



HAMBURG AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINDOWS TO THE PAST... *The Official Newsletter of the Hamburg Area Historical Society*

Volume 24, Issue 2

"Preserving Our Past for the Future"

Spring 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I usually have to stop and think about what to convey through the President's Message. Not this time! It's all about the build! After a year of red tape to be cleared up, it has finally happened, literally overnight. An early morning call from Owl Creek Construction, and a few hours later dirt was removed for the foundation. Since then it's been a whirlwind of activity.

The inside detail work, and packing and moving the contents from our old museum and offsite storage, will actually take longer than the construction. We can't give an exact time when the new museum will be open; however, if all goes well we would like to be in and open before the end of the year. To do so, we will need all hands on deck. Whether you have a truck, a strong back, or organizational skills, we can use your help. Please let a board member know of your willingness to assist or leave a message on the museum answering machine.

These are exciting times for our Historical Society! We will be able to accept donations of bigger items and collections. We can rotate some of our items held in storage to a place on display. Of course many of our beloved favorite items will still have a place for all to enjoy.

We will also be adding a much-anticipated Genealogy Research Station with updated computer and printer, and members willing to show you how to get started online.

We also plan on having events and fundraisers on our new parking lot. So get ready to help and enjoy your new museum.

Deb Billman, President

NEW MEMBERS

Harry Prutzman, Hamburg, PA
Eric Henne, Glen Mills, PA
Scott Snyder, Copley, PA
Jane Seaman, Bernville, PA
Arlan Dietrich, Hamburg, PA
Linda Mills, Hamburg, PA

COMING EVENTS

Our regular meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month when school is open, at 7 p.m., usually in the high school LGI room. Open to everyone, we have such interesting programs, you'll be glad you came out.

April 3 – Keith Brintzenhoff, as Dr. Witzelsucht, will entertain us with humor reminiscent of Professor Schnitzel in the old days.

April 27 – Annual BBQ. Dinners will be distributed from the Middle School 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Also a Bake Sale. *See article on page 2.*

May 1 – Show and Tell. This popular program was postponed due to bad weather in February, so here it is on May Day! People can bring things of local historical interest and tell a bit about them. Also, a teacher and students will share their work with the 1920 Census and the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1919.

June 7 – (Saturday) Field trip to the Gruber Wagon Works, Canal Museum and Epler one-room school at the Berks Co. Heritage Center, 10 am. *See details on Page 2.*

July 10 – Our annual picnic, held in the air-conditioned pavilion at St. Michael's Church. Bring a covered dish or dessert, and enjoy good food and a program, sitting with friends or a stranger who will become a friend. Open at 5:30, meal at 6 p.m.

We can't meet at the school over the summer, but our regular meetings resume in September.

THANK YOU, BUILDING FUND DONORS

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CORRECTION

In the Mystery Photo answer that was in our Winter issue, we should have said that the builder of houses in Belmont, Henry K. Wanner, was the great-grandfather of Becky Heffner, not her grandfather. We apologize for the error.

PORK BBQ and BAKE SALE APRIL 27

Remember when our annual BBQ was always in February? We had mighty cold weather for it some years. Well, we no longer have to worry about that, as it occurs in beautiful springtime each year now. You might have gotten tickets and have it marked on your calendar – April 27, the Sunday after Easter. Meals will be distributed from the Middle School, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you need extra tickets, call Beryl at 610-488-6818, or stop in at our Museum any Sunday between 1 and 4 p.m. This is a major fund-raiser, so be sure all your family and neighbors know about this great meal and have tickets in advance.

We kept the price at \$11, no increase from last year. The meal consists of plenty of BBQ, special sauce, a roll, baked potato, and applesauce. For dessert, we'll be selling homemade baked goods.

Many of our members are kind enough to bake their specialties and donate them to this bake sale, and we often sell out by 2 p.m. Bakers, please do not cut or package your baked goods. We have volunteers to do that, using our own containers. Baked goods can be dropped off at our museum, 102 State Street on Saturday, the day before the BBQ, from noon to 2 p.m., or brought to the Middle School on Sunday, April 27 from 9 to 10 a.m. We greatly appreciate your efforts.

HOUSE SITTERS NEEDED

We pride ourselves on having our Museum open, free, each Sunday afternoon. To do that, of course, one or two of our members must be on hand, to open at 1pm and lock up at 4 pm, and to greet visitors in between there. Sometimes these visitors will have questions, but most people just want to look around or do research. They find things of interest around every turn, and interesting conversations sprout up. Our photos on the walls, yearbooks, artifacts of all kinds will stir memories and discussions. Or they quietly browse in the library or enjoy the fascinating old newspapers.

House sitting is not a hard job. There are Sundays when no one visits, and you can find something interesting to read, or look at photo albums and yearbooks. Bring a friend to share the experience, or ask to have one of our board members or house sitters to be there to “break you in.” We promise you will enjoy it, and you will be helping in an important way. Call Pat at 610-488-1817.

A DAY AT THE WESTY

We had a very good response for our fund-raiser at The Westy on March 19, when that restaurant donated 15% of their take to us from all meals served to customers who showed the special coupon when they came in. This included eat-in or take-out. We received \$315.

We thank The Westy Bar and Grill for their community-minded efforts, and to all the people who responded. Our Building Project is underway at 4th and Franklin, and now all our donors can point with pride and say, “I’m helping with that!”

TOUR GRUBER WAGON WORKS ETC.

When Blue Marsh Lake was built in the 1970s, a whole valley ended up under water. Luckily, there was time to save a valuable part of this area’s history, the Gruber Wagon Works, a major industry dating back to 1882. It was moved to the Berks Co. Heritage Center. Preserved with the old machinery and methods, it reveals so much about the skill and work ethic that went into creating those durable modes of transportation.

Included with this tour is the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center and the Epler one-room school. This is a diversified tour, full of local interest. Meet at the Visitor’s Center Barn on Red Bridge Road. The main parking lot is close to the Canal Center, and those desiring less walking could be dropped at the Wagon Works. This tour does not involve climbing many steps.

Our tour will be on Saturday, June 7 at 10 a.m. The cost of the tour is \$5 per person. Anyone wishing to car-pool should meet at our new lot at 4th and Franklin by 9:15 a.m.

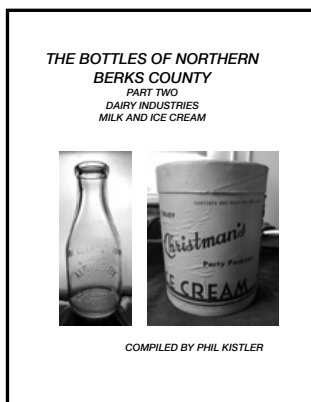
THE DAIRY AND ICE CREAM BOOK

Have you seen our latest book? Our second “bottle book” covers the local dairy and ice cream industries with over 100 photos and an extensive

write-up of details large and small. This area was blessed with fine dairies and ice cream manufacturers. Phil Kistler's book brings back memories, and is a joy to read.

Collectors will be interested in the photos of the large variety of milk bottles, bottle caps, etc. You'll find the ads fascinating, not just for edibles, but Rau's sold dairy supplies and Schlenker's sold milking machines. This book covers the industry from horse-drawn wagons to modern fleets of delivery trucks, from ice-box times to modern freezers. Remember the glass quart milk bottles with baby faces molded into the top? Insulated milk boxes on every front porch? Or, going way back, large canvas bags with dry ice inside to keep ice cream frozen before serving at church functions? Local dairies provided them all.

This spiral-bound book costs \$35, plus \$14 for mailing if that is necessary. All our books are available at the museum.



A PA. DUTCH STORY (with translation) *(Written by the late Richard Savidge)*

DER PARRE UN SCHNAPPS

Der Parre waar om Grebeddiche bout Prohibition. "Mir sette als Bier, wei un schnapps nemme un in der Riwwer schmeisse," hut er saagt. No hof er so schei heilich saagt "Der naekscht Leid oss mir singe is "Mir kumme all zammer an der Riwwer."

THE PREACHER AND LIQUOR

The preacher was preaching about Prohibition. "We should take all the beer, wine, and liquor and dump them into the river," said the preacher. He then sheepishly introduced the next song, "The next song that we'll sing is 'We will all gather at the river!'"

MYSTERY PHOTO

Only two people had much to say about our previous Mystery Photo. Sylvia Summons and Dave Eyer knew that these girls were all Hamburg High School Band majorettes in 1953-54. Those hats hid their hair-dos and, as intended, made them match up pretty well. Two remain unidentified, but the names we can supply are (back row) Anna Schrack, Barbara Graff, Gail Harner, Sally Hackworth, Joan Seaman, Marjorie Emhardt; (front row) Dorothy Kline, -----, Barbara Grimes, Vicki Fraunfelter, Janet Kershner, -----. The group was organized in 1953-54 by band director Mr. Rhine as part of the marching band. They performed at parades, picnics and basketball games. Most of this group were seniors who graduated and passed on the uniforms to the next class, but kept their batons and boots.

Now for our next Mystery Photo (below), it dates pretty far back, but there are clues to help place it. If you know where or when, call 610-488-1817 and leave a message. You will get a call back.



Mystery Photo

JEWELRY NEEDED

Once again, a reminder that our popular Used Jewelry Stand and our Dime Toss and Fishing Hole games will be set up at the Taste of Hamburg-er Festival at the end of summer. We have several tables to display and sell our wide variety of jewelry each year, and it is a major

fund-raising effort. We welcome donations of costume jewelry for women, men and children, as well as purses and jewelry boxes. Over the summer, we can sort and work on donations, then price the pieces and bag some of them. Rings, bracelets, necklaces, pins, tie clips, earrings, etc. are welcome. Drop them off at the museum or give to any of our officers or call 610-562-5904 for pick-up. We stress that all our jewelry is donated.

OUR NEW MUSEUM IS TAKING SHAPE !

It was exciting to watch the energetic crew from Owl Creek Construction at work putting up the skeleton of the building. On March 13, the day the joists were being swung into place by a crane, those who were watching likened the men to cats, squirrels, even birds, as they deftly scrambled up and worked on the growing framework. The man up top, easily balancing on narrow pieces 25 feet above the floor, would shout “8-footer,” and a man below would throw a 2x4 upward, to be skillfully caught and quickly nailed into place. Sixteen-footers were handed up, not thrown. Dozens of joists were fitted in place in just the hour we watched, and they were all finished later. In following days, the roof and first siding was put on. Still to be completed are the outer siding, doors and windows, floor and walls inside, the

plumbing and heating, electrical work, a porch along two sides of the building, and a ramp and steps..

To echo some local architecture of the past, the building has a red metal roof. Tin roofs were common all over town in the old days, put on by firms such as Rau Brothers. They were painted with a durable locally-made red paint, its color due to the red shale and clay. Locally-made bricks owed their color to those same materials. The wrap-around porch on our building will have white bannisters, just as so many homes had. Some stone siding will be a reminder of how popular local mountain stone was as a building material.

We have begun to sort through and pack some of our things that are not on display. As anyone who has moved a household knows, it is quite a job. We welcome volunteers. At some point, the new building will reach a point that those boxes can be unpacked and displays designed and set up. Repaving the parking lot, creating our Memorial Brick garden area, and other outdoor work will happen at some future dates as well.

Our new headquarters will preserve our culture and history, which grows with every passing decade. We’d like local people and businesses to be able to say “I helped make that happen.”





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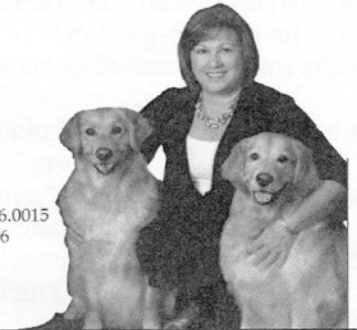
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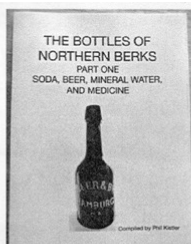
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GET TO KNOW US

Our annual membership dues is \$25 per household.

Our Museum at 102 State Street is open each Sunday afternoon, except holidays, from 1 to 4 p.m. We are proud of our large collection of photos and newspaper clippings, books on historical subjects, yearbooks, histories of towns and churches, and 100 years of *The Hamburg Item* newspapers. We have artifacts of all kinds to pique your interest. Come and browse to your heart's content. Admission is free.

Check out our Memorial Brick Walkway in front of the Museum. Memorial bricks may be ordered at any time, with any names you want, limited to three lines of print. Order forms are available at the Museum, or call 610-488-1817.

Our various books may be purchased at the Museum.

Hamburg Area 1752-1852

Hamburg Area 1850-2000

In Our Neck of the Woods (2nd printing)

Home Cooking and Eating Out (5th printing)

The Bottle Book

Bicentennial History Book (1976)

The Dairy/Ice Cream Book

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