



***In Remembrance of William W. “Bill” Leap***

By David C. Munn & Paul W. Schopp

David C. Munn writes:

The first time I met Bill Leap coincided with the first meeting of what would become the West Jersey History Roundtable. We met at Bill Farr’s law office. In addition to Bill, Bill Farr, and myself, the group included Bill Mihm, Gene Schmidt, Edie Hoelle, and Joan Brown Michaels. The last to arrive, Bill walked in with the 1907 Hopkins atlas (*Atlas of the Vicinity of Camden, New Jersey*) under his arm.

The group agreed to meet occasionally, and take field trips to historic places in Camden County and adjacent locations. At the time, 1968, most of us had become involved in the Camden County Historical Society. We would see each other on a regular basis.

When I became president of the historical society, Bill helped me initiate the restoration of Pomona Hall. Bill brought the project to completion as he followed me as president. During that period, Bill suggested as a fundraiser a series of auto tours. The Society would lead bus tours of the county, then publish the tours so anyone could follow them on their own. Bill would take a map and figure what sites would be interesting, and figure a route we could use. Then he and other “volunteers” would drive the route, noting points of historic interest and the mileage. Those trips resulted in great fun and real learning experiences. We conducted four tours, and published three. A manuscript prepared for the fourth tour, mainly Gloucester sites, remains unpublished.

Early in our relationship Bill asked me to read a manuscript he developed on the history of his hometown, Runnemede. He had completed four chapters. I read his work and submitted my opinion. I told him he should eliminate the first three chapters, start the work with the fourth chapter and

work from there. I did not hear from him for nine months! Finally he adopted my suggestion and renewed his research and writing.

You must realize that Bill owned his own business (sign painting) separated from his residence by a driveway. Often he would work late, then eat dinner, and finally get to work on his book. This did not happen until late at night. Several times he would call me after 11:00 p.m. I remember one call at 1:00 a.m. I sat on the floor in my kitchen listening to Bill, and I fell asleep. When I awakened with a start, Bill was still talking. What resulted from my suggestions, and much great work by Bill, is an outstanding local history of his community.

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Bill became interested in identifying old houses, and would visit them as the opportunity presented itself. He would knock on the door and identify himself as an “old house detective” and ask if he could look at the interior of the property to determine when it was built. He never seemed to be turned down, and would poke and prod through the rooms. In one house, he noticed one room that appeared to be shorter than the outside dimension of the house indicated. He mentioned this to the owner, and asked permission to punch a hole in the wall to see if he had made the right calculation. The homeowner supplied the hammer and Bill punched a hole and discovered a fireplace that had been covered up at some point.

I have been with Bill (and others) visiting three separate log houses in South Jersey, and in three different counties. We constantly learned from each other. An unusual experience happened the night that Bill called and asked if I had any plans. He had a visitor and wanted me to join him in talking to the man. I went to his house and met a professor from Ithaca College. Bill and he shared a bottle of Irish whiskey, and I joined in. I kept thinking, “Who is this guy?” At one point the professor looked at me and asked why I kept staring at him. I told him I thought I knew him from somewhere. He laughed and told me to keep thinking. All of a sudden, about the bottom of the bottle of whiskey, it came to me. “I know,” I exclaimed, “you’re one of the Camden 28!” This group of 28 people raided the Camden County Courthouse in Camden and destroyed military draft records. How he found Bill, I’ll never know. Several years ago, the Camden County Historical Society hosted a reunion of the Camden 28, but the professor did not attend.

Bill went through a tough time when his first wife, Claire, died. He called one night and invited me to join him at “Captain Cat’s” restaurant because he wanted company and some oyster stew. Over dinner, he explained how he had decided to seek his old flame whom he had known when he was stationed at Fort Dix. He learned that she had divorced and resided in Ohio. He eventually married Joyce and brought her to Runnemede.

This is only scratching the surface of my memories of Bill. He is a fine and true friend, and is sorely missed in his community, by his family, and the current members of the West Jersey History Roundtable.

Paul W. Schopp writes:

Although I had heard of Bill Leap for a number of years, I actually became acquainted with him in 1989, when William Farr called for a resumption of West Jersey History Roundtable meetings. Mr. Farr wanted to assemble the leading local historians in Camden County to assist him with his work on

place names. When Mr. Leap entered the meeting, he was larger than life: a raconteur filled with energy and stories of past glories. During my years of friendship with Bill Leap, I never observed a single moment when he was at a loss for words. In 1993, Bill began planning for a celebration and dedication of a new monument at Ashbrook’s Burial Ground in Glendora, Gloucester County. A cemetery since the late seventeenth century, Hessians, returning from their complete rout at Fort Mercer in October 1777, buried a number of their dead at this location. Bill contacted the Landgraf von Hesse in an effort to obtain funds for the monument; the Landgraf responded with \$2000 for the stone marker. Bill then coordinated with state and national officials, the local American Legion Post, and a variety of other groups and individuals. He also wrote a booklet for the celebration, providing a history of the burial ground, an Indian village that once stood near the cemetery, the Hessians, and even the lost cannons, reportedly discarded into Big Timber Creek so the Hessian soldiers could use the carriages for transporting their wounded. I took on the task of designing and typesetting the booklet while Bill handled all of the other details leading up to the dedication day. Bill continued to check on my progress and, like Dave Munn’s experience, I can remember being on the telephone with Bill at 3:30 a.m. making corrections to the text and falling asleep on the keyboard. At one point, the American Legion membership, largely composed of Second World War veterans, revolted when Bill told them that a contingent from the Infanterie Regiment von Donop would have an encampment at the burial ground. The American Legionnaires wanted nothing to do with “those krauts.” Meanwhile, I had convinced Bill that the Hessian re-enactors should not just set up camp at Ashbrook’s, but actually march up Station Avenue and then turn and march into the cemetery. On the day of the dedication, the Hessians did exactly that and when they marched into the cemetery, they did so with such flourish and military precision that every one of those American Legion members stood up and saluted! This action added yet another dimension to the day’s event and celebratory atmosphere.

Road trips with Bill were always a treat as he never failed to have a quiver full of pointed stories about the locations visited or passed along the road. Likewise, he always regaled those present at the meetings of the West Jersey History Roundtable with accounts of visiting old houses or his research into a multitude of historical subjects. As Bill’s health deteriorated, his house in Runnemede became “headquarters” for the roundtable, and during that time he only missed one or two meetings due to his illness. He would listen intently and usually interjected a tale, whether or not it related to the topic at hand! Always the gregarious host, he

welcomed each person arriving at the house and then reveled in the camaraderie and fellowship present around the table. As the guy who always picked up the pastries for the meetings, I would walk into Bill's house and open the box and Bill would select first. One time he wanted cheese danish, of which I had none, so I promised to bring some the next month and did so. Cheese danish reigned supreme for Bill, but one month I showed up with four cheese danish and Bill asked for apple instead – and I had none. Bill always kept us guessing!

Like the story of Tiny Tim in the Dickens's tale, *A Christmas Carol*, today there is an empty chair at the roundtable and Bill's presence is sadly missed by all. But the members keep Bill alive through recounting his stories as well as stories about his exploits. *Requiescat in pace*, Bill.

## **The Making of Sandy Shorts 1.2**

Last fall a group of Literature majors in a seminar entitled *Writing South Jersey* were charged with exploring South Jersey and writing about things that make it unique. Some of these features date back to then (you'll note the dates); others were written specifically for this issue, in particular the remembrance of Bill Leap by David C. Munn and Paul W. Schopp. Mr. Leap, benefactor of Stockton's Special Collections, died on January 18, 2012.

Stephanie Allen  
Editor

## **The William W. Leap Collection**

By Bill Bearden, Associate Director Library Technical Services, Richard E. Bjork Library, Stockton College

The William W. Leap collection consists of 1,265 titles in a variety of formats: monographs, annuals, maps, atlases, newspaper and magazine articles, and even one audio-tape. Among the sixteen books printed before 1850 there is included the earliest printed book in the collection, a copy of *Acts of the General Assembly of the Province of New Jersey*, published by Isaac Collins in Burlington in 1776.

While New Jersey is the primary focus of the collection: local church and business histories, family and genealogical material, art, fiction, natural history, ornithology, farming, maritime matters, and folklore, there are also some curious specialty items, including works on antiques, buttons, and military uniforms. Most interesting are nine Philadelphia and New Jersey county atlases dating from the 1870s,

complete with fine watercolor depictions of townships and property lines. Quite recently, the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts of Philadelphia restored for the library a wall map of Salem and Gloucester Counties, published by Smith & Wistar in Philadelphia in 1849. This wall map is, perhaps, the most valuable item in the collection. Its map scale has been used as the masthead for this issue of *Sandy Shorts*.

The collection reflects the interests and collecting passions of one individual: William W. Leap. His generous donation will always be remembered by the Stockton library and the users of its special collections.

## **Batsto Village**

By Ashley Rogers

It was a brisk October day in 2011, and you could tell fall was rapidly approaching. I hopped in my car, and having learned from my previous failed attempt at a site visit, made sure I had a full tank of gas and refreshments. Last trip, it turned out that due to Hurricane Irene, several of the bridges were still out, which sent my cousin Chance and me on a wild goose chase through the Pines. Being a lifelong resident of the area, I was surprised that even I found myself a little worried as the sun set and all I could see were trees. Luckily, my GPS works better than my Piney instincts, and we made it home unharmed.

With that fiasco behind me, I was ready to try again. When we arrived at Batsto around 3 p.m., there was an unexpected amount of cars for a late Saturday afternoon. Amongst these cars were a few limos as well. As we walked up to the main office for information, cheers were heard, and music began to play. Originally, I thought that this welcome was for my arrival, but it turned out that there was a wedding taking place on one of the scenic pastures; afterward, they took their pictures by the mansion.

All around the village, families could be seen enjoying the afternoon together. It was a great pleasure to see children running around outside surrounded by the historical town. In a world where most vacations are taxing on the parents' sanity as well as their wallets, Batsto offers a low-budget, fun day-trip complete with picnic areas, nature trails, historical sites, and all-over beautiful nature scenes – especially during the fall when the leaves begin to change. There is also an audio tour guide available, which includes different sites you can walk to and around. It provides phone numbers visitors can call on placards in front of relics such as the old saw mill, which is still used for demonstrations today. You might even see a painter capturing the beauty of the scenery on canvas,

as we did that day. Overall, Batsto is a great blast from the past that sits right in our own backyard. I can remember going there as a child, and I can't wait to go back and try out one of the trails once the weather warms up. Check it out for yourself.

## **Corvettes in Smithville**

By Ryan Ballard

On October 16th, 2011, Corvettes, new and old, could be seen throughout Historic Smithville & Village Greene in Smithville, NJ. Enthusiasts and onlookers roamed about looking at cars and talking to owners. At the same time, judges circled each car making sure every detail was correct; car companies and dealers offered their information on tables and inside tents; vendors from all around sold car products and apparel. It is a slice of American (and South Jersey) culture that exists so far below the radar that it is hardly even talked about or known. The best way to understand such shows is to visit one, join the crowd of onlookers, and chat with the car owners.

My father and I attended, as we do every year, but there weren't as many cars at the event as previous years. Ask most owners why and they'll blame it on the economy. Ask the right guy and he'll tell you it's because the car club running the show for the past five years is so out-of-touch with trophy classes that the true definitions of modification and customization are just plain wrong. Even though there were fewer Corvettes at the show this year, it was still an enjoyable event.

The assembled crowd walked around looking at the interiors, engines, paint, wheels, body, and even the undercarriage of certain cars. It may seem foolish to look at the underside of a car, but for enthusiasts, this can be a real treat. The crowd was sprinkled with connoisseurs who clearly knew why they were looking at certain components of a car, and you could see the appreciation on their faces. By simply looking at the VIN number and cowl tag on a classic car they could tell you what year it was made, where it came from, correct paint color for that year's cars, engine size, horsepower, interior color, and types of wheels and tires. By looking at the engine block number, they can tell you even more.

The literature on classic cars from the 1960s is limited, but at shows such as this you can learn about these cars from people who own them and love them. Say the words "Baldwin Motion" to a car guy from the 1960s and he'll drop his jaw, then start talking; say it to someone from today and they'll ask if you're speaking English. So take the time to visit one of these car shows. You will learn a thing or two (or more).

## **Henry Bostwick's Chicken Farm**

By Phillip Potter

Henry Bostwick has lived in Vineland, NJ since the late 1930s, when he was 4 years old. His parents moved to Vineland in hopes of retiring on a chicken farm because, at the time that they moved, this was a common reason to come to this area. Unfortunately, most Vineland chicken farmers did not do nearly well enough to retire; most of the farms barely made enough money to stay afloat. While they might not have struck it rich, chicken farming did teach them an interesting tidbit or two.

Take egg-laying, for example. Mr. Bostwick states that a leghorn chicken raised in Vineland still (to his knowledge) holds the world record for most eggs laid in a year, 362; the previous record had been 353. This chicken was named Meg O'day.

Then there is the business of actually cleaning the coops which, as you would imagine, get quite dirty. So, periodically they need to be cleaned and sterilized. The way that the farmers would do this is by using a nicotine solution to spray down the coops. The solution was six drops of nicotine to every 6 gallon container of water. When this was sprayed into a coop (without the chickens in it, of course) it would not only sterilize, it would kill any small animals or insects. Mr. Bostwick then said, "I have no idea why people smoke. If six drops can kill a mouse imagine what a lifetime of smoking does to your lungs."

Below is a diagram of an average chicken coop that Henry worked on as a child.

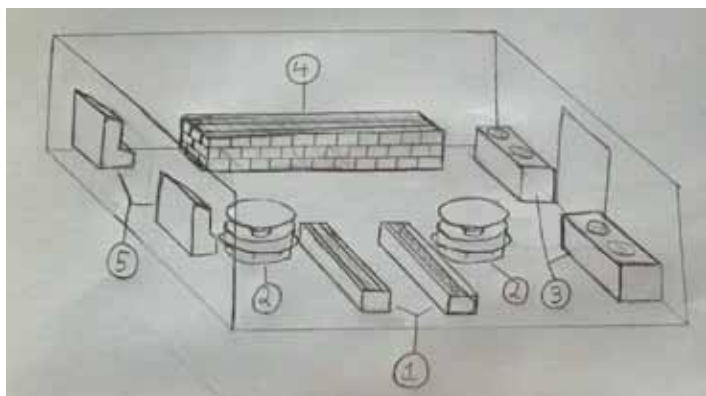
1) These are the troughs that the chickens would eat from. The chickens would perch on the sides and simply peck at the feed inside.

2) These are watering basins that chickens would perch on. These "fountains" automatically refill in a similar manner as a toilet basin.

3) These boxes are where the chickens roost. The circular areas were filled with straw, and the chickens would lay their eggs there.

4) This is the area where the chickens defecate. The sides of the box are block stacked on each other without mortar, so that they can be easily torn down and cleaned. The top is a mesh that the chickens can perch on, but still allows the fecal matter to fall through.

5) These boxes are filled with granite and oyster shells, respectively. These "act as the chicken's teeth." The chickens swallow these two things, and they stay in the chicken's gizzard to digest food.



## *Bivalve's Ships and Wharves and the Bayshore Discovery Project*

By Jenna McCoy

I wasn't looking for the museum when I found it. In fact, driving back in the thick marsh beyond Port Norris, I wasn't expecting to find much of anything aside from crab traps and the abandoned shacks of a once-thriving oyster town. Bivalve, neighboring the truly abandoned town of Shellpile, was a place I was exploring to find traces of what used to be.

That's why finding the newly developed, currently evolving *Shipping Sheds and Wharves* section of the *Bayshore Discovery Project* was such a surprise. Sitting deep at the end a driveway of crushed shells and marsh reeds, its museum and learning center is a project recently put in motion to preserve and rediscover the surprisingly rich history of a town that has all but vanished.

The building itself was remodeled to replicate the shops and oyster shucking wharves that were once filled with life and business. Along the deck is even a renovated train cart on its original tracks that shipped the town's oyster cargo out for sale across the country. The founders of this project made sure that the character of the building and its land was true to their turn-of-the-century form, when Bivalve and Port Norris were famous vacation spots for high society, and largely regarded as one of the oyster capitals of the world.

A film produced by the Bayshore Discovery Project reveals just that: the town and Bay area as visitors from the early 1900s would remember it. Curators of the museum first lead guests to this film, which was shot on location, and provides insights from local historians and descendants of the oyster fishermen and businessmen from the area. The film outlines the rise and fall of Port Norris and Bivalve – from the thriving oyster industry, to the near disappearance of oysters from the bay after the spread of a devastating disease, which scientists are still trying to understand.

After guests view the museum film, curators provide a tour of the building's wharves and various rooms, including the actual stands at which oysters shuckers worked over a century ago, the tools they used, and colorful plaques and photographs that tell the story of the industry that defined the Delaware Bay area. Outside on the pier, an actual historic oyster schooner, the *AJ Meerwald*, is docked, awaiting visitors who embark on guided tours throughout the Bay and the Atlantic.

But the museum doesn't stop with historical exhibits and voyages on the *Meerwald*. Each month, *Ships and Wharves* features the artwork of a local artist or crafter who showcases Bay culture with their work in the museum's art room. Art

## *Stackhouse Speech Review*

By Katie Malachefski

Dr. A.M. Stackhouse's address on the Colonial history of South Jersey, delivered in 1906 to a Quaker Young Friends Association meeting, shifts beautifully between factual accounts and more questionable oral tradition. Stackhouse, a local historian during the time this speech was delivered, was not afraid to point out the ambiguity of some of the things he recalled.

In the beginning, he notes that "tradition tells us something, but tradition is not to be relied on," and that historical accounts do not always give a full understanding of how our ancestors actually lived. Even so, Stackhouse explains various components of early life in the Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey, covering topics which include prominent early settlers, early education, and the liquor business.

Stackhouse colorfully recounts events that happened nearly 200 years before his speech in ways that makes it seem he had been there himself, but he also does not hesitate to remind us when we must "go back to facts again."

This short reprint of Stackhouse's speech splendidly portrays life in early South Jersey while simultaneously pointing out the gaps in what is known. It bounces between history and tradition, which is perhaps what makes this most appealing both to readers today and to the men sitting at the Young Friends Meeting who heard it firsthand over a century ago. If anyone is interested in reading a recent republication of the speech in order to decide for themselves, there are several available online.

Stackhouse, Dr. A.M. *A Retrospect of Colonial Times in Burlington County: An Address Delivered Before the Young Friends' Association 2nd. Mo. 9, 1906 at Moorestown New Jersey by Dr. A.M. Stackhouse.* Moorestown, NJ: The Settle Press, 1906.

and craft classes are also periodically held, including landscape painting, and even lessons titled “The Tools in Your Toolbox 101.” The museum also features touch tanks for children to learn hands-on about the wildlife within the Bay and estuary, and maps and displays for adults to learn more about the environment, too. At the end of this past September, the Shipping Sheds and Wharves opened the *Bivalve Cafe* that offers a home-cooked menu, and cozy booths – both indoors and out – that give visitors a chance to relax and enjoy the landscape, while sampling some local cuisine.

What’s more? On the second Friday of each month, Shipping Sheds and Wharves holds special evenings to offer visitors food, literature, music, crafts, and stories that exemplify and celebrate the area’s maritime culture. Last fall, the museum piloted 5-week enrichment programs for children of various ages in Delaware Bay art and culture, marine biology, and marsh ecology.

The project is currently expanding, and curators hope to increase and widen the program offerings and interactive exhibits and activities with every season. Be sure to stop by and see for yourself the active revival of a town that was, until this year, all but forgotten.

The Ships and Wharves section of the Discovery Bay Project is located at 2800 High Street (Bivalve) Port Norris, NJ.

## ***The Shack on Long Beach Island***

By Alyssa Flynn

It’s the most famous thing on Long Beach Island and it isn’t even a tourist attraction. Visitors cannot ride it, play on it, or shop near it. All they can do is look at it, and that is what they have been doing for the last hundred years. The shack, a tiny building made of wood that is falling apart off the side of the Route 72 Causeway, can be seen by all who enter the island just as they pass over the bridge. It has survived countless rain and snow storms over the last hundred years and although it is in pretty damaged condition today, tourists still view it as the guardian marking the entrance to Long Beach Island, watching over all who enter.

The owner of the property where it sits is Chet Atkins, who has plans to restore it in the near future. The actual building was once a clam shack, but has taken on a new meaning over the years as the landmark and symbol of LBI. Many homeowners feature lovely black and white pictures of it in the entrances to their homes and show their support by donating for its restoration. The shack will need some serious help to be restored since 2009’s heavy snow fall left it

in very delicate condition. Many rejoiced when they saw that the shack was still standing and survived the weather once again. Its magical endurance over the past hundred years has proven to be a pleasant mystery for the local people.

Other than the difficulties of unpredictable weather, the shack has not had many obstacles threatening its survival. Since it sits on private property, it rarely has anyone come near it except the owners who inspect it for damage from time to time. This has been its biggest defense against more damage. Yet by the thousands people see the shack every day and night. It rests only a few hundred yards off the Causeway Bridge (the only road that leads to LBI), so cars and cyclists drive by constantly. Its location has allowed the shack to become a larger than life symbol; the locals idealize its presence and endurance, and the tourists use it to announce they “are here!” when they finally see it off the road sitting next to the bay under the bridge – as it has been for a hundred years.

## **BOOK REVIEW: Townsend, Frank, ed. *Tales of New Jersey*. New Jersey Bell Telephone, 1963.**

By Ryan Ballard

When published in 1963, *Tales of New Jersey* was described as “a selection of the best and most interesting stories” to have appeared in the *Tel-News*, a small newsletter delivered to New Jersey Bell customers since 1935. The copy in the William W. Leap collection at Stockton, edited by Frank P. Townsend, is filled with unusual facts, folklore, and tales of New Jersey. There are facts about the prehistoric era of New Jersey: “Dinosaurs 35 feet long once lived in Gloucester and Burlington counties . . .”; the first intercollegiate football game in America was played in New Jersey on November 6th, 1869: Rutgers beat Princeton by a score of 6 to 4; and the first drive-in theater in America was opened on a 10-acre plot in Camden in 1933.

Many books detail the history and folklore of New Jersey, but this volume is particularly browseable and entertaining. It’s also a reminder of how quickly communication media has advanced. In today’s information age, where free texting, free minutes, and even free cell phones are used to attract customers, it’s downright quaint to find that this volume is derived from historical anecdotes sent as perks to telephone users.

## *The Not So Olde Tyme Kinda Sorta Harvest Fest*

By Dan Weir

It was October 22nd, 2011, and as I strolled along Mechanic Street in downtown Cape May Court House, with a Chip-Stix in one hand and my son's hand in the other, I scanned the whole of the Middle Township Olde Tyme Harvest Festival in search of a single pumpkin. I didn't need one; I just wanted to see one. Sure, there were a few here and there, sidled next to a bale of hay or concealing the bottom of a bundle of dried corn stalks, but most were still sporting UPC stickers, and besides, I wanted to see a pile.

I wanted to see a straw-strewn pickup truck filled with a transported pumpkin patch, or a mammoth, orange squash surrounded by spotlights and so massive it could only be moved with a forklift. After three laps around the fair grounds I would have settled for a couple of hook-necked gourds with rind rot; anything to indicate that there was an actual harvest to celebrate.

Instead, around every corner were stalls, tents, tables, stands, and blankets covered with wares ranging from the wholesale to the homemade. The autumn sun hanging a little too low in the midday sky? Don't worry, just walk fifty feet in any direction to one of the four vendors peddling their summer overstock of sunglasses. Perhaps your skin's gone numb, or you hadn't noticed the unseasonably warm October weather, and you've caught a chill? Fret not. Hand-knitted garments dot the landscape like woolen oases in a desert during a rainstorm. But please don't mistake my snark for condemnation, quite the opposite really.

In fact, I should probably feel pretty silly for my pumpkin hunting in the first place. I had forgotten something about my community I'd known for nearly twenty years: Middle Township doesn't really harvest anything. If it sprouts from the ground, we'll get it from the grocery store; we're only interested in the kind of green that doesn't grow on trees.

Summer sales and tourism drive the economy of Cape May County, so it should come as no surprise that most of the food and wares for sale at the Harvest Fest exemplify the best that the boardwalk has to offer. A swath of Wildwood's most popular eateries set up camp in the parking lot behind the old firehouse, offering average fare like pizza and french fries as well as more eccentric tastes. And let's be honest, when you go to the fair, do you go for the pepperoni and cheese or are you looking to tackle the deep fried Oreos? If that sounds too tame, why not try the fried Kool-Aid or a batter-dipped pickle from the Hot Spot IV's booth before washing it all down with a glass of banana wine from the Natali Vineyards' stall?

Normally I would go the adventurous route, throwing caution and a settled stomach to the wind, but two year olds are less keen on wild cuisine, so as my son and I grabbed a seat and split a basket of chicken fingers, we took in some of the local color. On a small stage at the head of Mechanic, local singer Brian Hickman crooned old standards by Bing and Sinatra, as, a hundred yards away, a cover band wailed some Rick Springfield. The cloud of conversation between the two, however, was so thick that their songs never mingled, but were instead absorbed by the electric murmur of the bustling crowd that separated them. A shame because I always loved "Jessie's Girl."

The majority of the rousing buzz came from the carnival attractions, donated by Morey's Piers and other local businesses, littered around the parking lot. A ferris wheel, a tilt-a-whirl, and pony rides, each leading a phalanx of children just waiting for their chance at an innocent thrill as their mothers and fathers smiled, jealous of the easy satisfaction of youth.

I pitied those inactive parents as I stood at the entrance of the inflatable, bouncy obstacle course, watching my two year old son claim the whole as his own. He had stopped midway, reveling in the bounciness and preventing anyone else from entering as the line behind me quickly grew. With a smirk and a wave the attendant granted me entrance, and I weaved my way past a bottleneck of toddlers until I scooped up my own and together we crossed the finish line and once again joined the crowd of familiar faces.

That's one of the funnier things about a small town; it's a lot easier to get everybody in one place. It's a strange feeling to see every person from your childhood corralled, dancing, and generally raising hell for a reason you can't quite place. It's like being on *This Is Your Life* but without the adoration and a less impressive, but more expansive guest list. In one day I saw old teachers, family friends, former classmates, and ex-girlfriends' mothers. The whole of Cape May Court House had emptied into the streets to greet their neighbors from nearby towns and applaud another six months of hard work and the closing of the year.

For this Harvest Fest my community had gathered, not to praise the efforts of a few stalwart individuals pulling success from the earth, but to celebrate the collective endeavors of everyone in difficult economic times. And while our modern harvest may mean stuffing bank accounts instead of stocking cellars, it still stands for preparing for the long quiet winter.

## A Sampling of South Jersey Wines

By Phillip Potter

From the perspective of an amateur wine snob, South Jersey wineries have two outstanding qualities. The first is an inexpensive table wine that is easy drinking, goes well with almost any meal, or can be enjoyed on its own. All four wineries that our group visited (*Renault*, *DiMatteo*, *Tomasello*, and *Plagido's*) more than fulfilled this requirement. However, one white wine stood out above the rest; the Renault Winery's chablis was one of the most remarkable inexpensive wines that I have had in a long while. It was smooth without sacrificing flavor, yet buttery to the point of being savory. At around \$15, it is a solid buy. Also, for anyone sensitive to sulfites, all of Renault's wines are produced with low sulfite levels (around 25% of the sulfites of other wines, on average), though that means the wine should not be stored for longer for than a few years.

The second standout attribute of the South Jersey wineries is the assortment of well-crafted fruit wines. Each of the four wineries we visited had at least one excellent wine in this category. Now fruit wines, to some, may carry the connotation of *Boone's Farm*, black berry brandy, and other backwoods or bottom-shelf boozes, but the apple, cranberry, peach, strawberry, and, yes, blueberry wines we sampled were bursting bouquets of flavor, and stepping outside of the more sanctified realm of grape wines seemed to relax the mood a bit. The members of our group who were new to wine really seemed to gravitate toward these flavors, proving that good wine is like a good pop song – wide appeal does not preclude good taste.

And for a little extra punch, DiMatteo's and Tomasello's turned their apple and cranberry wines into a wonderful holiday drink by heating them and adding mulling spices. This transformed the wines into a more complex, yet equally accessible, drink that is sure to please many guests any holiday season.

## Crawling with Character

By Stephanie Allen

There is no question that South Jersey has some historically significant wineries producing good quality wines; the previous essay can attest to that. But there is another great reason to check out the local vineyards, aside from their history and product. That reason is character. The four spots my fellow tourists and I hit on our wine crawl,

Renault, DiMatteo's, Plagido's, and Tomasello, all had staff, visitors, and atmosphere just as spirited as the beverages they produce.

Starting out at *Renault*, the largest and most well-known of the four wineries, I was immediately surprised by how un-stuffy the tour was. Our guide was funny and informal, and had more energy than anyone has a right to at 11 o'clock on a Sunday morning. He demonstrated how to use some of the strange looking equipment and fed us more than our fair share of wines (and chocolate!) during our tasting. He also made sure to point us toward the gift shop before we left, where a mannequin was decked out in a Santa apron complete with its own endowments.



Our second stop was *DiMatteo's*, a prime example of why you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. Housed in what almost looked like a double-wide trailer, it had the tastiest cranberry wine of the day, and some of the best stories. Working as part of a relatively small family operation, our wine tasting guide was also the vintner. As a third-generation winemaker he could remember the batches of "God's wine" his grand-mother used to make when he was a child. She had no regard for separating by grape type, or for adding sugar; she would just throw all different varieties in together. The finished product was some of the worst wine he had ever tasted, but, according to his grandmother, that's "the way God would have wanted it."

*Plagido's* was next on our itinerary and the most interesting yet. Another small winery, its tasting room doubled as its gift shop. There was a surprisingly large collection of refrigerator magnets with cheeky and rather risqué wine related phrases on them; some of the tamer ones read "Wine takes the Bitch right out of me," and "Zero to naked in 1.5 bottles." When we finally made our way to the tasting counter our



guide told us numerous stories about their prize-winning wines. He also treated us to a classic episode of *Murder She Wrote* while we drank.

Finally, we headed to *Tomasello*, and it soon became clear we had inadvertently saved the best for last. All the visitors at the winery seemed to be in costume, not such a strange thing for the day before Halloween. However, as we made our way deeper into the crowd we realized we were crashing a wedding – an *Alice in Wonderland* themed wedding; we arrived just in time to see Alice walk down the aisle, preceded by a host of character-inspired bridesmaids and groomsmen, and marry the Mad Hatter. In the midst of all the celebrating we managed to taste some wine, hear some colorful stories about married life, and watch our guide attempt to get our designated driver drunk.

We ended our wine crawl with nine bottles in the backseat, a testament to the enjoyment of a day spent touring South Jersey's wineries as much as to the quality of the local vineyards' product. But don't take our word for it – go out and see for yourself how educational and entertaining a tour can be; you're likely to come away with more than just a great bottle of wine.



***Peace Pilgrim: A Small Woman from South Jersey with a Big Message for the World***

By Katie Malachefski

The sun was shining on a beautiful, breezy September morning in Egg Harbor City as a sea of blue walked proudly in remembrance of an inspiring human being. The crowd

gathered at Peace Pilgrim Park on London Avenue for the fourth annual Peace Pilgrim Celebration, held on the week-end of September 16th, 2011.

Among the crowd of both young and old were a few whimsical personalities, including a man playing a banjo and a woman dressed as an angel, but what was the occasion? It was the 2-mile Intergenerational Walk for Peace in honor of Peace Pilgrim, a woman born in Egg Harbor City who has touched the lives of people all over the world with her striking message.

Peace Pilgrim, born Mildred Lisette Norman Ryder in 1908, started her 28-year pilgrimage in January of 1953. Her plan: to walk 25,000 miles on foot, stopping only when given shelter – fasting until given food – all in the name of peace. She knew her task was not going to be easy, but she believed in her cause so deeply that nothing could stop her.

Peace Pilgrim travelled all over the United States, Mexico, and Canada, appearing as a guest speaker and guiding others to a more peaceful way of life with her message, saying that humanity should “overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, and hatred with love.”

As a woman of nearly no possessions, Peace Pilgrim lived the simple life and felt completely free, believing that material things only stand in the way of our acquisition of inner peace, which she believed was the first step in creating a more peaceful world.

Copies of her short booklet *Steps Toward Inner Peace* are available free of charge, and have been so since she began handing them out during her pilgrimage. She inspired many during her lifetime, enlightening everyone she encountered with her honest words.

Sadly, Peace Pilgrim's journey ended in 1981, when she was killed in a car accident during her pilgrimage, but her wise words live on. *Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Works in Her Own Words* was put together by Friends of Peace Pilgrim, a non-profit organization formed in her honor. It includes various stories of her travels as well as important life lessons.

Her view of life is refreshing to learn, and regardless of religion or background, one can certainly benefit from reading her uplifting words.

Of course, there are skeptics who believe that Peace Pilgrim was just some kook, but perhaps her character can best be described by one of her friends: “Peace Pilgrim is either an eccentric old fool or an authentic prophet! The choice is ours to make when we meet her. But what is most extraordinary is that she is neither offended by the former description or esteemed by the latter. If Peace is a fool, she hides her foolishness well; if she is a prophet, a mist of humility equally hides her greatness. She is a fathomless enigma. One must continually pinch her here and pinch her there in a

determined effort to see if she is for real” (*Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Works in Her Own Words* 192).

From her grave, this insightful woman continues to offer wisdom to humanity. She is remembered and honored through the Peace Pilgrim Celebration in the town of her birth. This past year was the fourth annual celebration, which included the screening of director Tom Shadyac’s film *I Am*, a 2-mile Intergenerational Walk for Peace, an educational program, a pot-luck picnic and drum circle, and a Joint Spiritual Service.

The peace walk is a wonderful sight to behold: people of all generations donning light blue Peace Pilgrim t-shirts (given to the first 100 participants) while walking through a rural Egg Harbor City neighborhood. The walk begins at Peace Pilgrim Park and proceeds to Peace Pilgrim’s childhood home, where, after a short reflection, the group returns to the park for a picnic.

The walk also provides a small scenic glance into EHC’s history, passing by many beautiful historic homes along the way.

While Peace Pilgrim spent most of her life traveling around the country spreading her message of peace, people from South Jersey should be proud to call her one of their own. This woman’s impact on the lives of others was probably much bigger than she could have ever imagined, and she would be grateful to know that her life and teachings are now being remembered annually in her hometown. All people can gain valuable life tools from Peace Pilgrim’s words, and anyone who missed last year’s celebration must be sure to attend this year, on September 14-16th, 2012.

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This little booklet is a transcript of a conversation with Peace Pilgrim on a radio broadcast in 1964. She carried copies of it with her on her travels, handing them out to anyone who was interested. It is not copyrighted, and is available in whole on the website [www.peacepilgrim.com](http://www.peacepilgrim.com).

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This scrapbook of various memorabilia was compiled by Peace Pilgrim’s brother-in-law and is only available at the Bjork Library of Richard Stockton College. It contains personal pictures, handwritten letters, postcards sent from Peace Pilgrim to friends and family members, short local histories, and news clippings.

## Quiet Thunder at the Absecon Lighthouse

By Jenna McCoy

On Sunday, November 13, 2011, Dick “Quiet Thunder” Gilbert visited the Absecon Lighthouse in Atlantic City to give a presentation on Lenape culture and history in South Jersey. Quiet Thunder, 77, is a descendent of the Lenape people who were the original inhabitants of his home in Cumberland County. He visits schools and historical sites throughout the area in order to preserve his culture, which he fears is forgotten and misunderstood.

Quiet Thunder began his presentation by addressing an age-old conflict in the human mind: time. Unlike modern man, who measures time to its smallest fragments, the Lenape measured time only in seasons – each change in the environment signifying a change in location, duties, and recreation for the tribes.

During the summer season, Lenape from around South Jersey relocated to the shore for what Quiet Thunder described as a time of great importance, though this importance was defined a bit differently from today’s Jersey shore visitors. In the summer months, members from nations as far as the Rocky Mountains would travel here in order to trade for valuable materials such as wampum – shell that was made into beads in order to create pictorial histories of the tribe, nation, or land in general. In exchange for this valuable shell and a varied diet of seafood, landlocked people would bring the Lenape obsidian, and other materials for building strong tools, found only farther west in the continent.

Throughout the presentation, Quiet Thunder spoke to both of his audiences: the many children present, and the parents who brought them. Along with his own traditional garb, he brought with him hundreds of hand-made Lenape relics, including arrows, animal skins, basic tools, ritual stones, and feathers. Children were encouraged to touch and hold these relics, and were taught their purposes and stories. Quiet Thunder also chose three children from the audience to wear bear, coyote, and bobcat skins he brought, which, of course, was met with enthusiasm from the chosen children.

While ensuring that the children were engaged in his presentation, Quiet Thunder addressed the adults, reminding them that the only way a culture survives is if the children are included in the traditions and rituals of the family; children need not only to be aware of a culture, but also to be an integral part of it.

The importance of children was one of many cautionary themes on which Quiet Thunder’s presentation was centered. He warned of the imposition of humans on an imbalanced natural environment, and how our children and their

children will have to live with the damage that we are doing. He warned about the loss of culture, and how a people can forget their heritage if it is not actively practiced, preserved, and shared by the community. Quiet Thunder even reminded the men in the audience that they must appreciate the undeniable importance of women, who were given natural power by the Great Spirit.

Though speaking to an audience that was composed of individuals from cultures outside of his own, Quiet Thunder welcomed questions, illuminated misconceptions, and addressed honestly the truth and reasons that his people have nearly vanished from the place where we now reside, all the while reminding us that South Jersey is, and always will be, Leni Lenape land.

## *When the Lights Go Out...*

By Stefanie Schulte

To be brave and calm and rational requires self-control in even the best of situations. It's worse now. I can't see. On this foul weather day, I'm halfway up the winding staircase of Barnegat Lighthouse and I have been telling ghost stories... showing off. How neat was it that they buried the drowned keeper's cat in the foundation of the tower after she fell sans lighthouse into the bay some 150 years ago?\* Isn't it interesting that this place has a ghost kitty prowling up and down the stairs? Kitty could possibly be sitting by the window in the niche to my right.

Fascinating, isn't it? And it was, until the lights flickered and then snuffed out with a crackle and a spark. A little boy's high-pitched scream and his quickly descending steps echo clang-clang further and further beneath me. The narrow space on the metal stairs constricts in the pitch dark as the thick walls seem to loom closer. Only whisks of the beacon's light flicker through a narrow hatch-way above me and a park ranger hollers from the base of the structure. I'm in a panic and I can't get myself to descend further into the dark, so I bite my lip and climb towards the light.

I can't stand the thought of kitty that's no kitty anymore. In the dark of my mind's eye, the cat's feline features are unpleasantly emaciated; her tail is missing, her ginger fur matted and disheveled as she waspishly arches her back and bears her terrible teeth.

Eventually the lights come on; my silly fear of the lighthouse's ghosts evaporates; and I can enjoy seeing what's really there. The view from up top is phenomenal, the air icy-crisp and starlit, and the beacon's ever-rotating beam of light washes over the vast calm of land and water.

Come climb the lighthouse: it's free in the winter months and a dollar donation during the summertime.

**Note:** \*1857 is the year that the first lighthouse collapsed and fell into the waters of Barnegat Bay.

## **The Gloucester City Historical Society**

By Sara Klemowitz

The building that is home to the Gloucester City Historical Society appears quite modest from the outside. Nestled quietly in a strip of shops opposite a lovely view of the Delaware River and the Philadelphia skyline, one might not even notice it when meandering down King Street. After visiting this museum, though, the phrase "big things come in small packages" rings true.

Though the building is currently undergoing some renovations, the walls are still lined with shelves chock-full of Gloucester-appropriate books and binders. An entire bookshelf is home to every Gloucester City High School yearbook since the 1930s, and an impressive collection of various South Jersey historical texts rests below.

My interest was piqued by the contents of the aforementioned binders. One collection, titled "Gloucester Goes to War," flaunts a number of binders filled with memorabilia from Gloucester City during the Vietnam War, World War II, the Revolutionary War, and others. Among the memorabilia are clippings from newspapers about Gloucester residents killed in action, records of honorable discharges, and the like. One collection of articles reminisces about the Battle of Java Seas during World War II in which the S. S. Houston was sunk with a Gloucester soldier on board. The turmoil of the time is conveyed when one article declares the men aboard the ship were missing or dead, while another suggests they may be alive and held captive in Japan. All the "Gloucester Goes to War" memorabilia is historically informative, but it also brought a personal element to the war stories, providing for a very emotional sense of perspective.

In addition to this collection, there are various accumulations of Gloucester photos old and new, boasting collections of photos of the Delaware River beach, the Walt Whitman Bridge, and even photos of Gloucester in the early 1900s. It was captivating to recognize in the older pictures that many of those buildings still stand today. Also very interesting are binders containing detailed histories of certain Gloucester families, some of which were actually typed on typewriters. If a person is interested,

there are also listings of the burials in each Gloucester City graveyard.

There is much more to learn about Gloucester City than meets the eye. Though its borders are only the perimeter of two square miles, this humble stretch of land has been inhabited for more than 300 years. The curators of the Gloucester City Historical Society do an astounding job presenting all angles of its history in such a compact location – one which is definitely worth the visit.

## The Palace of Depression

By Kristin Corum

They say one man's trash is another man's treasure. But in George Daynor's case, that trash became his palace.

The story behind this junk castle starts with a vision. An angel came to Daynor as he slept and instructed him to head to Vineland, New Jersey. With only four dollars in his pocket, he set out on a most curious endeavor.

Earlier in life Daynor had gained a fortune mining gold in Alaska. He lost half of his fortune, reportedly, in the 1906 earthquake of San Francisco. He then lost the rest of his fortune during the Wall Street crash in 1929 (*Weird NJ* 1). But Daynor would not allow these misfortunes to slow him down and, with angels leading the way, he was confident he would find fame and fortune on his New Jersey adventure.

After purchasing four acres of swamp land at the outskirts of Vineland, Daynor lived in his car for three years as he drained the swamps and began building his kingdom. According to the *Encyclopedia of New Jersey*, he built his castle out of car parts, mud, recycled building materials, and other junk.

Opening the doors to the castle in 1932, Daynor charged a quarter to visit the "Strangest House in the World" (Schuyler 1). The large, eighteen-spired castle gained immediate popularity with tens of thousands of visits per year, a place on maps of roadside attractions, its own Universal Pictures movie called *The Fantastic Castle*, and eventually a feature in Ripley's "Believe it or Not" television show (Schuyler 1).

It wasn't long, though, before Daynor's penchant for notoriety caused his ruin. On July 4th, 1956, one-month-old Peter Weinberger was stolen from the patio of his home when his mother left his side for a few minutes (*FBI* 1). The case garnered national attention and soon George Daynor found his part to play. He called the FBI and told them that he had been sought out by the kidnapers and that they had asked to hide in the tunnels of the castle.

Although he quickly recanted and admitted that his story was false, he had become involved in the case. The kidnapper was caught and sentenced to death after the remains of Peter Weinberger were found. Daynor was sent to prison for providing false information.

During the year that Daynor sat in prison, his castle was vandalized and burnt down. After his release, Daynor was too old and without the income to repair the castle. Another major deterrent, much to his dismay, was a change in local traffic patterns.

At the time, the castle was located on the main highway from up north to Atlantic City. But then Route 55 was built, along with other major roadways, and traffic was routed away from the attraction which fell into further disrepair.

Daynor died in 1964 at the announced age of 104. The city of Vineland tore down the surviving structure soon after, leaving the ticket booth, some benches, and a path to the creek as the only remaining original structures.

Recently, there has been renewed interest in the building made of junk, and it is being steadily rebuilt. This is where my story begins. After looking at pictures and reading up on this historical relic in my hometown, I decided to visit. Not knowing what I would see, I took my camera and a friend to 265 S. Mill Rd., Vineland, NJ, to see what was there.

Pulling into the lot, the castle looks much like a castle of old, an ancient set of ruins. I expected to take a few pictures and be on my way, but as we parked, we came upon a man who lives and works at the site.

Due to regular and destructive vandalism, Jeffrey Tirante lives in a tent on the site. He recounted the story of one man who tried to take lumber needed for the structure and scaffolding; only upon constant berating from Jeff did the man put it back. In another incident, a young man tied a chain around the ticket booth and tried to tear it loose in an attempt to gauge the strength of his truck. Around the clock security provided by Tirante has helped to stem the vandalism. So have heavy-handed fines and regular police surveillance of the site.

As we introduced ourselves to each other, Tirante began to weave a tale more fantastic than I had imagined about the castle made of odds and ends. He began by sharing pictures of the castle in its heyday and stated that the new castle was being built to Daynor's original plans. Kevin Kirchner, a building inspector in Vineland, is heading the project, which uses recycled materials and is being completed by volunteers as a nonprofit project.

George Daynor, having been led to Vineland by angels, incorporated the angels into his plans. The eighteen spires of the castle were meant as resting places for the angels when they visited earth, explained Tirante. Today the spires have

not yet been replaced, but their foundations have been laid and work is progressing.

Pointing to a large circular door, Tirante explains that it was the tortoise shell door. It will be decorated with kitsch and knickknacks like a tortoise shell just as Daynor had decorated it. Daynor had a lot of respect for the local Turtle tribe of the Lenni Lenape, explained Tirante, and the castle is said to be built on laylines of healing for the Lenni Lenape.

Tirante recounted his own story of being healed by a medicine woman, and how together they located and took pictures of orbs of light that they believe to be spirits at the castle.

Moving through the door we came upon one small and one large hole in the wall. The small hole is one of many fireplaces inlaid in the building; the large hole is the wishing well. Daynor told the story that he fell into this well and was saved by mermaids who resided in the ocean and frequented the area through the well and the creek on the site.

From there we went through an upwards leaning tunnel which took us into the sunset room that had originally been decorated with bottle caps, glass, and a reflective car paint mixture which captured the sunset. Once finished, this room will do the same. The next room is the living room where Daynor had a fireplace that Tirante said was large enough to fit an ox.

Heading down more tunnel ways we found ourselves in the basement with more rooms and even more tunnels. It was damp and musty, just as I imagined a dungeon would feel.

Stepping through a wrought iron door, we came to a series of rooms. One room has a large iron wheel for a door, the next looks like a throne room, and the third pays homage to the Jersey Devil.

The throne room Tirante built as a replica to the bridge of the Enterprise from Star Trek. The Jersey Devil room is fairly empty, but the focal point, when completed, will be the incredible glass fireplace in the shape of the face of the Jersey Devil. Its mouth is the fire receptacle. The eyes are made so that they will glow red when there is a fire in the mouth. The fireplace is absolutely gorgeous, despite the haunting face of a local monster.

This homage harkens back to the creative ingenuity of Daynor and his ability to change with the times. He introduced the Jersey Devil to his repertoire to gain more popularity and interest in the castle. He often hid in the tunnels and would pop out with a statue or figure of the monster as he screeched and created smoke to complete the illusion. He also was reported to have held UFO crash searches on the property after the events in Roswell, New Mexico.

Heading back outside, one notices the beauty of the build-

ing itself, with intricate brickwork done by the volunteers. Inlaid throughout the brickwork are little knickknacks, toys, and beautiful blown glass pieces made by a local glassblower named Janice who works in Wheaton Village.



The building, despite being unfinished, is whimsical and inspiring. As we left, Tirante asked us to sign his notebook, which served as a guest book. As my friend and I signed our names, he explained this would be a part of the Living History and Arts center that would eventually be built on the site. On site too will be Mir Café, which will serve as an area for musicians, poets, and the like who can come and perform. At the moment, Tirante hosts musicians on the castle porch and records videos which he posts online.

Visits to this castle in the making are strongly encouraged. The message of the Palace of Depression, built to show that one man could beat the Great Depression, rings true here still. The sheer beauty of the place, as well as the tenacity of the workers, proves that the American Dream – making something out of nothing – is just as possible now as it was long ago. The glorious handiwork is awe inspiring, and to see it in the building stages is a remarkable testament to the passion of a few who cling to the history, albeit an odd history, of Vineland and of their youth.

To get involved with this project, which needs more hands, or just to visit, go to [www.ourhero.biz/tovolunteerforthepalace.htm](http://www.ourhero.biz/tovolunteerforthepalace.htm).

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## Waretown Lake

By Alyssa Flynn

Between classes in any high school the gossip usually consists of who is still dating whom, whose parents are out of town for the weekend, and always where to "like go" on Friday nights. Anxious boys and head-over-heels-in-love girls need a spot to be alone. That spot has to be secluded and not frequented by the local police. Once a location is found, a really good one, news travels faster than lightning through the halls of the senior classes. In Ocean County, this spot is Waretown Lake.

Students at the local high school figured it was a good site when the principal (a local resident for over twenty years) admitted during a school assembly that he hadn't been aware that Waretown had a lake. The seniors looked at each other and smiled.

The website of the Ocean Township Recreational Department mentions Waretown Lake, providing useful information about opening and closing times, and where to purchase badges, but it leaves out the reasons why the lake is a local secret.

Why is this place so little known that even the principal of the local high school missed its existence? The sad truth is that the park and lake are run down. Visiting during the day can be a big disappointment.

On the other hand, on a warm summer night with the moon rippling across its waters, the lake is beautiful and untroubled. All seems right with the world to the couple who sit on the lifeguard stand, cuddled under a blanket.

But in the light of morning, the trash and detritus from many previous nights becomes apparent. There are no parents playing with their kids, no picnics, no people working up a sweat on the tennis courts. The reality of the place is much sadder than what teenagers imagine as they look up to the bright, shining moon.

In the dust of crumbled high school romances, visits to Waretown Lake are depressing. There is no youthful hope, no adventurous spirit. It is an abandoned place within an otherwise pleasant hometown. And yet despite the trash and

empty beer bottles visible by day, by night it can still evoke feelings of nostalgia. Perch yourself on the lifeguard stand and look out upon the waters of Waretown Lake; see if you don't feel young again.

## A Life With Books

By Stephanie Allen

*David Pinto, Stockton's current – and longest serving – Library Director, will be retiring this June. On February 19th, 2012 I talked to him about books and music, the future of libraries, and what real wealth looks like.*

**SA:** Working in a library, one would think you must have a love of books. Is that true for you?

**DP:** Yes. I've been in libraries since June of '75, which will make 37 years upon my retirement. Back in the olden days, although there were some computers, libraries were mainly made up of books, periodicals, and paper, and so that was a major attraction.

**SA:** Was that interest something you had from childhood? Were you a reader as a kid or can you think of a particular event that really sparked your interest in books as physical objects?

**DP:** I wasn't in love with books until I learned more about them. I really fell in love with books when I took a course about the history of the book in graduate school.

**SA:** Okay, so it was fairly late.

**DP:** It was fairly late. I must have been 27 at that time. However, I had been a maximum reader all my life. I never recall, literally never recall, not having a book, not being in the middle of a book. 100% of the time I am reading a book. There is never a time when I'm not inside a book somehow. That doesn't mean I'm always reading, but I'm always in process – as soon as I finish one book I pick up the next one, and I've been doing that since I was a kid. So, the thing that attracted me initially to the library was that I was very interested in reading. But as I learned more about it and started working with librarians, and library staff, and users, I realized a lot of very well educated people hang around libraries.

**SA:** It's amazing, right?

**DP:** One of the great joys of being here, even more than being around the books, is being around the interested and interesting people. So, I started in libraries and finally went to graduate school at University of California Berkeley where I took this history of the book course, and from there it became a mad passion. We did typesetting, monotype, we

made paper, and we actually put our hands on the Gutenberg Bible.

**SA:** Wow...

**DP:** It was very exciting. And to this day it's probably the most fun course I ever took.

**SA:** So, graduate school was where the mad book passion started. What was the focus of your bachelor's degree?

**DP:** I entered college in 1970 and went to three schools as an undergraduate: Lake Forest College in Illinois, State University of New York at Purchase, and I graduated from the University of New Mexico. At all three schools I was a Philosophy major and Religious Studies minor. Both have been lifelong interests for me.

**SA:** And what was the degree you wound up with after graduate school?

**DP:** Well, as an undergraduate I was working in the libraries at the University of New Mexico. Once I graduated I began working in the library full time. I did that for several years while taking courses on research, reference works, and so forth, and ultimately I got a scholarship to attend graduate school at UC Berkeley in library school. I got my degree, got a job on the faculty of Virginia Tech in 1980, got a second master's degree there in public administration, and finally left in 1987. That same year I became a library director at Mercyhurst College in Erie, PA, and after that at Keene State College in New Hampshire. From there I came down to Stockton in 2001, and, upon my retirement, I will be the longest serving library director in the College's history.

**SA:** Thinking about the collections we have here, like the Leap Collection and some of David Munn's books we're starting to have filter in...

**DP:** It's true.

**SA:** ...which is just a beautiful thing, would you say people who do this kind of library work collect literary things? Do you have a collection of literature, or, perhaps as a little birdie mentioned, mandolins?

**DP:** Oh, my personal collections?

**SA:** Your personal collections, yes. What do you collect?

**DP:** I collect in two areas: instruments, recorded music, and prints, and cartoons, animation, and comic strips – political cartoons in particular.

**SA:** Really?

**DP:** Yeah. I've taught courses in political cartoons and the history of cartooning. And I'm a musician, so I have a collection of, easily, 3,000 albums. And when I say albums, I mean vinyl, long play albums, audiotapes, CDs, and now, of course, innumerable mp3s and digital files.

**SA:** So you're not a vinyl snob.

**DP:** No, I'm not. I'll take whatever comes. And I'm also a performer. I play drums in a Stockton faculty band, and they

let me play the mandolin once in a while. I'm primarily a mandolin player, and I have a collection that I use.

**SA:** How many would you say you have?

**DP:** I would say I have six mandolins. I also have two guitars and a mandola.

**SA:** Is this interest in music something you've had since childhood, too?

**DP:** Oh, absolutely. I've always been crazy about music. It does something in my brain and has as far back as I can remember. I started playing guitar at 11 and now I play banjo and drums and hammer dulcimer and mandolin – anything I can put my hands on I like to play. I had my first paying gig in 1966 when I was 14, and I've been performing ever since. I've made six albums to date and have gigs set up for the next six months.

**SA:** That's amazing. So, coming back to your other love, books, why do you think libraries are important?

**DP:** Well, that's a very interesting question that may have nothing to do with books.

**SA:** Okay.

**DP:** There are really two issues there: the role of libraries, and the role of books in society. Let me do the library piece first. A lot of what we do, a lot of what we spend our money and time and energy focused on, is electronic now. At last count, we have 161 electronic databases. We have electronic books, electronic reference source, software. The role of libraries in 2012 is to vet those resources. It's a very important role, a role we've been playing for hundreds of years, but we were playing it with paper previously. So, books have a rich history and I value them greatly, and we still buy a lot of books, but not as many as we bought last year, and last year was even fewer than the year before. However, we're still adding in the neighborhood of 5,000-6,000 books to the collection a year. Then there's the whole issue of Special Collections.

**SA:** That was my next question.

**DP:** In the library we have something called Archives and Special Collections. Here we keep the College archives, the history of the College, and the documents pertaining thereto as well as collections of areas of interest to the College. In particular there is an expressed interest in region, South Jersey, Atlantic County, Atlantic City, and Galloway, specifically. We have the Leap collection, which is 1,250 items, and we're now in discussions with David Munn, another donor, to acquire his collections of literature on New Jersey, poetry in particular. So, there are areas of interest to the College and we try to coordinate all the opportunities to develop these resources, and we've been extremely successful in doing so.

**SA:** What do you think libraries will look like in the future? In the Nook and Kindle generation we're in now, and

even beyond that? Are libraries as physical spaces going to survive?

**DP:** Eventually all information resources will be in digital form and available digitally, probably on your wrist, or embedded in your eyeglasses, or perhaps in your earlobe... somewhere where it's all just there for the asking. So the need, the traditional need of a library as the home of these resources, is clearly changing, and there's no question that eventually that role for libraries will go away. But there are things that libraries, or places like libraries will continue to do. First, we have all this paper, and a lot of this stuff is going to be kept. So, the physical aspect of a library will become more like a warehouse or an archive where we store and preserve and make available these print resources. But that's more like a warehouse than a library. Libraries now are busy, vibrant places. Here at Stockton we have over 8,000 visitors on any given week when school's in session.

**SA:** What would you say to someone who was thinking about getting into this field, going to work in a library? Would that still be something you would suggest as a viable option?

**DP:** Oh, absolutely. It's a wonderful profession to be in. I mentioned the real joy is being around information, knowledge – kind of the next step of information – and even wisdom, and people who are seeking it, creating it, using it. Being around people who are intellectually curious, intellectually engaged in the life of the mind, is a real privilege. Interacting with students who are learning how to think, and learning what other people have thought over time, and how it should influence their ideas – that's a very special place to be. So even though librarianship has changed, and is still changing, the profession itself will continue for many, many years to come. There's clearly room to grow, and I'd recommend it to anybody. You'll never make a fortune doing this, but you will work happily your entire life. And frankly, I think that's more important. You will get up in the morning with a smile on your face. And after 37 years of doing this in essentially every conceivable capacity, I'm telling you that that is what wealth looks like. I've had jobs where I did not get up with a smile on my face, and every day is difficult. So whatever it is that you're interested in, pursue your passion.

**SA:** I would have to agree. So what's next for you?

**DP:** My sincere hope is to make it through June, that's the first thing, after which I hope to take the summer off. The whole time I've been working I've worked 12 months a year, but all my friends have worked nine and ten months because they're faculty members. They do their research in the summer and they also frequently teach class – they're very busy all the time – but their schedule changes. I've always wanted to have that schedule change, so this sum-

mer I'm planning to take off. And then in the fall I have a couple of options. I'm very involved in playing music, and I'm very involved in many different groups. I expect all that to continue, but I'm also thinking I'll probably want to come back and work in Archives/Special Collections in some capacity where I can interact with users. Here I'm primarily interacting with vendors and other employees at the College and I think I'd like to get back into the user end of it. So, something part time, maybe. I don't need to do that, but I really love the work and I think that would be fun. But, first things first. My ambition over the summer is to get a really good tan. And I realize tans are bad for you...

**SA:** Tans are very un-PC.

**DP:** Absolutely, I'm first in line to say so, but that's my ambition. I want to take time off, I want to read some of the books that I've been buying for 37 years, and making available, and organizing, and checking out to hundreds of thousands of people. I want to read four books a week, every other day I want to be reading a book, wouldn't that be wonderful?

**SA:** It certainly would.

**DP:** That's an ambition I have. Play more music, enjoy myself, and take it easy.

**SA:** Well, I hope that all works out for you. Even the pursuit of the perfect tan.

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