

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Where the Past
Meets the Future*

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**JOIN UP OR
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**
See Page 4 for Details!

© 2019 Asbury Park Historical Society **Spring-Summer 2019**

We're Just Getting Warmed Up for 2019!



Mark your calendar for fundraisers, parties and open houses!

It's a calendar of happenings that range from open houses to exclusive affairs — and from festive thank-yous for our supportive neighbors and dedicated volunteers, to a generations-spanning salute to one of the biggest milestones in music history. All on the agenda in the months to come, and all coming to you courtesy of the Asbury Park Historical Society's Special Events Committee.

A LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE

A work in progress for the better part of a year, the upstairs library at **The Stephen Crane House** is getting "ready for its close-up" in Spring 2019 (see page 2 of this newsletter), as part of a \$10,000 slate of projects that also included the installation of a new state-of-the-art fire and security alarm system at our 140-year old headquarters. On the evening of Thursday, May 2, the public is invited to take a first look at this resource for the preservation of the noted 19th century American author's literary legacy, during a special Membership Party with complimentary refreshments in our downstairs reception room, and donations welcomed toward the ongoing renovation of our State and National Historic Site.

A WEEKEND IN OLD MONMOUTH

That first Saturday and Sunday in May means the return of **A Weekend in Old Monmouth**, the annual schedule of self-guided historic house tours coordinated by the **Monmouth County Historical**

Commission. The afternoons of May 4 (10 am-5 pm) and May 5 (12-5 pm) will represent the third year that the home of the Asbury Park Historical Society has taken part in the county-wide event; the only participating property in the city, and a popular stop for hundreds of Old Monmouth visitors since its debut on the tour in 2017. Attendees are invited to view the most recent improvements to the property, take in an informative slideshow on the house's colorful history, and speak in person to our Historical Society docents. Check in at visitmonmouth.com for full details on the tour routes and participating sites.

A KICKOFF TO SUMMER PARTY

As director of the **Bruce Springsteen Archives at Monmouth University**, a longtime central figure on the Shore area music scene, and a member of the Asbury Park City Council, **Eileen Chapman** has applied both her artistic credentials and her administrative expertise to numerous projects designed to preserve and promote our city's "principal export" and best known signifier: its multi-faceted music. As chair of our Special Events Committee, Eileen has teamed with fellow APHS trustees **Teddy Chomko**, **Susan Rosenberg** and **Jennifer Stine** — as well as a squad of skilled volunteers — to assemble an exciting spring/summer of activities that begins with a **Kickoff to Summer** "for Locals Only." (Continued on page 4)

Visit Our Website at www.aphistoricalociety.org

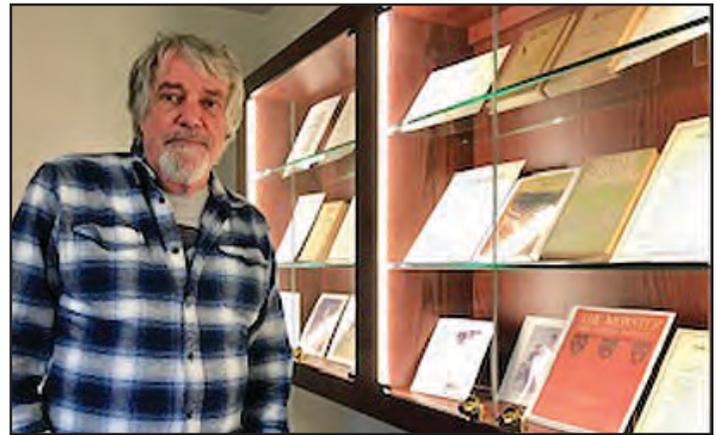
There's No Time to CHILL, for a Busy Historical Society!



The Historical Society rang in a busy year 2019 with our annual re-organization meeting, hosted at the **Asbury Park Public Library** on the evening of January 17. Continuing a tradition of illuminating presentations by guest speakers on topics of local interest, the APHS board of trustees welcomed author **Rick Geffken** for a slide-show lecture based on *Lost Amusement Parks of the North Jersey Shore*, the 2017 book by Geffken and photo curator **George Severini**. Attendees were treated to complimentary refreshments, introductory remarks by president **Don Stine** and board member **Kay Harris**, plus a tour of some long-gone pavilions, public places and palaces of amusement in Monmouth County — from the fondly remembered, to the nearly forgotten — that once upon a time offered relaxation, recreation, and rollicking entertainment to hundreds of thousands of Shorebound visitors. Find out more about this popular volume of Garden State history at arcadiapublishing.com.



At the request of the Historical Society, Ocean Grove-based videographer **Paul Kaplan** is currently at work on a short documentary project detailing the history of the circa 1878 Stephen Crane House; one of the oldest still-standing residences in Asbury Park. Kaplan (at right in photo, with the house's longtime private owner and APHS trustee **Frank D'Alessandro**) has interviewed principals in the house's story that include **Tom Hayes**, the NJ Natural Gas executive whose efforts rescued the former Arbutus Cottage/Hotel Florence from years of neglect and probable demolition in the mid-1990s. Plans are for the documentary to be completed this spring, whereupon it can be viewed on the Historical Society's website — and anyone with a house-related story or materials to contribute is invited to contact pkapproductions@gmail.com.



APHS president (and dealer in rare books) **Don Stine** is pictured with an all-new, custom-built, illuminated bookcase, commissioned to house and display a collection of first editions and other antique published works by Stephen Crane. The centerpiece of an extensive renovation of the Crane House's second floor library, the display allows visitors an opportunity to view early publications of *Red Badge, Maggie*, and other milestones from the famed author's brief but prolific career (including the posthumously published *The O'Ruddy*, in a volume gifted by Stephen's sister Nellie to their brother Townley). The library, which has been fully replastered, repainted, refurbished, and re-wired, also houses editions of works by Stephen's favorite authors from within his lifetime, while the house's Archive Room will feature biographical/ critical studies, works by Crane's friends and contemporaries, plus materials of local and regional interest. See page 1 for details on a special event celebrating the room's re-opening to the public.



Our house at 508 Fourth Avenue — where the diminutive dynamo Helen Crane once hosted many prominent temperance and suffrage activists of her day — has long been available as a meeting place for local clubs, civic and grass-roots organizations, and on March 20, the Crane House served for the first time as host venue for the monthly meeting of **Asbury Park TV**. The board of the volunteer initiative (dedicated to chronicling council meetings, community events, and numerous other aspects of city life) convenes on the third Wednesday of every month, and the inaugural meeting here was conducted by APHS board members that included (L-R) **Ed Salvus**, president **Ginny Otley**, **Michael Sodano**, **Drew Chiminec**, **Nate McCallister**, and Deputy Mayor **Amy Quinn** (not pictured: **Jess Alaimo**). The month of March also found the Crane House playing host to the planning board of the **Asbury Park Promenade of Mermaids**, the colorful event that presents its fifth annual edition on Saturday, June 29.

A successful “Pop-Up” preview for the Asbury Park Museum project!

The project wasn't designed to be anything other than a temporary, limited-time exhibit — but as a way of introducing to the public the concept of **The Asbury Park Museum**, the wintertime “pop-up” installation on the city's famous boardwalk was a successful endeavor; one that served to point the project's planning committee toward a permanent home location in the seasons ahead.

The Museum committee was chaired by business owner, educator, author, and Historical Society trustee **Kay Harris** — and energized with the assistance of a team that included music historians **Charlie and Pam Horner**, fellow APHS board members **Susan Rosenberg**, **Eileen Chapman**, **Don Stine**, and **Dolly Sternesky**, story teller and actress **Lorraine Stone**, NJ Pan African Chamber of Commerce president **Dina Todd**, Crane House writer in residence **Tom Chesek**, and AP Historical Society members and volunteers **Ray Sternesky**, **Charles Trott**, **Conrad Neblett**, **Maureen Nevin**, **John Brown**, and **Yvonne Clayton**. The project transitioned quickly from drawing board to brick-and-mortar reality, when Asbury Park Boardwalk property managers Madison Marquette offered the season use of a 1,430 square foot space within the Fifth Ave Pavilion. Located between Tim McLoone's restaurants and the site of the forthcoming Iron Whale, the space became the setting for a display of photographs, posters, and artifacts representing all facets of our “roller-coaster” history, from the days of Founder James Bradley to the threshold of the new century — with a special emphasis on the people, the local



landmarks, and the amazing musical heritage of the oft-neglected West Side.

Many of the materials on display were included in a celebrated mobile exhibit on West Side music, drawn from the Horners' first-rate collection of recordings, photographs and memorabilia. The Society donated numerous items from its own archives for the occasion, and the display further featured materials assembled by the various volunteers, with Asbury Park's Mayor **John Moor** (at right in above photo) even donating an authentic conductor's cap from the city's original electric trolley car system.

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APHS EVENTS *Continued from page 1*

Hosted on the semi-enclosed oceanfront deck, surfside stage and beach-top dance floor of the **Anchors Bend** bar and restaurant on the north side of Convention Hall, the “fun-raiser” event keynotes the prime-time season in hotter-than-ever Asbury Park, on a late May/ early June date to be announced. Admission includes hors d'oeuvres, one complimentary drink, and of course live music. Follow the Asbury Park Historical Society on Facebook for updates and more details.

A VERY GROOVY ASBURY WOODSTOCK

Last December, the **Paramount Theater** stage was the setting for ***A Very Asbury Holiday Show***, a special benefit concert that summoned a decades-spanning collection of music makers — ranging from 60-year veterans of the city scene, to some of the most talented newcomers on the block — into an all-star/ all-Asbury band under the direction of **Tony Peruso** and **Jillian Rhys-McCoy**. On Sunday, July 21 — and in advance of the 50th anniversary of the original Woodstock festival — the Asbury Park Historical Society joins with the **Asbury Park Music Foundation** to present ***A Very Groovy Asbury Woodstock*** under the famous Paramount proscenium. Asbury-based musicians of all ages and sonic persuasions are expected to join Peruso, along with a special guest emcee, for a once-in-a-lifetime jam that honors the legendary artists of that 1969 cultural touchstone. More details to come — including a full lineup of featured performers — with proceeds dedicated to the ongoing programs of the APHS and APMF, and ticketing available through ticketmaster.com and the **Stone Pony** box office.



Watch this space, and follow the Historical Society on social media (or via the printed pages of **The Coaster** newspaper) for updates on still more exciting activities, including the annual **Art on the Boardwalk** outdoor art and craft show (scheduled for Sunday, August 18; rain date August 25), an **APHS Awards Dinner** honoring our most dedicated volunteers and supporters (tentatively set for October 10 or 17 at **Jimmy's Restaurant** on Asbury Avenue), and a newly expanded edition of our **Holiday Lights NYC Bus Tour**, presented in partnership with the **Ocean Grove Historical Society** (Sunday, December 1).

Look also for the Society's tables and tents at other events happening all around town throughout the warm-weather months, including the free **Concerts at Springwood Park** series, and the weekend-long **Oysterfest**. The APHS welcomes the input and energy of community volunteers to assist in our special events (as well as our regular committee work) — and we invite you to see page 4 of this newsletter for details on how to contact us.

Pictured: volunteer Diana Meggitt manned the table on behalf of the Society, during a summer 2018 event at the Transportation Center.

Free Public Events at the Stephen Crane House

On Sunday, May 19, our Lecture Room Theater is the setting for a double feature salute to a little known but significant figure in film history: screenwriter Frances Marion. The 1927 silent classic *Love* (with Greta Garbo and John Gilbert) and the 1953 drama *The Clown* (with Red Skelton in a reworking of *The Champ*) will screen beginning at 3 pm, with donations welcomed for our friends at the Asbury Park Little League.

The Crane House stage welcomes the artists of **The American Poetry Theater** on the evening of Saturday, June 8, for a reading of an original theatrical presentation. The collective founded by **Rich Quatrone** has presented numerous plays centered on contemporary social issues, at venues throughout Monmouth and Ocean counties, and for their inaugural visit to our intimate Lecture Room space, the group will



premiere *American Dreaming*, a script by Jim Benner that addresses the ongoing problem of poverty in the midst of plenty in America. Advance reservations for the 7 pm event (\$15) can be made at uly46@aol.com, or 732-822-4338.

A summertime staple at the Crane House... and an event that was successfully relocated to Thursday evenings last year (due to the realities of beach-weekend parking in an increasingly busy Asbury Park) ...the

“Bite at the Opera” series of opera-on-film screenings resumes on June 25, when your host **Frank D’Alessandro** welcomes one and all (and pays tribute to the late Metro Lyric Opera impresaria Madame Era Tognoli) with a filmed performance of Vincenzo Bellini’s *Norma*. The fourth Thursdays of July and August bring the popular pair of Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald, in *Maytime* (July 25) and *Girl of the Golden West* (August 22). Enjoy free admission, complimentary home cooking, central A/C, and surprise “bonus features” in this “best kept secret” tradition for music lovers of all ages!

Follow the Stephen Crane House on Facebook, check Asbury Park’s Coaster newspaper, or join our mailing list, for updates on additional free film screenings and other events!



Kay Harris (at mic) introduces vocalist Herb Glenn (right) and his jazz trio, during a Museum fundraiser event in early March.

MUSEUM *Continued from page 3*

The mayor and fellow members of the City Council were on hand for the ribbon cutting event on the afternoon of December 15, 2018 — and the Museum was up and running!

Boosted by such events as the Holiday Bazaar, the New Year’s Polar Bear Plunge, and the annual Light of Day festival — and

helped tremendously by a winter with no significant snowfall — the Museum welcomed hundreds of unique visitors each weekend, hailing from just blocks away, to all over the United States, and several European countries as well. Special events included book signings and presentations by figures from the region’s rich vocal music scene (including Duprees singer **Tommy Petillo**, and singer-songwriter-producer **Billy Terrell**); a fundraiser featuring a tribute to Nat King Cole by **Herb Glenn** and his jazz combo; several Black History Month readings of works by African American poets and authors, and an illuminating lecture on the often overlooked history of the area’s Sand Hill Indians.

While the Museum packed up its displays following its closing day on March 10, the quest continues to secure a year-round site for this celebration of the people, the places, and the parade of events that have come to define our endlessly fascinating city. Discover more about The Asbury Park Museum (a NJ Non Profit Corporation) on Facebook. Follow the progress of this worthy project, and find out how you can lend a helping hand!

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

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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