



# 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**

As the Laurel Historical Society grows, we need to work to support our small staff and ever expanding programs. The best way to support a growing, healthy organization is through an endowment. Although we can currently claim a small endowment, it is not yet large enough to meaningfully support our annual budget.

To support the continued healthy growth of our organization, we are starting a Planned Giving program. We are hoping to plant a seed that will benefit us down the road. It is likely that others have approached many of you for similar programs, and you may have some knowledge of them. Planned Giving programs come in many shapes and sizes, both simple and complex.

We want to keep it simple. By simply including us in your Will or your Revocable "Living" Trust, you can easily ensure that your wishes to support the LHS are fulfilled. As an organization, we would be most grateful if you consider including LHS in your legacy – either a specific amount or some alternative manner.

If you would like additional information or help on what to do, we can help. Call

or email me (301 776-7036, [j.mcceney@verizon.net](mailto:j.mcceney@verizon.net)), Kevin McNulty (301 953-7272 ext 105, [KMcNulty@resourceenterprises.com](mailto:KMcNulty@resourceenterprises.com)), or Lindsey Baker (301 725-7975, [Director@LaurelHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:Director@LaurelHistoricalSociety.org)).

James B. McCeney, Chairman of the Board

P.S. A big welcome to our new Corresponding Secretary and Director Regina Mima!

### **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 28, 2010. 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**

This past May and June I spent some time in sunny California. I wasn't soaking up the rays on company time, but instead attending the American Association of Museums Annual Conference. This annual conference usually draws 6,000-8,000 attendees from around the world. This year was no different: all 50 states, 55 countries, and over 200 sessions

rounded out one of the largest museum conferences in the world.

I presented a session with two other museum professionals on strategic planning for small museums. Our session was one of the 10 sessions chosen to present again in an online format for virtual attendees from around the world. It was a pleasure and an honor to be able to use all that I had learned thus far working with the wonderful volunteers and members at the LHS, and share that knowledge with the museum world. As usual, I returned to the LHS refreshed, re-energized, and ready to go. Twenty pages of notes later, I'd like to share some of the most important lessons I learned at AAM.

- 1) As we've learned time and again, museums are only relevant when they are serving the community they live in. Many speakers discussed the need to utilize the museum to address current issues. The museum is a trusted institution and can be used to tackle the hard stuff.
- 2) My challenge to the LHS is to continue to move forward with the idea that we can tackle the hard issues and do so with confidence. In our current exhibit, we discuss how we define community in a number of different ways, but at the same time we allow the visitors to engage in a conversation about how we might divide our community. I think this is a great step in utilizing our museum to discuss relevant issues.
- 3) One of the most important things we must remember is that as we become bold and brave in discussing the real history and culture of Laurel and seek new ways to serve the community, we

will gain a wider audience. This new wider audience will trust us even more for discussing what has previously been off limits.

It was an invigorating conference, full of great ideas and great conversations. If you'd like to learn more about my experience, let me know. Thank you again for being a wonderful, supportive membership that allows me to attend conferences and come back ready to serve you again!

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

Our exhibit *Snapshots in Time: Our Community in 1910 and 2010*, continues through the end of the year. Come in and take a look!! There is handicapped parking directly in front of the Museum for those who need it.

Let the twenty-second century know you were here!! Bring up to four recent pictures that tell **your** story and place them in our *Laurel in 2010* scrapbook. Pictures of your family, your team, your school, your pets, your house, special celebrations and special days are welcome. You can write a description for the future about you and your life in Laurel. Make sure what you love is remembered. Scrapbook creation will take place on the **4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month** from May until November at the Laurel Museum from 1 – 4 PM.

## **Children's Corner**

Congratulations to Sophia Anastasi and Nika Peden who represented our Junior Docent Program in an article in the *Gazette*! The Junior Docent program is designed for promising young community members who like to

contribute to the LHS. These young people are often the ones you see helping out at our Children's Programs, but they do many things to help the Museum. This summer, they are creating "Traveling Trunks" to be used by local schools. They are also giving tours of the current exhibit to camp groups from Laurel Parks and Recreation. Last summer, the Junior docents created a short video explaining the history of the Mill. The video was made for kids by kids! Please consider using the video for your classroom, group or club. If you are interested in learning more about the Junior Docent program please contact us at [director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org).

**"AND THEY'RE OFF!" LAUREL MUSEUM ANNOUNCES LAUREL RACE TRACK CENTENNIAL EXHIBIT**

Submitted by Karen Lubieniecki



Bubbles Pick wins The Law Day Purse May 1, 1959 at Laurel Race Course. Owner: Ewart Johnson; trainer: B. Guy Bellwell.

Famous horses like Kelso and Secretariat, movie stars, exciting races, jockeys, and life in the backstretch will all be part of the Laurel Museum's 2011 exhibit **"And They're Off!: 100 Years at Laurel Park."** Opening in February 2011, the centennial exhibit will explore the history and racing highlights at Laurel Park, and the track's impact on the Laurel community. According to Lindsey, the goal of the exhibit will be to both celebrate and explore

the impact of Laurel Park on the community over a hundred year period. "We're excited to have the opportunity to celebrate such a significant part of Laurel's history. Laurel Park has so many exciting stories attached to it and we hope to explore many of them."

The Laurel Race Track opened in October, 1911. Since that time it's been an active part of the Laurel community. While located in Anne Arundel County, the City of Laurel is the town nearest the track. Over the years, races like the Washington D.C. International and the Maryland Million drew large social crowds and celebrities ranging from Elizabeth Taylor to the Aga Khan. Horses from Secretariat to Seabiscuit to steeplechaser Billy Barton and jockeys such as Eddie Arcaro and Ron Turcotte and trainer Lucien Laurin have been part of the Laurel racing scene. Today the track is facing new challenges and controversies with slots all part of a 100-year history. It should be a fascinating and entertaining exhibit.



Dashoney, trained by Laurel resident L.G. Bedwell, wins at Laurel Park October 28, 1961

Do you have a connection to racing in Laurel? How about a business that catered to track personnel or thrived because of business from visitors to the track? Maybe you know a family member or friend who works or worked at the track? Do you own any memorabilia relating to racing in Laurel? The LHS is currently collecting information, stories and objects for the exhibit. Please contact Lindsey Baker at [director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org) today.

## What's New in the Laurel Historical Society Collection?

Submitted by Karen Lubieniecki

Photos of the 2009 4<sup>th</sup> of July float, A zipper stick from the Vogue Dress Shop and a 1917 Calendar from the Henry A. Block store are a few of the twenty-five items recently accessioned for the LHS. We encourage people to share their memories, and think of us before throwing out that Laurel-related item – photos (with IDs), objects relating to businesses, schools and other civic groups are welcome, as are letters, diaries, postcards and other written items.



Here are some new items in the Laurel Historical Society Collection. Many thanks to their donors:

| DONOR                   | ITEM(S)   |
|-------------------------|---|
| John Ballenger          | Copy of photo of 1 <sup>st</sup> Buicks to arrive in Laurel   |
| Laurie Blitz            | 1917 calendar from Harry A. Block store   |
| Melissa Burley          | Copies of deeds, etc. to 709 Main Street  |
| Helen Coaplen           | 60 photos, many Laurel sites standing and gone  |
| Betty Compton           | 5 photographs; 3 of 2009 4 <sup>th</sup> of July float and 2 of Main Street in 1991   |
| Richard Dahms           | The WLMD Collection, including cards, stickers, t-shirt, letters from Laurel Elementary, record and envelopes   |
| Pat Haag/Mary Donaldson | Soroptimist materials   |
| Marian Hoekstra         | Cards and magnets<br>One copy of "Visit Historic Old Town Laurel, Maryland" by FoLHMS   |
| Jason Illari            | Laurel Police ticket #1250, void  |
| Jhanna Levin            | 2 copies of "Visit Historic Old Town Laurel, Maryland" by FoLHMS  |
| Mary Madigan            | 50 <sup>th</sup> Reunion Book of LHS Class of 1950  |
| Norman Mason            | 5 photocopies of Laurel Elementary students   |
| Phyllis Mills           | Copies of 5 photos: 5 <sup>th</sup> and Main Street, Laurel Elementary #1, 1912 & unknown date, LHS about 1920 or unknown workers; photos of 2 girls at Patuxent River Bridge |
| Penny Phelps            | Photos of Bowie Road at Montpelier gate with names  |
| Michael Smallwood       | 1962 map of Prince George's County; piece of map showing Laurel with ads  |
| John Sherwood           | 45 record of "Joni", by Laurel resident Roy Franklin  |
| James Wolfe             | BG&E 140 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary glass; History of United Methodist Church; Vogue Dress Shop zipper stick, Snyder's Cleaners zipper stick                                   |

## **Do I have something the LHS Might Like for its Collection?**

Submitted by Karen Lubieniecki

Our primary collection criteria are that the object have a Laurel connection – which can cover a lot of situations – and be from any time period from Laurel’s earliest past to the present. As an example, we were recently given two 45 rpm records; one “Joni” featured a song by a Laurel resident, the other was a Pat Boone record. We accessioned the former, but not the latter.

In the case of photos, if you want to share one with us we will be happy to make a copy of your original and keep the copy for our files, and we really like to know who is in the photo. If you have letters, old diaries and other materials that contain interesting stories or facts about life in Laurel, consider the LHS to be a good steward of your originals, but in any case we welcome copies for our research files.

Accessioned items may not be displayed immediately, but we are grateful to our donors nonetheless. Items on Laurel Racetrack donated a number of years ago, for example, will be incorporated into our upcoming exhibit on the track’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

When people offer us an item for the collection, we ask that they fill out a **Temporary Custody Form** which determines the type of donation. These are generally an unconditional donation (you give it to us with no strings), or an item to be considered for acquisition. If we don’t accession it (perhaps it doesn’t meet our collection parameters, or we already have many of the same object) we will do one of several things:

- Return it to you if you indicated you want it back if the item is not accepted as part of the collection.

- For unconditional donations we will take donated items and generally:
  - use them for educational purposes
  - place them in the library for research purposes (for example, if items are photocopies of original articles).
  - offer them to another institution that may find them appropriate for their collection.
  - sell them to benefit the Laurel Museum.
  - dispose of them appropriately.

Once we accession an item, or you give us an unconditional donation, you will receive a **Deed of Gift** from the LHS. Donations are tax-deductible, however, please note the LHS cannot appraise items, nor assign them a monetary value. Questions? Please contact us.

### **Museum Shop News**

**Beat the heat! Avoid the snow! The Museum Shop is available on line 24/7! Stay tuned for new shop products and of course the coveted 2010 Christmas ornament. Start your collection this year! We have previous year’s ornaments available as well. Come in and see us! Shop anytime at [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop).**

### **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!

## **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:

Patricia Ann Bell  
Crystal Brooks  
C.P. and Betsy Brothers  
James and Mary Driskell  
Francis and Betty Hall  
Paul and Stephanie Hirt  
Ruth Kent  
Philip and Suzie Komornik  
Randi Kroop  
Joanna Kurtz  
Georgianna Morley  
Reality, Inc., Scott Graham  
Red, Hot & Blue  
Mark Tomassoni  
Michael and Helen Webster

We are happy to have you!

## **GALA NEWS**

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE ARE ALREADY COLLECTING AUCTION ITEMS. IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING NICE YOU'D LIKE TO DONATE (EVEN THAT NECKLACE YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW GAVE YOU FOR CHRISTMAS), PLEASE THINK OF US.**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE GALA COMMITTEE OR MAKING A DONATION TO THE 2011 GALA, PLEASE CONTACT MARGIE**

**MCCENEY AT 301-776-7267 OR [MMCCENEY@YAHOO.COM](mailto:MMCCENEY@YAHOO.COM). THANK YOU!**

**MARGIE MCCENEY, GALA CHAIR**

## **DID YOU KNOW?**



Governor George Wallace was shot at the Laurel Shopping Center on May 16, 1972, and he went on to win the Maryland Democratic Primary that year.

Joe Robison recalls, "I responded to the call but I was late getting home from work after picking up my wife. When we arrived home we heard a call from the rescue squad. I lived at 914 Montrose Avenue and while on the way to the squad the ladder truck from the fire house turned on Montrose Avenue from 8th Street. When we arrived at the squad we were going to take the second ambulance but when we were pulling out of the squad bay a driver came in. I told him to take the ambulance and I would drive the squad truck. Before we could change positions we were told by the dispatcher that they wanted no more equipment on the call and to stay at the squad. I then asked what was going on and I was told Governor Wallace had been shot. I went home and got the Chief's Car (I was the Fire Chief). I arrived at the Shopping Center and the ladder truck was on the roof looking to see if anyone else was involved."

## **Welcome New Volunteers!**

The LHS welcomes our newest volunteers:  
Hollie Costa- docent/shop volunteer  
Lynda Frost- docent/shop volunteer

Thank you ladies for volunteering!

The Laurel Museum is in need of volunteers for the **2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month, 1 PM - 4 PM**. Volunteers are also needed for the **2nd and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of each month, 12 PM - 2 PM**. Anyone interested in volunteering at the Museum may contact Monica Sturdivant at [assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org) for more information. 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!

### **SHARE YOUR MEMORIES**



#### ***Summer in Laurel in the 1930s***

Submitted by Elizabeth L. Compton

To prepare our home for the July and August heat, my mother replaced the winter wool carpets with fiber ones and heavy draperies with sheer white curtains. These surroundings, with fresh lemonade, picnics and vacation visits filled our summer days.

My memory begins in 1930 when I was four years old. I recall vividly both my resident North great grandparent's smiles, habits and many of their words.

They both died in late 1930. I am happy we spent our early days with them.

My brother Bob, one and a half years younger than I, made little roads with his toy trucks and soldiers along the edge of flower beds. On the hottest days, we gleefully jumped in and out of a big wash tub filled with water from the garden hose. I had a pretty cat named Ginger, for that was her color. She was dressed in doll clothes and pushed in a little baby carriage. When not trying to control my pet, I bandaged pretend wounds of my neighbors and attended their imaginary ills. My mother allowed us to bring many items outdoors to "play store". Indoors on rainy days the sewing machine drawers became the Citizens National Bank teller's station.

A swing hung from a big limb of the backyard pear tree where we sailed through the air. It was replaced with a hammock by the time I was a teenager. When I gazed up to the puffy white clouds in a beautiful blue sky and dreamed of what could be. My grandmother, Grace North Welsh had shared the Northern fence line and exchanged flowers with neighbor Laura Miller. They produced a lovely mirror image of colorful fragrant blossoms. I viewed them, and their bees and butterflies from my second floor bedroom window.

Our family of seven; my parents, grandparents, uncle, my brother, and I gathered to share our evening meal. After dinner the children were bathed, read a story, said our prayers then tucked in bed. Mom and Daddy returned to the adults downstairs. My brother and I then slipped into the hall, lay on the floor and peered through the grate to watch the family below in our dining

room, still around the table talking. A little while later a call was heard for us to “go back to bed”!

When we were a little older, my grandmother took my brother to Washington, D.C. once or twice a month on Saturdays for accordion lessons. I walked to Montgomery Street to Helen Ramey’s home for piano lessons. We also attended dance lessons at St. Mildred’s Hall where Bob tap danced and I studied ballet. My blue tutu was stored in the deep bathroom closet to avoid being crushed. We reluctantly performed for visiting relatives, Bob in his white satin shirt and short black velvet pants and metal taps on his shoes. If only his Marine Corps buddies in 1942 could have seen those pictures.

We went to Saturday matinees at the Laurel Theater for Flash Gordon and Tarzan serials and nibbled licorice. On Sunday afternoons the family turned on the radio to the Kraft Music Hour. We also made some music of our own. My grandmother played the piano to accompany my Uncle Emory Welsh’s baritone voice to Stephen Foster’s tunes.

Summer visits were with Aunt Claudine (my mother’s sister) and Uncle Marvin Shipley on their big farm in Anne Arundel County. My aunt often made me a new dress on those visits. We walked together every morning in her beautiful garden, naming the blooms and gathering some to bring indoors. Uncle Marvin grew specimen dahlias, hybridized them, and named them after his daughters. My brother traveled with him about the farm visiting fields of strawberries or tomatoes, green beans and the best “Long John” cantaloupes and watermelons ever. The pickers were

paid with tokens at the end of each row. The tokens were redeemed at the local Harmon’s Store. We were taken to the Glen Burnie Carnival, and to a cottage on the Severn River where we swam with the frogs and crabs, feeling the soft, mushy black soil on the bottom with our toes.

Another rural aunt and uncle took us to the Montgomery County Fair. There I won a box of Whitman’s Chocolates in a spelling bee. On the way home we stopped so my uncle could join a bucket brigade to help extinguish a barn fire. It was an exciting day for an eight year old!

Our Baltimore aunt and uncle took us on historic site trips. They had a deep rear yard with a prolific vegetable garden. Everyone seemed to have a garden in those Depression days.

During the 1930s men “rode the rails” looking for work. Our brick sidewalks in Laurel had chalk marks, known to those traveling men as symbols of reaction to them; a sympathetic resident, a meal or a dog. Those “hobo signs” are documented in the Laurel Museum Research Library. My mother prepared meals which she served on the back porch to the men, many who offered to cut grass or clean the garden to repay.

In 1937 while roller skating, I fell and broke my arm in the front of Dr. John and Betty Warren’s home on Montgomery Street, now the residence of Lisa Losito and Doug Humphrey. After surgery and several casts, I was back playing the piano and horseback riding from Aitcheson’s Stables. My brother, two neighbors and uncle and I rode almost every Sunday through the woods, across 198 to the gravel Gunpowder Road. That

same group often took 22 caliber rifles to the Patuxent River to shoot at moving targets thrown in the river. Laurel was different then. During our walk home from church, we stopped to visit our Daddy's widowed sisters, the Miles aunts – all five of them at 414 Main Street. There we were spoiled with flattering hugs and treats, and began lifelong caring relationships.

In 1937, our family was blessed with the arrival of my sister Maryland. I was 11 years old and now had this sweet, cheerful, cuddly real life doll. We had much fun together even though she told me later I was "bossy". Maryland and I continue to be devoted sisters and cherish our time together.

Our childhood is filled with memories of a loving, extended family, dear thoughtful friends, and a multitude of experiences preparing us for life. We realize now how we were sheltered from the sadness and suffering of the Great Depression. *For us it was a blessing to grow up in Laurel, Maryland.*

Thank you Betty...I feel like I was there.  
Editor

**NOVEMBER 2010 IS THE 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAUREL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. AND APRIL 2011 IS THE 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAUREL MUSEUM.**

**BECOME A PART OF LAUREL HISTORY!**

Celebrate The Laurel Museum and become a part of its history. Purchase a brick on the Laurel Museum Brick Walk and become part of the historical fabric of this 1840s building. A Laurel Museum brick is the perfect way to celebrate your

children, parents, grandparents or other family members. Businesses can also show their support and ensure that their involvement and support of the Laurel community will be remembered.

Purchase on line at [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org) or by calling (301)725-7975

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!**



**Laurel Historical Society**  
817 Main Street  
Laurel, Maryland 20707  
301.725.7975/301.725.2675 (fax)  
info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org  
www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org

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# Laurel Historical Society Calendar

## SEP 2010 – NOV 2010

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

Sep 9, 6:00 PM  
*Singing Laurel History* at the  
Laurel Museum.

October 2, 8:00 PM  
*Haunted Walk*. Laurel Historical  
Society and Venus Theatre.

October 4, 7:00 PM  
*Genealogy Talk*: Baltimore  
Immigration. Laurel Pool Room.

Oct 9, 6:00 PM *Have You  
M.E.T? Museum, Eats and  
Theater in Historic Laurel*  
Collaboration with Laurel Mill  
Playhouse.

Oct 24, 1:30 – 3:30 PM  
Kid's Sunday at the Laurel  
Museum. *Harvest Some Fun at  
the Laurel Museum: Harvest  
Time Traditions from Around  
the World.*

Nov 7, 1:30-3:30 PM Third  
Annual *Taste of Laurel*.  
Sponsored by Main Street  
Pharmacy. Laurel Museum.