

Tidings

Official Newsletter of the Avalon History Center and Avalon Historical Society

Summer 2018 Issue

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THE REUNION

2018 Marks the 50th Anniversary of Avalon's Very Own Community
Amateur Theatrical Troupe: **The Avalon Players**

Established by Dennis Soens, Bonnie Matt & Ginny Lynch in 1968, the Players put on their first production at Community Hall, with "A Taste of Broadway". Since then, almost every Spring has seen an audition notice go out to neighboring schools & communities, answered by 100s of children seeking the thrill of the boards and lure of the bright lights. No-one is turned away, everyone has a part to play & many a star has been born thanks to the dedication, hard work & love for the theatre of the Soens family & Avalon Players organization, plus the support of Avalon's local business & administrative leaders.

Audiences and performers alike have been thrilled by such productions as "Cinderella", "The Wizard of Oz", "Peter Pan", "Grease", "Fame" to name but a few. Also produced were Avalon originals - "Avalon...Cooler by a Mile" an original musical written by Joanna Evans, Dave Haberle & Jeannie Haryslak with musical score by Dan Keen & William Beck, a work of fiction featuring real characters from Avalon's history, went into production in 1991. Followed in 1992 by "Avalon...Still Cool", another original from the writing team of the Avalon Players. Both were produced to commemorate Avalon Borough's Centennial.



Eddie Donlevie starring in *Music Man* in 2002. Plus costume that he wore. Donated by parents Jack & Mimi Donlevie.



2018 sees the Avalon Players putting on a production of "Mary Poppins, Jr.", to be performed in August at Avalon Elementary School. Be sure to get your tickets.

In the meantime, enjoy a bit of Broadway in Avalon at The Avalon Players reunion in Community Hall on July 28th, and check out our new exhibit of Avalon Players posters, playbills, costumes & memorabilia at the History Center on 39th St.



Dennis Soens (1950 - 1989) was one of the original founders of The Avalon Players. He attended the Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, appearing in such productions as "South Pacific", "Godspell", "They're Playing our Song" to name but a few. Dennis never forgot his roots however, & returned to Avalon every summer where he was an Avalon lifeguard by day and a director, choreographer, voice-coach, electrical, sound & lighting engineer, set & costume designer by night.

Look inside for our Summer
Events & Program
Schedule!

Check *it* Out!

at the AVALON HISTORY CENTER

215 39th Street, Avalon, NJ 08202

HISTORY CENTER SUMMER HOURS

Begin Memorial Day Weekend!

Tuesday-Sunday 10am to 4pm. Closed Mondays.

(609) 967-0090 | avalonhistorycenter.org

SUMMER 2018 EVENTS & PROGRAMS!

Check out our three-part series on the history of Avalon this summer!

Part 1 – The Railroad Age (through 1939)

Tuesday, July 17 at 6pm. Join Interpreter Bill Mengel to learn about Avalon's origins, founders, infrastructure buildup (including the railroad!) and early businesses.

Part 2 – War Years & Beyond (1940-1962)

Tuesday, July 31 at 6pm. Join Collections Coordinator Bonita Risley as she covers the impact of WWII on Avalon, changes through the 1950s and on to the powerful Nor'easter of March 1962, which altered the course of the island's history.

Part 3 – Recent Memory (1963 to today)

Tuesday, August 14 at 6pm. Join Director Nina Ranalli to reflect on Avalon's history in more recent years, characterized by new businesses, rapid development, and shifting demographics.

Plus, lots of other great events and programs!

Avalon Historical Society's Annual Photography Contest

Accepting entries during the month of May. Entries on display during the month of June.

Avalon Historical Society Olde House Tour – June 16 at 1pm. Enjoy tours of several of Avalon's old homes. This is a ticketed event beginning at the History Center.

4th Annual Paper Peddler Trivia Night! – Tuesday, June 19 at 6pm. Bring a team of friends and demonstrate your knowledge of Avalon's history and culture in a Quizzo-inspired trivia game! Enjoy old photos and memorabilia. Prizes will be awarded to the winning teams. Call ahead to reserve a table for your team of up to four people.

New Avalon Assembly Chautauqua at the Jersey Shore – Tuesdays, June 26, July 10, July 24, and August 7 at 7pm at the First United Methodist Church of Avalon. Chautauqua assemblies provided education and enrichment for adults in communities across the United States beginning in the late 19th century. Join in a revival of this tradition by attending a variety of lectures on cultural and historical topics. Held at the First United Methodist Church of Avalon.

MONDAY FUNDAYS at Avalon History Center: Behind the Scenes at the Museum!

July 16, July 30, and August 13 at 10am. A program for children. Look, touch, learn and explore with hands-on activities. All ages welcome, best for 10+. No registration required.

Miniature Golf Fun Thursday, July 12, 5 pm to 8pm at Go Fish Mini Golf. Enjoy a round of golf with friends or family, while benefiting the Historical Society. Prizes for winners!

Avalon Historical Society Annual Clam Shell Pitch Competition, 30th St. Beach

July 21 at 8:30am. Try your hand at this fun, horseshoes-like sport, historically played on Avalon's beaches! No experience necessary. Tournaments for singles and doubles. Register and practice beginning at 8:30am at 30th St beach. Tournament starts at 9am.

Avalon Players 50th Anniversary Reunion

Saturday, July 28 from 4-6pm at Avalon Community Hall

Fifty years ago, Dennis Soens, Bonnie Matt and Ginny Lynch asked the then-mayor of Avalon if they could use Community Hall to put on a show. The mayor approved and the dramatic ensemble "Avalon Players" was born, taking the stage in its first production, "A Taste of Broadway." Join us in celebrating 50 years of musical theater & community! Attend the reunion to reconnect with old friends, view memorabilia from past shows, and enjoy refreshments. No tickets needed, but if possible please RSVP via our Facebook event so we have a rough head count. Have photos or memorabilia you'd like to share? Please call the Avalon History Center, (609) 967-0090.



*Do you own
a historic
house?*

The Avalon Historical Society is looking for houses to be included on the Olde House Tour. If interested, please call the History Center.



Growing Up in Avalon

Remember the laughing, the playing, the sandy feet, the team spirit, the friends forever – relive & share your special childhood memories of Avalon at the History Center's Growing Up in Avalon exhibit, new this summer.



Avalon Players 50th Anniversary

Celebrate 50 years of singing, dancing & community spirit with the Avalon Players Cooler by a Show exhibit, new this summer.



Plus, an exciting addition to our Local Businesses exhibit!

You may miss eating at the Pudgie Pelican this summer, but you don't have to miss visiting with him. We have welcomed the pelican to his new home at the History Center!



Avalon's first female lifeguard - Meg Patterson 18 of Maple Glen is being congratulated by Avalon Public Safety Commissioner Lloyd C. Riggall left and Beach Captain Murray Wolf.

Have you seen our Beach Patrol room?

We are refreshing the space and adding information on the Beach Patrol's South Jersey Championships, plus a feature on female members of the patrol. And don't miss our 1925 Avalon Beach Patrol Lifeboat!



The roof of the house stood on the Community Hall parking lot briefly during the structure's dismantling. What a sight!

Saved from demolition - 254, 6th St. Avalon. Having been abandoned & sold at auction for the lot it stood on, one of Avalon's original Queen Anne style Victorian houses was dismantled floor by floor & moved into storage early this year. Concerned members of a family who spent many happy summers there until they sold it in the mid 1990's, worked with the developer & removal experts & are now searching for a suitable lot where it can eventually be reassembled & restored to its former glory.



Avalon Register of Historic Places

Is your house more than 50 years old, and retains its original character? It may be eligible for listing on the Avalon Register of Historic Places. The program has been initiated to cultivate a culture of appreciation for historic resources by identifying significant places and recognizing property owners that choose to preserve them. Stop by, call, or visit the History Center's website for a copy of the application form.

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

**Presented by the Avalon
Historical Society**

**Do you have a good eye and
a camera? Can you capture
a moment or tell a story
through the lens? Then share
your talent with us.**



Best in Show for 2017 – “Bananaquit Dominica” by George Rose

The Avalon Historical Society is accepting entries into their Annual Amateur Photography contest, up until 2pm on May 31st.

Categories include:

- Portrait & Personality
- Nature
- Scenic
- Avalon
- Under 12 Children’s entries.

All entries must be matted & mounted, 5” x 7” or 8” x 10”, & include full name & contact information. Up to 4 photographs per \$10 entrance fee. Entries will be on display at the History Center throughout the month of June. Please contact History Center for further details - (609) 967-0090.

Time to renew!

Memberships to the Avalon Historical Society run from June 1 – May 31. Please return the enclosed membership application with your annual donation. Your membership contributions allow the Avalon History Center to pursue special projects and collections acquisitions. They are appreciated. Thank you!



Mark your calendar!



8th Annual Avalon Historical Society

Clamshell Pitch

July 21, 2018

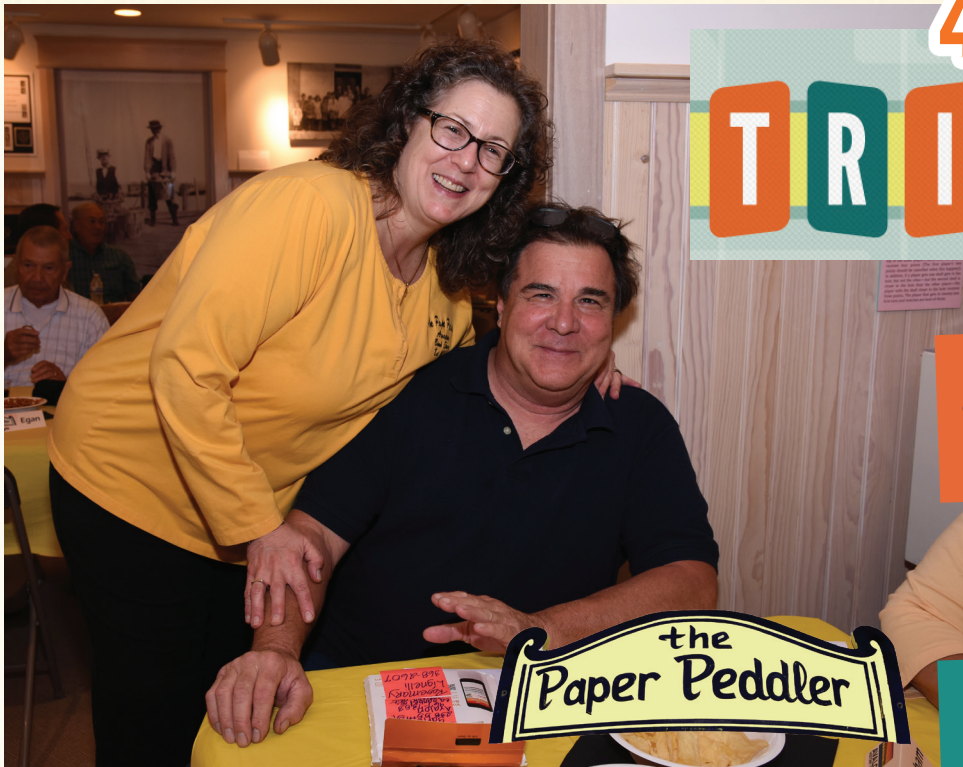


During clamshell pitching, a game similar to horseshoes, competitors toss clamshells toward holes dug in hard-packed sand and are awarded points for landing closest to or in the hole. A simple game with no equipment required, families and friends have played casually on the beach for decades or perhaps even centuries.

In 1946 the first International Clam Shell Pitching contest took place in Cape May on Labor Day weekend. The following year, the Avalon Clam Shell Club challenged the Cape May team, and the match was held on Avalon's 21st Street beach (see photo).

Cape May continued to hold an annual tournament, but a dredging project in the late 1990s changed the character of the sand on Cape May's beaches, making the grains large, coarse, and no longer appropriate for clamshell pitching competitions.

Avalon's fine-grain sand remains hard-packed and suitable for competition at or near low tide. The Avalon Historical Society revived the old tournament in 2010 with the help of W. Norman Mackey, who was an Avalon lifeguard in the early 1930s. Mackey played clamshell pitch his whole life, and taught his kids and grandkids to play as well. This year's tournament will be held Saturday, July 21 at 30th Street beach. Register and practice beginning at 8:30am. Tournament starts at 9am. We hope to see you there!



Craig Cunningham & Deb Martinelli, owners of the Paper Peddler

4th Annual TRIVIA NIGHT

What Avalon Mayor was a professional brewer of beer whose family was one of the largest beer distributors in the world?

A. Mayor Bergner

In what year was the 32nd Street life guard beach house built?

A: 1972

Name a business that was formerly located at what is now Circle Pizza.

A. American Store, John's Hang Up, Sullivan's

The Avalon History Center will hold the fourth annual "Paper Peddler Trivia Night" Tuesday, June 19th at 6pm. Attendees will compete to show their mastery of Avalon history and culture in a "Quizzo"-like game, which will feature old photos and Paper Peddler memorabilia.

The Paper Peddler, an iconic local bookstore that closed its doors in 2014, had a tradition of writing an Avalon trivia question on a chalkboard outside the store.

Trivia Night attendees can enjoy the game, snacks and good company. The History Center is glad to put on this program, in partnership with the former owners of the Paper Peddler, because it's an interesting way for attendees to learn about Avalon's history and enjoy the sense of community at the same time.

This year's prizes will consist of no-longer-available Paper Peddler tote bags filled with a variety of books on local history, plus other items. Those interested in participating may call the History Center at (609) 967-0090 to reserve a table for a team of up to four people.



Previous-year participants enjoying the game.

**Did you know the History Center
has a backyard garden available
for your use?**

Bring a friend, a book, a glass of lemonade, you are welcome to come and relax in the History Center's back garden with vintage style gazebo & memory brick path. Watch as the planting is transformed into an historic Victorian style formal garden, complementing the Colonial style cottage garden surrounding the restored Avalon Cottage.

The garden will be spruced up and ready for your use as of Memorial Day weekend.



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