

South River HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Number 30

FEBRUARY 2005

2004—A YEAR IN REVIEW

President's Message by Marilyn Anastasio

Thanks to you, our members and supporters, the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. had a truly successful 2004! The South River War Memorials' Restoration Project, though daunting at first, proved to be a unifying endeavor. Organizations and individuals united to raise funds for the restoration and to perform, attend, and reflect at the dedication of the restored War Memorial Monuments ceremony. Sufficient funds were collected to not only restore but also to maintain these edifices.

- Programs throughout the year were varied, interesting, educational, and well attended thanks to the efforts of our vice president/ program chairperson Karen Satterthwaite. Mr. Thomas Dominiecki, retired attorney, deacon at St. Mary's Church, explained the process involved in getting St. Mary's of Ostrabrama Church onto the state and national registers. His slide presentation documented the rigorous procedures and efforts extended to achieve results. Ted Kadela, by means of a power point presentation, highlighted for us his father's legacy: The Imperial Music Center and the Imperial Music Band; a story of the men, their mission, and the music. Martin Adler shared with us his collection of memorabilia from the Liberty Ballroom. His history of the site and the renowned bands and stars who performed there, and his special guest Mr. Mitchell Janowski, a former owner of the ballroom, had the audience reminiscing and sharing.
- In March, a fundraiser was held at the American Legion. Speakers and

memorabilia representative of wars and conflicts involving United States Service Men and Women were featured. JoAnn Smith-Goepfert and Donna Rafano were the co-chairs for this event.

- Stephanie Bartz, Maria Gostkowski, Dick Meyers and myself introduced members to cataloguing, to the computer program PastPerfect, to materials and memorabilia donated. Audience input and commentary were forthcoming and, as ever, appreciated, as often times background of items and details of history become enhanced.
- At our annual meeting in November, Maria Gostkowski explained how the portraits of South River's mayors were being restored.
- Worthy of mention, too, were the Cruise Nights; the museum's monthly Open House session; the Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Commission Trolley visits to the Museum; the visits to the museum by the South River Seniors, the Women's Club, the Boy Scout troops, the third grade stu-



On November's 17, 2004 at the Annual Meeting, Maria Gostkowski explains the process she used to restore the South River Mayoral portrait collection.

dents from the South River Elementary School. Over 700 people have passed through our portals this past year.

- An on-going project is the mapping of the Washington Monumental Cemetery. Girl Scouts Christy Fic and Lauren Zdziarski mapped two sections, as they worked for their Gold Badge. Will Stoffers, who is working toward his Eagle Scout rank, has organized a group of volunteers to complete the project. When completed, the project will become an invaluable resource to our town, to the South River Historical & Preservation Society, to the Washington Monumental Cemetery trustees, and to all interested in history and genealogy.

(continued on page 2)

2005 SOUTH RIVER HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY MEETINGS

FEBRUARY 23

APRIL 27

JUNE 22

SEPTEMBER 28

NOVEMBER 16

PLEASE JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd

Speaking at the February 23 meeting will be Feather Schwartz Foster, an amateur historian and the author of "Ladies: A Conjecture of Personalities." The book, which has a five-star rating on Amazon.com, blends fact and fiction in focusing on America's First Ladies.

All meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and are held at the South River Museum (formerly known as the Old School Baptist Church/War Memorial building) located at 64-66 Main Street, South River. For more information: visit www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/, or call us: (732)613-3078.

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and Sonny Paprota
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and Karen Satterthwaite
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President's Message (continued from page 1)

What about 2005?

Our most significant project this year will be the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Old School Baptist Church, the "home" of the South River Historical & Preservation Society, Inc. and the site of the South River Museum. We look forward to your joining in our building's bicentennial.

Another 2005 project is the continuation of the cataloging of our collections so artifacts can be accessed at the museum and on our web site.

These projects can be accomplished with your help. Please consider sharing some time with us.

Please join us on Wednesday, February 23rd at 7 p.m.

Annual Meeting — November 17th

After our traditional annual meeting dinner, Maria Gostowski presented the program about the restoration of the South River mayors' pictures. The mayors' portraits had been in the courtroom of the old Police Station. Due to time and water damage, some of the pictures were in extremely poor condition. Maria explained the steps which were necessary to restore the portraits. Each time Maria showed a newly restored picture, the audience's "Oooos" were audible

After a few more pictures are taken and restored, the complete set of mayors' pictures will hang in the courtroom/Council chambers in the



Doris Miller, Bob Rafano and Maria Gostowski examine artifacts at November's Annual Meeting

new Criminal Justice building downtown on Main Street.

Pack 4 Tiger Cubs visit the Museum

The Tiger Cubs from Pack 4 visited the South River Museum last Fall. After a tour of the museum, which

was enjoyed by the Cubs and their parents, refreshments were served.



Top Row: Kevin Brosseau, Matthew Dovedytis. Middle Row: Tiago Fresco, Edward Tuba, Mark Podeszjinski. Bottom Row: Matthew Leviton, Deyvid Vasileu, Anthony Bonsonte, Mark Bonsante.

Common expressions, interesting origins—

In George Washington's day, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted, therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression. **"Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg."**

Needless to say, personal hygiene left much room for improvement. As a result, many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bee's wax over their facial skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, if a woman began to stare at another woman's face

she was told **"mind your own bee's wax."** Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term **"crack a smile"**. Also, when they sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt and therefore the expression **"losing face."**

Ladies wore corsets which would lace up in the front. Atightly tied lace was worn by a proper and dignified lady as in **"straight laced."**

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the "ace of spades". To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't **"playing with a full deck."**

Early politicians required feedback

from the public to determine what was considered important to the people. Since there were no telephones, TVs or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to "go sip some ale" and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. "You go sip here" and "You go sip there". The two words "go sip" were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term **"gossip."**

At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint- and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in "pints" and who was drinking in "quarts", hence the term **"minding your P's and Q's."**

We Need You—

Perhaps, in the past, you've been a silent member. Do consider attending our regularly scheduled meetings or attending an open house on the first Sunday of the month to view our collections. Your support and participation in our organization will help advance our

mission to preserve local history and artifacts for future generations.

If you would like to spend a few productive hours, join us at the museum. It's fun, it's easy, and most of all you will get a first hand look at some of the "goings on" behind the scenes at our wonderful South River Museum.

Programs / Presenters Wanted—

If you have an interesting hobby or collection or know someone who does and would like to speak at one of our meetings, please contact the South River Historical & Preservation Society at **732-613-3078**.

Special Acknowledgements:

Life Members:

Louis E. Rezem, Sr.
Richard K. Meyers
Stephanie Bartz
Ann M. Smith
Eileen Koltowich

War Memorial Donations

Addendum:

Silver Donor:
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In memory of Erich W. Heine,
US Navy, WWII.

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Contributions In Memory of:

Joseph Aschettino by Anthony and Ann Aschettino
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My mother, my father, sister Mary, brother John by Eileen (Kozak) Koltowich
In memory of Rosella Schnatz
In memory of Louis Rafano

2005 Business/Corporate Members:

Appleby Insurance Agency, Inc. - 43 Main Street, South River
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Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

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Visit our website at:
www.rootsworld.com/~njsrhps/

2005 SRH&PS Membership Application

Please check one: New Renewal Gift (from _____)

Please print your name clearly as it should appear on membership listing:

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Additional contribution (optional) \$ _____

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____ Cash Check (Please make check payable to "SRH&PS, Inc.")

Send your application and dues payment to: **Candice Lewandoski**
60 Hillside Avenue
South River, NJ 08882

My company has a matching gift program. Company Name: _____
Company's address: _____

As a tax-exempt corporation, the SRH&PS, Inc. is eligible to receive matching gifts. If your employer participates in such a program, please send matching gift forms with your membership donation. The Society's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

I would like to donate an additional amount of \$ _____

This gift is in honor of in memory of _____

Gifts will be recognized in our newsletter.

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* For multiple memberships, please list additional names on back of this form