



HAMBURG AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Volume 22, Issue 1

"Preserving Our Past for the Future"

Winter 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year everyone! Hope you all enjoyed the holidays and are off to a happy, healthy new year.

This time of year can keep a lot of us close to home, avoiding cold, windy days and early darkness, not to mention snow. You might be spending more time watching TV. Recently I watched a few old "Twilight Zone" shows. One involved a man longing to return to his childhood. He was dismayed with his present high stress job, urban environment, decline in morals, people not knowing their neighbors. He longed for the past. Well, by some stroke of cosmic travel he landed back in his childhood neighborhood, albeit in his present adult body. He was thrilled to visit the ice cream parlor, and his old home. Of course his parents didn't recognize him. Then he ran into himself as a boy. That didn't go too well, he scared the boy and caused him to have an accident that left a limp he retained in his present life. Nobody knew or trusted him.

Now you may ask why I am bringing this up? Many of us long for the past and feel if we could go back and relive those memories, many of us would indeed find pleasure seeing family, friends, pets and places no longer with us. But going back would never be the same as in our memories. We tend to gloss over the difficulties and remember only the good things. We have gotten used to many conveniences, formed new families, homes and lives.

I guess what I am trying to say is you really can't go back except through memories, and visits to museums, historical societies and living history attractions. That's why it's so important to preserve our memories and artifacts for future generations. Without physical evidence, memories can be dismissed as never having happened. Take your children and grandchildren to exhibits and relive memories with them. Not only will they appreciate your life and what you had, but also what they have now.

Our Historical Society motto is "Preserving the past for the future". Help us preserve and share our history by continuing to support our museum with your time, memories, artifacts and donations.

Here's to 2025 and the long-awaited construction of our new building. Hopefully we will have lots of progress to share with you soon.

Deb Billman, President

COMING EVENTS

Our regular meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month that school is open, at 7 p.m., usually in the LGI room. After a brief meeting, there is a program of historical interest. Open to all.

February 6 – Our popular "show and tell" meeting will be in the James Gilmartin Board Room at the high school. People can bring any items of historical or local interest, and tell about them. Also, Mr. Laughlin, a high school teacher, will share his and his class's work with the 1920 census and the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1919.

March 6 – Guide Dogs, by Barb and Dennis Dietrich

March 19 – Enjoy a meal at The Westy, and benefit our organization. See details on page 5. **Must show coupon, shown on page 5.**

April 3 – Keith Brintzenhoff, as Dr. Witzelsucht, will bring us Pa. Dutch humor, like Professor Schnitzel in the old days.

April 27 – Annual BBQ and bake sale. See article on Pg 3.

NEW MEMBERS:

Annette George, Mohrsville, PA
Delores Ritter, State College, PA
Linda Prutzman, Hamburg, PA
Jeffrey Schreppe, Seabeck, WA

**GROUNDBREAKING AT 4th AND FRANKLIN !
See article and photos on Pages 2 and 4.**

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SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS

MORE DONATIONS TO BUILDING FUND:

We are pleased to print the fourth list of donors to our Building Fund. The following were received from January to December of 2024. Some of these people also donated in previous years.

\$4,000:

Sandy & Marty Christman

\$1,500:

Virginville Grange

\$1,000:

Anonymous

\$550:

Elmer & Beryl Schrack

\$500:

Wagner Good VFW Post #216

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Ronald & Cindy Kunkel

\$100 to \$499:

Dennis & Betty Haag

Larry & Cheryl Bressler

Deutsch Eck Restaurant (plate it forward)

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Tyler Bachman in memory of Roslyn Yocom and Ted Miller

Mary & Robert Harron

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Janet Peters in memory of Charles Grim

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Douglas & Joan Adams

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Marianne & Robert Blauser in memory of Roslyn Yocom

Hamburg Grange

Stephen Cashman

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Roy & Darlene Berstler

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Raymond Kreider

Scott Kreider

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Saranna B. Miller

Dwayne Henne

Michael Correll

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A, Brian Moyer

Matthew Haag

Patricia Lakits

Mary Liber

Greg & Nancy Noel

Ernest & Betty Leshner

Rev. Norman & Nancy Dresher

James & Sheila Nichols

Elizabeth Sweitzer

Jean Horning

Michael & Jane Adams

Cheryl & Larry Bressler

Christopher & Helen Price

Karl & Susan Stoudt

William R. Dalious

WORK HAS BEGUN !

On January 15 at 6:30 a.m., with the temperature in the teens, Elmer Schrack got a call from Amos Esch at Owl Creek Construction, saying they were going to start our building project, and would be there at 9 a.m. Elmer informed the other members of the building committee, and brought our building permit to the site, where workmen, trucks and a huge shovel were ready. For two days, that shovel removed dirt and it was hauled to a designated spot. Footers would soon be in place, and other necessary work done, in spite of typical wintry weather. On January 16 the building committee, the officers and board members and other interested parties gathered in a snowstorm to pose near the big hole in the ground at the site where soon will rise the new home of the Hamburg Area Historical Society. **See photos on page 4.**

So we thank everyone who has shown their support by donating to our various fund drives and at other times. We have loved our little stone house on State Street, purchased in 2002 and cleaned up and restored in the following months. We had no idea how the artifacts, photos, books and local treasures would come pouring in. When it became apparent our house could not hold and display them all, the search began for larger quarters. Soon after we purchased the lot at 4th and Franklin, COVID hit, bringing all building plans to a halt. Once things got moving again, the long process dealing with contractors, beurocracy, and banks began. It has taken a lot longer than expected - we thought groundbreaking might be last March!

We know our work is far from over. We hope many of you will volunteer to help with the project as we plan exhibits and the move to our new museum. To be involved, please call any of our officers or board members.

ANNUAL BBQ IN APRIL

It is not too soon to mention that we will once again be selling tickets for our popular BBQ. It is scheduled for April 27, and tickets will be mailed to local members in the hope that they sell well and this annual fund-raiser will be a success. More details will be in our Spring issue, very close to that event. We will once again combine it with a bake sale, often a sell-out. Our Historical Society is fortunate to have so many good bakers and workers.

THRIVENT “CHOICE DOLLARS”

For any member of Thrivent, this is a reminder that your “Choice Dollars” can be donated to any non-profit 501(c)3 organization. The deadline for this donation is March 31, 2025. The Hamburg Area Historical Society appreciates having received these donations in the past, and is looking forward to being considered again this year. Please contact your Thrivent agent or go online to thrivent.com to make your contribution.

MYSTERY PHOTO

The photo in the previous issue was fascinating, wasn't it? And quite a few people called to identify it, some of whom had memories of living there (though probably not as long ago as when the photo was taken). Callers were Becky and Lee Heffner, Dick and Carol Stine, Cynthia McElrea, Barbara Seidel, David Trump, Darryl Dietrich, David McFall, Randy Specht, Denny Bowers, Adam Kershner, Diane Moyer, and Richard Seyfert. They all knew this was the 500 block of South Fourth Street, better known as Belmont, as it looked almost 100 years ago. All those houses on the left were built by Henry K. Wanner. In 1910 the first group of double houses was constructed in the middle of the block. They were quickly occupied, so in 1915-1918 he built another section of the row at the southern end. Then the homes to the north completed the row in 1925. These are all well-built, as Mr. Wanner took pride in his work, and he always signed his name in each home,

somewhere in the attic. The precision used in placing all those houses is evident when one looks through the porches from south to north – those posts and walls line up perfectly! This phenomenon caught the eye of a TV crew from Hamburg, Germany, some years back, when they were here to do a feature about our area for their home city. They were pleased to film the view through the whole line of porches.

The home at the south end of this row is just a tad larger, for that one was for his own household of 13 children. Other places in town built by Mr. Wanner are the former Legion building (now Necessities) and the movie theater. There are many other homes and buildings in this area that bear Henry K. Wanner's signature on their woodwork.

We were given much of this information by Becky Heffner, who is Mr. Wanner's granddaughter.

If you can ID any of the girls in this new Mystery Photo, call 610-488-1817 and leave a message. You will get a call back.



MYSTERY PHOTO

GROUNDBREAKING



The Building Committee at groundbreaking: (L-R) Brian Riegel, Scott Lakits, Sandra Christman, Janet Barr, Elmer Schrack (chairman of the committee). See article on page 2.



Officers, board members, and other interested parties gathered at the building site and were smiling through the snow on January 16 at 4th and Franklin Street. (L-R) Front row: Sandra Christman, Elmer Schrack, Pat Pitkin, Barbara Graff, Janet Barr, Deb Billman (president), Deena Kershner from Our Town Foundation; back row: James Stevens from Rep. Jamie Barton's office, Brian Riegel, Beryl Schrack, Cathy Correll, Scott Lakits, Pat Lakits, Marcia Scharadin

This is the coupon that must be shown at The Westy in West Hamburg on March 19 in order for our Historical Society to receive a portion of the proceeds from your meal. They just need to see it, not keep it, so you can either take this along to show, or take a picture of it (the entire page) with your phone and show that. We thank you for your support.



**JOIN US TO SUPPORT THE
HAMBURG AREA HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

**Wednesday March 19
11 AM to 9 PM**

**The Westy Bar and Grill
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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

HAMBURG AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2025 OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Deb Billman 484-665-0160

Vice President – Elmer Schrack 610-488-6818

Secretary – Janet Barr 610-562-0240

Treasurer – Scott Lakits 484-332-9440

Membership – Pat Pitkin 610-488-1817

Programs – Brian Riegel 484-523-2554

Museum Coordinators – Pat Pitkin & Elmer Schrack

Facebook Page – Brian Riegel

Directors: Cathy Correll, Barbara Graff, Pat Pitkin,
Brian Riegel, Marcia Scharadin, Pat Lakits,
Sandy Christman

Newsletter: Janet Barr (editor), Dale Graff, Barbara Graff,
Pat Pitkin, Brian Riegel

Send articles & comments to: jmbwoods1@gmail.com

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EMAIL ADDRESS: historyhamburg@gmail.com

PHONE (at the Museum) 610-562-3664

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