LAUREL HISTORY BOYS CONNECT WOMAN TO LOST FAMILY MEMORABILIA

A couple of weeks ago, I received an email through our Laurel History Boys website (laurelhistory.com) from Nancy Sweigart, wondering if we might be able to help track down a family treasure that had gotten lost over a decade ago. It was a framed poster honoring her late mother, Colleen Kelly, who’d been presented with the gift in appreciation of her services to the Laurel Boys & Girls Club back in 1969.

Along with a scrapbook, it had been part of a surprise “This is Your Life” celebration for Mrs. Kelly, who’d served the LBGC from 1957–69. The hand-drawn, hand-lettered poster had been signed by approximately 400 members of the club, including then Mayor Merrill Harrison, future Mayor Leo Wilson, and a youngster who would go on to become Laurel’s longest-tenured Mayor some 33 years later, Craig Moe.

Sadly, the framed gift had mistakenly been included in an estate sale after Mrs. Kelly’s passing in 2006, and wound up at Laurel Auction where our Pete Lewnes (who collects anything and everything Laurel) happened upon it and purchased it for $5. Some ten years later, he gave it to me to post on my Lost Laurel website, in hopes that a family member might recognize it.

When Nancy wrote, asking if we might be able to help locate the one-of-a-kind piece, I happily replied, “I believe we can... it’s in my basement!”

We arranged to meet that weekend at the Taste Diner, and proudly reunited Nancy with this piece of her family’s history.

~ Richard Friend
LEVELS OF GIVING
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM
JANUARY 1, 2016 TO DECEMBER 31, 2016

The Laurel Historical Society depends upon the generosity of our donors to complete its mission of “Preserving Laurel's Past for the Future.” In an effort to recognize and thank our contributors, we are doing our annual publication of names and donation levels. Without all of you, we would not be able to continue the work of the Society. **We want to know of any errors, misspellings or omissions. Please contact Lindsey Baker by email at director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or by mail, 817 Main Street, Laurel, MD 20707.**

The Society would like to thank the following donors for their support in the form of contributions, sponsorships and advertisements:

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THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE
LHS Board meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each January, April, July, and October. The next meeting is April 27, 2017. Members are welcome to attend. They are held in the Pool Meeting Room at 7:30 PM.

LAUREL HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF JIM MCCENEY

The Laurel Historical Society is pleased to announce the James "Jim" McCeney Scholarship for two deserving Laurel-area high school graduating seniors who have demonstrated excellence in the discipline of social studies and intend to continue those studies at the college or university level. This scholarship program was established in 2016 in memory of Jim McCeney, former President, Treasurer, and Chairman of the Laurel Historical Society. Two scholarship recipients will receive awards of $750 to be used in support of their academic studies in history or other related fields. For consideration, applicants must meet GPA requirements and be able to demonstrate sustained participation in social studies-related activities outside of the classroom, as well as submit an application and short essay. The application will be available on the LHS website.

MUSEUM NEWS
Laurel’s WWI: From Here to Over There

Opened February 5th

Drawing back the curtain on long-forgotten Laurel soldiers, men stationed at Camp Laurel, Red Cross knitting sessions, and dances at the former cotton mill, the newest Laurel Museum exhibit: **Laurel’s WWI: From Here to Over There** opened Sunday, February 5, 2017. Focusing on individuals, the exhibit explores the impact of this cataclysmic world event on Laurel and its citizens. More than 230 soldiers with ties to Laurel, including at least two women, have been identified as participating in the war. Some 116,000 Americans died during WWI, including seven from the Laurel area. Artifacts, including WWI posters, a uniform, minutes from the City of Laurel, trench art, and more are on display throughout the exhibit.

“Laurel area residents don’t realize all the people and events that took place here during WWI. Because of Camp Meade the Laurel community not only sent men to war, but met and supported soldiers from all over America who were here before they went off to fight. We hope this exhibit will not only re-introduce long-forgotten people, including those who sacrificed their lives, but also help visitors learn more about this important world event,” stated Karen Lubieniecki, a member of the Exhibits Committee.

“Our community has been invaluable in helping us identify people and events, and we hope when others come and visit they’ll share their families’ experiences,” Marlene Frazier, another Committee member added.

Divided into five main sections over two rooms, the exhibit explores how the town and its citizen’s were involved in the war effort, from raising funds, to entertaining soldiers to sending their sons overseas. Visitors will meet Gertrude Ellis, Arthur Phelps, Herman Winter, Van Williams, Jay Lyons, the Welsh family, George Musgrave, George McCeney, Gertrude Ellis, and others who lived in Laurel or passed through, for whom the war changed their lives forever. Visitors will also discover Camp Laurel right next door at the Laurel Racetrack – and the newly established Camp Meade. Laurel soldiers who fought wrote letters home that hint at the horrors they experienced in the bloody Meuse-Argonne campaign.

“...we have been in action for the past 22 days and have seen some awful sights...“I have surely lost lots of my good friends. It surely makes me feel bad.” James Gilbert Brown, *Laurel Leader* letter to his father dated October 29, 1918, printed Dec. 27, 1918.

Van Williams was one of 30 Laurel-area African Americans who also served in the War. In the segregated army, he was not permitted to fight, but served in dangerous missions as part of support units. His draft registration card, with a clipped edge, also identified him as of “African descent.” Camp Meade, Dwight Eisenhower, and the little known “Hello Girls” who went overseas as telephone operators are part of the exhibit. The exhibit ends with a look at the 1918 Spanish Flu, a deadly disease that took more American soldier lives than battles, and affected many in Laurel just as the war was ending.

**Laurel’s WWI: From Here to Over There** runs through December 17, 2017. The Laurel Museum is open Wednesdays and Fridays 10 AM - 2 PM, and Sundays 1 - 4 PM and is free. Visits by school groups and tours over 10 people can be scheduled on other days by appointment. The John Brennan Research Library is open Mondays by appointment. For more information visit www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org.

“**Miss**” Eileen Collins Named LHS Volunteer of the Year for 2016
On January 22nd the annual Volunteer Appreciation Party was held in the Cabana Room at Patuxent Greens. The event was attended by many board members and of course our wonderful volunteers. The 2016 volunteer of the year is Eileen Collins! Eileen gives her time, talent and treasure to the Society and has worked tirelessly in many capacities including serving on the Development Committee and for many years on the Gala Committee. Congratulations Eileen!

The LHS also recognized 12 milestone volunteers including Betty Compton and Jean Wilson for 40 years; Joan Fitzgerald, Jim Gordon, Margie McCeney, Irene Ohlmacher and Kay Wilson for 15 years; Mike Boivin, Jane Bulla and Vi Turley for 10 years; and Tom Dernoga and Paula Schuman for 5 years.

Many thanks to all of our volunteers!

MEMBER NEWS
Please welcome our new members:
Ray Pomeroy
James & Susan Wolfe

We are happy to have you!

Please welcome our new volunteers:
Rebecca Krieger
Janice M. Joyce

Thank you ladies for volunteering!!

Volunteers Needed!
The Laurel Museum is in urgent need of volunteers for the first and third Fridays of the month, 10 am - 12 pm and 12 pm - 2 pm. Volunteers will give tours, answer questions, and handle shop sales. Training is provided. For more information please contact Monica at assist@laurelhistoricalsociety.org or 301-725-7975.

Save the date for annual gala!

We want you to save the date
APRIL 22, 2017
For this Extraordinary Gala Benefiting The Laurel Historical Society
DID YOU KNOW?
The Avondale Mill was built in 1845 by the Snowden Family, which owned much of the land in the Laurel area at that time. Initially a flour mill, it later produced cotton cloth and a special type of lace-print cloth. George Wheeler owned the Avondale Mill in the 1860s and 1870s. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, B. F. Crabbs owned the mill and it was referred to as “Crabbs Mill.” The dam for the Avondale Mill was at the foot of Post Office Avenue. Gates could be raised to allow water to flow into the millrace that ran parallel to Main Street. From 1915 to 1917, the Southern Embroidery Company used the mill to produce lace-print cloth, and, among other things, turned out chevrons for WWI uniforms. During WWII, the building was used to manufacture tractors. In 1961, the City of Laurel purchased the Avondale Mill and approximately 17 acres of riverside property. The Department of Parks and Recreation used the mill for indoor programs and storage, but had to vacate when the building became unstable. In 1979, the Avondale Mill was put on the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, the mill burned in 1991 before restoration could begin. The site is part of Laurel’s Riverfront Park. Enjoy a walk down Avondale Street and see the site where the mill once stood.

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
* Access to our on-line collections
* Member’s only events
* Member 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 laurelhistoricalsociety.org

RECIPE: GROUND BEEF FIESTA
Submitted to the LHS by Penny Phelps May 27, 2000

Ingredients
1 lb ground beef
1 Tbsp oil
¼ cup diced onion
½ cup green pepper, sliced in thin strips
2 tsp salt
1 tsp chili powder
¾ tsp pepper
1 can (16 oz) tomatoes
1 can (12 oz) whole kernel corn
1 ¼ cups bouillon (1/4 cup water plus one bouillon cube)
1 can (7 oz) sliced mushrooms
1 1/3 cups minute rice
grated cheese

Brown meat in oil over high heat in skillet, leaving meat in coarse chunks.

Add onion, reduce heat to medium and cook until onion tender but not browned.

Add seasonings, tomatoes, corn, mushrooms and bouillon and bring to a boil.

Stir in green pepper and bring to second boil.

Stir in rice and remove from heat.

Cover and let stand 5 minutes

Sprinkle with cheese.

Peggy writes...in the 1940s and 1950s my dad, Reed Caulkins, worked in Washington, DC. He grew a wonderful vegetable garden in Laurel. He believed that corn was best when eaten fresh. His rule was: Do not pick the corn for dinner until you see me driving up the driveway.
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Laurel Historical Society Calendar
February 2017 – August 2017
For more information visit laurelhistoricalsociety.org

February 5th
Exhibit Opening:
Laurel’s WWI: From Here to Over There

February 9th
Black History in Laurel
Laurel Branch Library

February 19th – 21st
Small Museum Association Conference

April 22nd 6:30 PM
Laurel Historical Society Gala

May 11
Annual Meeting Date

July 10th – 12th
Rube Goldberg Camp

August 7th – 11th
Science in the Summer

Be sure to “Follow or Like” the LHS on your Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook!