



# 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 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

For most people, the coming of fall means cold weather and changing leaves, but for the Laurel Historical Society it means much more. It means the arrival of the new ornament, the Holiday Open House, the last months of an exhibit, the intense planning for a new exhibit, and the Taste of Laurel. It can be quite daunting to work on all of these things at once, but with the help of our wonderful volunteers, we always find a way to get everything done.

On Sunday, November 7th, we held our Third Annual Taste of Laurel. We began the event during the "Buy It Here: Laurel Advertises" exhibit, and because it was such a huge success, we decided to continue to hold it annually. Every year, the event has been generously sponsored by Main Street Pharmacy and every year we've added more vendors and participants. The first year we had 65 people attend. This year, we had 65 people in the first 30 minutes. In the end, we had over 200 people with 11 local businesses showing the community what they had to offer.

As I spent the afternoon worrying about the people waiting in the cold and wondering whether or not there would be food left for them to sample, I was reassured by our

volunteers that this is exactly the type of problem you want to have; too many people. I am hoping that we can continue to have the same problem this fall. Our new ornament Laurel's Kluckhuhn Christmas Tree promises to be a big seller. Perhaps we might even sell out; again a good problem.

Our current exhibit is up until the end of the year and I hope our galleries will be filled with those members who haven't yet had a chance to view "Snapshots in Time: Our Community in 1910 and 2010". As we continue to work through a busy fall into winter, I'd like to say thank you to all who make this time of year a success. I hope to see many of you soon and wish you all a very happy holiday season.

Lindsey Baker, Executive Director

### **A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

You could almost taste the sense of community in the air or maybe it was the smell of pupusas; I'm not sure. Either way I was overwhelmed by a warm and fuzzy feeling of "loving my town" this past weekend at this year's Taste of Laurel. With so many participants, it certainly was a HUGE success for the restaurants that participated and for the LHS itself. Wow!! I heard the food was delicious (for the first time ever I didn't even get any samples

because we were so busy) and the pool room was full of smiling faces!

The Gala Committee is hard at work planning this season's Gala *Night At the Races*. The ideas are flowing so make sure you mark your calendar for April 9, 2011 as not to miss THE EVENT OF THE YEAR!

Is anyone else as curious as I am about the new exhibit? I can't wait for opening weekend. Hopefully it won't snow again! One of the best parts about being President of this organization is the people that I meet and get to know through the work that we do. Please stop by the Holiday Open House (the cookies will be excellent, I guarantee it) and introduce yourself. Oh, and buy an ornament before they are gone, they are gorgeous!!

With warm wishes for the holiday season,

Jhanna Levin, President

### **TASTE OF LAUREL A HIT!!**

Many thanks to all who attended our Third Annual Taste of Laurel. Good food, good friends and a good time had by all. We would especially like to thank the following

Taste of Laurel vendors and participants:

Cakes by Adrienne

Fruit Flowers

Laurel Tavern Donuts

Main Street Sports Bar and Grill

Mango's Grill

Nuzbacks

Pasta Nostra

Red, Hot & Blue

Soretti's Ethiopian

Tampico

Toucan Taco

Please support our local restaurants and Main Street Pharmacy, our corporate sponsor for the event.

### **MUSEUM NEWS**

Our exhibit *Snapshots in Time: Our Community in 1910 and 2010* continues until December 17th. 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 ends November 28<sup>th</sup>!!

### **Children's Corner**

Please spread the word about our children's programs. We invite you and yours to learn a little bit about Laurel; history, customs, and traditions, and experience the interactive space Diven's Den.

### **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 Mango's restaurant. Join us!

### **LHS Genealogy Group**

The Laurel Historical Society 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).

### **Museum Shop News**

#### **Holiday Open House**

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup>**

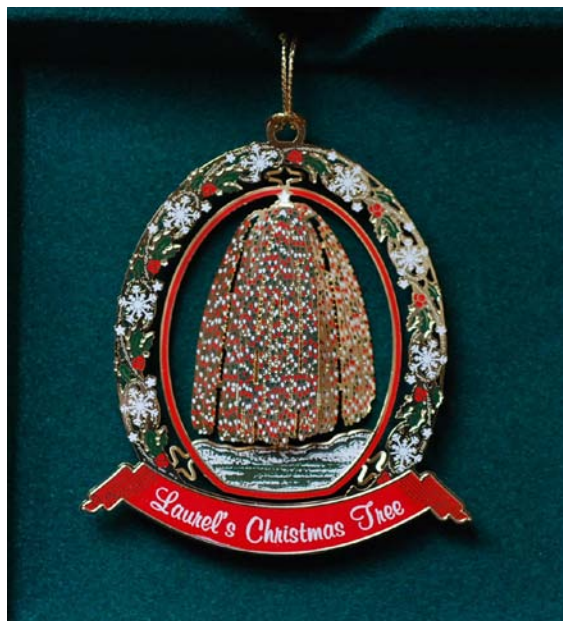
Can you smell the nutmeg and cinnamon baking up in delicious Christmas cookies, the tangy smell of pine, and the fresh scent of bayberry candles? Then you must be headed for the LHS Open House December 3-5, 2010!

The Open House is a great place to find just the right gift for a special person. Consider a new item such as **“Homemade Cookies from Olden Times”** baked by our talented corps of volunteers for sale in special holiday tins; a unique gift for only \$10. Additionally, we will have sample cookies made from recipes in our collection of cookbooks. You may try Kris Kringle Oat Cookies from the **Coming Home for Christmas** cookbook or Benne Seed cookies from the **Plantation Row** cookbook. Cookbooks are a great gift and are reasonably priced from \$5. Gift baskets featuring these and other items will be available for purchase.

Once again the Snow Hill Garden Club will be creating its ever popular wreaths. You may order in advance at a discount price of \$30 or purchase during the Open House for \$35. Watch for the flyer coming soon! We also have a wide variety of historical toys and books, always popular with the younger crowd, as well as some cuddly toys. Don't forget all the Laurel collectibles for friends and family near and far. There are key chains, tie tacks, pendants; t-shirts and polo shirts; locally made crafts; throws; tote bags; and books about Laurel and environs.

For those who want to shop from the comfort of home, you can find many of our shop items online. Check it out at: [www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop](http://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/shop).

### **2010 LHS Ornament: Laurel's Christmas Tree**



We will be featuring the new 2010 LHS ornament at the Open House – a beautiful addition to your holiday décor that you won't want to miss. We are very excited about this year's ornament which is a departure from previous ornaments in two respects. First, it is in color; and second, it is not a building! The ornament this year represents the Kluckhuhn Family Christmas tree which has been adopted by the Laurel community as its own. The landmark tree covered with bright lights has been a beacon during the holiday season but was badly damaged during the record snows last winter. The LHS thought it a fitting tribute to feature it as our ornament of the year. Of course our entire collection of ornaments from years past will also be available. Volunteer Virginia Mentall suggests giving ornaments to friends moving in or out of town. You could also give ornaments as a housewarming gift or hostess gift during

the holidays. Karen Lubieniecki suggests decorating a small tree with only Laurel ornaments. Great ideas ladies! The ornament is available now in the Museum Shop and via the Online Shop for \$20. Previous year's ornaments are \$16.

Join us at the Open House for fun, shopping, and treats!

**Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM**

**Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM – 2:00**

**Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

### **MEMBER NEWS**

Please welcome our newest members:

Crystal Brooks  
Dana and Karl Harzer  
Paul and Stephanie Hirt  
Mark Tomassoni

We are happy to have you!

### **Welcome New Volunteers!**

The LHS welcomes our newest volunteer: Melissa Calvin - shop, festivals and as needed docent.

Thank you Melissa for volunteering!

The Laurel Museum is in need of volunteers for the **2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month, 1 PM - 4 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!

### **GALA NEWS**

"Night at the Races" will be held at the Laurel Racetrack on April 9, 2011. Sponsorship opportunities are now available. Would you or your business consider sponsoring the Invitations, Commemorative Booklet, Centerpieces, Keepsake Photos, Foyer Décor and more? How about purchasing a premium table for 10 and receive preferred seating, premium wine and other amenities. Place an ad in the Commemorative Booklet for as little as \$40 for a business card size. The possibilities are endless and all donations are tax deductible and will be used to further the mission of the Laurel Historical Society, Inc.

Donations are also being accepted for the silent auction. Create a theme basket or a basket representing your business. You may also donate Laurel related treasures, new or gently used items or quality hand crafted items. Thank you in advance for your support and we hope to see you there!

### **INTERESTING TIDBITS**

#### **THE FIRST SPEEDING ORDINANCE IN LAUREL**

Submitted by Ken Skrivseth

Law of Maryland 1878; Chapter 468

An Act to repeal sections 4, 12, 15, amend

An act to incorporate the town of Laurel

Section 51 [Prevent Fast Driving]

Approved April 5 1878

That the said commissioners shall have power to pass ordinances to prevent fast or immoderate riding or driving through the streets of said town, and when it shall appear that the offender is intoxicated so as

to render it unsafe to permit him to ride or drive through the streets, may provide for the removal of the horse and vehicle beyond the limits for said town, or for the deposit thereof in some place of security until the offender shall be sober, and may confine said offender, as provided in section forty-five of this act; to prevent and remove any obstructions in the streets, lanes or alleys; to prevent the exhibition of any indecent or immoral shows in said town, and to pass all other ordinances or by-laws necessary to give effect and operation to the powers vested in them.

Same issue...earlier time!!

### **SHARE YOUR MEMORIES**

Submitted by Joe Robison

When I was 11 or 12 years old I sold newspapers at the Race Track. We sold the Baltimore Sun and it was not a good seller. We would watch the "Jack's Little Green Card" selling their card for \$1 with their predications of the winners. There would be some that just give out winners and you paid on the way out after the races. They would give one winner to some and other winners to other. They couldn't lose. We could go into the race track after the 6th race to sell our papers and that's when we made our money. I liked the steeple chase racing. One day a storm came up and it was really raining hard and a helicopter came down in the infield. The next day we found out it was Arthur Godfrey!

### **FALL TO WINTER IN LAUREL IN THE 1930s**

Submitted by Elizabeth L. (Betty) Compton

The undulating red brick sidewalks on Second Street in the 1930s were pretty to look at, great for hiding secret messages beneath, checking the chalk hobo signs and for scavenger hunts but they were not good for roller skating. So we learned on the hard cinder path in front of the Fish house nearby. We then graduated to Montgomery Street where concrete or "cement" (as was

more often said then) sidewalks made smooth ways to glide as fast as possible on those crisp autumn days after school. Roller skating and bike riding were favorite pastimes.

Montgomery Street was our route to walk to Elementary and High School. It was lined with many deciduous trees; oak, ash, maple and some dogwoods in gardens. Their brilliant reds, yellows, and oranges mixed with evergreens blazed in the sunlight. The fallen leaves crackled under our feet as we kicked our way along. Burning of the leaves was permitted in those days and the trip was fragrant with a smoky haze.

The space on the southwest corner of The Boulevard (Route 1) and Montgomery Street was vacant in 1930. The lot is now occupied by a gas station. The Musgrave residence was on the south and the Water's home on the west. The field was filled with various shades of tan, green and brown grasses, blue chicory blossoms and the most impressive milk weed pods. Mature pods burst open with the contents of silk threads attached to one seed holding the one-inch strands in a triangle of beauty glistening in the sun as the breeze scattered them in the air. These stood out as a lovely miracle of beauty in nature. I paused as I went by to enjoy the scene.

Just outside the elementary school grounds, on the Fifth Street side, was an area where chinquapins grew. We would crawl under the bushy shrub and shake the branches to bring the little nuts (a miniature chestnut, *Castanea pumila*) to the ground. After stuffing our pockets, we peeled off the thin shell and ate the inside on our way home. We made "Winter Gardens" in deep pie plates or low bowls filled with woods soil. We gathered moss, crow's foot, seedling evergreens and the best find; the deep green

leaved creeping plant with their red partridge berries. Tending this little treasure was a pastime during the cold months waiting for the color of the bulbs of spring.

Autumn in Laurel is a beautiful time with its abundance of turning leaves and riverside views. We clamored over the rocks along the Patuxent River. On weekends we rode horse back beginning at Aitcheson Stables, through the woods, in all kinds of weather. When winter snow arrived, my mother made crullers dusted with confectioner's sugar and hot cocoa to cheer us as we returned home cold and wet from sledding. I will always remember the wonderful aroma and the welcome of warm sweets and happy greetings. I also remember the scolding my mother gave Mr. Aitcheson when he brought us home from the hills near his home on a big sled tied to the rear of his car. The potential danger was too much for her to remain silent. We agreed with Mr. Aitcheson that it was a great ride! When Laurel Lake froze, it was the signal for all kids and some adults to bring out the ice skates and wool gloves. Some evenings as it began to grow dark, fathers came to pick up their children for dinner. They often left the headlights of their cars on to give us another half hour of fun.

Wintertime inside was often spent in the Library where my great grandparents set of Compton's Pictured Encyclopedias helped us do our homework. On Sundays my grandmother accompanied my Uncle Emory on the piano as he sang familiar songs in his deep, rich baritone voice. After homework on week nights, we played one or two games of Parcheesi, Monopoly, Checkers, Dominoes or card games like Old Maid or Hearts with my Grandfather or whoever was enticed. We also read or listened to the radio. The Kraft Music Hour

on Sunday afternoons featuring the operatic singer Vivian Dellachiesa was a favorite of the family. Majestic Radio Concerts were introduced by the announcer intoning, "With the Majesty of Motion from the Boundless Everywhere comes the mighty name Majestic, Monarch of the Air". Listening to the radio was an important part of the life for news and entertainment. The local movie theatre also provided Saturday matinees with serials, news and licorice.

In 1932, my mother made my brother and me colonial costumes with cotton batting wigs, authentic jewelry and a velvet bow on my wrist and wig to wear to St. Philip's celebration of the Bi-Centennial of George Washington's birth. In school, we celebrated his actual birthday in February.



Bob and Betty Myles in 1932; Bi-Centennial of George Washington's Birthday at St. Philip's

Thanksgiving was a big family occasion with the traditional feast and devotions when the clan gathered. Christmas preparations meant extra church service, decorations and cooking. The proverbial fruit cake was a popular tradition. In our home, one "light" and one "dark" were

made with copious amounts of preserved fruit and nuts, soon after Thanksgiving. They were stored in tight-lidded tins with a towel soaked in brandy so they would be “just right” by Christmas. Various cookies and sweets were made and some hidden to be sure they were available Christmas week. When I think of them, I can taste the favorites. Our neighbor, Mr. Miller, always delivered wine he made from his grape arbor on Christmas Eve. We were not given any until we were a little older because it was supposed to be “strong”. Mrs. Miller and my mother traded their baked delicacies doubling the color and variety of treats.

Our Christmas tree was cut by my Dad from the area south of Second Street which ended at Laurel Avenue into a pine woods. The smell of fresh evergreens permeated the house. Decorating the Christmas tree was done by Santa making an especially exciting and colorful Christmas morning. In later years, we sometimes invited friends in for a Christmas tree decorating party. The day after Christmas was reserved for our visit to my Dad’s sister’s home where all six of them had decorated a tree reaching to the high ceiling with bright, delicate ornaments. In addition to their delicious dinner we had to choose between the three cakes Aunt Molly made each year. One was a white cake with fresh coconut icing, one a yellow cake with caramel icing and the third chocolate with chocolate icing. If you have never had a “made from scratch” fresh coconut cake, find a recipe, crack open the coconut, grate its lining, make the creamy icing and enjoy; there is no equal to Aunt Molly’s however.

By 1937 we had lost most of our dear old folks but the birth of our baby sister cheered us all that year (and many since) with her vivacity and smile. Growing up in Laurel provided exciting, healthy and

memorable times. Now so much technology is available to young people, but I think some of the simpler family oriented activities and experiences are still enjoyed.

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

## NOV 2010 – FEB 2011

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

Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Dec 4<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM  
*Holiday Open House* at the  
Laurel Museum.

Dec 19<sup>th</sup> 10 AM - 2 PM  
Last day for *Snapshots in  
Time: Our Community in  
1910 and 2010* at the Laurel  
Museum.

Dec 13<sup>th</sup> & Jan 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM  
Genealogy Group Meeting at  
the Laurel Pool Room.

Dec 15<sup>th</sup> & Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM  
Book Club at Mango's Grill  
on Route 1.

Jan 27<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM  
LHS Board Meeting

Feb 6<sup>th</sup> Opening of new  
exhibit: *And They're Off: 100  
Years at Laurel Park* at the  
Laurel Museum.