



# The Laurel Light

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The Laurel Light  
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The Laurel Historical Society, Inc.  
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## News and History from the Laurel Historical Society

*The mission of the Laurel Historical Society, Incorporated is to encourage the understanding and preservation of the history and cultural heritage of Laurel.*

### **A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD**

The Laurel Historical Society had elections to the Board in June and added two new members, Paula Schuman and Tom Dernoga. Jeff Edwards and Larry Eldridge retired and we thank them for their service. The Officers and all other members of the Board will continue to serve, and I thank each for his or her hard work.

Here is an introduction to Paula and Tom and as always, ladies first:

#### **Paula Schuman**

Paula is a Founding Partner and Vice President of Quatrefoil Associates of Laurel (C Street) that develops, fabricates, and installs custom museum exhibitions throughout the country. Initially Paula used her welding and woodworking skills in developing quality fabrications and applying best practices in conservation. Her role has evolved into corporate management and finance. Her company has worked with such institutions as the PNC Legacy Project (the same PNC who bought Citizens National Bank), the National Museum of the American Indian, the National Postal Museum, the Brooklyn Children's Museum, and The Walters Art Museum to

name a few. They have also provided the Society with advice on our museum's exhibit space, including recommendations for our newly upgraded lighting.

#### **Tom Dernoga**

Tom is a lawyer and maintains a general law practice emphasizing; land use, environmental, administrative, labor, and tax matters. He earned his Master of Laws in Taxation. He served on the Prince George's County Council, representing District One from 2002 to 2010. He has been active in civic affairs for many years and is a long time supporter of LHS. He is a resident of West Laurel where he served two terms as president of the homeowner's association. Tom and his wife, Lenora, have two children.

James B. McCeney  
Chairman of the Board

#### **BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

LHS Board meetings are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each January, April, July, and October. The next meeting is Oct 27, 2011. Members are most welcome to attend Board meetings. They are held in the Pool Meeting Room at 7:30 PM.

**A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

One event that I often overlook is the bi-annual Holiday House Tour. Because the tour is planned almost entirely without my input, I often times find myself having to ask for the latest news. Recently, I was able to speak with the House Tour Committee Chairman, Bobbi McCeney about planning this year's tour. She had some very exciting news to share and the committee is putting together a particularly interesting tour of Laurel's homes. For those of you who have never attended, the participants tour private homes and businesses within greater Laurel, with interesting remodels, engaging histories, fantastic holiday decorations and more. Property owners open up their homes and businesses to the committee which then decides whether or not the property is appropriate for that year. (For those of you wondering, the answer is yes, they are still accepting houses for this year's tour!).

In addition to being a pleasant afternoon, the house tour is also a great money maker for the LHS. (Because sometimes, you actually have to worry about how we're going to continue to offer interesting programming and new exhibits.) The members of the committee do a great job of working with a tiny budget while maximizing the profit for the Society. In 2009, advertising space was sold in the brochure for the first time. We were able to increase the profit margin by selling over 40 ads. Each ad costs local businesses a mere \$20--a very reasonable price! With between 150 and 200 people attending the house tour each year, these \$20 ads go quite a long way. So in the end, our tour not only makes money for the LHS, but it also

supports local businesses--which we always try to do as an organization. The Holiday House Tour, much like the Annual Gala, is one of those events that just happen somewhat magically with little to no input from me. It is very exciting to see an all-volunteer committee put together a program that is not only interesting to the community, but also fulfills our goals in a number of different ways. The Holiday House Tour is a lovely afternoon in Laurel, visiting some of the homes you always wanted to see. Many participants learn more about the history of Laurel and meet friends both old and new along the way. So thank you to everyone who volunteers and I hope to see you all touring on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 – 6:00 PM.

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

p.s. Do you ever wonder how people hear about us? We've learned that there are lots of ways people hear about the Laurel Historical Society, but our publication with the furthest reach is our rack card. A simple card, much like the kind you find at rest stops, visitor centers, and other museums, is what we use most often as an introduction to the Society. We give them out to school groups, at festivals, and exchange them with other museums to distribute to their visitors. Well, we've finally run out of our last printing and we're in the market to purchase more. If you believe in what we do and want to help us get the word out why not sponsor the rack card? If you're interested, sponsorships are available! Contact us for more information!

## **The Laurel Museum Celebrates 15 Years: A Look Back at 31 years of Dedicated People**



Betty Compton lights the first of 15 candles!

As I scanned the faces on the lawn of the Laurel Museum on May 15, 2011 on its 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday, they brought back memories of the 31 year history of the Laurel Historical Society and the Laurel Museum. In 1974, Mayor Leo Wilson appointed the first Bicentennial Commission in the state. I was pleased to serve as the Chairman of Programs under the Chairmanship of Doris Bowie. As an outgrowth of the celebration, the Laurel Horizon Society was born in 1975, later to become the Laurel Historical Society. It was so gratifying to see Jean Wilson who has been a working member since then in the museum and as a Director on the Board. Her daughter Margaret, is helping with children's events and son-in-law Steve Hubbard, is a valuable member of the Board. It is good to see generations of families involved in our common goal.

One of the LHS goals was to start a museum. When I saw Harry Rosenbluh, I was reminded of his idea of a HELM account: Help Establish Laurel Museum. Harry was a dedicated member for years

updating the Laurel Centennial History of 1970 in 1990, and adding its index in 1994. He also did research and published a periodic newsletter, as well as volunteering as a docent.

I recognized another Museum founder, Joe Robison, who was Mayor when Jane Cole and I asked him for space in City Hall to meet and place exhibits. His reply to that request was to pass a resolution dedicating the Main Street Old Factory Building (as the 1840 mill worker's house was called), as a museum. Using City and State funding, construction began and the Laurel Museum opened in May 1996. Joe remains an active Board member and has contributed a great deal to the Walking Tour Map of Laurel. His wife Joan, along with the Robison family, has been a faithful volunteer through the years.

Then I saw Marlene and Jim Frazier. Marlene was there with Jane Cole and me when we met with the City staff and contractors during the years of repairs and improvements to the museum. Marlene has held many offices in the Society including President and Recording Secretary. Her efficient record keeping, collection management and house tour planning have been invaluable. Jim keeps the computers working and uses his skills with electronic equipment. His contributions are essential and so willingly given.

It was good to see Edna Casula, long time member and wife of Frank, who was Mayor when the museum opened. Frank served as a Board member and was always eager to help us. Also, Mike Walls who gave us our early legal advice and has always been interested in our work. Mary Lehman was President when the video "Historic Crossroads, Laurel Maryland" premiered. The Society won an American Museum Association National Silver Award for the

video. It was presented to me in Seattle at the national meeting and the video was shown at the conference to the 3,500 attendees. The marble award remains on the mantel in the museum.

I saw our smiling, hard working Melanie Dzwonchyk taking notes. Her coverage of museum and Society events through the years has been a wonderful asset. She worked in the early years of the museum and served as President. When she and Karen Lubieniecki co-chaired one of our house tours, a prize was awarded to the first person who could spell both of their names correctly!

Today, as in days past, Karen Lubieniecki was keeping things moving. She has a track record of enthusiastic support and of actually getting in the trenches to accomplish any task. She served as President when the museum opened and has held the position twice, as well as other offices. She and her husband Ken Skrivseth have contributed to exhibits and to our knowledge of Laurel's past through their research.

Margie McCeney was representing her family as well as herself today. Her parents, Jim and Bobbi, were unable to be with us. Jim has served as our Chairman of the Board and Treasurer and has contributed a multitude of ideas and countless hours to the Society. His wife, Bobbi, a Master Gardener, has been a consultant for the museum grounds and has helped at numerous other events. Margie assumes the responsibility for her parents when needed and in her own right has been the back up in the museum, helping in numerous ways to establish order and send correspondence. She works tirelessly on the annual gala.

Frieda Weise was busy in the shop but we saw her as we left. Her efforts and

knowledge in various aspects of the museum and shop activities have been and continue to be valuable. Chris Erdle, our cheerful heating and air conditioning consultant, was there and eager to assist. He and Frieda both serve on the Board. It was pleasant to see Charles Hessler again. His passion for detailed computer based collection recording has been a monumental and enduring asset. It requires many hours of careful work and we cherish him. Shari Pollard reminded me of her Volunteer Coordinator days of intense and demanding duties so pleasantly executed. She has served as President and is still active as a docent. It was a treat to see Tom Dernoga and his wife Lenora present. He has been an enthusiastic supporter and his interest in Laurel's history has been essential in the progress of the museum. He is also a new Director on the Board.

Lindsey Baker, our Executive Director, was available as always to answer our questions. She is an actual professional Museum Studies graduate and is a tribute to her profession as she goes about her busy daily activities so pleasantly and efficiently. All who work with her admire her. She has opened up the museum to more community programs and enlivened and grown its status in the Laurel community. We are happy to call her our own. Our current President, Jhanna Levin, conducted today's birthday cake and candle lighting with care. She called upon junior members to light the last candle to symbolize the future.

We were pleased that so many of the past and current members of the City Council attended including Mayor Moe who serves as a member of the Board. I can't help mentioning a special City Council member in the crowd, Gayle Snyder, whom we love as a long time friend. She and husband Fred are moving to Delaware and we wish them many happy years there.

There were faces I saw who were not there today but will live on in my memory. I recall especially my dear friend and Co-Founder Jane Cole who spent many hours preparing excellent exhibits and in the Armory cataloging the collection in preparation to move to the museum. John Brennan, whose collection of photographs and writings formed the nucleus for the museum research library. His Sadler brass plates of early photographs are the foundation for the visual history of Laurel. His collection of plates, now in the care of Jim McCeney, has been donated to the museum. It was fortunate that John was present when the library was named for him at the grand opening in 1996.

I am sorry if I missed any others for all who were present today support our efforts. Early volunteers including; Penny Phelps, Clare Bergeron, Cheryl and Mike Dyer, and Kathleen and Don Dalphonse come to mind. Also, Louise Eldridge, Inga Gill, Bea Newkirk, Irene Ohlmacher, Don Henyon, Sidney Moore, Joan Fitzgerald, Cynthia Wood, Ivory Doles, Frances Brooks and Shirli King have all dedicated their time. Gertrude Poe's Leader articles of her hometown Laurel history are an integral part of the library. The Centennial Publication of the History of Laurel, which she wrote in 1970, is still referenced today. I would also like to recognize my neighbors, Dr. Mack and Loretta Statham. Mack played the pump organ when we opened the museum and Loretta was the first Volunteer Coordinator. Other neighbors including Carole Montesi, Jim Gordon and Phyllis Mills have spent many hours working in the museum. We are indebted to the many donors who through the years have financially supported the society and made valuable gifts of artifacts, letters or photographs to the museum.

Some previous Board members including; Earl Snyder, Andrew Ellis, Barbara Feagin, Jeff Edwards, Larry Eldridge and of course current Board members not previously mentioned including; Kevin McNulty, Regina Mima, Scott Lilienthal, Lisa Losito, Jeanie Anastasi, and Paula Schuman all hold the future in their hands. They face the challenge of continued growth and development and we see them successfully advancing those goals! The years spent developing the Laurel Historical Society and the museum are among my happiest. The fact that my beloved husband was interested in my home town too made it doubly important to me, and his help and involvement made it all possible. The faces I saw today, and the numerous others in my mind, reinforce my conviction that it takes the dedication of many inspired workers to accomplish a goal. The Laurel Museum houses the history of our community and the ideals of the people who came before us to build a home for themselves and a town for the future.

Elizabeth Lee Miles Compton – Betty  
May 20, 2011



Junior Docents Kelly Crawford and Madeline Lilienthal light the last candle to represent the future.

## **Children's Corner**

Many fun and interesting Children's programs are held on the grounds of the Laurel Museum. Our next event will be held on Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:30 -3:30 PM. Bring the kids or grandkids and enjoy this low cost community activity together.

## **Laurel Historical Society Book Club**

The LHS Book Club meets monthly to explore history and culture related topics one book at a time. We meet the third Wednesday of every Month at 7 PM at a local restaurant. Join us!

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

**“AND THEY’RE OFF! 100 YEARS OF LAUREL PARK“ CONTINUES UNTIL DECEMBER!**



Famous horses like Kelso and Secretariat, movie stars, exciting races, jockeys, and life in the backstretch is part of the Laurel Museum's 2011 exhibit **“And They're off! 100 Years at Laurel Park.”** The centennial exhibit explores the history and racing highlights at Laurel Park, and the track's impact on the Laurel community.

If you haven't had a chance to see the exhibit, or if you need a second look, come visit the Museum on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 AM – 2 PM or Sundays from 1 – 4 PM.

## **Museum Shop News**

Beat the heat! The Museum Shop is available on line 24/7! Stay tuned for new shop products and of course the coveted 2011 Christmas ornament. Come in and see us or shop anytime at [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop).

## **LHS Genealogy Group**

The Laurel Historical Society Genealogy Group assists LHS members in conducting Genealogy research. Whether you are just thinking about beginning your journey into genealogy or you are an experienced genealogist, please join us and learn how we can help each other. For more information, contact Mike Boivin at [mikeB98159@aol.com](mailto:mikeB98159@aol.com).

## **MEMBER NEWS**

Please welcome our newest members:

Barbara Ann Bradbury  
LeEllen Brown  
Martin J. Dambrauska  
Andrew Flott  
Michael and Jeanne Francisco  
James C. Rosapepe  
Nancy M. Stevens  
Betsy Welsh  
Geraldine Witt

We are happy to have you!

## **Welcome New Volunteers!**

No one this time...how about you?

## **A Call to Volunteerism: Is it for you?**

Submitted by Monica Sturdivant

Some people strongly believe in the theory that "good things come in threes." The other day, as I was working on the museum's volunteer schedule, I had a thought. What if I could apply this theory as an attempt to spread the word about the museum and possibly encourage more

new people to volunteer? Throughout the month, I can challenge myself to tell three new people three different things about the Laurel Museum. I have decided that my three things will be the following:

The Laurel Museum has a convenient and beautiful location! I'll mention that the museum is on Main Street, on the same side of the street as "the pool." I'll encourage them to walk around the outside of the building. I have to admit that one of the things that sold me on wanting to work here was the beautiful view. Although the history of the museum building is very interesting, the landscape is just as appealing.

The Laurel Museum is a great place to learn about Laurel's history! The museum is chock-full of things about Laurel. Sure, we have plenty of things that one would expect to see in an urban history museum, but we also have more than a few unexpected items. I plan to encourage them to visit our research library and ask to look through our scrapbooks, photos and vertical files. From time to time, I still enjoy looking at these things because somehow, I always manage to discover something new!

The Laurel Museum is a great place to volunteer! I'll talk about how many of our volunteers have been with us for years and they enjoy helping others in the community learn about Laurel's history. I will encourage them to come for a visit and ask the volunteers what they like most about what they do at the museum. I'll share a story with them about when I made my first call to the museum to ask about the position that I now hold. At that time, I had been a stay-at-home mom for about three years and before that, I had worked at universities for over ten years. My dream was to work in a museum; doing so would be a total career change for me. My call to the Laurel

Museum that day was my first call to a museum about a job posting. What I will never forget is the volunteer who answered the phone. She was courteous and helpful, as expected. However, when she told me how much she enjoyed volunteering, I decided at that moment that if I did not get the opportunity to work there, I would definitely try to volunteer.

After coming up with my three things, I had another thought. What if the Laurel Museum's volunteers and all of the Laurel Historical Society members challenged themselves to do the same? They could come up with their own three things when telling three people about their own experience at the museum. I predict that three things will happen. Many volunteers and members will get to share their favorite "Laurel Museum" stories. More people will want to visit the Laurel Museum. And new people will want to become a part of sharing Laurel's history, whether they choose to be come volunteers, or members or both.

### **Volunteer Needs**

The Laurel Museum desperately needs volunteers for Sundays, 1 PM - 4 PM to docent or work in the shop.

The Communications Committee needs a volunteer to help us get the word out about our programs. This volunteer will be putting information into different websites with calendar programs. This is an easy job for someone looking to work from home!

The Exhibits Committee needs a volunteer to help us on a very interesting special project. We need help transcribing the Laurel Mill ledger. This is an exciting at-home job for anyone looking to learn more about Laurel and help us interpret its history!

If you are interested in becoming a

volunteer in these or any other capacity please contact Monica Sturdivant at 301-725-7975 or assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org. Thank you!

### **Volunteer Luncheons**

Please consider joining other volunteers for our monthly luncheons at local restaurants. Dates and times are emailed to volunteers. Bon appétit!

### **A Farewell to Treasured Docent Ivory Doles**

Submitted by Shari Pollard



We were sad to learn of the death of Ivory Doles, a long term faithful volunteer at the Laurel Museum, on July 18, 2011. Ivory was born in the District of Columbia in 1937, received a Master's degree in Math and Computer Science from Howard University, and had a long career as an analyst. Following her retirement from the United States Postal Service, Ivory began volunteering at the Laurel Museum in 2002. She worked a four hour shift twice a week and came in other days to do research and special projects which included a joint exhibit

with Montpelier Mansion. She was Volunteer of the Year in 2003.

Ivory had a passion for learning, researching, and giving tours. She also volunteered at the Smithsonian and Library of Congress. Following her move to Baltimore, she had to reduce her hours at the Museum to one day a week plus special projects and served on the Exhibit Committee until her recent illness in January. She will be missed by her many friends at the Museum and for her dedicated service.

### **MY MEMORIES OF LAUREL**

Submitted by Joe Robison

When I was a young boy, we had softball teams playing under the lights at McCullough Field. It was quite something to see the bleachers filled and all the spectators cheering. Teams were named after the businesses that sponsored them--White's Cab, Laurel Sport's Center, Boulevard Motors, Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, The Expendables, etc. I played for the Expendables. Its hay-day was from 1946 to 1952. This was fast-pitch softball and that's what killed the league. Pitchers from out-of-town were being brought in. They were really good. They had to bring their own catchers. I remember Chuck Beall was the umpire and he knew me. When I would complain if he called me out on strikes, he would say "Boy You're Out" and that was it. George Sullivan was the man in charge and he called the games over the loud speaker. You could hear the games all over Laurel. The lights came from old Griffith Stadium. Mr. Duffield put them up. In 1949, I was called the youngest player of the year. People like Russell Beall, Warren Hulbert Litchfield, Mr. Bowie, Kenny Kidwell, Mervin Benton, Otto Kaiser, Dick Grace, Mr. White, and I played. We really enjoyed it and hated see it go.

YOU grew up in Laurel or have lived here a very long time and you remember lots of stories!! Please email them to the Laurel Light Editor, Jeanie Anastasi, at jmanastasi@verizon.net. Thank you.

## HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

2011



This December we will have our Holiday House Tour and we are looking for committee members and properties to feature! Planning is underway so don't delay! Please email committee chairperson Bobbi McCeney at [heyma@verizon.net](mailto:heyma@verizon.net) if you are interested in serving on the committee or would be willing to have your home or business featured on the tour. It's a great incentive to get those little "to do" items completed and a fun way to share your property with the community!



Have you ever wondered how your contributions to the Laurel Historical Society are used? You can now choose how you would like your support utilized. We are offering sponsorships of line items in our budget. Levels range in price from \$250 to \$1,000 and sponsorships are available for exhibits, landscaping, postage, supplies, software and more. Please contact us at (301)725-7975 or [info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org) for more information.

We would love to have your story ideas particularly for the *Did You Know*, *My Memories of Laurel* and *If These Walls Could Talk* sections of the newsletter! Please email The Laurel Light editor, Jeanie Anastasi [jmanastasi@verizon.net](mailto:jmanastasi@verizon.net) with your comments, suggestions or story ideas.

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS!**



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# Laurel Historical Society Calendar

## SEP 2011 – DEC 2011

For more information, visit: <http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/pages/calendar.html>

August 13, 6:00 PM

*A Night Behind the Scenes,*  
Laurel Museum and Kroop's

October 23, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

*Kids Day at the Laurel Museum.*

December 2-4, Various Times

*Holiday Open House*  
Laurel Museum

Sep 8, 6:00 PM

*Singing Laurel History.* Laurel  
Museum.

Nov 6, 1:30-3:30 PM

*Fourth Annual Taste of Laurel.*  
Sponsored by Main Street  
Pharmacy. Laurel Museum and  
Laurel Pool Room.

December 10, 2:00 – 6:00 PM

*Bi-Annual Holiday House Tour*  
Start at Laurel Museum to pick  
up brochure for sites.

September 17, 1:00 PM

*Member's Only Trip to the*  
*Trolley Museum.* Meet at Laurel  
Museum.