

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**JOIN UP OR  
RENEW YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP!**

See Page 4 for Details!

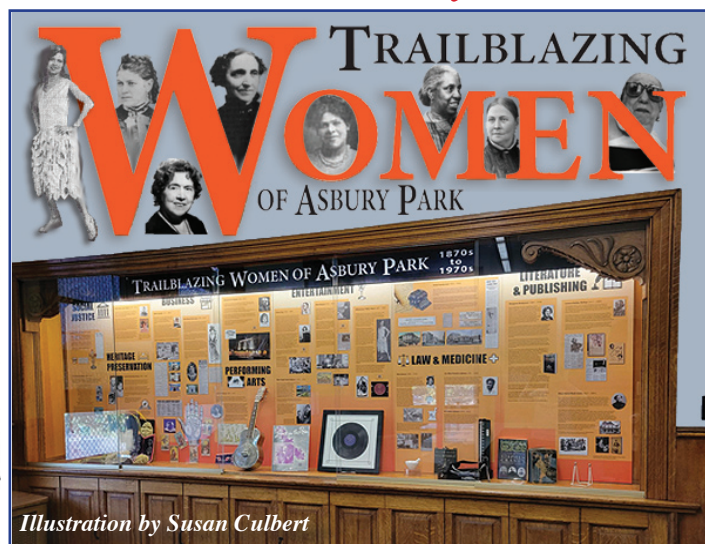
*Where the Past  
Meets the Future*

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## Blazing trails; lighting the path between yesterday and today!

*Join us for our annual Membership Meeting  
...and meet some extraordinary women!*



*Illustration by Susan Culbert*

They were the figures who helped write major chapters in the city's history — the artists and activists, the authors and attorneys, the educators and entertainers, the mediums and the medics, the saloonkeepers and the social justice warriors who brought a diverse but divided Gilded Age resort to the threshold of its 21st century rebirth. Together, they were the *Trailblazing Women of Asbury Park* — and when the Asbury Park Historical Society holds its annual Membership Meeting on the evening of Thursday, January 19, 2023, the spotlight will shine on these legendary local ladies who played a significant role in shaping the first hundred years (1871-1970) of our collective story.

Hosted inside the Public Library at 500 First Avenue, the public-invited 7 p.m. event will be keyed to the Asbury Park Museum's ongoing "pop-up" exhibit of the same name, currently on display (from now through the end of Women's History Month in March 2023) in the Bradley Room of the historic library building. Underwritten by **Ethan Grossman** (and dedicated to his wife **Diane Ambler**, an accomplished career attorney and women's rights advocate who graduated Asbury Park High School in 1967), the project was curated by former Monmouth Museum exec director **Avis Anderson** and designed by **Stan Cain**, with contributions by **Kay Harris** and her team of board members and advisors from the realms of academia, business, journalism, and public service.

Scheduled to include a slideshow presentation on many of the exhibit's honorees and themes, the meeting will also feature complimentary refreshments, a table with membership information and history-related items for sale, as well as a welcome message/ dialogue with our members old and new. The latter is now more than ever an important means of communication between the Society and the public, as the people of Asbury Park navigate another in a series of transitional periods along the city's "roller-coaster" timeline. With such hot-button issues as the fate of the century-old Church of the Holy Spirit continuing to stir debate and inspire grass-roots activism, generations of Asbury Parkers have looked to us for perspective and a public voice — and the APHS has stepped up to the plate, in support of a bold new initiative.

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*Order your APHS  
2023 calendar today!*



Still on sale while supplies last — and available for a limited time at discounted online pricing — our 2023 wall calendar *Soundings from Asbury Park* keynotes the 50th anniversary year of The Boss's nationwide debut, with a fun fact-packed celebration of our little but LOUD Music City by the Sea!

Illustrated with dozens of vivid pictures, this limited edition collectible is loaded with HUNDREDS of historic highlights 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 tuneful 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, and the generations of talented townies AND touring acts who helped put our town on the map.

There's something for everyone in the pages of this exclusive gift item...and right now, you can order the *Soundings from Asbury Park* 2023 calendar at our official website, [aphistoricalicalsociety.org](http://aphistoricalicalsociety.org), for just \$16.99 each plus \$5.00 shipping! It's a "keeper" that will help the music lover in your life ring in the new year in classic Asbury Park style!



Visit us online at [aphistoricalsociety.org](http://aphistoricalsociety.org)

## History in the making, from our house to yours...



On a chill and blustery November 20, the doors of the Stephen Crane House opened (and kept blowing open, repeatedly) for a very special guest, when the celebrated novelist, essayist and screenwriter **Paul Auster** graced us with a visit in celebration of young Master Crane's birth month, and the paperback edition release of *Burning Boy*, his epic biographical study of Crane's intense life and turbulent times.

The NYT best-selling author (of *The New York Trilogy*, *The Book of Illusions*, *The Music of Chance* and many other works) read selections from his brilliant appreciation of the 19th century storyteller, poet and journalist who began his professional writing career while a resident of the Asbury Park house once known as Arbutus Cottage...a trailblazer who he's described as "a writer for all time." Joined for an illuminating discussion by **Professor Stanley Blair** of Monmouth University and **Michael Newton** of our event presenting partner the **Asbury Book Co-Op**, Auster fielded questions from an engaged full-capacity audience (including Village Voice cartoonist **Mark Alan Stamaty**), and signed copies of *Burning Boy*, in

an afternoon event from which a portion of proceeds was dedicated at the author's request to the nonprofit **Society to Protect Journalists**.

Our gratitude goes out to Auster and his wife, novelist **Siri Hustvedt**, for giving so generously of their time and resources. Special appreciation to **Liza Minno**, general manager of the member owned and operated Book Co-Op, to **Catryn Silbersack** of Henry Holt and Company for helping make this event come together and commence so smoothly, to **Ben Baker** for creating a video record of the program, and to all of the attendees whose shared passion for Stephen Crane's story/ stories stands as testament to Auster's mission of "getting people to READ him again."

The event represented The Stephen Crane House at its best...as a true literary landmark that attracts Crane aficionados from literally all around the world; a living/ breathing place where friends gather to hear history come vividly ALIVE; a house of ideas and learning; a community resource that partners with, promotes and supports positive endeavors within the local neighborhood and the big world beyond.



On October 26, the Crane House hosted its first Halloween program since the onset of the pandemic era's real-life horrors, as filmmaker **Craig Singer** and Showroom Cinema manager **Jeff Lundenberger** joined us for a screening of Singer's locally lensed "timeloop of terror" feature *6:45*. An audience of old and new faces took in the 2021 film at our in-house theatre, where several scenes for *6:45* were shot in January 2020 (and subsequently slashed to the cutting room floor). The macabre matinee was a dedicated fundraiser for the **Asbury Park Arts Council** and its hyperlocally independent **APin3 Film Challenge** project; a thank-you and show of support for the organization's including the Historical Society/ Stephen Crane House as a crucial cultural resource in their ambitious Arts and Cultural Master Plan for the city.

For the week marking the 151st anniversary of Stephen Crane's birth, the actors of **The Arbutus Theater of the Air** delivered an encore presentation of *The Reluctant Voyagers*, our exclusive "radio play" adaptation of the author's most comical short story. The 3 pm program on Sunday, November 6 also featured a screening of *Sir, I Exist!*, a 30-minute video on Crane's life and career (produced in association with **Asbury Park TV**), based on the live lectures presented to school groups and organizations by former Crane House owner **Frank D'Alessandro**.

For our monthly meeting on October 20, the APHS welcomed members of the Society and the general public back to our third-Thursday sessions — among them neighborhood homeowner and historic research specialist **Roger Champagne**, who detailed a new project (co-chaired with **Susan Rosenberg**) in which owners of homes dating back 100 years or more are invited to learn how to use public records, online newspaper archives, and other easily accessed resources to create a "biography" of their home, and help compile a registry of noteworthy local houses. Contact Roger through the Historic Society — and be our guest when public meetings return to the Crane House in February 2023!



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

## ...and to the 'Greater Asbury Circuit' beyond!



On September 8, 2022 — little more than two weeks after the area in front of **Convention Hall** served as the setting for the successful 17th annual edition of our **Art on the Boardwalk** event — a more intimate and somber happening took place outside the **Paramount Theatre**. Our organization's treasurer **Andy Skokos** joined former APHS president **Don Stine** for the yearly displaying of a memorial wreath dedicated to those who lost their lives in the **SS Morro Castle** tragedy, which occurred just off the beach at Asbury Park. The monument that was funded and installed by the Historical Society remains on view year-round — and the year 2024 will mark the 90th anniversary of the maritime disaster that continues to inspire public debate and interest to this day.



On the weekend of September 23-25, the second annual **AsburyFest** event at **Bradley Park** proved to be a great opportunity for the Historical Society to connect and re-connect with friends old and new, as the APHS and the **Asbury Park Museum** had a successful session of sales and sign-ups during the three-day festival of food, music, and local merchants. Then on October 1st, the "sister" organizations took it inside the Collins Arena at **Brookdale Community College** for **Monmouth County Archives & History Day**, where our Secretary (and retired BCC librarian) **Susan Rosenberg** joined Museum trustee **Pamela Horner** for the 27th annual "meet and greet" with representatives from our area's numerous historical organizations.

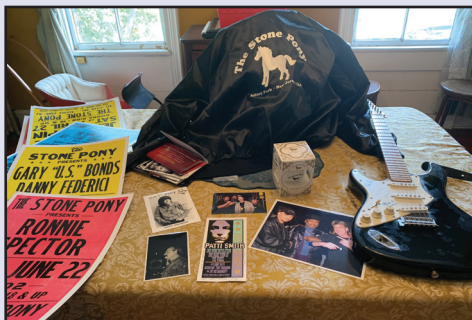


On Sunday, December 4, the Historical Societies of Asbury Park and Ocean Grove teamed up once more to deliver a busload of holiday spirit. A sold-out **NYC Tour** excursion group joined APHS trustee **Teddy Chomko** (also coordinator of our **Art on the Boardwalk** show) and friends for a stop-and-shop at the **Bryant Park Holiday Bazaar** vendor market, and — for the first time in the long history of our popular holiday-season fundraiser — a visit to **Radio City Music Hall**, where attendees enjoyed a 5:00 pm performance of the **2022 Christmas Spectacular**, starring the world-famous Radio City Rockettes! Of course, no "Holiday Lights" day trip would be complete without an after-dark viewing of the famous Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree!

## Thanks for the memories...and the family treasures!



(LEFT) They were the oldest continuously operating business in Asbury Park when they closed their doors in October 2022 — and when the last remaining staff of the **William R. Hogg Co.** took inventory of their 100-plus year old building at Fourth Avenue and Memorial Drive, they discovered a trove of blueprints from a century's worth of jobs that the plumbing and HVAC contractor undertook around the city — projects that ranged from iconic waterfront landmarks (the Casino and Power Plant, Howard Johnson's) and schools (Bangs Ave. Elementary, the High School stadium), to long-gone businesses (Steinbach's, Stein Cadillac, Fischer Baking Co.) and future boutique lodgings (the Salvation Army rest home/ Asbury Hotel). Our thanks to **Rand Danielson** for thinking of the Historical Society with this unique and generous donation — and to the Hogg team for their generations of contributions to city life!



(CENTER) A vintage **Stone Pony** staff jacket...never-before-seen photos featuring Rock & Roll Hall of Famers like Robbie Krieger of The Doors ...posters, flyers, and other memorabilia bearing the signatures of Gary U.S. Bonds, Patti Smith, and many others...even a guitar autographed by Peter Tork of The Monkees! All included in a cache of memorabilia related to Asbury Park's world-famous music venue, donated by **Ginnie Taylor** on behalf of her late father, circa 2000 Pony employee "**Gee Man**" **Cacio**.



(RIGHT) An antique ice water decanter — ornately decorated with icicles and polar bears, and gifted to Asbury Park founder **James A. Bradley** — was among the items purchased in the estate sale of **Dr. William Liebesman** of Deal, by our president Kay Harris. The inscription on the one-of-a-kind artifact reads, "Presented to Jas. A. Bradley by his Asbury Park Friends July 4, 1878, As a token of esteem and appreciation of his Enterprise and Liberality."

*From postcards to pianos and all kinds of items in between, the APHS has been pleased to offer a caring "forever home" to Asbury Park-related memorabilia donated by families, businesses, and organizations, with an eye toward their enjoyment by future generations of Asbury aficionados!*



# Public Programs from the Historical Society



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11:** "Decrease the surplus population!" snarled a certain notorious miser of literary renown...and when the Crane House presents our holiday-themed entertainment for 2022, we'll be taking old Scrooge's word at face value. Produced and presented by the **Traveling Literary Theatre** troupe, *A Christmas Carol* finds a trio of professional actors performing all of the roles in the classic Dickens tale, in a 3 pm program for which a suggested donation of cash (\$10) and/or a new unwrapped toy will benefit the all-new **Kiwanis Club of Asbury Park** and its revived town-wide Toy Drive.



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8:** For decades, singer-songwriter **James Dalton** worked the prominent clubs, portable stages and private porches of the Jersey Shore scene, amassing enough stories to compose an autobiographical words-and-music presentation entitled *Asbury Park and Me*. At 3 pm on the first full weekend of the new year, the Crane House will be the scene for the actual US premiere of a work that debuted at the 2022 UK Fringe Festival. It's an early entry tie-in to the annual **Light of Day Winterfest** slate of shows in and around AP, with tickets (details TBA) benefitting the LOD Foundation's ongoing effort to promote awareness of and research in Parkinson's and other neuromuscular diseases.



**SUNDAY, MARCH 12:** She was an early winner of what became the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry; a popular novelist of her day, a friend to an amazing cast of characters...and a native of Asbury Park who employed versions of her local stomping grounds as settings for her fiction. **Margaret Widdemer** will be remembered anew in a Women's History Month program hosted by Monmouth University's **Prof. Stanley Blair**, who will deliver a presentation on the author's deep local connections in a 3 pm program. It's followed by a screening of *The Dream Lady*, a woman-directed silent feature film based on Widdemer's 1915 novel *Why Not?*



## *Annual Membership Meeting* from page 1

Presently in the preliminary discussion stages is a project that seeks to establish the city's first official **Historic Preservation Commission**; an entity that would advise and work with city/county/state government on matters pertaining to the proposed (re)development, renovation, and repurposing of structures on or adjacent to properties designated as Historic. Stay tuned for updates from the Historical Society, several board members of which are involved in this effort.

Speaking once again of extraordinary women, congratulations are in order for a pair of Historical Society veterans whose endeavors related to the city's recent Sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) observance have received well-deserved recognition. On October 1, Monmouth County Clerk **Christine Hanlon** bestowed our multi-tasking president **Kay Harris** (left) with the **M. Claire French Award for Leadership in Historic Preservation**, citing her "contributions to the awareness, understanding or preservation of Monmouth County's rich history." Also in October, APHS member **Celia Morrisette** (right) was honored with her committee colleagues in a proclamation from the city council for her work on a slate of *150 Years* projects, including the December 2021 dedication of an Asbury Park Time Capsule on the grounds of the Crane House.



## The Asbury Park Historical Society

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

Contact **SUSAN SKOKOS**, membership chair, at [skokose@aol.com](mailto:skokose@aol.com)

Donations accepted via PayPal at [aphistoricalociety.org](http://aphistoricalociety.org)

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

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

**Asbury Park Historical Society, 508 Fourth Ave., Asbury Park, NJ 07712**

