



# The Laurel Light

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The Laurel Light  
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## News and History from the Laurel Historical Society

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

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

There are several dozen individuals who participate in running the Society. I wish to shine a little light on one group of "volunteers" who work hard; the 17 members of the Board of Directors. The LHS is truly fortunate to have the group we have. We have a diverse group of men and women – young, middle-aged, and seniors; those who work full-time, part-time, mothers and fathers of children at home, retirees – some who are looking after others, and those who are enjoying grandchildren and great-grandchildren. In addition to their private lives, each contributes to the success of the Society. They give from their experience, time, effort, and resources. Eight serve as officers and members of the Executive Committee and allow the full Board to work more effectively. Board members serve on every committee of the organization, many as chairperson. They devote an enormous number of hours each year to the Society and work to make it better. Board members are ineligible to be named "Volunteer of the Year", but in my opinion, the entire Board wins an equivalent prize. I wish to offer my sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors for their participation and

contributions to the Society. It is an honor to serve with you.

While there are currently 17 Directors on the Board, we would be pleased to welcome additional individuals who are interested in serving. Please let me know if you are interested at [j.mcceney@verizon.net](mailto:j.mcceney@verizon.net).

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 April 22, 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**

On January 10<sup>th</sup> we honored all of our volunteers at a reception held in their honor. The Board of Directors sponsored the gathering at Harmony House to share some refreshments and conversation. Three of our volunteers, Beverly Jacobs, Frieda Weise, and Jerry Chappell were honored for their continued service over five years. These volunteers serve the organization in a myriad of ways, all of

which we greatly appreciate. Another of our volunteers, Frances Brooks, was chosen as Volunteer of the Year for the work she has done for the LHS in the past year. Frances' dedication to the task at hand is ruthless and she has solved many mysteries for the Research Library. She is also on several committees, is photographing the entire Museum collection, and is an ever available volunteer for special events.

I was reminded as I spoke with our volunteers at the reception of the hard work that **all** of our volunteers do on a regular basis. I see many of our volunteers every day, even during the month of January when we are closed. So even during the Museum down time, I have volunteers coming in and out working on tasks they have dedicated themselves to.

I believe that all of the compliments I receive about the great things the Society is doing should not be directed toward me. They should be directed toward the wonderful volunteers who come in day after day, even when we're closed, and continue to do the work of the Society. So if you're pleased with the way an exhibit looks, the way a program is run, or the way we've reached out to the community, thank a volunteer. Tell them how great a job they are doing. And if you're a volunteer, thank yourself. Because it is your hard work that has made the Society successful. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all and tell you that I truly appreciate all of the work you do for the LHS!

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

Our next exhibit *Snapshots in Time: Our Community in 1910 and 2010*, opens Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM. This exhibit takes a look at Laurel's communities in 1910 and 2010 and challenges the visitor to think about all of the ways in which "community" can be defined. The exhibit will be more interactive than any of our previous exhibits with a whole new look and feel. We are very excited for members and visitors to come in for a tour!! There is handicapped parking directly in front of the Museum for those who need it.



Boy with tricycle and camera, circa 1910



Camille Sturdivant with bicycle and camera, 2010

### **Museum Shop News**

Now that the holiday rush is over and all the decorations have been stored for another year, the shop is back to fulfill your gift shopping needs for adults or children in this new year. The shop has some notable Laurel collectibles that would make great gifts during the dreary winter months. The 2009 ornament featuring the historic scene of the 500 block of Main Street, circa 1910, as well as the full complement of past years' ornaments, would make a wonderful birthday or other special occasion gift. The beautiful new, blue polo shirt with the LHS logo embroidered on it, would be lovely addition to anyone's wardrobe as the weather gets warmer. There is also an array of new children's books in the Historic Communities Series including; *The Gristmill, Tools and Gadgets*, and *Old Time Toys*.

For adults, especially those who like to cook and bake, there is an extensive

collection of small cookbooks which include not only recipes, but also historical information. Such titles as *Grist Mill Quick Loaf Breads* promise recipes that are low fat, high fiber and whole grain for the health conscious. You can discover how to make Rosemary Parmesan Biscuits in *Four Centuries of American Herbs*. And how about "Love Apple Spice Cake" from *Refreshments Now and Then*? Did you know that tomatoes were called "love apples" and were thought to be aphrodisiacs? Hence the reason it was all the rage to add a can of tomato soup to the recipe in the early 1900's!

Several new postcards that coordinate with the new exhibit, *Snapshots in Time: Our Community in 1910 and 2010*, will also be available with photographs featured in the exhibit. Other new items will be added in the shop throughout the year. Stay tuned and come in and see us! You can visit the online shop anytime at [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop).

Frieda Weise, Shop Manager

## **Holiday House Tour**



A wonderful time was had by all during the biannual Holiday House Tour on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Visitors enjoyed seeing creative holiday decorations, antique machinery, small and large renovations, additions, and unique architecture and art work hiding inside beautiful Laurel homes and businesses. Our next Holiday

House Tour will be December 2011.  
Please let us know if you or someone you know would be interested in showing their home or business on the next tour. We welcome new committee members to start planning in the spring of 2011. Please call the Museum for more information.

### **Children's Corner**



Children at play, December 2010

The museum is happy to offer a new interactive space for kids! "Diven's Den" is open during museum hours and provides a number of interactive toys and craft projects as well as independent children's activities. Monica Sturdivant, our own Assistant to the Director, is using her artistic talents to supply creative artwork for the space. And don't forget, our research library is available for children and their parents to research topics of interest related to Laurel History.

### **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 in the Laurel Museum. Join us!

### **LHS Genealogy Group**

The Laurel Historical Society Genealogy Group has recently formed to assist 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).

### **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Please welcome our new members:

Salem Alatawi  
Nate & Kerrie Allen  
Fannie Avery  
Austin and Patricia Calinger  
M. A. Chenault  
Michael Collins, Legends Group  
Robert and Nancy Cook  
Freia Cooper  
James and Laurel Cross  
Edward Dawson  
Mary Dresser  
Leo and Joyce Emery  
Beverly Jacobs  
Russell and Jean Jones  
Randi Kroop, A.M. Kroop  
Melanie McKnight  
John and Sophia Menard  
Lorraine Miller  
Bertha (Bert) Rushing  
Helen Faye Rushing  
Phyllis Sczuka  
Roy Wayne Shiflet  
Lynn Sport  
Charles and Margaret Stainer  
Susan Troccoli  
Andy and Virginia Underwood  
Ann Wagner  
John Whitehead  
Lesley Zark  
Steven Zelenek



We are happy to have you!

### **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 at

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

### **VOLUNTEER UPDATE**

Please welcome our newest volunteers:  
Laurel Cross – Shop Volunteer

LHS volunteers and their families came together at Harmony House on January 10 for a celebration honoring their efforts throughout the year. Five year volunteers Frieda Weise, Jerry Chappell, and Beverly Jacobs were honored for their continued dedication to the LHS.

The Volunteer of the Year was announced and Frances Brooks took home the honor for her multi-faceted

efforts with the LHS. Frances is on the Public Programming and Exhibits Committee. She is also in the process of photographing the entire collection and works every Monday in the Research Library. Frances is a key part of the Laurel Historical Society's efforts in serving the community.



Frances Brooks, Volunteer of the Year with Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

### **Focus on People: Volunteer of the Year Frances Brooks**

Interviewer(I): Tell me a little bit about yourself.

Frances Brooks (FB): I have lived in Laurel since 1972 and I have a daughter, Crystal, and a son, James. I also have two grandsons, James III and Cameron. About a year and a half ago, I retired from the Federal Government after working 50 years. Except for 2 years, all of my service was with the National Archives and Records Administration.

I: How did winning the Volunteer of the Year for 2009 make you feel?

FB: I was both shocked and pleasantly surprised to learn that I had been chosen as volunteer of the year. I'm very honored and pleased at being recognized in this fashion and to know that the Society appreciates my efforts to contribute in any way I can to help the Museum reach its goals.

I: What special talents and skills do you bring to your work at the Museum?

FB: As far as special talents and skills go - nothing special; just using good old fashioned common sense and being willing to learn and apply technologies that are new to me to get the job done.

I: What do you enjoy most about volunteering for the LHS?

FB: Most of all, I enjoy working with some first-class people such as Lindsey Baker, the Executive Director, and her assistant, Monica Sturdivant, and becoming acquainted and working with the other volunteers. I think my very favorite project is the one I am working on now, taking photographs of the Museum's varied and sometimes, unusual collection of objects. Also, researching and answering requests that come in to the Brennan Research Library has very much broadened my knowledge about Laurel and its history.

I: What do you like to do in your spare time?

FB: Other than volunteering at the Museum, I enjoy family, trying new recipes, reading, and working crossword puzzles--the day is not complete until I

finish the daily Washington Post puzzle, I also like to travel, especially to the Caribbean Islands with my soul-mate daughter, Crystal. I also have a love for Las Vegas and all it has to offer.

I: Is there anything else you would like to say to prospective volunteers to the LHS?

FB: I am sure that anyone who decides to volunteer at the Museum will find it to be a very rewarding and fulfilling experience, whether it's working as a docent giving tours, working on a committee, completing research requests in the Library, or helping at special events. There's never a dull moment; always something new and different is being planned to make the community more aware of what the Museum has to offer. Thanks for your time and interest.

### **Volunteers Needed**

We are in need of several docents to work at the Museum, especially on Sundays from 1 PM until 4 PM. Please call the Museum if you can help out one or more Sundays a month!! Thank you for your consideration.

### **Volunteer Luncheons**

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

### **GALA NEWS**

On Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup> the 2010 gala will be held to benefit the LHS. This is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Society, and your participation is really appreciated! This year's theme will be *Night of the Comet*. Go back in time to the 1910, when comets were mysterious and

people were on the lookout for Halley's Comet! This is a splendid evening in which you will visit with fellow members and visitors and help the Society at the same time. Invitations will be mailed soon. If we don't have your address or you need an invitation sent to family or friends please contact the Museum. We're also collecting items for the silent auction. Unique and Laurel-related items are especially appreciated.

Jhanna Levin, President & Gala Chair

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Submitted by Lindsey Baker

Have you ever heard of the Maryland Industrial and Agricultural School for Colored Youths? Founded in 1902, it once trained colored youth in carpentry, cookery, dressmaking, freehand and mechanical drawing, housekeeping, laundering, and needlework, as well as English instruction. It is not clear when the school ceased operation but records have been found until 1910 and possibly as late as 1920. The founder of the school, Ernest Lyon, was a pastor in Baltimore, New Orleans, and New York City. Approximately a year after founding the school, Pastor Lyon was appointed by President Roosevelt to be Minister Resident and Consul-General to Liberia. Consequently he became very involved in Liberia and spent much of his time across the Atlantic.

The school was successful in supporting itself and attendance increased steadily in the early years. One observer noted, "with 8 horses, 8 cows, a dozen hogs and 40 persons to feed through the year, not a head of cabbage or a potato or an ear of corn, had been purchased and that these were their staple foods and had all been

raised on the farm." It stood on 85 acres in Howard County. The area was described by a principal as "excellently located near the above-named cities, with ample train service, thirty-two trains a day. It is on an elevation, several hundred feet above the level of the sea, with magnificent springs of healthful water. All who have seen it admire it for its beauty of location." Our volunteer registrar, Charlie Hessler, went to the Howard County Land Records office in Columbia and found several land records concerning Ernest Lyon including a 1903 mortgage. The description contained in the mortgage states that Mr. Lyon bought an 85-acre property at the corner of All Saints Road and Clarksville Road. Clarksville Road was later renamed Old Scaggsville Road. So if you look out the back windows of our museum and look toward the northwest you can probably see the school grounds that Pastor Lyon purchased. The school's location was hiding in plain sight.

If you are interested in learning more about the school or helping us delve deeper into this mystery, please contact our research library at [research@laurelhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:research@laurelhistoricalsociety.org).

### **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

**IF WALLS COULD TALK: 331 PRINCE GEORGE STREET**

Submitted by Don and Kathleen Dalphonse



This chronological history of 331 Prince George Street is a result of research based on the land records of Prince George's county, folklore and speculation. Most of the dates and facts mentioned are from the various folios of the land records found in Upper Marlboro concerning the property.

The oldest date in which the property is mentioned is 1878 and it is believed that the house was built circa 1878 and belonged to the family of Armand Jardin. John Brennan, a late Laurel historian, related that the same family once owned the property which is now Laurel Lakes and that they were in the floral business. Reportedly, the family provided some of the flowers for Abraham Lincoln's funeral in 1864.

Armand Jardin's son, Armand F., born in 1868 and his wife Myra may have lived in the house, although this is most unlikely because of their status. The couple was active in St. Mary of the Mills Parish. It is they who gave the money to purchase the main altar and both Armand F. and Myra are buried in the cemetery. A picture of the main altar at St. Mary's church, along with a brief review of the Jardin's contributions to the church and their family's tie to Lincoln's funeral may be found in *The Story of St. Mary of the Mills Church*, by John Brennan, 1976. There is a marble stone on the first stair leading to the main altar with the name Armandi Jardin, dated 1886. It seems that Armand Jardin gave the donation in memory of his father. The stone was recently uncovered during a renovation of the altar at St. Mary's church. The property remained in the possession of the Jardin family until 1909 when it was bought by Harry and Sadie Feige for \$1,350. In February of 1914, a \$1,000 mortgage was taken out from the Laurel Building Association of Prince George's County and we believe this was to build a new addition on the house. The Feiges lost the house in 1919 when they were unable to make their mortgage payments and ownership was transferred to the Laurel Building Association. It was sold to John B. and Eloise Krainer on March 4, 1919. The property was owned by the Krainer family until April 2, 1947, when it was sold to G. Bowie McCeney, although the house is assigned from McCeney to John B. and Doris Krainer from 1947 until 1949. From 1949 until 1963, the property was assigned to Don C. Freeman, attorney at law, and R. Moss Carrico, Jr. On March 26, 1963, the property was purchased by Harry M. Susini and Harry A. Susini, co-partners



for the Laurel Investment Company, and we assume rented from 1963 until 1967. In 1967, the Susini family sold the property and another property on Montgomery Street to Robert and Myrna Siegel for \$28,900. On October 25, 1978, the Siegels sold the property to Frank B. and Joni A. Debaldo for the sum of \$21,000. The Debaldos did major renovations on the house, removing interior walls, combining rooms and returning the house to a single family home from two rental apartments. They also updated the plumbing and electrical work completing major upgrades to the interior of the house, yet leaving the exterior and surrounding property in a state of relative disrepair. On April 26, 1978, the Debaldos sold the property to current owners Donald J. and Kathleen R. Dalphonse. The Dalphones have resided in the home and beautified the property by replacing the exterior siding and through extensive landscaping. The Dalphones added a baby girl to their family home in 1986 when they adopted Helen Yoon Mee Marie Dalphonse from Korea.

### **IF WALLS COULD TALK: THE LAUREL STORY**

Have you renovated your old home or business? Have you found interesting artifacts in those old walls. Do you feel the presence of former inhabitants? Have you learned the history of your home and the families who lived there? Do you want to share what you have discovered? Please email The Laurel Light editor, Jeanie Anastasi [jmanastasi@verizon.net](mailto:jmanastasi@verizon.net) with your "walls" stories.

### **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.

### **PLEASE WELCOME AND SUPPORT OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS!**



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**Address Service Requested**

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director  
Monica Sturdivant, Assistant to the Director

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Jean Wilson



# Laurel Historical Society Calendar

## February 2010 – April 2010

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

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February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1-4PM: Grand Opening of *Snapshots in Time: Our Community in 1910 and 2010* at the Museum.

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 7PM: *Looking At What Isn't There: The Sadler Photographs in the Snapshots Exhibit at the Laurel Museum.*

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM: *An Early 20th Century Night on the Town—Dinner and Theatre Laurel Style*

March 11<sup>th</sup>, 7PM: *Apart Before Death*, a lecture at the Laurel Pool Room.

March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1-4 PM: *Spring Back In Time: Explore Laurel 100 years ago.* Kids Event at the Laurel Museum.

March 27<sup>th</sup> : Gala! *Night of the Comet* at the Laurel Race Track.