

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Where the Past  
Meets the Future*

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## It's Our Party...and You're Invited!

### *15th Anniversary Party set for McLoone's in June*

Depending upon which chart you consult, a 15th anniversary celebration is represented by crystal, by roses, or by the gift of a watch. As we get ready to mark the 15th birthday of today's **Asbury Park Historical Society**, we do so as keepers of the timeline for our city's ever-fascinating history...as part of a fast-changing town whose impact is now coming into crystal-clear focus...and as a deeply rooted part of a community that will continue to bloom in years ahead.

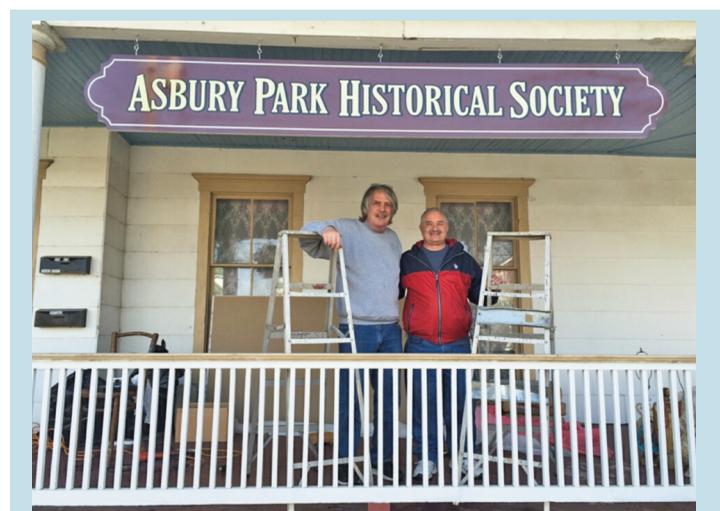
On **Sunday, June 12 at 6 p.m.**, the APHS invites the public to help us celebrate 15 years of preserving and promoting the architectural and cultural legacy of Asbury Park here in the 21st century, when we host an Anniversary Party fundraiser at **Tim McLoone's Supper Club** on Ocean Avenue.

"If you attended our Morro Castle Monument dedication dinner several years ago, then you know what a great time you're going to have!" APHS President **Don Stine** said.

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*The distinctive space-age flying saucer of Tim McLoone's Supper Club plays host to a celebration of historic proportions on June 12, when the old boardwalk landmark Howard Johnson's building helps us mark our 15th Anniversary.*



*The new permanent home of the APHS got a grand housewarming gift on March 16, when Don Stine and Andy Skokos installed this new sign over the porch of the Stephen Crane House.*

### *Meanwhile, back home at Arbutus Cottage...*

Drafty windows and leaky pipes. Loose floorboards and cracked plaster. Disagreeable radiators, falling shingles, and some not-always-welcome critters who make themselves at home in crawlspaces and under porches.

As anyone who's ever renovated a 100-year old house can attest, the sort of features that give a place "character" can be a constant source of worry for an owner trying to make a 19th century antique into a viable home here in the new millennium. As the Asbury Park Historical Society moves into its first-ever permanent space — the National Historic Site once known as **Arbutus Cottage** — the challenges are many, requiring a historian's sensibility and an extra heaping helping of TLC.

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Visit Our Website at [www.aphistoricalociety.org](http://www.aphistoricalociety.org)

## Society Puts on an “Airshow” at Annual Meeting



The **Asbury Park Public Library** was the scene, as the annual reorganization meeting of the Asbury Park Historical Society took place on the evening of January 28. Several recent and new additions to our board (including returning trustee **Dolly Sternesky**) were nominated and voted upon, while a trio of former board members — **John**

**Moor**, now the elected mayor of Asbury Park; **Donna Troppoli**, formerly secretary and newsletter editor; **David Sobotka**, chair of the Crane House Historic Nomination effort — were honored with certificates of commendation for their years of volunteer service.

The centerpiece of the evening was the slideshow “*Asbury from the Air*,” an engaging salute to the city’s often-colorful place in early aviation history, enhanced with an array of aerial scenes taken from biplanes, blimps, bombers and modern drones. Narrator and APHS President **Don Stine** was joined by Interlaken historian **Robert Waitt** (whose tales of a 1910 Asbury Park Air Show in Interlaken included the first air expo fatality and a crash that resulted in the nation’s first aviation-related lawsuit), **Arthur Gregory** (a nephew of the late Ike Schlossbach, legendary polar explorer and owner of the Asbury Park Air Terminal), and **Margaret Noumair** (daughter of the recently deceased photographer Ed Noumair, who displayed enlargements of her father’s lenswork above Asbury’s beach and downtown).

### *ARBUTUS Continued from Page 1*

Rechristened as **The Stephen Crane House** in the 1990s, the one-time home of the famous American author was generously donated to the Historical Society last year by its longtime private owner, APHS board member **Frank D’Alessandro**. The retired educator, with a major assist from City Historian **Werner Baumgartner**, put in countless dollars and hours to maintain the house at 508 Fourth Avenue as a small museum, community meeting space, and venue for arts events with a literary angle — building upon a precedent established by the house’s previous owner and rescuer, NJ Natural Gas executive **Thomas Hayes**.

Even before closing on the property in fall 2015, the non-profit Society coordinated an intensive campaign to have Arbutus Cottage placed on the state and national historic registries, a designation that allows the house, possibly the oldest still standing in Asbury Park, to qualify for historic preservation grants and other special funding.

While the APHS has convened a Grant Committee to apply for those available monies, the grants represent just a small piece of what’s required to renovate and fund the ongoing operations of the Crane House in the years to come — which is why the Historical Society is seeking the support and input of our neighbors in helping our headquarters achieve its potential as a community resource, and a building that reflects its 19th century vintage.

Recent work on the house has focused upon upgrades to fire safety equipment and other city code issues, such as the installation of additional overhead lighting and necessary repairs to the roof, floors and windows. The services of plaster contractor **Jerry Goodrich** (who redid the decaying stairwell leading to the attic) and others have been retained, while members of the Society continue to donate their time and energy to tasks both large and small, around the house’s interior and yard.

In addition to such major long-range projects as the repair and refurbishment of the house’s windows (most of which are original to the circa 1878 structure) and the eventual installation of new climate control systems, the agenda for the coming months includes an overhaul of the front parlor’s plaster ceiling (with an eye toward duplicating the vintage wallpaper of Mrs. Crane’s era); new plantings and landscaping in the front yard; repurposing some of the house’s rooms as archives for historical materials, and the installation of an access ramp for guests, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As always, the Asbury Park Historical Society welcomes donations of funds and/or volunteer hours from individuals and area businesses. Gifts or loans of historically pertinent photographs, documents and period furnishings are especially appreciated. Contact the APHS at [aphistoricalociety.org](http://aphistoricalociety.org), see us on Facebook or call the Crane House at (732)361-0189 to find out more about the many ways in which we can partner to preserve and promote our beloved city’s heritage and history.

## From Crane's House to Our House (part 1 in a series)

As what could be the oldest standing home in Asbury Park, the Stephen Crane House has experienced a rollercoaster history mirroring that of the city itself. And, while the former Arbutus Cottage is now an historic site in caring hands, that was not always the case.

"Asbury Park was absolutely horrible," recalls Doug Mauro of the city's long decline at the end of the last century. "Properties were available cheap. A Victorian house was selling for the cost of a two-week rental on Fire Island."

In the 1980s and '90s Mauro, then president of the Asbury Park Garden Club and member of the Shade Tree Commission, resided at 502 Fourth Avenue, three doors from the run-down house that had served as the Hotel Florence and, later, a boarding house, for much of the previous decades. From a 1985 newspaper article, Mauro learned that his neighborhood could boast some interesting historical persons — for instance, retail magnate F.W. Woolworth had a summer mansion on the corner; the illegitimate child of President Warren Harding was born in a nearby cottage, and Stephen Crane, author of "The Red Badge of Courage," had lived as a young man at the then boarded-up number 508, three doors east. But, when it came to preserving and promoting its past, "the city didn't care."

A casual conversation with fellow Asbury resident and Garden Club member Tom Hayes convinced Mauro that his

colleague, who had expressed interest in purchasing a local investment property, would be the perfect buyer for the old Victorian house where Stephen and his mother Mary Helen Peck Crane had lived — and that he and his wife Regina would be a couple who would honor and respect the property's storied past.

Concerned that the house would be fated to wind up as one more multi-family dwelling or worse, razed — Tom and Regina Hayes came to the realization that "We didn't want that to happen. We wanted to make the house a cultural resource for the town, a place the town could be proud of, a place for holding meetings and events."

Mauro suggested that the Hayes family reach out to Syracuse University, where the Stephen Crane Archives are housed. The Special Collections department responded by sending hand-colored photos of the Crane family members and the old house — all of which are still on display in the house's front parlor. With that authentication in place, the journey from neglected derelict to community treasure was underway.

— *By Susan Rosenberg, Trustee/Secretary of the Asbury Park Historical Society and retired library professor, Brookdale Community College. The story of the Crane House will continue in future newsletters.*

## Trustee Kay Harris Honored with Carousel Award

Last May, the Asbury Park Chamber of Commerce honored APHS board member **Kay Harris** with one of its annual Carousel Awards. It was a great accolade for the owner of the **Asbury Galleria** shop, located inside the Grand Arcade of Convention Hall. A city native, Kay's many family connections to Asbury history include grandfather Lorenzo Harris, the legendary one-armed sand sculptor who became a prominent member of the community, and her father Dr. Lorenzo Harris Jr., the city's first African American council member. Kay's sister Sharon has also served on the council. Having operated her boardwalk business in various locations for more than 10 years, the retired IT specialist for AT&T also works as a substitute teacher at Asbury Park High School in addition to dealing in Asbury Park-related photos and memorabilia. She is currently finishing a labor-of-love project, *From Amistad to the White House: Teachable Moments from 1893 and In My Lifetime*. Scheduled for this fall, the self-published book is a chronicle of a personal journey, during which Kay visited and recorded her impressions of places related to the Civil Rights struggle in America — a tour that ranged from the well-kept replica of the slave ship Amistad docked at Martha's Vineyard, to the dirt roads and boarded-up build-



*Kay Harris is pictured with U.S. Congressman and civil rights pioneer John Lewis in a 2014 photo. The APHS trustee toured the historic sites of the civil rights struggle as research for her forthcoming book.*

ings of forgotten Money, Mississippi. The forthcoming publication of Kay's book will be announced on our website and facebook page.

# A Cultural Exchange Between Asbury, Cuba

On Saturday afternoon, March 20 — even as President Obama was leading a delegation to Cuba, in the first such visit by a sitting Chief Executive in nearly 90 years — the Stephen Crane House became the setting for a special public-welcome presentation, sponsored by the APHS and hosted by Asbury Park’s “Mayor Emeritus” and Brookdale Community College adjunct faculty **Ed Johnson**.

Centered around a PowerPoint slideshow, the “standing room only” presentation was a look back at a December 2015 group excursion organized by Ed and **Bev Beveridge**, during which 14 Americans traveled to the island nation. It was a “People to People Cultural Exchange” that saw the group experiencing first-hand the effect of longstanding traditions — and incremental changes — on Cuban culture and daily life, during the relaxation of restrictions.

Since music remains a major component of the cultural heritage in both Cuba and our city, it was only natural to include “musical ambassadors” like Asbury Park High School educator **Karen Lee** and fellow flutist **Diane Doolittle**, both of whom shared video clips plus stories of their collaborations and “conversations in the universal language” with veteran Havana-based musicians.



**Former Asbury Park mayor Ed Johnson was the Historical Society’s guest speaker in March, for a presentation on his December 2015 group excursion to Cuba. Ed and Jeff Lundenberger will return to the Crane House for regular events in their free classic film screening series.**

A detailed account of the Cuba trip can be viewed at [edjohnsonasburypark.com/Local\\_2\\_Global](http://edjohnsonasburypark.com/Local_2_Global). Check the Stephen Crane House Facebook page for updates on the “Lights! Camera! Politics!” series of classic film screenings, co-curated by Ed and **Jeff Lundenberger**.

## ***PARTY Continued from Page 1***

The space-age entertainment venue and restaurant with the wraparound view of Convention Hall, ocean and beach promises to be a stellar summer-season setting, for the event that runs from 6 to 10 p.m.

Attendees will enjoy a sumptuous dinner plus cash bar, dancing, and more. Live entertainment will spotlight the 18-piece **Jazz Lobsters Big Band**, with James Lafferty and company performing a panorama of pop standards on

the stage that’s hosted some of the most legendary names in jazz, blues, and rock.

Tickets are \$100 per person, and can be reserved by PayPal at [aphistoricalociety.org](http://aphistoricalociety.org); or mailing a check by June 1 to APHS, 508 Fourth Avenue, Asbury Park, NJ 07712. Tickets also on sale at **Asbury Galleria** in Convention Hall or (cash/check only) at **Gifts by Tina**, 73 Main Avenue in Ocean Grove, on Fridays through Sundays from 12-5 p.m. Sponsorships and program ads are also available. For additional information, contact [echapman@monmouth.edu](mailto:echapman@monmouth.edu).

## The Asbury Park Historical Society

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**Join up or renew your membership today!**

contact **Kay Harris**, Membership Chair, at [kayharrismck@msn.com](mailto:kayharrismck@msn.com)

*Your generous donations of funds, historical materials and period furnishings are greatly appreciated for our community programs!*

Donations via PayPal to [antichay@gmail.com](mailto:antichay@gmail.com)

Call the Crane House at 732-361-0189 or address correspondence to:

Asbury Park Historical Society c/o Stephen Crane House, 508 Fourth Ave., Asbury Park, NJ 07712

