

Portage Area Historical Society Newsletter



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June 2005

This year's Great Portage Community Yard Sale is quickly approaching. The June 11th date was changed from May because of requests from participants, May being just too cold. Last year over 90 homes participated in the event. The all-day rain did not inhibit shoppers, and Portage streets were busy throughout the day. Participant forms are already coming in for this year's event and we are hoping for another successful day. Maps can be picked up at the museum on June 11th, the day of the sale. If you are not planning your own sale, the PAHS will be accepting donated items. No clothing or large furniture please.

Colonial Dinner

On April 10th the Portage Area Historical Society sponsored a colonial dinner at Fort Roberdeau, a Blair County Revolutionary War Fort. The meal was absolutely delicious, but definitely different. The cooks and servers, all dressed in colonial garb, were fascinating and very knowledgeable. The two-hour meal initiated much conversation with some dining favorites being carrot puffs, turnip soup, and chocolates with hot peppers. If you missed this year's dinner, join us next April for a repeat of the event.



Barb & John Havrilla, Greg & Ginny McDonnell,
& Ruth Richardson enjoying their colonial dinner.

Ferdinand Bionaz

Last year Portage lost not only a prominent member of the community, but a faithful backer of the Portage Station Museum and the Portage Area Historical Society. From the beginning, Mr. Bionaz offered legal advice on many occasions. He supported our efforts and donated generously to our causes. He will be missed.

Museum hours

The museum hours for 2005 have been changed to Wednesday and Saturday 1 pm to 4 pm. Many thanks to Mary Ellen Lutz and Ruth Richardson for volunteering so much of their time to keep the museum open to the public on a regular basis.

Ruth also stops by the museum on a regular basis to check phone messages, water the flowers, and do general maintenance. Please let us know of anyone interested in working 20 hours a week, there is a program that will pay for the hours.

Memory Plaque Addition

This spring a new plaque was added to the memory board. The \$500 plaque purchased by Mr. William Callahan in memory of his family's restaurant is engraved: "Charles and Grace Callahan, 'Callaway Tea Room', 1925-1940." The family style restaurant, located at 1719 Caldwell Avenue, was the first restaurant in the town where people could dine to music. A plaque is a wonderful way to remember a friend or relative. Prices are \$50, \$100, \$500, and \$1000.

Freight Depot

Several years ago Eugene Stepp donated the old Portage Freight Depot to the Portage Area Historical Society. In October of 2001, the Allegheny Ridge Corporation did a feasibility study of the building and surrounding grounds to determine a plan to remodel. Over the last four years members of the historical society have made every effort to try to save this building. The final results, the state will

invest no money in the present foundation and structure. A new building would cost about \$2 million, way out of the reach of our small organization and town.

Art Show

This year during Summerfest weekend, August 12-14, Barbara Yetsko will unveil her newest paintings at the Station Museum. Barb has been preparing for this show for the last year and will be ready with about 20 paintings, mainly portraits of little girls. Her works will continue to be on display through mid-September.

Scout Display

First floor displays at the museum for this year deal with scouting. Items from the 30s to the 90s are on loan to the museum from local and previous residents of the area. Many thanks to John Gartland Jr. and Sr., Bruce and Adam Cadwallader, Steve Gavlak, John and Mike Havrilla, Greg, Mark, and John McDonnell, Joann, Alicia (Smith), Ashley, and Amanda Nickol, William Callahan, Bruce Valari Jr. and Sr., Scott and Bob George, Carl and Ruth Richardson, Faye Irwin, Regis Huschak, and Troop 58. Displays include everything from camping equipment and personal items to handmade kerchief slides and a Klondike Derby sledge (dog sled).



Memories

The Palmer Collectible brought us this story: "The plaque of the B. N. Palmer building gave me a trip down memory lane. I lived in the Nidetch Apts and I would play in the lot between the two buildings. I thought the mill and BN were really out of this world. He would tolerate me for awhile and then send me out. Later on

he took on a line of paints and painted a lot of my toys for me – he was also a very good wood worker. B.N. Palmer organized the first all boys school band and later directed and held the high school band together during the summer. He helped me learn to play the trumpet. One of his

expressions was, 'Teach a boy to blow a horn and he'll never blow a safe.' He and his wife rented rooms in their home to out-of-town female school teachers."

by **Bill Callahan**. Share some of your Collectible memories with us!

Museum Visitors

Since we opened the doors April 2nd, five groups have visited the museum, including two groups of scouts, one school group, and a group from the National Railroad Association. Besides regular visitors, several people have also stopped by to do research in the reference section on the second floor.

Upcoming events:

August: *Barbara Yetsko - Art show*

September: *Paula Purnell - Songs and Stories of SW PA*

October: *Peggy Fields / Blair County Historical Society - 200 years of Wedding Dresses*

December: *Light Show*

Check the Portage Dispatch for details!!

New Collectible

After many suggestions and lots of work, the 2005 collectible, Abe Stier's Stop Light Market, will soon be on sale at the museum. The building was located at 800 Caldwell Avenue, now an empty lot between the Centre Towne Mall and Beck's Funeral Home. The Stop Light Market was a typical small town grocery store specializing in fresh meats ready to order. Brown's Pool Hall occupied the second floor. Thanks to the efforts of many individuals, especially Ruth Richardson, our collectibles continue to be a very successful fundraiser.

Visit our Website @

www.portagestationmuseum.org

Museum Hours: Wednesday & Saturday - 1 pm - 4 pm

Portage Area Historical Society Board

Regis Huschak - President

Ruth Richardson - Vice President

John Havrilla - Treasurer

Mary Kostan - Recording Secretary

Irene Huschak - Corresponding Secretary

Barbara Havrilla, Betty Cann, Ginny McDonnell, Mary

Lou George, Tom Gaudlip, and Barbara Prostejovskiy

Collectibles Order Form

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

New Abe Stier's Stop Light Market \$16.00 (tax included) Quantity: _____ Total: _____

Palmer Building \$18.00 + tax (\$19.08) Quantity: _____ Total: _____

Mountain House \$12.00 + tax (\$12.72) Quantity: _____ Total: _____

Sonman Tipple \$16.00 (tax included) Quantity: _____ Total: _____

Keystone Hotel \$16.00 (tax included) Quantity: _____ Total: _____

Shipping - Add \$3.85

Total Enclosed: _____

** Collectibles can also be purchased at the Portage Station Museum, Lee Street and the Portage Public Library, Main Street

2005 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

Mark the category you prefer.

() Annual Member \$5.00 () Life Member \$50.00 () Student Member \$2.00

() Life Sponsor \$100.00 () Life Benefactor \$250.00

Make all checks payable to: Portage Area Historical Society