

HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION

News

Number 28

CELEBRATING

SRH&P SOCIETY
15th ANNIVERSARY
 1988-2003

2004 MEETINGS

JUNE 23

SEPTEMBER 22

NOVEMBER 17

All meetings begin at
 7 p.m. and are held at
 the South River Museum
 located at 64-66 Main Street,
 South River.

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President's Message

by Marilyn Anastasio

What a wonderful response to a worthy cause! Thank you!

After the announcement that we would like to restore the monuments in front of the South River Museum, many of you generously contributed.

Your donations will make the restoration and maintenance of the Dough Boy (WWI) and the memorial to World War II - Korea - Vietnam possible.

It is our sincere hope that most of the restoration be completed in June (weather permitting). We look forward to your joining us at the rededication program in the near future.

South River War Memorials Restoration - Update

More than eighty people attended the fundraiser held on Sunday, March 21, at the American Legion Hall located on Legion Place.

The purpose of the event was to raise monies needed to restore the Dough Boy and the WWII- Korean Conflict-Vietnam Memorial. Joann Smith-Goepfert and Donna Rafano served as co-chairs and emcees.

Representatives from each war/conflict and from different branches of the Armed Services of the United States addressed the audience. Among the speakers were Bill McIlvaine, John Hershey, Walter Mrozek, Ed Roginiski, Stanley Drwal and Ann Rafano.



Bill McIlvaine spoke of his experience in Vietnam

Memorabilia spanning the wars/conflicts were on display: photos, uniforms, artifacts.

Armed Forces songs were sung.

Refreshments and remembrances were enjoyed.

The SRH&P Society would like to thank all involved for helping to make the occasion such a success!

Our goal of \$9400 was exceeded. Funds in excess of the restoration costs will be earmarked for the maintenance of the memorials in the future.

Contributions are still welcomed and appreciated.



Marilyn Anastasio and Karen Satterthwaite hold the \$2,000 check from the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders

February 19th Meeting— Thomas Dominiecki presents the history of South River's St. Mary of Ostrabrama Church

By Karen Satterthwaite

At the February meeting our guest speaker was Mr. Thomas Dominiecki. Mr. Dominiecki was born and raised in South River and practiced law here for 32 years. Ordained a deacon for the Diocese of Metuchen in 1998, he is presently serving in that capacity for St. Mary of Ostrabrama Church.

Mr. Dominiecki began his presentation with the Polish immigration to the South River area and their pleas for a Polish parish. Once land was purchased, Henry Dagit was chosen as the architect. The Romanesque Revival architecture is present throughout St. Mary's Church as was pointed out in the slides that were shown. The church's basement was used for masses until the upstairs portion was completed. The beautiful stained glass windows are original except for those that were damaged during the 1993 fire.

Mr. Dominiecki also discussed the involved process of completing the application for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places

We applaud Mr. Dominiecki for his hard work and determination and for an informative and delightful evening.



Deacon Tom Dominiecki looks at an old photograph of St. Mary's Church after his presentation.

Historic Fact: Memorial Day

This U.S. holiday that honors those Americans who have given their lives in any war while serving this country is also called "Decoration Day." Since the end of World War I, Memorial Day is also sometimes referred to as "Poppy Day," due to the fact that volunteers would sell red poppies to benefit disabled veterans.

Fact source: World Book Encyclopedia (Sharron G. Uhler)

A South River Soldier's story—

Ed Bartz recalls a war story from his father

My parents were married in 1958 and didn't even meet until long after World War II. When the war started my father was in his early twenties and was still living at home with his mother. He wasn't required to serve in the Army since he was the only son and was supporting her, but he did enlist and served in the Army Signal Corps. As my father told it, part of his regular rations were an allotment of cigarettes and pipe tobacco. The trouble was that whenever he smoked, he'd end up giving part of his allotment to others. He soon figured out that if he quit smoking, he could sell the cigarettes and tobacco instead, for quite a bit I believe. I understand that while he was overseas he worked with quite a few locals, so perhaps he sold the cigarettes to them. He also played poker to make extra money. All the extra money he made was sent back to his mother in South River. She used that money to purchase a house in both their names while he was still overseas. I live in that very house today.



Edward Bartz Sr., outside Paris during WWII in 1946.

PROJECT: RESTORATION

The South River Historical & Preservation Society would like to thank the following people for their generous donations towards the restoration of our War Memorial Monuments:

PLATINUM DONORS (\$1000+)

Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders —Cultural & Heritage Commission
Irene C. Dunham, In honor of George R. Dunham, Navy
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GOLD DONORS (\$500 - \$999)

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Vito Ciccarelli, Army, WWII, In memory of Tom Ciccarelli, Army, WWII and Leo J. Crimmins, Navy, WWI
Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Rafano, In memory of Leo J. Crimmins, Navy, WWI and Thomas Ciccarelli, Army, WWII
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Andrew Sivess, In memory of Andrew Sivess, Navy, WWII

War Memorial Monuments Donation list (continued from page 3)

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The Imperial Band, Chorus and Music Center: A brief History

By Candice (DeVoe) Lewandoski

- Having served in the First Division Marine Corp Band, Ted Kadela pursued his passion for music after his discharge from the Service in 1946. He was instrumental in organizing the Imperial Band, initially as a marching band. The “original ‘46 aggregation” — none of whom were professional musicians but all of whom were “darned good musicians, nevertheless”, according to Dr. Ted Kadela, guest speaker at the April meeting of the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. — were from all walks of life, including a butcher, an electrician, a TV repairman, an insurance agent, a carpenter, and several music teachers.

- In the 1960s, the musicians funded and built the Music Center on Appleby Avenue themselves. Their dream was to provide South River a venue for concerts, programs, and cultural and visual art exhibitions, etc.

- “Obstacle” was not in the founders’ vocabulary. Their single-mindedness of purpose would see the project not only to its completion but also to its thriving success. Thanks to men like Kadela, Krauss, Stochel, Milano, Eastman, Meade, Appleby, Wnek, Zelanko, South River gained a cultural center.

- Behind the scenes, the operation of the completed Imperial Band Center relied totally on volunteers for cleaning, cooking, dishwashing, serving, etc.

- In the mid-to late- seventies, the Imperial Band and Chorus took their show on the road, performing in concert halls and on stages in Ireland and in Poland.

- The Imperial Music Center is not just a building; it is a celebration of life — the lives of the founders, the lives



Dr. Ted Kadela relives his childhood as he presents the history of the Imperial Music Center founded by his father.

of the men, women, and children who performed in the band and chorus over the years, the lives of those fortunate to attend performances, dinners, exhibits at the Center, the lives of all in South River enriched by the “spirit” of the IMC.

- The Imperial Music Center stands today as a tribute to Theofil “Ted” Kadela, to stalwart friendships, to patriotism, to love of community, and to love of life.

- Our “thanks” again to Dr. Ted Kadela for the informative and insightful program. We have certainly gained a deeper appreciation for the dreamers and their drive, the performers and their passion, the organization and its origins.



South River Elementary School Third Graders visited the museum on Government Day, May 14. On the right— Doris Miller gives the students a quick tour of the museum.



South River
Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

64-66 Main Street
P.O. Box 545
South River, New Jersey 08882



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In Memoriam

With deep sympathy
the SRH&PS Executive Board and members
extend sincere condolences
to the family of

EARL WENGER

Earl was one of the most
dedicated, involved, and beloved
members of our organization.

He lives on in our hearts
and in our memories.



Donations to the Society in memory of Earl Wenger are still being accepted.