

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**JOIN UP OR
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**
See Page 6 for Details!

*Where the Past
Meets the Future*

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Get “Art & About” on the Boardwalk in Summer!



L-R: Trish and John of Hamm's Art Studio, and painter Patricia Arroyo were among the artists taking part in last year's Art on the Boardwalk event, the open-air affair that comes back to the boards in August.

ART ON THE BOARDWALK returns Aug. 20 for a 12th annual edition!

It's a colorful addition to the sights, sounds and sensations of the famous Asbury Park boardwalk — and on Sunday, August 20, the outdoor art fair known as **Art on the Boardwalk** returns to the place that's hosted generations of painters, poets and performers, for an amazing 12th annual edition!

A fundraising presentation of the Historical Society, the event is a “big tent” showcase for the original creations of

dozens of artists, working in a variety of media. Open to the public between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. — and extending along the “beach” side of the boards, beginning at the south entrance to Convention Hall's Grand Arcade — Art on the Boardwalk offers a great opportunity for Shore-based creatives to catch the eye of thousands of summer-season visitors. And, if you're on the lookout for a unique gift or accent for your home, you've come to the right place!

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Tickets On Sale NOW for Our Annual 50/50 Drawing!

You have to be in it to win it! The Asbury Park Historical Society has begun its annual 50/50 raffle, to be drawn at our meeting on November 16, 2017. We are looking to ramp up ticket sales this year, so if you can help sell tickets (or know someone who can), please contact Susan Rosenberg at susanrosenberg10@gmail.com.

You can also buy your own tickets through the mail! Tickets are \$5 each, or a book of five for \$20. Just send a

check made out to the APHS for the number of tickets you want to purchase, and we will mail the entry stubs to you. Mail check to: **APHS/Stephen Crane House, 508 Fourth Ave., Asbury Park, NJ 07712**. Please be sure to include your name, address and telephone number — and ask your friends, relatives, or business associates if they would like to participate. We can always use the support! Thank you and Good Luck!!

Visit Our Website at www.aphistoricalociety.org

A Spring into action for the APHS!



For local baseball fans, April 15 represented the 70th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's major league debut...as well as Opening Day ceremonies for our friends at the **Asbury Park Little League**! The Stephen Crane House marked the occasion (and celebrated Crane's own connection to the game) with a screening of the vintage musical *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*, a visit from Little League director **Danny McKee**, and a fascinating lecture on the pastime's origins and circa 1864 style of play, by captain **Russ McIver** of the Monmouth Furnace Vintage Base Ball Club (pictured with some of our city's young players).



On May 6 and 7, the Historical Society marked its first-ever participation in the annual **Weekend in Old Monmouth** tours, by welcoming scores of new visitors to the historic Stephen Crane House. Trustees **Frank D'Alessandro** and **Susan Rosenberg** were joined by writer-in-residence **Tom Chesek** in conducting tours of the premises for an estimated 150+ first-time guests of all ages! Then, at the conclusion of the tour schedule, the house welcomed back former residential tenant **Kerry Butch**, Deputy Mayor **Amy Quinn** and City Councilwoman/APHS trustee **Eileen Chapman**, for a meeting of a newly established Asbury Park chapter of the League of Women Voters.



On April 25, the **Barnegat Windjammers** chapter of the nonprofit historical organization **The Questers** enjoyed a private tour of the Crane House, that included a slideshow presentation on the roller-coaster history of our headquarters known at various times as Arbutus Cottage and the Florence Hotel. The ladies gave a generous donation to the APHS...while the National Historic Site played host to other tour groups in April, May and June, from the Monmouth Region campus of **Project Teach**, as well as from **Brookdale Community College** and **Asbury Park High School**.



On the evening of May 11, the Crane House was the scene of an intimate memorial service for **Milton Edelman**, the longtime photographer who passed away recently at the age of 94 — and who was our guest of honor at January's annual reorganization meeting. An Air Force color guard honored the WWII veteran of the US Army Air Corps with a presentation of the flag to his family members...and our good friend was further remembered via personal recollections, displays of images from his long life and career, and a retrospective slideshow.

What's in a name? The people behind the street signs

Research/ Photos by Susan Rosenberg, Trustee/ Secretary

Most of us with a passing interest in the history of Asbury Park are probably aware that the city's founding father, **James A. Bradley**, was a devout Methodist — a member of a Catholic family who converted to Methodism at the inspiration of his wife Helen, and whose visits to the young religious settlement of Ocean Grove spurred him to purchase and develop a large tract of sand and scrub that sat at the opposite edge of what is now **Wesley Lake**.

That narrow body of water was itself named for **John Wesley** (1703 - 1791), the Englishman who is credited with founding the original Methodist Society in 1739. As opposed to the prevailing Calvinist theory of predestination, Wesley expounded the doctrine of free will; believing that one could receive personal salvation through faith, experiencing inner holiness and outward piety. He was a leader in the Evangelical Revival, as well as an ardent abolitionist who published the pamphlet *Thoughts Upon Slavery, Against Slave Trade and Slave-Holding*.

Bradley named his planned pious resort **Asbury Park**, in honor of **Francis Asbury** (1745 - 1816), the famed "Bishop on Horseback" who was the Wesley protege charged with organizing and spreading Methodism in America. Ordained in 1784, the same year that the Methodist Episcopal Church was established in England, Asbury made his episcopal tour of New Jersey's "Shore and River counties" by ferry, foot, horseback, and "Jersey wagon," arriving in Monmouth County on September 9, 1785. Bishop Asbury was impassioned about saving the "souls of the lost," in addition to the abolition of slavery and other social ills — and his name further adorns the east-west thoroughfare **Asbury Avenue**, as well as the tiny Warren County community of Asbury, NJ.

From the days of Steinbach's Mammoth Department Store, to the restaurants and retailers that draw crowds here in the 21st century, **Cookman Avenue** has long been the heart of the city's downtown business and transportation hub. It's also one of several local streets named by Mr. and Mrs. Bradley in honor of prominent Methodist clergy — in this case **Rev. Alfred Cookman** (1828 - 1871), who passed away right around the time of the city's street mapping.

Revered for his piety, character, grace and power in bringing God to the people, Cookman began as an itinerant Methodist preacher, becoming pastor of 12 churches for 22 years. As one of the original trustees of the Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association, he ardently supported this concept of spending "a week in God's temple of nature" — and like the founders of Methodism, he loathed the American slave trade, and believed that emancipation was an act of God. In 1872, together with the Methodists in Ocean Grove, Rev. Cookman helped found a school in Jacksonville, Florida, to educate and empower freed slaves. It became the Cookman Institute in his honor.

Another contemporary of the Bradleys — and another Methodist minister who took the summer air in Ocean Grove — **Rev. Samuel Monroe**

(1816-1867) would have his name affixed to **Monroe Avenue** a few years after his untimely passing. By and large, however, Bradley would name streets after people who were long gone by the time the new and fast-growing city took shape — as witness **Webb Street**, named for **Captain Thomas Webb** (1724-1796), the British military man credited with bringing Methodism to Philadelphia and Delaware. **Heck Street** honors pio-

neer **Barbara Heck** (1734-1804) — the Irish-born, New York-based woman known as "The Mother of Methodism" — and her husband Paul.

Known for establishing camp-meeting communities in the Canadian provinces, **Nathan Bangs** (1778-1872) is remembered here via **Bangs Avenue** — while **Mattison Avenue's** namesake **Hiram Mattison** (1811-1866) was a noted writer and speaker whose passionate advocacy against slavery even caused a rift with other members of the church's General Conference. Meanwhile, **Bond Street** honors **Thomas E. Bond**, the medical doctor whose 19th century writings on Methodism had a big influence on the church's formal organization — and whose own views were often counter to those of the Wesleyan abolitionists.

Cutting a north-south path from Mattison Avenue to Sunset Lake, **Emory Street** takes its name from **John Emory** (1789 - 1835), the 10th bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

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Asbury Park's musical Madame defined an 'Era'

Visit AsburyAngels.org, the online memorial hall of fame dedicated to our city's late great musical movers and shakers, and you'll encounter such familiar figures as Clarence "The Big Man" Clemons, rocker Bill Chinnock, legendary promoter Moe Septee, and golden-voiced R&B crooner Bobby Thomas. You'll also find a lady by the name of **Era Tognoli** — and if that name doesn't ring a bell, be assured that Madame Era is very much remembered each and every year at this time, when the historic Stephen Crane House hosts an annual summer series of **Opera On Film** screenings in her memory.

As a young operatic soprano, she sang the title role of

Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* at New York's Metropolitan Opera House; performed regularly on radio, and shared the Verona stage with the legendary Maria Callas in *Turandot*.

It wasn't until a chance 1959 visit to Asbury Park, however, that Era Tognoli would be inspired by the project that would become her calling, her passion, and her greatest legacy — the presentation of live grand opera, in the seaside city that stole her heart.

As founder and impresaria of what would come to be called **Metro Lyric Opera**, Madame Era would stage an amazing 50 seasons of classics from the operatic canon — 45 of them as a year-round resident of nearby Allenhurst — under the proscenium of the **Paramount Theatre**. Working on a shoestring



The Stephen Crane House salutes the late Metro Lyric Opera founder Madame Era Tognoli (pictured at left on a 2009 visit to the house, during a recital by soprano Joanne Baiano-Roy) with a summer series of cinematic operetta adaptations. (Photo courtesy asburyradio.com)

budget; persevering through some very uncertain times, "The Madame" served as producer, artistic director, respected mentor and unwavering den mother to a company of believers that ranged from young area students in their first full-length productions, to internationally renowned conductor and lifelong friend **Anton Coppola**. And Era was herself a True Believer; a figure whose incredible half-century run on the boardwalk kept the stage lights burning during many of the city's darkest and most troubled decades.

With Madame's passing at the age of 92 in 2011, the soaring voices appeared to have been stilled — but that summer, and every year since, Crane House

host Frank D'Alessandro has paid tribute to Madame, with a series of intimate screening events that began with Franco Zeffirelli's 1982 filming of Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, and that have ranged from the canon of classics to a special salute to working-class Hollywood singing star Mario Lanza.

Here in 2017, the accent is on light operetta, in a series that keyed on June 25 with a screening of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, the lavish 1939 Technicolor production featuring members of the famed D'Oyly Carte Company. The series continues with events in July and August (see page 6 for details); all featuring free admission, complimentary refreshments, and an invitation to help support our friends in the Asbury Park Little League.

What's in a name?

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Running parallel to Ocean Avenue (and forming the famous "Circuit" with that waterfront thoroughfare), **Kingsley Street** is dedicated to **Calvin Kingsley** (1812 - 1870), himself the 22nd bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

As Asbury Park grew to encompass the acreage west of the railroad tracks, other prominent religious figures would come to have their names attached to local streets, such as **Langford Street** (after Episcopalian **Dr. John Langford**, a regular summer visitor), and **Comstock Street** (after **Anthony Comstock**, the often controversial American crusader for Victorian ideals of morality, who died in 1915).

One of These Things is NOT Like the Others:

Alone among the original layout of streets on the older, East Side of the city, **Sewell Avenue** is named not for a Methodist pioneer, but for a war hero, prominent politician

and businessman who was very much alive at the time that the Bradleys were passing out names — **William Joyce Sewell** (1835 - 1901). As to whether this had something to do with the fact that Sewell was then a newly elected New Jersey State Senator — as well as a leading figure in the railroad industry, during a time in which a young resort city was marketing itself on its proximity to major population centers — one can only speculate.

Serving as captain of the N.J. Volunteer Regiment during the Civil War, Sewell would rise to the rank of Major General for courageous leadership in battle — winning the Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Chancellorsville, the 1863 conflict that just happened to form the basis of Stephen Crane's masterpiece *The Red Badge of Courage*. He actively took part in capturing Richmond, a feat that led to General Lee's surrender — and would go on to be elected United States Senator from New Jersey, serving from 1881 to 1887, and again from 1895 until his death in 1901.

A Spring into action for the APHS!



Dolly and Ray Sternesky are pictured holding down the folding-table fort on May 20, during the **City-wide Yard Sale** in which the Historical Society took part for the first time from its Crane House headquarters! The APHS had a busy day, selling off nearly \$400 worth of items (including a cache of wearables donated by **Southside Johnny and the Jukes**); peddling tickets toward our 50/50 raffle, and...if nothing else...taking some significant steps toward a much-needed cleanup of the Crane House attic, from which a team of trustees and volunteers shlepped down tons of old furnishings and curiosities. A shout-out as well to **Steve Merlin** and the others who performed a massive clean-up of the exterior property, in preparation for the spring tour season!



Historical Society trustee, Asbury Park High School teacher, local business owner and first-time author **Kay Harris** (left) continued her hyper-local Book Tour in May and June (and led some stimulating discussion forums), with reading and signing events at **St. Augustine's Episcopal Church** and the city's **Public Library**, keyed to her recently published volume *From Amistad to the White House: Teachable Moments from 1839 to Within My Lifetime*. The account of Kay's journey through historic landmarks of the Civil Rights era is illuminated by her photographs and personal thoughts on the ongoing struggle for understanding and equality. Purchase the book in hardcover and paperback at Kay's **Asbury Galleria** store inside Convention Hall, or online from Amazon.com and other e-tailers.

A family's musical legacy, a key piece of history



For decades, **Vera G. Himmel Carty** played the organ during Sunday services at **Bethany Baptist Church**, the Brooklyn landmark where she was a devoted member of the congregation. At home, Vera made beautiful music on a solid mahogany upright piano, built in the early years of the 20th century by the Walters company

of New York City. The family heirloom eventually passed into the stewardship of Vera's grandson **Ron Carty** — and on April 19 it found a new "forever home" inside the old-kitchen reception room of the Stephen Crane House! On their way to a new residence in Atlanta, our neighbors Ron Carty (left in photo) and **Jerry Biga** generously donated this perfectly preserved and fully functional instrument to our Fourth Avenue headquarters, where it is sure to delight our many longtime friends and future first-time visitors alike. We look forward to incorporating it into some of our own future programming...so as they say, "stay tuned!"



Free public events at the Stephen Crane House

SUN., JULY 23: Our annual summer **Opera On Film** salute to the late great Madame Era Tognoli (see page 4) continues with an operetta double feature of Humperdink's *Hansel and Gretel*, starring Fredrica von Stade and Judith Beigen — followed by the 1936 Hollywood adaptation of Michael Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl*, featuring classic comic relief by none other than Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. Doors open at 2:30 pm, with program commencing at 3. It's free admission with complimentary refreshments, and donations welcomed for the Asbury Park Little League.

SUN., AUGUST 13: The summer screening series concludes with the immortal duo of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy in one of



their best known features: the 1940 MGM adaptation of Sigmund Romberg's *New Moon*. The operetta that gave us "Stout Hearted Men" screens at 3 pm, with doors open 2:30 and donations welcomed, as always, for our local summer baseball program.

Follow The Stephen Crane House on Facebook for updates on a featured film event TBA in September 2017...and visit our historic headquarters on **SAT., OCTOBER 7**, for the first in a new fall series of **Lights! Camera! Politics!** film/discussion events, hosted by Asbury Park Mayor Emeritus **Ed Johnson** and spotlighting Marlon Brando as a famed Mexican revolutionary, in Elia Kazan's 1952 production of *Viva Zapata!*

Art on the Boardwalk returns on August 20

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There's still plenty of time for participating artists to register by August 1st, with a \$75 non-refundable entry fee securing a high-visibility 10-by-12 foot space on the scenic boards. The event is open to fine artists working in oil paint, acrylic, watercolor, pastels, photography and sculpture.

Checks for entry fees can be mailed to **Teddy Chomko** at 496 Monmouth Road, West Allenhurst, NJ 0771. For information on set-up/ breakdown, parking and other details, call Teddy at (848)667-3432, or Dolly at (732)776-5323.

City Lights Tour is back!

Returning by popular demand after a one-year hiatus, the **City Lights Tour** is now accepting reservations for a bus excursion that sets sail to holiday-season points of interest in New York City on Sunday, December 3. Co-sponsored by the Asbury Park Historical Society and the Historical Society of Ocean Grove, the trip has traditionally offered participants a group tour of Rockefeller Center in all its seasonal glory, as well as major store displays, the Holiday Bazaar at Bryant Park, the 9-11 Museum and many other sites around the island of Manhattan. The day trip also includes a full sit-down lunch; full details are still to be announced, but early registrations can be made by calling (848)667-3432.

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Join up or renew your membership today!

contact **Kay Harris**, Membership Chair, at 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

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

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