

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**JOIN UP OR
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**

See Page 4 for Details!

*Where the Past
Meets the Future*

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It's about Time: a community gets back in touch with its historic self

A time capsule (and more) for a glorious 150th anniversary

"Where the Past Meets the Future." For all of us at the Asbury Park Historical Society, those words are much more than a simple motto...and here in this milestone year on our city's timeline, the APHS is proud to be playing a major role in a project that will bring Past, Present, and Future together for a *very* special observance.

As part of a slate of celebrations marking the *sesquicentennial* (150th anniversary) of Asbury Park's founding, a **Time Capsule Committee** chaired by Historical Society officer **Susan Rosenberg** has initiated an endeavor aimed at placing a formal **Asbury Park 2021 time capsule** into the earth this fall... with the aim of recovering the artifact 50 years from now, in time for the bicentennial birthday of the place called Asbury Park.

Scheduled to take place on the property of The Stephen Crane House at a November date to be announced, the ceremony will dedicate a curated collection of items that represent the city of Asbury Park in the year 2021. As to the question of what best encapsulates present-day life in our community, Rosenberg explains that it's a matter for which the committee is seeking the input of "all Asbury Park residents past and present," as well as "businesses, groups, and school children."

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Photo by Tom Chesek

Housepainting specialist **Magee**, whose history with The Stephen Crane House dates back more than 20 years, returned to 508 Fourth Avenue to wield the brush and roller, as the Historical Society began a program of improvements designed to make the house's front entrance more welcoming and accessible to our guests. See page 3 for additional details and images.

'Grab the brass ring,' with these holiday gift ideas!



Available now as a special limited-time fundraising item for the Asbury Park Historical Society — and custom-designed to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Asbury Park — our exclusive **Carousel House Holiday Ornament** is a keepsake that's sure to catch the glimmer and dazzle of the Season of Lights, in breathtaking fashion.

Capturing one of Asbury Park's most beloved and iconic attractions in exquisitely detailed brass, the ornament makes a perfect gift for anyone who carries a special place in their heart for our seaside city — whether their "home for the holidays" is a hearth far removed from our Shore, or right here in the place that marks its "sesquicentennial" milestone in 2021.

As unique as Asbury Park itself, the Carousel House Holiday Ornaments can be ordered via PayPal for \$20 each (plus \$4 shipping and handling) from our official website, aphistoricalociety.org. Through the end of September, the ornaments can also be purchased at **Asbury Galleria**, located on the boardwalk at Second Avenue (adjacent to Splash Water Park, across from the Stone Pony) — and beginning in October 2021, the ornaments will be available for purchase at Asbury Park's two **Fun House** stores, inside the Grand Arcade of Convention Hall, and at 704 Cookman Avenue.

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Visit us online at aphistoricalociety.org

Opening our doors, and reaching out once more...



Photo by Tom Chesek

A fire-and-brimstone Temperance Lecture by the spirit of Mrs. Helen Crane (as channeled by actor **Lindy Regan**) was just one of the surprises in store on Sunday, April 25, as a small group of invited attendees gathered for a special Silver Anniversary program at The Stephen Crane House — the State and National Historic Site that first opened its doors to the public on April 26, 1996. Hosted by Kay Harris and Tom Chesek, the program featured the reading of personal greetings from the property's two previous private owners, **Frank D'Alessandro** and **Thomas Hayes**. Hayes told the story of the Crane House's rescue in a screened interview with APHS officer Susan Rosenberg, "Mrs. Crane" regaled the audience with her now-legendary lecture on *The Effects of Alcohol Upon the Organs and Tissues of the Body* — and the afternoon closed with actor-playwright and longtime friend of the house **Marjorie Conn**, performing a special preview excerpt from her work-in-progress play on the life and times of Stephen's "common law wife" Cora Crane. The entire program was recorded for posterity by **John Kaplow** of NJ Media Works, and can viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESxNI4C7lmU.



Photo by Jennifer Stine

The tunes of "Asbury Park's first music superstar" filled the air on the evening of Wednesday, May 12 — and the performance venue named in his honor came to life for the first time in many years — when the **Paragon Ragtime Orchestra** sounded the keynote for a new Spring/Summer season of events at **The Arthur Pryor Bandshell**, the open-air rooftop amphitheatre located upside the Fifth Avenue Pavilion. The first in a 2021 **Vogel Concert Series** of shows produced by **Andrew DePrisco** and his team at Ocean Township's **Axelrod Performing Arts Center**, the program found the organization under the baton of Asbury Park native **Rick Benjamin** recreating the signature sound of Pryor, the internationally renowned trombonist-composer-bandleader whose concerts on the Asbury Park boardwalk were a summertime staple for over 25 years, beginning in 1904.

The show, an informal re-dedication of the 200-seat Bandshell that floated its first note in 1963, featured the reading of a proclamation from Mayor **John Moor** and the members of the City Council, delivered by APHS member **Celia Morrisette** as part of her slate of sesquicentennial events.



Photo courtesy Jennifer Stine

A capacity crowd at the Public Library welcomed back author **Helen-Chantal Pike** to Asbury Park on the evening of Thursday, June 24, for an event keyed to the release of her new book, *Asbury Park: A Century of Change*. A lifelong aficionado of all things Asbury, the Vermont-based historian delivered a slideshow presentation and signing session for her latest publication from Arcadia Publishing/History Press, in an event sponsored by the Historical Society. An examination of the ongoing process of change in our city, from the days of Mayor Clarence Hetrick to the present day (as well as the people who make it all happen), the newest entry in Arcadia's Images of America series joins such previous Pike projects as *Images of America: Asbury Park*, *Asbury Park's Glory Days*, and the Pike-edited omnibus *Where Music Lives*. Catching up with friends old and new throughout a busy weekend, the author made additional appearances at locales all around town.



A beautiful summer Sunday set the scene, as the Historical Society's open-air art show and sale formerly known as Art on the Boardwalk returned after a one-year hiatus on August 15 with a new name: **The Ray Sternesky Art Show on the Boardwalk**. Re-branded in memory of the beloved painter and longtime friend of the APHS who passed away in March, the successful fundraiser coordinated by trustee **Teddy Chomko** commandeered the boards south of Convention Hall for a colorful outdoor bazaar that showcased the works of numerous area visual artists, photographers and crafters, many of them brand new to the event. Future editions will continue to honor Ray, whose visions of local landmarks remain on permanent display at the Asbury Park Senior Center.

Follow the Asbury Park Historical Society and The Stephen Crane House on Facebook

...to a diverse community that has a story to share!

On the evening of Thursday, July 8, The **Berkeley Oceanfront Hotel** hosted 175 guests in an opening reception for the “pop-up” exhibit *Asbury Park: 150 Years of Change and Transformation — A Segregated Seashore*. A project of APHS president **Kay Harris** and her team at the non-profit **Asbury Park Museum** organization, the multi-media installation tells the century-and-a-half story of our city’s famous beaches, boardwalk and waterfront attractions, as viewed through the lens of a diverse (but divided) community.

Funded in part by a grant from Monmouth University, the exhibit tells a many-faceted and fascinating story through large informational posters, a continuously screened slideshow, display cases featuring memorabilia from the many distinct eras of Asbury Park history, and even some examples of antique swimwear from a century past, as well as the hotel’s own photographic enlargements of vintage beach scenes. There is no charge to view the exhibit, which remains on display daily through November 2021 inside the east lobby area of the hotel, 1401 Ocean Avenue at Sixth Avenue.

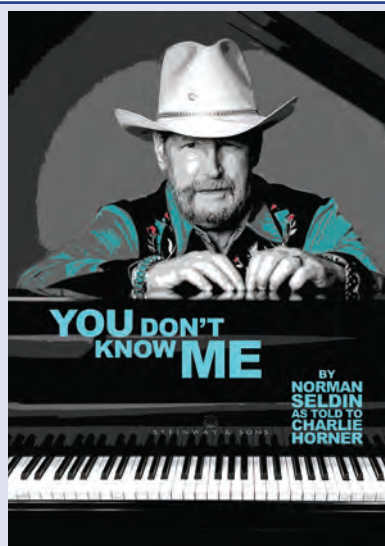


Photo by Stan Cain



Photos by Andy Skokos

The front porch of our Stephen Crane House headquarters is the subject of a major makeover regimen in the late summer of 2021, with a power washing and re-painting helping to put a fresh new face on our Fourth Avenue home. Made possible by funds from an annual grant by the **Jules L. Plangere, Jr. Family Foundation**, the project is also scheduled to include a rebuilding of the front entrance steps (complete with new lighting fixtures, and an added handrail for the safety of our guests). Meanwhile, continued improvements to our in-house Lecture Room performance space are being made by custom plaster expert **Jerry Goodrich**, in preparation for the room’s planned re-opening to public events in the fall.



Gift Ideas From pg 1

Fall 2021 also sees the release of a printed work that should resonate with all those who share a passion for the Sounds of Asbury Park — *You Don’t Know Me: The Musical Memoir of Stormin’ Norman Seldin*, as told to Charlie Horner. Of course, generations of Shore locals have come to know Norman Seldin as a very visible member of the area business community; as an ivory-tickling ambassador for Steinway pianos — and as a figure who has shaped the local soundscape since the red-headed mover-and-shaker could cultivate his first beard.

Even those who think they know Stormin’ Norman will discover new and amazing facts about the prodigy who mastered the piano at the age of three, fronted his own band at 13, and was producing concerts, managing musical acts, and running his own record label before he was old enough to drive. Nor-

man’s bands broke the color barrier for previously all-white nightclubs along the Jersey Shore by incorporating black singers and musicians — among them **Clarence Clemons**, who performed with Seldin on his way to E Street, and **Harry Ray**, who Norman recorded before he topped the charts with Ray, Goodman & Brown.

Watch our website and social media for news on book signing and concert events keyed to *You Don’t Know Me*, available soon from Amazon and other retailers — and stay tuned for updates on the next project from APHS members Charlie and Pamela Horner: Part Two of *Springwood Avenue Harmony: The Unique Musical Legacy of Asbury Park’s West Side*. The follow-up to the acclaimed first volume finds the award-winning music historians picking up the story from the post-WWII era, on through the newfound appreciation of the city’s long-neglected musical riches here in the 21st century.

Public Programs from the Historical Society



In a year of milestones that include the sesquicentennial of Asbury Park's founding, *and* the 25th anniversary of The Stephen Crane House, the calendar date of November 1st, 2021 marks 150 years since the birth of Stephen Crane himself — and the APHS is hard at work on several projects that will honor the classic American storyteller, journalist, and poet who began his writing career right here at 508 Fourth.

In the works are a new video on the life and times of Crane, produced in collaboration with **Asbury Park TV**, and designed to screen for school groups and other visiting organizations — as well as a first look at an original one-woman play that pays long-overdue tribute to the relationship between Stephen and his “common-law” wife, the vivid character known as **Cora Taylor Crane** (pictured).

Written by and starring **Marjorie Conn** (whose stage presentations, including original pieces on Eleanor Roosevelt and Lizzie Borden, have been popular features at the Crane House), the play tentatively entitled **Cora and Stephen** is scheduled to go up inside our recently renovated Lecture Room theatre on the afternoon of Sunday, November 7. Additional details, including information on admissions and a possible added performance, will be forthcoming in APHS web/ social media postings and email blasts to our supporters.

Also in the discussion stages are a formal outreach to the town of Badenweiler, Germany (site of a memorial at the place where Crane passed in 1900, and where a celebration of the internationally renowned author takes place each year), and a possible encore presentation of the one-man show **An Evening with Stephen Crane** by Kentucky-based playwright Phil Paradis, last seen here in November 2019. The Crane House has also reached out to award-winning novelist **Paul Auster**, whose forthcoming book **Burning Boy** offers the Brooklyn-based author's highly anticipated perspective on the life of Stephen Crane. While these proposed events have not been finalized as this newsletter goes to press, available updates will be made public as they are confirmed.

Time Capsule *From pg 1*

The committee that also includes fellow APHS trustee and city councilwoman **Eileen Chapman**, **Lisa Bovino**, and **Elena Zazanis** will be soliciting and coordinating the collection of donated items, and will explore cost options for a pair of commemorative plaques and the capsule itself. A GoFundMe campaign will be announced on the Society's social media platforms toward financing of the project, and donations from the public can be made directly to the Asbury Park Historical Society (using the designation “Time Capsule”) as we look ahead to the year 2071.

Meanwhile back in 2021, plans for additional special activities keyed to the city's 150th continue apace, with events chair **Celia Morrisette** announcing a “Sensational Sesquicentennial Event” for September — a fun party that honors the contributions of the LGBTQ community in the city's remarkable “comeback” story of the new millennium. Scheduled for Friday, September 17 at the Empress Hotel's **Paradise** nightclub, the event known as **Savvy, Saucy, Brassy and Bold** brings together the “Dynamic Divas of Asbury Park” for a Drag-tacular celebration featur-

ing performances by **Jolina Jasmine** and **Victoria Courtez**. Doors open at 8:30 pm, with a percentage of the \$20.21 admission fee dedicated to the city-based nonprofit **Garden State Equality**. Visit paradisenj.com for more details.

The evening of Friday, October 15 offers an **End of Summer Sesquicentennial Clambake**, presented in partnership with **Cross + Orange** restaurant and hosted at **Kennedy Park**, Grand Avenue between Cookman and Lake Avenues. Also in the works is a partnership with **Tom Pivinski** of the volunteer **Asbury Park Environmental Shade Tree Commission**, to dedicate a Coastal Garden installation in honor of the late artist and musician **Gerard “Art” Robrecht**.

Together with the return of such high-profile happenings as the **Sea.Hear. Now Festival** (September 18-19), the rebranded **AsburyFest** (September 24-26), and the town-wide **Porchfest** (October 2), these and other events described in this newsletter promise to make 2021 a history-making year in itself...so stay safe, stay connected, and let's work together to get together, in the months and seasons ahead!

The Asbury Park Historical Society

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Join up or renew your membership today!

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Donations accepted via PayPal at aphistoricalociety.org

Call the Stephen Crane House at **732-361-0189**

to schedule a tour...and address correspondence to:

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