



# The Laurel Light

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The Laurel Light  
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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 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Over the past four years, we've done our best to expand our programming and exhibits. Whenever a new program is proposed, we always ask ourselves how it helps us reach our ultimate goal of promoting and preserving the history and cultural heritage of Laurel. Like many history museums that have been overlooked in recent years, we've wondered about other ways to tell our story and reach more students. This summer we had that opportunity. We were approached by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) to be a site for their Science in the Summer program, a grant program funded by GlaxoSmithKline. Science in the Summer has taken place for many years in libraries in the Philadelphia area, but this year they wanted to reach out to the DC area. The coordinator of the program for AAAS is a member of the LHS and familiar with our creative programming. She immediately thought of us as a potential site.

We decided that bringing scientific information to the community, while not something we normally do, was relevant to our mission. With our current exhibit on the mill workers that produced cotton duck fabric with the help of machines and some

pretty important science, it wasn't too hard for us to imagine why this story was just as relevant to understanding our past as knowing the names and stories of the mill workers. So from August 6-9, we hosted our first ever "Science in the Summer" camp. With a little help from Side by Side, our enrollment numbers were beyond capacity. We had many people on the wait list and 2 very full classes. Children entering grades 2-6 were able to take part in a number of experiments and learn science. Experiments like hammering a nail with a banana captivated the eager students.

Based on the evaluations, we learned just how great this program was. Approximately half of the parents had never heard about any LHS programs and all of the parents have now been added to our mailing list. Parents had the opportunity to visit the Museum while their kids were in class and we gained new members and have several applications for volunteers. To date, this program was the most diverse ever held and the best reflection of the demographics of our community; something we are constantly striving to improve. I think we'll be seeing the benefits for years to come. Engaging new families in an exciting program is an excellent way to make ourselves better known in the community. Sometimes it is a little difficult to answer the question--how does it help us reach our

ultimate goal--but by thinking outside the box we continue to make strides forward in creative ways.



A budding scientist surprised by the experiment! Photo by Lindsey Baker

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

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

I would like to introduce the new members of the Board of Directors, elected this past May; Frances Brooks, Abram Fox, and Michael Boivin, Sr. have joined us on the Board.

Frances Brooks was born in Brooklyn, WV. She relocated to Washington, DC in 1957 in search of a job with the Federal Government. She found one at the General Services Administration (GSA), but after four months was a victim of a reduction in force. Luckily she had proven her worth and was given the choice of being reassigned. She chose a position at the National Archives where she remained until her retirement in 2008, serving 50 years in the Federal Government.

Within a month of retirement, Frances moved quickly to a more dynamic organization, the LHS, first as a docent and subsequently moving to the Research Library. She has photographed most of the Museum's collection of objects and textiles and uploaded them to the database. She is

also culling out duplicate information in the Research Library's vertical files. Frances has served on the Public Programming Committee and the Exhibits Committee. As you may know, she was selected Volunteer of the Year in 2009.

Abram Fox is a doctoral candidate in Art History at the University of Maryland, College Park, and has volunteered as a docent at the Laurel Museum for more than three years. He is also the Vice Chairman of the Andrea Henderson Memorial Fund, a non-profit organization which raises money for cancer research. Abram has lived in Laurel since 2007 with his wife, Sara.

Mike Boivin, Sr. was born and raised in New Hampshire. He has been a resident of West Laurel for more than 35 years and he and wife Donna have five children. He earned a BA in Business Management from the University of Maryland and a MBA from Keller Graduate School of Management. He is a retired hospital administrator, who served as President and Chairman of the Board of a national professional organization. In addition he has organized several not-for-profit groups, including developing bylaws, incorporation paperwork, and applications for tax exempt status. Mike is a very active Family Historian (Genealogist), and founder and director of the LHS Genealogy Group. He is also a faculty member for computer classes with the Laurel Senior Friendship Club, teaching classes in Genealogy, Windows Live Photo Gallery, and a variety of other computer applications

Finally, I would like to thank Scott Lilienthal who regretfully stepped down from the Board. We appreciate his time, effort, and advice.

Jim 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 October 25, 2012. Members are welcome to attend. They are held in the Pool Meeting Room at 7:30 PM.

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

Our latest exhibit, “True Life: I am a Laurel Mill Worker” continues. Please visit the museum and shop on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM or Sundays from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. For more information on the exhibit or to schedule a group tour please visit [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org).

### **Laurel in 1862 and a Preview of the 2013 Civil War Exhibit**

Did you know Laurel had a Civil War Hospital or that troops were stationed around the rail line near the present station between Montgomery and Main Street? Or that soldiers and Laurel families experienced the pain of war by 1862? Beginning this September, the Laurel Museum is mounting a Civil War mini-exhibit which will show a map of the town in 1862 with Civil War sites indicated. The exhibit panel will also feature quotes from Henrietta Stabler Snowden, and “Aunt Becky”, who was a nurse at the Laurel Hospital. Aunt Becky cites the death of a soldier guarding the rails at Laurel. Snowden, whose husband Nicholas was killed in June 1862, notes: *“I used to think I never knew what trouble was until this war broke out.”* The panel, a snapshot of Laurel in 1862, reveals that even as battles were raging at Antietam and other places, the town was beginning to experience the

war’s impact. Our next exhibit explores these events in more detail.

**If you have any artifacts, pictures or stories of the Civil War in Laurel you can share please call the Museum.**

### **UP KEEP ON “THIS OLD HOUSE HOUSE”**

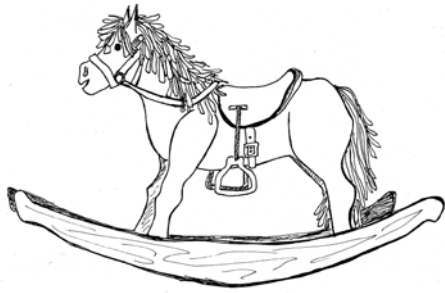
Our partnership with the City of Laurel means that the LHS is able to maintain our historic structure with the help of many. However, we are always in need of volunteers to continue our work in and around the grounds of the Museum. Most recently, window well covers were purchased to replace those in the front of the Museum and shelves were purchased to replace those in disrepair in the attic. The window sills, doors and outside stairwells are all in need of significant work. Be assured that grant funding is sought regularly for this important upkeep and repairs, and that your donations are an additional source of income we depend on. Your money at work!

### **Mini Exhibits in City Buildings!**

The history of Laurel is being displayed throughout the City and surrounding areas. Check out the mini exhibits in the Laurel Library, Greenview Pool Cabana, Gude Lakehouse, Partnership Activity Center (Police Dept.), Armory, Municipal Center Laurel Pool Room and the Maryland City at Russett Library.

### **LHS Genealogy Group**

The LHS Genealogy Group assists 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).



## **Children's Corner**

Science in the Summer Camp a great success!



**Two scientists waiting for a reaction! Photo by Lindsey Baker**

Our next *Kids Day at the Museum* is October 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **MEMBER NEWS**

Please welcome our newest members:  
Frances Brooks  
Patricia Brown  
The Leonard Group

We are happy to have you!

## **Welcome New Volunteers**

No new volunteers this time...how about you?

## **Volunteers Needed!**

The Laurel Museum is in need of volunteers for **Sundays from 1PM -**

**4PM.** Even just once a month or every other month would help! Anyone interested please contact Monica at [assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org) or 301-725-7975 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!

## **FRIENDS AND FAMILY PICNIC**



Photo by Lindsey Baker

A wonderful time was had by all at our annual picnic held this year on the grounds of the Museum. Despite the somewhat uneven terrain, everyone enjoyed one of the few nice evenings of the summer. Join us next year!

## **FRIEND AND DONOR OF THE LHS REMEMBERED**

Glenn Feagin, a friend and longtime LHS Gala Sponsor and donor died June 15<sup>th</sup> after courageously battling cancer for years. Glenn and wife Barbara have been members, volunteers and donors to the LHS and Barbara has served on the Board of Directors. We mourn with his family at this time.

## MY MEMORIES OF LAUREL

By Virginia Poist Underwood

*I have lived in Laurel all of my life, as did my parents. It was truly a wonderful place to grow up in. Many of my fond memories are of Main Street, the hub of activities in the 1940s and 50s. As a child, one of my favorite stops was High's for a 5 cents ice cream cone. Safeway's first store was near High's. Other favorite places include Katherine's Shop at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Montgomery Street. They boasted homemade ice cream, and the shop included a soda fountain. Cordelia's Bakery was popular for its wonderful homemade donuts and penny candies. Cook's Hardware, Polars 5 and Dime Store, Block's and Lights are all among the missed shops. I can't leave out The Little Tavern and their 10 cents hamburgers. It was run beautifully by the DeVore family for many years. A lot of people that grew up here compare it to the TV show "Happy Days." Everyone in town knew everybody and doors were left unlocked until the last person came in at night.*

*Summers were always special. The Fireman's Carnival used to be held at McCullough Field and lasted two whole weeks. The same field was used for a men's baseball team. The games were attended my many Laurelites and people from*

*neighboring towns. There was also an excellent Negro League back then. The Laurel swimming pool opened in 1953 and became the center of a lot of social activity for teens. Also a very popular pastime was attending the movies at The Laurel Theater. For one dollar, you could by a ticket and purchase popcorn and candy. Movies changed three times a week.*

*Winter was a time for sleigh riding, some using "Devil's Hill," a steep hill behind upper Main Street going down to the river. Ice skating at the Laurel Lake was a favorite sport for many. The lake was in its original form back then, located off of Cherry Lane, a little country road accessed off of Route 1 or Contee Road. The firemen would come and hose off the lake to make it smooth. Fires were burned to keep people warm and the daring would engage in a game of "Crack the Whip."*

*You could catch a Trailway or Greyhound bus at the corner of Main Street and Route 1. Many times my friends and I would hop on a bus and go to Baltimore or Washington, DC for a day of shopping. Laurel still has a small town flavor and friendly people. I couldn't think of anywhere I'd rather live!*



## **CHANGING OF THE SIGNS**

Many of you may have seen the old sign revealed at Laurel Shopping Center in June. Once the old marquee was removed, it revealed the original signage in bold red letters “LAUREL SHOPPING CENTER”. A brand new sign has been mounted in place, but it was fun to take a peek at the original before demolition. The shopping center is celebrating 56 years.

### **ORIGINAL SIGN DEMOLITION JUNE 27, 2012**



Photo by Karen Lubieniecki

### **UPDATED SIGN AUGUST 9, 2012**

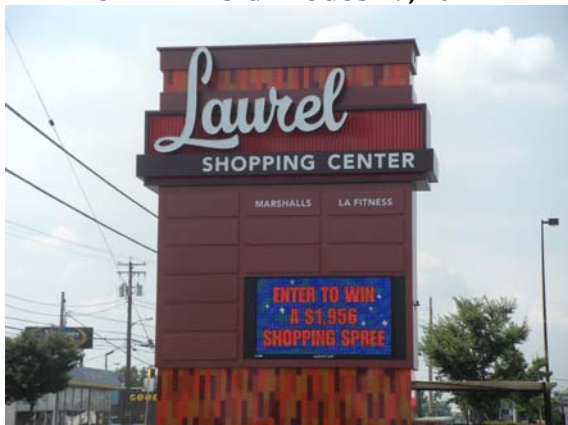


Photo by Jeanie Anastasi

## **BECOME A PART OF LAUREL HISTORY!**

Purchase a personalized side walk brick and literally become a part of Laurel’s history!! 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. You may purchase on line by visiting [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org) or by calling (301)725-7975.



Already have a brick? Purchase another and ensure that you and your loved ones continue to be on Laurel’s historical path!

## **SHARE YOUR MEMORIES**

We would love to have your story ideas particularly for the *Did You Know* and *My Memories of Laurel* 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. Thank you!

## **Laurel Historical Society**

### **Major Donors and Sponsors**

\*Starting at the \$250 Level\*

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### **Become a Member**

Are you reading this newsletter but not a member? We'd love for you to join!

Membership enables the Society to:

\*Sustain the Laurel Museum

\*Research Laurel history

\*Preserve artifacts

\*House a research library

\*Host special children's events

\*Develop educational materials for  
schools and scout groups

Membership benefits include:

\*Quarterly Newsletter with articles about  
Laurel history, museum exhibits and  
programs

\*Member's only events

\*Member's only discount in the museum  
shop

\*Discounts on LHS events, including our  
annual gala

\*Contributing to the preservation of  
Laurel's past and present for future  
generations

Join today by visiting

**[www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org)**.



**Please consider the LHS in  
your Planned Giving. It's easy.  
For more information please  
contact Lindsey Baker  
(301)725-7075.**

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# Laurel Historical Society Calendar

## September 2012 – December 2012

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

September 8 <sup>th</sup> at 10 AM Part I of the Tasting Laurel Series: <i>A Tour of Gorman Farm</i> Reservations Required!	October 10 <sup>th</sup> at 7 PM Part II of the Tasting Laurel Series: Lecture with John Peter Thompson, Food Historian <i>Beltsville Agricultural Center:</i> <i>The Science of Organic Farming</i> Laurel Pool Room	Part III of the Tasting Laurel Series: <i>5<sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of Laurel</i> Laurel Pool Room
September 13 <sup>th</sup> at 6 PM <i>Singing Laurel's History</i> with George McCeney Laurel Museum	October 21 <sup>st</sup> 1:30-3:30 PM <i>Kids Day at the Museum</i> Laurel Museum	November 8 <sup>th</sup> at 6 PM Part IV of the Tasting Laurel Series: <i>A Community Conversation</i> and Pot luck Laurel Pool Room
September 27 <sup>th</sup> 3-6 PM Educator's Open House Laurel Museum	November 4 <sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM	December TBD Holiday Open House