to the auctions of the contents of the schools and obtained many items for the Society, including most of the wooden furniture in the Museum.

Then he arranged to have everything removed and stored until it could be cleaned and put in the Museum.

Earl didn't just concentrate on the inside of the Museum, he also tended the lawn and the cemetery for many years.

His dedication to South River and to preserving its history was recognized by the Borough when the Mayor and Council appointed him town historian.

Then, in June 2000, the South River-East Brunswick Rotary Club presented Earl with its "Service Above Self" award for his many contributions to the community of South River, the Historical Society and his church, Conklin Methodist Church.

It is easy to understand why many of the Society's members refer to Earl as "Earl, the Pearl"! **Thank you Earl, for many years of outstanding dedication and service.**



Earl Wenger, the ideal volunteer!

Historical News

September 26th Meeting Highlights - Society members take an Historic Hunt

Those who attended our last meeting in September, found themselves discovering the Old School Baptist Church Museum in ways they never knew. Marilyn Anastasio and Candice Lewandoski presented an "Historic Hunt" created with grant money received from Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission. The group was given 20 minutes to answer questions relating to the different exhibits area in the museum. Afterwards, Marilyn revealed the correct answers along with an explanation of how the questions were created. The educational "Hunt" was designed for students to help make learning about the museum fun. Everyone seemed to enjoy the exercise as laughter could be heard from all corners of the building. The evening ended

with a video created with the assistance of Charles Levinski. Thank you Marilyn, Candice and Charles for your many hours of work in creating this wonderful video (and Historic Hunt).

In the end, a new appreciation of the OSBC museum was felt by all.

Dolores Roginski concentrates on the Historic Hunt questionnaire, while others behind her look for answers in the industrial section of the Old School Baptist Church museum.



Eliane Verloove, Irene Buga and Councilman Rich Reichenbach explore the kitchen area of the museum



Recent Donations

Lillian Roselli Kuntne (East Brunswick) - donated a WWII South River Homecoming Celebration program.

George Matts - a water skiing life preserver made by the Liberty Cork Co., of South River, Marine Div. (located at old silk mill)

Fred Goff - donated a 1930 South River Trust Co. anniversary ash tray.

Ann Smith - donated a nurse's outfit.

Candice Lewandowski - donated a copy of the 1979 Master Plan of South River Education Facilities Report.

Irene Buga - donated a collection of reproduction of Harpers Weekly from Nov. 1864 to Dec 1865, a Raggedy Ann & Andy lunch box, three coins from Central Jersey Savings & Loan Assoc., an 1945 American Red Cross First Aid textbook, and a thermometer from Allgeier's Beverages, est 1888.

Debbie Richter - donated a 100th Anniversary coffee mug from Trust National Bank, a 10th Anniversary commemorative dish from the SR Columbiettes, a 1961 commemorative glass from SR Fireman's Jubilee, a History of South River booklet from 1970, a SRHS

Class of 1946 dedication booklet of the Old School Bell, two Robin's Dept. Store shoe horns, a Fee Paint & Wallpaper paint stirrer, a Cost Liquors Store thermometer, and a political ashtray to elect Bodnar (mayor), Kulik and Froude (both for council).

Helen Antonitis (Sioux Falls, SD) - a Capital Theatre Dresser Set (collected piece by piece), a photo of John Antonitis (her husband) in his Capital Theatre doorman uniform, and a mantle clock, also given out by the theatre, all circa 1930.

New Members

Total Member for 2001: 170

Girl Scout Troop 1169:

Christine Cox	Maggie Cseh
Helen D'Amico	Christy Fic
Ashlee Geesey	Ashley Graf
Katelyn Molchan	Lauren Zdziarski
Allison Zemann	

Suzanne Buffalino
Amy Rafano

In Memory of

The Executive Board and members of the Historical Society extend their sincere sympathy to the families of former members who have passed away since the publication of the last newsletter.

CHARLOTTE F. RICE

GEOGEANNE JUNE*

**A direct descendant of Samuel Willet, founder of South River through the David B. Martin family. The "castle" at 6 Jackson Street was built by the Martins. Another interesting note: the sextant on display at the Old School Baptist Church museum came from the Martins.*

John Frazee, Sculptor, 1790 - 1852

On Sunday, October 7, John and Jane Frazee were at the museum. Well, not exactly. Jane Frazee died in 1832 and was buried in the cemetery behind the museum. After his wife died, John Frazee, known as the Father of American Sculpture, carved an urn for his wife, Jane. The urn is in the Old School Baptist Church Cemetery. John Frazee died in 1852.

Our members, Karen Migut (Jane) and Bob Rafano (John), dressed in period clothes, spoke about the lives of the Frazees. The presentation, in the form of a dialogue between

a husband and wife, was informative and entertaining.

The sketch was written by Marilyn Anastasio, who did a great job in presenting the intricate life of the famous

South River resident. Hats off to all involved. The cast plans on sharing



Karyn Migut and Bob Rafano received great reviews on their portrayal of Jane and John Frazee.

their production again with the Society in the upcoming year.



Anthony Agnone receiving his Rotary Service Award

A Salute to Anthony Agnone Celebrating a Member of the Society

On October 12, 2001, Anthony Agnone, a member of the South River Historical and Preservation Society, received the 50 years of Service to Rotary Award. Anthony Agnone's service to South River is deeply appreciated by the Society, too. Whenever called upon, he volunteers his time to enrich the history of South River.

Mr Agnone served as Superintendent of Schools in South River from 19?? to 19?? He was well respected by those who had the pleasure of working with him.



Mayor Robert Szegeti presents Anthony Agnone with a proclamation of Outstanding Service to the

Announcements

"A Revolutionary Time"

November 2001 through March 2002, celebrating the 225th anniversary of the American Revolutionary War. Info: NJ Parks & Forestry Call 609-984-0610

Sunday, December 9th, 4 pm,

Lecturer: Todd Braisted "The military Role of the Loyalists in the 1776 New York-New Jersey Campaign" Nassau Hall, Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ

Sunday January 20, 4 pm, Lecturer: Mark

Lender "Recruiting the Regular — How New Jersey Raised Its Continental Troops During The War for Independence" Haddon Fortnightly, 301 E. King Highway, Haddonfield, NJ

"Year of Crisis; New Jersey in 1776"

New Jersey Historical Commission 17th Annual Conference. Info: 609-292-6062

Saturday December 1, Masonic Temple Barrack Street, Trenton, NJ An all day program including workshops, tours of the

State Archives, Old Barracks and the State Museum.

Old School Baptist Church Museum

The museum is open on the first Sunday of every month from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Volunteers are need. For more information call 613-3078.

For more information about the South River Historical & Preservation Society visit our website at: www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/



South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

129 Main Street,
South River, New Jersey 08882

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www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/

A FEW FACTS ABOUT NEW JERSEY

New Jersey has the highest population density in the US. An average 1,030 people per sq. mi., which is 13 times the national average.

Highland, New Jersey has the highest elevation along the entire eastern seaboard, from Maine to Florida.

The Passaic River was the site of the first submarine ride by inventor John P. Holland.

New Jersey is a leading industrial state and is the largest chemical producing state in the nation.

New Jersey is a major seaport state with the largest seaport in the US located in Elizabeth where air, land, rail and sea all run parallel.

The light bulb, phonograph (record player), motion picture projector were invented by Thomas Edison in his Menlo Park laboratory.

The first sea-plane was built in Keyport.

The first air-mail to Chicago was started from Keyport.

The first phonograph records were made in Camden.

The first Indian reservation was in New Jersey.

Atlantic City is where the street names came from for the game Monopoly.

Atlantic City has the longest boardwalk in the world.

New Jersey has the tallest water-tower in the world.

Two-thirds of the world's eggplants are grown in New Jersey. New Jersey had the first Medical Center, Jersey City.

The Pulaski Sky Way (first sky way highway) from Jersey City to Newark.

The first tunnel under the Hudson River. (Holland Tunnel)

The invention and manufacturing of the Colt Revolver was in Paterson.

The first baseball game was played in Hoboken.

The first intercollegiate football game was played in New Brunswick; in 1889 Rutgers College played Princeton. Rutgers won.

The first Drive-in Movie theater was opened in Camden.

The first radio station and broadcast was in Paterson.