

# South River HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Number 32

JUNE 2005

## President's Message by Marilyn Anastasio

"Time flies when you are having fun!" During the summer, if you would like to find a "cool" place to have some "fun", join us at the museum. We will be open for Cruise Nights, June 16th, July 21st, August 18th, and September 15th; Sunday, July 10th, August 7th, and September 4th. Please visit and see what we are doing or if you would

like to help, just let us know.

Special thanks to Ray Reininger and his daughters Alexa and Christina, who created a beautiful garden display in the back of the Museum. The garden features the old jail doors from the South River Police Station and is titled "Free At Last".

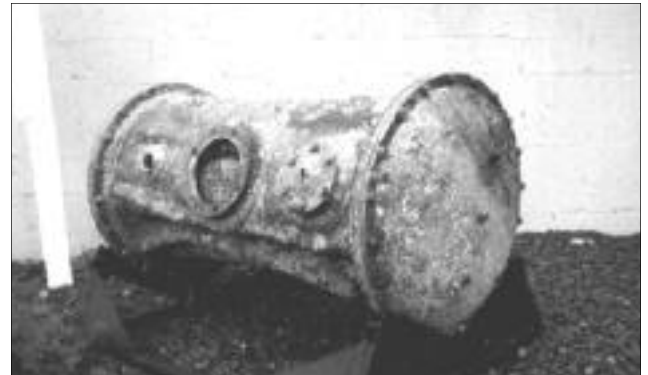
Looking ahead to September, the 200th Anniversary Celebration of the Old School Baptist Church will be on Sunday, September 18th from 2 to 4 at the South River Museum. Please note that it will replace our regularly scheduled meeting on September 28th. Please consider sharing the afternoon with us.

## NJ Historical Divers Association president, Dan Lieb, spoke at the April 22 meeting—

Dan Lieb, president of the New Jersey Historical Divers Association, was the guest speaker at our April meeting. The New Jersey Historical Divers Association is a collection of divers who "work together to preserve shipwreck history of New Jersey." Their mission is not only to identify the wreck but to investigate the "stories" behind it.

According to Mr. Lieb New Jersey is rumored to have over 1,000 wrecks off it's coastline. The fact is that only 500 wrecks really exist. Many vessels did not actually sink but were removed or "sailed on."

Mr Lieb spoke in depth about his organization's wreck investigation of the Cecilia M. Dunlap which he believes sank in the 1930s. There was some controversy as to where the vessel sank— his organization positively identified the actual location of the Dunlap. He also spoke about another famous New Jersey ship wreck—the Morro Castle. Following the program Mr Lieb answered questions for the audience.



*This heat exchanger was recovered from the ocean off Sea Bright, New Jersey from the wreck site of the CECILIA M. DUNLAP, which foundered during a storm on September 12, 1931.*

For more information about the NJ Historical Divers Association, Inc. email [NJHDA@aol.com](mailto:NJHDA@aol.com)

## 2005 South River Historical & Preservation Society Meetings—

JUNE 22

SUNDAY, SEPT. 22  
200th Anniversary  
OSBC Celebration

NOV. 16

### PLEASE JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22nd

Judy Van Derveer Olcsvay will speak to the Society about the history of Main Street Florist, a local business on Main Street in South River.

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

## South River Historical & Preservation Society

### 2005 OFFICERS:

**Marilyn Anastasio**  
President

**Richard Meyers**  
Vice President

**Hank Dziemian**  
Treasurer

**JoAnn Devlin**  
Secretary

**Donna Rafano**  
Immediate Past President

### TRUSTEES:

Martin Adler  
Brain Armstrong  
Carol DeVoe

Pat Gawarkiewicz  
Paul Goepfert

Kathleen Hyland  
Arthur Londensky

Paul Migut  
Ann Rafano  
Edwin Roginski  
Karen Satterthwaite  
Elaine Sicknick

### HONORARY TRUSTEES:

Harold Armstrong  
Helen Armstrong  
Warren Booraem  
Woodis Booraem  
Ann Rafano  
Earl Wenger (deceased 2004)

### 2005 Business Members:

Appleby Insurance Company  
First Reformed Church  
Laffin Chevrolet  
Anthony J. Cifelli & Sons  
Witty's Discount Liquors, Inc.  
Union Baptist Church  
Grannd Companies  
Conklin United Methodist Church  
Moshe Aaron Yeshiva High School  
Ria Mar Bar and Restaurant  
Sliker Machine Workers, Inc.  
Yuhus Plumbing & Heating, Inc.  
Polish Army Veterans



*Doris Miller gives the South River Elementary School third graders a tour of the Museum on Government Day.*

## Visitors filled the Museum

### Government Day

Almost two hundred excited third graders with parents and teachers from the South River Elementary School and Corpus Christi School visited the museum on "lucky" Friday the thirteenth. The South River Museum was one stop on the students' Government Day. With Pat Gawarkiewicz, Doris Miller, Karen Satterthwaite, and Elaine Sicknick as docents, the children toured the museum and cemetery.

Thank you Mayor Szegeti and the administration and staff of South River Elementary School and Corpus Christi School for organizing this worthwhile day for the children.

### Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance Meeting

On May 19, the Society hosted a meeting of Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance.

In addition to the regular agenda of the Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance, Ann Rafano presented the history of the South River Museum. It was a pleasure to host the meeting and learn more about other New Jersey historical societies. .

### Open Doors of Faith Tour

On June 12, the Museum participated in a tour of South River churches. Over 25 visitors toured the Museum. Marilyn Anastasio, Donna Rafano and Iris Schimtt were hostesses.

## Woodis Booraem name South River Historian

On April 25, Mayor Robert Szegeti along with the Borough Council, appointed life-long resident Woodis Booraem as Local Historian for the Borough of South River for the year of 2005. Ms. Booraem will replace Earl Wenger who passed away in 2004.

The Society would like to congratulate Woodis on her appointment and acknowledge her steadfast dedication to preserving the history of South River.



*Newly appointed South River Local Historian Woodis Booraem.*

---

## Part I : Memories of Growing up in South River – early 1950's to mid 1960's

### By Bob Pastorio

*Editor's Note: The article and photo were excerpted from a series of emails between Stephanie Bartz and former South River resident, Bob Pastorio. It's a wonderful example of the "good ole days" and how great it was to grow up in the quaint little town of South River. It's guaranteed to make you chuckle!*

This wandering around a past that I've not thought about in a very long time is interesting. And finding other things I didn't know about is likewise fascinating. It's prompting me to want to write about it - not sure what the form would be. I've been thinking about a novelization that would encompass the period from a very narrow perspective; maybe an old man reflecting on a youth. Dunno what'll happen with it all...

We lived at 103 George St (upstairs) for a while (Tom Iadevaia owned it then - he has a plant nursery in Jamesburg now), and had our family's first So. Riv. business on Ferry St., 3 doors in from Main St. The Towne Spa -ice cream shop -luncheonette. It's an empty lot last I looked. Half of a building that also sheltered Ida's Shop - millinery with her two sons Marvin and whatsisname (I wanna say Herbie.). Ida later moved to what had been Butch's nasty saloon on Main Street (across from the bank driveway) that featured country music(!) and let me meet some of the legends - Hank Williams, The Sons of the Pioneers, Sons of the Purple Sage, and like that...

Then 115 Main St. (ground floor on the right side as you face the front of the building where my mother had a beauty shop and we lived behind it). Across from the Temple where Jackie Mason's brother was the first rabbi. Rabbi Mazza, as I recall. Dr. Lang had lived in the 115 Main house before us (he moved up the street into a big house up near the corner of Jackson St.) and he had installed phone jacks all over the house, EVEN IN THE BATHROOM. WHO EVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING IN 1954?

Finally, 189 Main (a nice house with tall Colorado Blue Spruces that are no



*Bob Pastorio in the front of his parent's store, the Towne Spa, located on Ferry Street.*

longer there - corner Main and Wilcox) where Robin spent her first, infant year or so. And, simultaneously, a later beauty shop which my father and I built by gutting the space and filling it up again with beauty shop stuff on Thomas St. right across from the front of the old High School.

And, astonishingly, none of these momentous things were profiled on the site. Nor was Boyt's Drug store where I worked briefly and once farted very loudly; Richter scale stuff - because my true love du jour, Ellen O'Neill, poked me in the ribs while I was carrying a huge pot of potatoes I had peeled - in front of many disoriented customers, a pharmacist named Wally Wolack who laughed so hard he actually fell to his knees, and two girls in my class who did that snerky laugh thing when you're trying not to laugh noticeably. Snorts that they tried to disguise by coughing and covering their entire faces instead of just their mouths.

Nor was the Laundromat on Main (next door to the dry cleaners owned by the Alferis brothers, Mike and Steve) owned by Ray Hoff where I

worked until the day the woman came in with all her "delicates" as Ray called them, and wanted me to "refresh" them and handle them with my bare hands while washing and folding and all and here I was 14 years old with a typical Italian dose of adolescent testosterone and all my blush glands working overtime. She first asked "for the woman who works here" and when I said there was no woman, said, "Well, you'll do." She opened her little satchel and brought out several bras with cups large enough to hold my head. I couldn't take my eyes off them. I'd never seen anything like them up close before. I remember concentric stitching around the cups as though they needed the extra strength that the stitchery would provide to do their jobs properly and maybe to prevent unfortunate explosions; who knew what could happen. Row upon row of hooks on the back where they were to be connected to do their onerous duty, probably with the help of some stout friend to help fasten. She said something about their being yellow because they'd been stored someplace and something had happened to them and they could be cleaned, but they should be washed by hand or something, delicate soap I seem to recall, and squeeze, don't wring the wash water out of them, or whatever. Waving them around and I thought I would erupt into flame. All I could think about was that these things had spent time next to her, um, skin. She said "Did you understand all that?" I said in my most adult fashion, "What?" She took a deep, exasperated breath. I thought the fabric of her blouse would burst, and I would be breasted to death. I wasn't cut out to be a laundry guy.

**To Be Continued.**



South River  
Historical & Preservation Society, Inc.

64-66 Main Street  
P.O. Box 446  
South River, New Jersey 08882

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMITNO. 82  
SOUTH RIVER, NJ  
08882

Visit our website at:  
[www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~njsrhps/)

## 200th Anniversary of the Old School Baptist Church



*The Old School Baptist Church in the early 1900's.*

Please mark your calendars  
and join us for a celebration  
commemorating the  
200th Anniversary of the  
**OLD SCHOOL  
BAPTIST CHURCH**

on Sunday, September 18, 2005  
at the South River Museum  
64-66 Main Street, South River.  
The celebration will begin at 2 p.m.  
with music, followed by  
light refreshments, and a short  
program about the building's  
interesting history.