The “Greatest Show on Earth!”

Not only is the gala our largest fundraiser of the year, it is one of our most fun programs. The idea that once a year, our members and guests put on their best finery and spend the evening in community merriment, is magical. This year’s gala was definitely “The Greatest Show on Earth!” For those of you who missed it, we moved from the Ballroom at the Doubletree to the much more spacious Atrium. We were fortunate enough to have both our uplighting and draping sponsored, which helped to transform the space. The elegant yet playful circus theme was interpreted in a variety of ways throughout the evening and the room itself. Everything from the entertainment, to the centerpieces, to the activities and background music was chosen with care to invoke that circus-y feel. Jhanna Levin, acting as ringmaster, was in costume. A stilt walker greeted guests at the entrance. A gilded living statue surprised several guests during cocktail hour. Even a mermaid was in attendance! Our themed Wheel of Donation game during cocktail hour certainly had people talking.

The spirit of donation was in full swing that night for sure. Steve, serving as our auctioneer, was able to convince several guests to donate to our long list of needs. Coming soon: new lighting in the basement and a new desk for Ann. Although our honorees Bob Mignon, LARS, and Main Street Pharmacy were not surprised by their award, the thunderous applause from the attendees proved we chose wisely.

Save the date for next year’s gala...same time, same place...new theme: April 13, 2019!

~Jhanna Levin, Mariam Thakkar, and the Gala Committee
New Executive Director joins LHS!
I am delighted to join the Laurel Historical Society as the Executive Director! My husband, Robert, and I moved to Laurel less than a year ago to be closer to his job at the National Archives and to our family and friends in northeastern Maryland and southeastern Pennsylvania. We quickly learned that there was so much history and culture alive in Laurel!

I had wanted to be an archaeologist since I was in the sixth grade, and I graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in Anthropology. My graduate studies at the College of William and Mary focused on 18th-century material culture in the Shenandoah Valley. Talking to people about my passion for the past led to me teaching anthropology and sociology as an adjunct professor at Cecil College. I transitioned to the museum world as a curator for the Havre de Grace Maritime Museum, putting my time as an intern at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to good use!

As an archaeologist, I have pulled countless artifacts out of the ground (the first person in hundreds or thousands of years to touch them again)! However, I feel like small, community-focused organizations like ours house the real treasures, because we have the pieces of history, art, and culture that are so intimately tied to Laurel’s past—some items have never even left town—and now their stories get a chance to be told through our work at the historical society.

Let’s Connect!
I love meeting new people and making new connections, especially when it comes to learning more about my new town! I invite you to stop by the Museum to see me, call, or send me an email. Let me know your ideas for LHS, or anything else! Have a new recipe? A favorite restaurant? A great place to walk or relax? Let me know!

Thank you for such a warm welcome, and my best for a great summer!

Yours respectfully,
Ann Bennett
director@laurelhistoricalsociety.org
DNA – Your “Birth” day Gift From Your Ancestors

At the LHS Annual Meeting genealogy enthusiast Jim Cross presented an in-depth talk “DNA – Your “Birth” day Gift From Your Ancestors.” He explored some of the basics of DNA testing and what services different companies offer. We’re excerpting one part of his talk here.

One of the most important elements of DNA testing is understanding that different DNA Tests find different things. There are four DNA tests that come from different parts of the cells:

- Autosomal (inside nucleus) = atDNA
- Mitochondrial (outside nucleus) = mDNA
- Y Chromosome (inside nucleus) = Y DNA
- X Chromosome (inside nucleus) = mtDNA

What companies can you test with and what do they provide?

- **23 and Me** atDNA (genealogy or for possible medical issues)
- **Living DNA** – atDNA, Y DNA, mtDNA (geographical roots)
- **Ancestry and MyHeritage** - atDNA
- **Family Tree DNA** – atDNA, Y DNA, mtDNA

Once you’ve received the original results, you may want to go further. [GEDmatch.com](http://gedmatch.com) is an option. It’s not a testing site but offers tools to analyze and compare your results from different testing companies and possibly find additional matches.

For those looking to explore their family tree, it’s important to remember that DNA Testing complements a genealogical paper trail. It can provide clues, and break through “Brick Walls.” Genealogy efforts require BOTH. Genealogy is built on the documentation of ancestors with various research records. Using DNA successfully requires that you and your match have some verified lineages that you can explore. There’s a lot more to DNA testing and genealogy but hopefully this can help. ~Karen Lubieniecki

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**Congratulations to our new LHS officers!**

**President:** Jhanna Levin  
**Vice President:** Frances Brooks  
**Treasurer:** Lesley Brinton  
**Recording Secretary:** Melanie Dzwonchyk  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Karen Sullivan
June 1916: Laurel’s Dress Rehearsal for War

It’s Wednesday, June 21, 1916. Imagine that you are shopping on Main Street in Laurel with other shoppers and several horse and buggy wagons. Perhaps one of the new-fangled motor cars is down on US Highway 1. You hear the electric trolley coming on one of its normal runs from Washington DC. The trolley stops at its 6th & Main terminus. The sleepy Main Street scene changes abruptly! A company of Maryland soldiers gets off the trolley. They were not expected.

What is happening? The Great War, later known as World War I, has been boiling in Europe for two years already, but the United States was not involved. In 1916, President Wilson was more concerned about problems with Mexico. Pancho Villa had been creating havoc within Mexico, and his men had crossed the border briefly, terrorizing the town of Columbus, New Mexico. General Pershing had responded by invading Mexico, chasing the bandits. Some USA border protection was needed fast and the National Guard was the answer. For the first time Congress authorized an American president to call up the National Guard across the country. Maryland’s National Guard Troops converged in Laurel.

Troops came to Laurel from all over the state, including Cambridge, Frederick, Bel Air, and Hagerstown. Infantry, artillery, and cavalry from the 1st, 4th, and 5th regiments of Maryland, about 4500 troops, created a sea of tents. Company F of the 1st Maryland, the troop that arrived so unexpectedly by trolley, guarded quartermaster supplies at the Numsen Canning Factory on Talbot Ave.

The Maryland National Guard encampment, named Camp Harrington after Maryland’s governor, stretched from Talbot Avenue south along Route 1 all the way to the Maryland National Cemetery. Soldiers mustered, were equipped, drilled, fed, and trained for action. Visiting the troops became a major event for locals and folk from far and wide. They came by trolley, train, horseback, buggy, and even by motor cars. It was reported that around 40,000 people came to witness, meet, and celebrate the soldiers.

In a few weeks the soldiers were loaded onto about 10 special trains at the station, while equipment and horses were loaded at the Laurel Racetrack side. The logistics were complex, involving men, horses, tents, kitchens, food, supplies, and weapons. Their destination: Eagle Pass, Texas.
Troops in Laurel

“Until they had disembarked from the electric line and started down Main street, Laurel did not know the soldiers were here...[T]he blaring of the trumpets soon had the entire population on the streets.

Cheers upon cheers echoed and re-echoed through the country and the inhabitants – and particularly the young ones, welcomed the troopers.”

(Laurel Leader, June 23, 1916)

June 1916, continued

Within a few months it was over and, by early 1917, the troops came home by train. The Mexican border incident was mostly uneventful and is today largely forgotten. But it meant the soldiers gained experience and Laurel’s citizens became more comfortable with soldiers in their community. Meanwhile, the war in Europe continued to escalate, and with a better trained and equipped fighting force at home in Maryland and other states, the stage was set for the US to take a larger role in the world conflict. On April 6, 1917, the US declared war against Germany. Many of the young men who had just mustered out returned to service to fight in France in a much more difficult and deadly conflict. ~Ken Skriverst

New from the Collection

These photographs were recently donated by Beth Elliot and Dianne Plackett. The picture on the right shows the interior of the Fairy Spring School, a rural, one room schoolhouse located on Route 197 halfway between Laurel and Bowie.

The school, named for a nearby spring, educated the children of the surrounding farms until the early 1930’s. The picture on the left depicts one of the classes around the turn of the century, showing the students and their teacher. One teacher taught all subjects to grades 1 through 8.

~Marlene Frazier
LHS ELECTS NEW OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

The LHS held its annual meeting on May 10, electing new officers and members of the Board of Directors. The officers and new board members will begin serving their terms July 1, 2018. Terms run through June 2020. Several currently serving members were reelected for another term: Mike Boivin, Frances Brooks, Lisa Everett, Jhanna Levin, Karen Lubieniecki, Margie McCeney, Melanie Dzwonchyk, and Marlene Frazier. Three new individuals were also elected:

**Robert Mignon**

*Bob Mignon is a long-time Laurel business owner, who has made many contributions to the Laurel community, and has been especially supportive of the LHS and its mission to preserve and promote Laurel history. He was recently recognized for his efforts at the LHS Gala with a Community Impact Award.***

**Karen Sullivan**

*Karen Sullivan is a dedicated LHS Volunteer, whose efforts were recognized in 2018 with her selection as Volunteer of the Year.*

**Lawrence Eldridge**

*Larry Eldridge is a long-time supporter and former member of the LHS Board of Directors. He currently serves on the Investment Committee.*

Board members Abram Fox and Amy Graver declined to serve another term and the organization thanked them for their service and many contributions to the LHS. Board member Richard Friend, whose term ends in 2019, resigned for family reasons in April. We are deeply appreciative of Richard’s contributions and service to the LHS. We also wanted to thank officers completing their service: Steve Hubbard, Amy Graver, Mariam Thakkar, and Marlene Frazier. ~Karen Lubieniecki

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**Genealogy Corner - How to begin your family’s genealogy**

You could document your data by hand using a variety of paper forms (many free online) and a pen/pencil. But a good software program can make the job much easier and enjoyable, and can help to find information about your ancestors. I recommend you use a software program called RootsMagic (RM). You can download a free copy of RootsMagic Essentials from [www.rootsmagic.com](http://www.rootsmagic.com). The free version has all of the required functions but only provides a limited number of reports. The full version is only $29.99 and is often on sale around the holidays. They offer a variety of user guides and educational material on their web site.

RM is quite user friendly to use - you just start by entering data on yourself! Enter your name (or maiden name) and dates for birth, marriage, etc. Then begin to expand your tree by adding your parents and grandparents, etc. I also include information such as when/where they lived, religion, education, military service, awards received, occupation(s), deceased date and place of burial. As you build your tree, you can add photos and other media into the software.

RM has built in connectivity with FamilySearch.org (free), Ancestry.com (with an account), and other databases. I recommend that you consider uploading your tree to these sites for free so you can access data from other trees on your ancestors. More about sharing your tree in the next issue of Genealogy Corner. ~Michael R. Boivin, Sr.
MEMBERSHIP

Check your mailing label on the back to find out if it’s time to join or renew your membership!

Members receive:
- Online access to parts of the Laurel Museum's collection
- Quarterly newsletters and Members-Only Events
- Participation in the LHS Members Only Genealogy Group
- E-mail bulletins on events and activities
- A 10% discount in the museum shop, including online purchases
- Discounts on LHS events, including our annual Gala
- Contribution to the preservation of Laurel's past and present for future generations

Membership Categories

- Student $10
- Senior $18
- Individual $30
- Couple/Family $40
- Business $50
- Lifetime $500

Name(s) ____________________________________________

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☐ Please use my email address for electronic communication.

Payment
- Check
- Credit Card
  Credit Card # ________________________________
  Expiration date ___________________________ CVV # _________

Please return this form and payment to:

Laurel Historical Society
817 Main Street
Laurel, MD 20707

-OR-

Join Online https://www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org/join-the-lhs.html
Calendar of Events

Rube Goldberg Camp: June 26—29, 2018
McCeney Scholarship Deadline: June 29, 2018
Science in the Summer Camp: August 20—24, 2018

Help us “Go Green!”
Help us eliminate paper, reduce waste, and lower costs—all resources that can be better used in support of our education and outreach programs—simply by making sure we have a current email.

Look for emails from us in the future and be sure to check “email communication” on future printed communication.

Or, email us at info@laurelhistoricalsociety.org. Email subscribers also see the newsletter in full color! ~Ann

Contact Us
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Laurel, MD 20707
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Email: info
@laurelhistoricalsociety.org

We’re on the web:
www.laurelhistoricalsociety.org

Laurel Museum Hours
Wed & Fri. 10 am - 2pm
Sunday 1 - 4 pm