



Official Newsletter of the Avalon History Center and Avalon Historical Society

Summer 2020 Issue

 facebook.com/AvalonHistoryCenter



This has been an unforgettable time in history, not just in Avalon, but all over the world. The Avalon Free Public Library and History Center hope we have kept you informed, entertained, connected during the challenges of isolation and request that you consider sharing your own personal stories of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on your lives. Please go to Avalon History Center's link on the Avalon Free Public Library website, or pick up a questionnaire from outside of the History Center on 39th Street.

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

Take a stroll down to 30th St. and Ocean Drive, right there on the corner you will bump into a 48", 150lb bronze statue of a 5 year old girl flying a kite. Take a closer look and you'll see how she is cheekily poking out her tongue, plus you will notice the signatures of every Avalon Elementary school child in 1990 etched on the kite

Who is the Kite Girl? How did she get there? Where did she disappear when she was just 36 days old? Who takes care of her while we are not looking?

It all started back in 1988 when the Avalon Garden Club, under the Presidency of Catherine McMenamin, began planning a borough beautification project to present a special gift to Avalon. Margaret Goodwin chaired the project and discussions went ahead - in February 1989 a fountain was debated, then in June a 100 lb aluminum heron, 43" tall with a 3 foot wingspan was considered.

A bit more research found local sculptor/artist Gary Jacketti - graduate of Philadelphia's Tyler School of Art - right in the heart of Avalon where he had his studio and also worked as cook at the Windrift Hotel.

Jacketti was approached and by

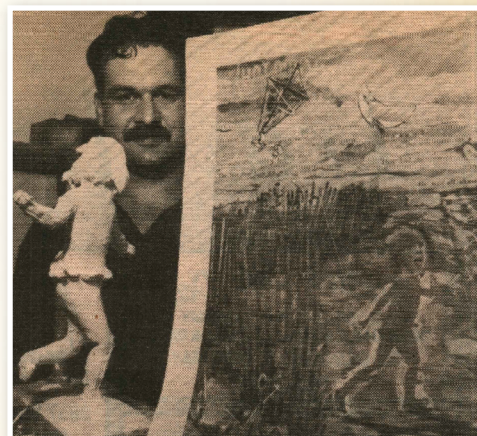


mid-Summer he presented the Garden Club with two sketches. The first was of children building sand-castles, the second was of a child flying a kite in the dunes.

The Kite Girl was chosen, the sculptor was commissioned, the site was made ready. Members of the community generously donated their time, as did the artist, as well as equipment and services, saving the Garden Club several thousands of dollars. George Tozour prepared the site and laid the railroad ties, Anthony Matalucci's Cape Concrete donated and poured the concrete, Oceanview electrical Services installed all electrics and lighting fixtures, Jack Bretherington contributed carpentry work, the Stone

Harbor Lions Club made a generous monetary contribution for preparation and maintenance. Harry de Butts, Grace O'Brien, Mayor Richard Light, Ferrens's bakery all contributed goods and services.

It took 2 years of planning but, dedication day came on Thursday, July 26, 1990! It was Elsie Kuhn's first official duty as Avalon Garden Club's newly elected President. Elsie, the Garden Club and the sculptor Gary Jacketti presented Mayor Richard Light and the Borough of Avalon with a lasting memorial to the "safe family atmosphere of the beach" in Avalon.



Artist Gary Jacketti with image and model for sculpture. Photo by Al Campbell for Herald-Lantern Dispatch 7/25/90

(continued on next page)

But that's not the end of her story. Just 36 days after her installation, the Kite Girl disappeared! After a weekend of the Boy Scouts and Police frantically searching all over the island, patrolmen spotted her in the early hours of Monday morning standing unharmed at first base on the baseball field between 11th & 12th Streets. An alarm system was subsequently installed and arrangements for regular police patrols put in place.

Despite those measures, she again fell victim to theft. This time it was her kite which was reported as missing on July 13, 2013. It was quickly restored however as the thief unwittingly left a clue at the scene - a paystub, complete with name and address!

As the Kite Girl celebrates her 30th birthday this summer, let's hope her adventures off-site are behind her as she continues to greet us all as we arrive in family friendly Avalon.



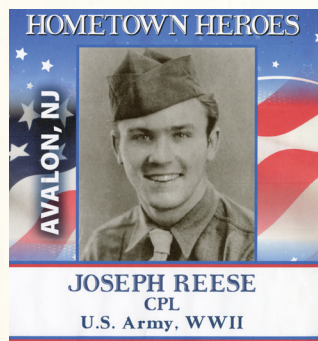
HOMETOWN HEROES PROGRAM

Have you noticed the veterans banners hanging in the center of Avalon from Memorial Day To Veteran's Day each year?

Operation Hometown Heroes is a partnership between the Borough of Avalon and the Avalon Historical Society, honoring veterans of all military services past and present, who have a significant connection to the Avalon community.

To request a banner, please contact the Avalon History Center and supply the following information:

- Requestor's name and contact information
- Veteran's name, Branch of Service, Rank
- Sponsor's name (if applicable)
- Veteran's photograph, in uniform is preferred



Cost of the banner is \$300; donations of any amount toward that cost are accepted. We wish to honor the service of all of our veterans, so requests for banners unaccompanied by donations will be funded through the Avalon Historical Society.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Are you familiar with Avalon's Register of Historic Places?

This program is intended to recognize Avalon buildings—homes, businesses, public buildings, and other structures—that are more than 50 years old and that have retained their original character. If your home, business or building falls into those categories, you may be eligible to be placed on the register and be entitled to hang a plaque on your home or building indicating its historic status.

To participate, you are asked to submit an application, available from the Avalon History Center, which the staff can help you to complete. If your application is accepted, you receive the following free of charge:

- Placement on the Avalon Register of Historic Places.
- Certificate indicating your building's acceptance into the program.
- Recognition in Avalon History Center/Avalon Historical Society newsletter.
- Priority consideration on the Avalon Historical Society House Tour.
- Inclusion on the "walking Tour" map of Avalon locating historic structures.

For a fee of \$70, the official "Avalon Historic Register" plaque indicating the building's year of construction will be offered to you.





at the AVALON HISTORY CENTER

215 39th Street, Avalon, NJ 08202

HISTORY CENTER YEAR-ROUND HOURS

Monday-Friday 10am- 4pm. Saturday 10am-1pm.
Closed Sundays.

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(609) 967-0090 | avalonhistorycenter.org

SUMMER 2020 EVENTS & PROGRAMS!

Summer History Lectures!

While all summer lectures & programs have had to be temporarily suspended in-person, you will be pleased to hear that the History Center has scheduled the following, to be available virtually via Zoom.

Registration is required prior to event. You will then be sent a link & instructions to enjoy the presentations.

Please follow the link via Avalon Free Public Library's History Center page, & while there check out Sean Farrell's YouTube video tutorial on how best to use Zoom.



Tuesday, July 7 at 6pm

'Old Glory - the History of the American Flag'

presented by Kevin Woyce, via Zoom

Tuesday, July 21 at 6pm

'Hidden Maritime History - Shipwrecks of NJ'

*presented by Stephen Nagiewicz
Professor at Rutgers University, via Zoom*

Tuesday, August 4 at 6pm

'The Roaring Twenties'

presented by Melissa Palmer of the Mid Atlantic Center, via Zoom

Saturday, September 5 at 1pm

'American women in World War I'

presented by Pary Tell, via Zoom

History Center & Historical Society Summer 2020 Programs

It is with regret that the History Center & Historical Society have suspended the **"Early Avalon" Walking Tours of Avalon's Peermont Section** with Bruce Tell for 2020 but, rest assured they will be back in 2021. A self guided option will be available soon!



New Exhibits for 2020 - Coming Soon!

"Last Call for 36th & Ocean"

It was Jack's Place that was heavily mourned on May 22, 2019, as the demolition crew tore down the building on the corner of 36th St. and Ocean Drive.

However, some who remembered also grieved for it's earlier incarnation as Gallagher's Pub and those of an even earlier generation wiped a tear for the Black Eagle, also known as the Dirty Bird.



"Avalon from Above"

Enjoy historic aerial images of Avalon - photographs and original artwork. See how Avalon's shoreline has changed as days go by.



at the AVALON HISTORY CENTER

Welcome to the Avalon History Center's new Digital Collections Coordinator

Jonathan Gibson

Welcome to the Avalon History Center's new Digital Collections Coordinator - Jonathan Gibson.

Starting work in April 2020, Jonathan Gibson is the History Center's new digital collections coordinator. A graduate of Thomas Edison State University with a master's degree in public service leadership, Jonathan has previously worked at the Avalon Free Public Library and the NAS Wildwood Aviation Museum.

He is thrilled to be working in Avalon again as part of the History Center team! And we are thrilled to have you join us, Jon!



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