

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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Making art, making music...making memories!

*Visions of Shore life and
more, as our signature summer
event returns to the boards!*



As generations of locals could tell you, the Asbury Park boardwalk is that special place where memories are made — and where ART happens, often in the most delightfully unexpected places. Once each year, and for the 17th time since we first pitched our tents along the seaside railing, the Asbury Park Historical Society transforms the stretch of herringboned hardwoods just beyond **Convention Hall** into a strolling, rolling, open-air gallery that spotlights the visual art and artisanal handcrafts of some very creative people, working in a myriad of media.

Going up on Sunday, August 21 (with a scheduled rain date of August 28), the **Art on the Boardwalk** event extends southward from the main entrance to the Grand Arcade at Fifth Avenue, with longtime event coordinator **Teddy Chomko** forecasting as many as 30 participating artists taking the opportunity to show and sell their unique wares. The event that was rebranded last year in memory of co-founder, APHS member and celebrated city-based painter **Ray Sternesky** runs from 9 am to 5 pm, with all works on display available for sale.

Whether you're searching for a one-of-a-kind gift idea for that special someone, or looking to capture the soul and spirit of Shore living as part of your year-round decor, you've come to the right place — and if you're an artistic person who's looking to stake out your own booth on our boards, email njshoresouth69@gmail.com for all the details. *An early reminder as well, that our popular NYC Holiday Lights Bus Trip makes its annual run on Sunday, December 4 — and that information on advance reservations can be obtained by contacting Teddy Chomko at the address listed above!*

*Exclusive ornaments, new
2023 calendar are perfect gift
ideas for lovers of Asbury Park!*



It hosted its grand opening in 1930 with events that boasted such stars of Hollywood and Broadway as Fredric March, Ginger Rogers, and the Marx Brothers...its floors and stages have featured many of the mightiest names in music, in addition to pro basketball, boxing, wrestling, roller derby, and countless sold-out trade shows and expositions. And, while its event spaces have remained "dark" here in 2022, the Convention Hall/Paramount Theatre complex is ready to illuminate the Season of Lights, with all the glimmer and dazzle of an endless summer's night.

Available now as a special limited-time fundraising item for the Historical Society, our exclusive **Convention Hall Holiday Ornament** is a keepsake that captures what is almost universally regarded as New Jersey's most iconic building, in exquisitely detailed brass. The custom-designed 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 extends GREETINGS to all, throughout the seasons.

Along with our **Carousel House Holiday Ornament** (returning for 2022), the new Convention Hall ornament can be ordered via PayPal for \$22 each (plus \$5 shipping and handling) from our official website, aphistoricalociety.org. The ornaments can also be purchased at **Asbury Galleria**, open 7 days on the boardwalk at Second Avenue (adjacent to Splash Water Park); weekends at **Gifts by Tina** on Main Avenue in Ocean Grove, and every day at Asbury Park's downtown **Fun House** store, located at 704 Cookman Avenue. Watch for updates on additional retail outlets...and wait, there's more!

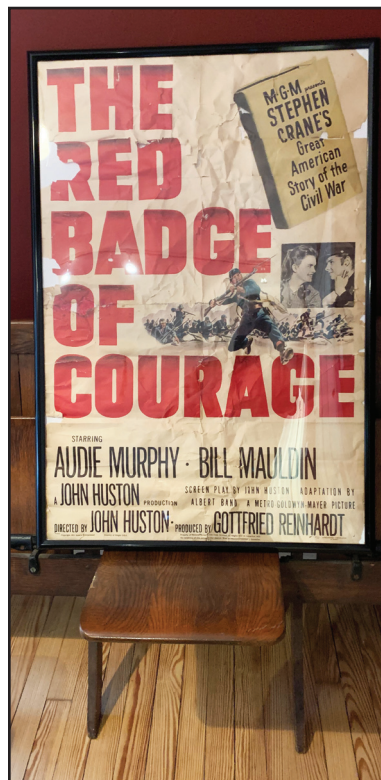
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Upstairs, downstairs, even out on the roof...



On the weekend of April 30 and May 1, participants in the Monmouth County Historical Commission's **Weekend in Old Monmouth** slate of historic house tours got their first look at a newly re-opened public display room at the Stephen Crane House. The place designated "Stephen's Room" presented a vision of how young Mr. Crane's bedroom in his mother's home might have appeared during the years when he attended the old Asbury Park High School. As a work in progress, the second-floor space has been re-plastered and painted, and furnished with artifacts acquired/donated by Historical Society officers including **Jim Henry**, **Don Stine**, **Susan Rosenberg** (who provided an antique riding bridle as a reminder of Stephen's prized pony), and the late **Mary D'Amato** (who contributed a Victorian-era child's writing desk). For the county commission, it was the first Old Monmouth event following a two-year hiatus — and for aficionados of the area's many sites of historic interest, it was a chance to catch up with the numerous improvements to the premises that were put into motion during the Covid-related shutdowns of 2020 and 2021.



Donations of period furnishings and other artifacts of historical interest are of course always welcomed by the Society — and one of the more interesting gifts in recent months was this item that boasts both a Crane connection *and* a link to one of the most famous business organizations in mid-20th century Asbury Park. Presented by an anonymous donor with a history at the city's old **Lyric Theatre**, this full-size poster for the 1952 big-screen adaptation of *The Red Badge of Courage* was discovered in the rafters of the downtown movie house that was once part of **Walter Reade's** cinema empire. Directed by John Huston and starring real-life war hero turned Hollywood star Audie Murphy, the film has been shown several times in our Lecture Room screening space, where plans are afoot to revive our popular series of classic movie matinees in the near future.



On the afternoon of May 15, the sounds of music issued forth once more from the stage area of our Lecture Room theatre, when Shore-based artists **Jonathan Tea**, **Pat Guadagno** (subbing for a temporarily sidelined **George Wirth**) and **Regina Goldy** brought the songs and the ever-fascinating backstories to another successful *Songwriters at the Crane House* matinee. A fundraiser for the Historical Society's programs at our in-house performance space and elsewhere, the event presented by **Brenda Wirth** and the nonprofit **Musicians on a Mission** organization represented a debut appearance for both Tea (impresario of the acclaimed *Spilling the Tea* series at **John's Cracker Barrel** in Shark River Hills) and Guadagno, the master entertainer whose special events include the annual *Bobfest* in Red Bank, as well as a tribute to Tom Waits at **Monmouth University** on September 24. Returning to our stage after a long hiatus from performing in public, Ms. Goldy had all in attendance emotionally invested to a major degree, as the trio of music makers ran a gamut from offbeat humor and pure joy, to personal loss, universal challenges, and the kind of perseverance that triumphs over tragedy. Watch for details on future Crane House events with the Songwriters of MOAM — and hold us to our pledge of providing more tissues next time out!



Say, has anybody seen McGee? Here in Summer 2022, the veteran house painting specialist **Kathy McGee** — whose association with the Stephen Crane House can be traced back to the turn of the millennium, and the tenure of former private owner **Frank D'Alessandro** — has been spotted all around the house at 508 Fourth Avenue, even up on the roof, as she helped lend a much-needed refresh to the north- and east-facing facades of the circa 1878 structure. It's the continuation of a (very much ongoing) program of restoration that began a quarter of a century ago, when **Tom and Regina Hayes** purchased the gutted and boarded-up derelict, with the aim of creating a museum and community center honoring the life and work of its namesake onetime resident, who began his celebrated writing career while living beneath that roof. Planned projects range from the acquisition and display of additional period-correct furnishings, to a major upgrade of the house's climate control systems — so feel free to contact the APHS if you've got items, hours, and ideas to contribute!

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

Something's always happening at our Crane House HQ!



Since establishing regular Open House tour hours at the Crane House nearly a decade ago, our doors have opened to visitors from across the continent and all over the world (including Europe, Australia, South America, India, Japan, the Pacific islands, and even right here in Asbury Park) — a diverse set of enthusiasts united by their ongoing interest in Stephen Crane, and often drawn from the fields of academia, journalism, documentary film, historical research, or simply a fan's passion for Crane's writing. That said, it's not every day that we welcome someone who can claim an actual bloodline connection to the Crane family — but on July 9, **Debbie McGee** and her husband **Tom** made the trip from their home in Folcroft, PA to explore the cottage once owned by Mary Helen Peck Crane, a distant ancestor who was quite the regional celebrity and dynamic personality in her own right. The Crane House remains open for drop-in tours year-round (Sundays from 12 to 2 pm, or by special appointment), with no reservation necessary, and no charge for admission (although contributions to our donation jar are never discouraged!).

Then on the morning of July 11, the Crane House played host to members of the Metedeconk chapter of **The Questers**, the international organization dedicated to “keeping history alive by supporting preservation, restoration and education.” This was the third such area chapter of the organization to make a special group visit to the former Arbutus Cottage, and the second such excursion since the Historical Society reinstated larger group tours in spring of this year. Board members **Susan Rosenberg** and **Tom Cheseck** showed the ladies around the various public spaces of the APHS headquarters, after which the guests assembled for a special screening of “*Sir, I Exist!*,” a new video on Stephen Crane's life and times produced by our friends at Asbury Park TV (and based on the in-person lectures once given by the house's previous owner **Frank D'Alessandro**, who appears onscreen in the 30-minute custom production). The program is available to screen for students, historical societies and other clubs or organizations with an interest in visiting Crane's home, and tours can once again be arranged by calling 732-361-0189.

Perfect Gift Ideas from page 1



Carousel House ornament

In the works as this newsletter goes to press...and scheduled to go on sale in September 2022... our all-new 2023 wall calendar **Soundings from Asbury Park** celebrates the amazing century-and-a-half soundtrack to our little but LOUD Music City by the Sea!

A fundraiser for the Historical Society's ongoing slate of restoration work and public programming, the full color/ limited

edition collectible assembles HUNDREDS of fun facts related to Asbury Park's main cash crop and principal export to the world beyond: MUSIC from all genres, all sides of the tracks, and EVERY era of American popular culture. It's a tune-fest timeline that runs from the Gilded Age of march bands and operettas and the milestone moments of jazz 'n blues, to the roots of rock, the Rites of Springsteen, the generations of talented townies AND touring acts who helped this 1.5 square mile municipality loom larger on the musical map than ANY other town of its modest size and monumental significance.

Written and designed by APHS trustee **Tom Cheseck** as a “sequel” to our successful and sold-out Sesquicentennial calendar of 2021, it's a “something for everyone” item that's sure to resonate with anyone for whom our city was the setting for a life-changing musical memory. Whether it's a birthday or memorial of a prominent person with a connection to the local music scene; a date commemorating a major concert event, festival, crucial recording or big broadcast...chances are excellent that you'll find it here. Even if you thought you knew AP's music history inside-out, it's almost certain that you'll learn something “new” and



fascinating in this keeper item that's worth keeping around, even after the year 2023 goes into the books!

Watch our official website, aphistoricalociety.org, plus social media and other local news sources, for updates on ordering the **Soundings from Asbury Park** 2023 calendar, which will be available via PayPal for \$19.99 each (plus shipping) — as well as information on participating retail outlets for this item, which together with our exclusive line of ornaments will make the 2022 holiday season a special one for those who love All Things Asbury Park!

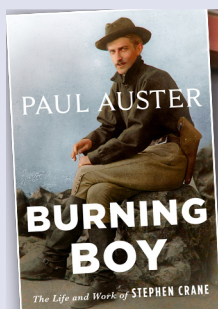
Public Programs from the Historical Society

SUMMER IN ASBURY PARK is a phenomenon that extends well into autumn; proving conclusively that it's okay to wear FUN after Labor Day, and taking in such annual attractions as the star-studded **Sea.Hear.Now Festival** (September 17-18), the town-wide **Asbury Park Porchfest** (September 10) — and, on the weekend of September 23-25, the return to Bradley Park of **ASBURYFEST!**

Historical Society trustee **Jennifer Rae Stine** and her team from the Greater Asbury Park Chamber of Commerce are lining up another extended weekend of live music, games, kid-friendly activities, food and beverage, a local vendor's alley, and informational displays from community organizations like our own APHS! Stop in at the park; say hello to our volunteers, check out our newest unique gift items, and find out how you can become a member of our crew (look for us as well during the annual **ARCHIVES AND HISTORY DAY** at **Brookdale Community College** in Lincroft on October 1st)!

Those first bracing breaths of fall weather also serve to herald a new season of public events at our Stephen Crane House...including the long-awaited return of **PUBLIC-WELCOME MONTHLY MEETINGS**, beginning with our September session on Thursday evening, Sept. 15. Come on out to the house at 7:30 pm; catch up on the latest activities of

the APHS and feel free to share your thoughts on our programs, as well as the current-events issues that affect our city's historic heritage and long-range public profile. We look forward to seeing you there, hearing your voice, and finding ways in which we can work together to fulfill our mission of education, preservation, and community outreach!



STAY TUNED as well for the announcements of special events at our in-house Lecture Room theatre, including programs themed for both Halloween and the year-end Holiday interlude...plus, of course, our annual observance of Stephen Crane's birthday in November! For 2022, we are pleased to welcome the acclaimed novelist and filmmaker **PAUL AUSTER** in a special November visit to Asbury Park (date and venue to be announced),

keyed to the paperback release of **Burning Boy**. The Brooklyn-based author's major biography and critical exploration of Crane's life and work has served to awaken a new level of contemporary interest in the storyteller, poet, and journalist who began his writing career here at the house once known as "Arbutus Cottage."

Keep it tuned to our official website and social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) for updates on these and other events of public interest...and we'll see *you* wherever the past truly meets the future!

Our Annual Member Meeting was "One for the Books"



The historic **Asbury Park Public Library** on First Avenue was the setting...and a gallery of locally based historians and memoirists served as guests of honor on the evening of April 21, during the Historical Society's (delayed and rescheduled) public-invited Member Meeting. Board trustees from the APHS and the member-owned **Asbury Book Co-Op** joined in welcoming new library director **Kathleen Melgar** to her post, and shared presentations on some of the many recently published volumes about the people, events, and social currents that have defined Asbury Park's history. These included *The Rope: A True Story of Murder* by Alex Tresniowski; *Gentrification Down the Shore* by Molly Vollman Makris and Mary Elizabeth Gatta; Steve Van Zandt's autobiography *Unrequited Infatuations*; Paul Auster's above-mentioned *Burning Boy*, and a newly updated edition of *Fourth of July Asbury Park*, the acclaimed study by **Daniel Wolff**, who was among the authors on hand to meet the reading public and sign copies of their works.

The evening also offered an opportunity for interested members to speak with the APHS board members and volunteer to join our committees, or assist with various activities throughout the year. APHS membership chair **Susan Skokos** invites you to contact her at skokose@aol.com...let us know the ways in which you'd be willing and able to help, as we move forward together along our city's ever-fascinating timeline!

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Join up or renew your membership today!

Contact **SUSAN SKOKOS**, membership chair, at skokose@aol.com

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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