

Tidings

Official Newsletter of the Avalon History Center and Avalon Historical Society

Winter 2016 Issue

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THANKS FOR JOINING US IN 2016!

The Avalon History Center and Historical Society held a variety of programs and events, which were well-attended and enjoyed by all. Check out some featured photos here and on the following page!



Competitors at the Clamshell Pitch toss shells into holes dug into hard-packed sand in a game much like horseshoes. Twenty-two participants, experts and amateurs alike, enjoyed the annual tournament!



The second annual Paper Peddler Trivia Night once again packed the History Center with experts on old Avalon! Do you have what it takes to challenge the winning team with your Avalon trivia knowledge next year?



For the first year, the History Center presented themed Day Camps, and local fifth through seventh graders attended. Campers heard about the history of the Avalon Beach Patrol, completed fun crafts, and learned useful skills like photography techniques!



The "On the Way to Cape May" historic lecture series featured educational presentations from a variety of experts from around the County. The series totaled six lectures. Pictured here, about 25 attendees wait for the start of Peter Harp's presentation on the Anglesea Lighthouse.



Local collector Len Morgan lent his fabulous camera collection to the History Center to display alongside entries to the Historical Society's annual photo contest.

Congratulations to the Photography Contest winners!

Avalon: 1st Mary Flounders, 2nd Craig Phillips, 3rd Nikki Robinson

Nature: 1st Karen Goldberg, 2nd John Kauterman, 3rd Craig Phillips

Scenic: 1st Stuart Friedman, 2nd Joy Corson, third Kathy Clark Kelley

Portrait & Personality: 1st Barbara Herr, 2nd Kathy Clark Kelley, 3rd Leslie Branda

Children's Category: 1st Cynthia Sakoulas, 2nd Gabrielle Grace Braun, 3rd Aiden James Hippen

The Best in Show went to Stuart Friedman with his storm cloud entry.



Congratulations to the Clamshell Pitch winners!

Singles winner: Rob Broadwater

Singles runner up: Jim Waters

Doubles winners: Patricia Yochim & Dan Matassino

Doubles runner up: Brian Moll & Matt Freeborn

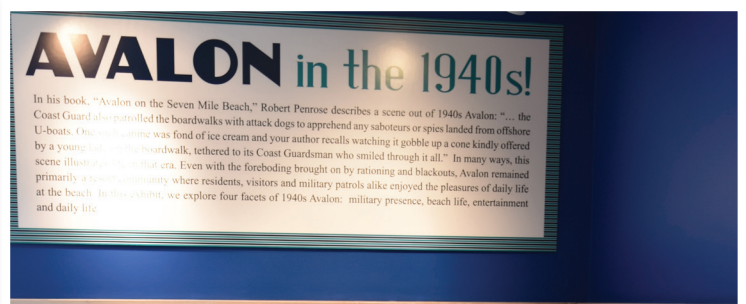
Pictured: Doubles winners Patricia Yochim & Dan Matassino, Singles winner Rob Broadwater, all with their trophies!

The Avalon Historical Society is already planning for the
2017 Olde House Tour!

The tour was not held in 2016 due to lack of participating properties. Do you live in a pre-1950s property?

Give us a call and help keep this popular event going! (609) 967-0090.

Staff and community partners worked on several new exhibits and displays that hundreds of visitors enjoyed during the summer of 2016. Did you miss out? View photos of featured exhibits below, or call us to find out what will be on view the next time you're in town.



The Diller Room now houses an "Avalon in the 1940s" exhibit, which includes about 60 minutes of fabulous home-video depicting people and places familiar to our most senior visitors. The exhibit also includes photographs, artifacts, and ephemera from the period. Grandparents have enjoyed showing their grandchildren an authentic rotary telephone, while many have found their family name in the accompanying 1940s telephone book. Come in to view military uniforms, a glamorous gold-lame bathing suit, and more!



The 1889 Joseph Wells landscape painting of Avalon, the restoration of which has been featured in previous issues, is complete and back on display at the History Center!



Local third-graders were excited to display their well-executed Presidents projects. Each student created a depiction of their selected president along with a written report. The History Center was grateful to have the projects for the summer months!

By History Center Collections Coordinator Bonita Risley

Avalon's business district, like that of so many throughout the country, has seen its highs and its lows, its triumphs and its challenges, made even more acute by the seasonal nature of a seaside resort. While many local businesses have come and gone, one thing remains constant – we all need them. Where there are people, there are entrepreneurs, and if businesses are to survive for more than one summer season, they must provide a unique and authentic identity. Whether they tap into the nostalgia of endless childhood vacations or the boutique experience for those looking for their very own undiscovered haven, or the comfort, convenience and familiarity among the permanent population, many of the landmark stores that have made up Avalon's business district over the years became town focal points, more than just somewhere to shop but also to catch up on the town news, meet old friends and make new ones. Such local businesses continue to hold a special place in people's hearts.

Mary Louise Van Thuyne of Philadelphia started it all when she built Avalon's first general store in 1911 (she also built the first store in Stone Harbor). Van Thuyne's General Store was at SE corner of 22nd St. & Second Ave. Being a large 3-story building, her brother Adolph & later his son also Adolph, rented out sections of it to other businesses. It became quite the central part of town life.



... It wasn't just grocery stores and restaurants that stood out as Avalon landmarks, being a seaside town with a tradition of boating and fishing there were boat rental places such as Captain Charlie's on the west side of Ocean Drive at 35th St. which rented out yellow rowboats of all descriptions; Morgan's Wharf on the south side of Princeton harbor, to where regularly "Lost" boats had to be recovered by a small outboard called "Morgan's Retriever." Neil Forte's boat yard at the west end of 8th St. at Cornell Harbor. Neil also repaired the boardwalk.

So many local businesses have come and gone in Avalon and will continue to do so, each leaving their mark and a memory. Come and see more and share your own memories of businesses past, in our new exhibition on Avalon's Local Businesses.



FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT

CLAM CHOWDER, CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP, TOMATO OR GRAPEFRUIT JUICE, CHERRYSTONES	
Roast of beef	I.75
Roast Fresh Ham	I.40
Pork Chops	I.35
Single Pork Chop	I.10
Fried Chicken	I.25
Half Fried Chicken	I.65
Baked Ham	I.35
Ground Steak	I.10
Fillet of Flounder	I.10
Fried Oysters	I.25
Deviled Crab	I.25
Deviled Clams	I.25
Choice of Two: French Fried, Home Fried or Sautéed Sweet Potatoes, Lima Beans, Peas, Corn	
Lettuce and Tomato or Cole Slaw Salad	
Coffee Tea or Milk	
Home Made Pie Jello Cake Baked Apple Ice Cream	



AMERICA'S FINEST ICE CREAM

... Virginia Lou's family style restaurant, formerly Tom's Chowder Inn, on 24th St. & Third Avenue, was run by the Ditzler family from 1930's, it was a firm favorite for its homestyle cooking, warm atmosphere & reasonable prices.



The History Center and Historical Society have been actively working to improve outdoor spaces. Stop by to view the historic Cottage, restored gas lamp, and newly-landscaped backyard with lovely gazebo. Look out for more outdoor events going forward!



Visitors are welcome to sit in the backyard gazebo for a rest, and to enjoy the lush and colorful landscape design by Cape Shore Gardens.

The historic gas lamp in front of the History Center has recently undergone restoration, including being stripped, metalized, and re-painted to protect against deterioration (accelerated due to exposure to salt air) for the next 25-30 years. Here, conservator Adam Jenkins fills in tiny pits caused by the metalizing process. Check out the smooth, restored surface next time you are here!



AVALON AND THE RAILROAD CONNECTION

By History Center Interpreter Bill Mengel

Avalon would not be the popular tourist destination that it is today had it not been for the foresight of Joseph Wells and Frank Sidall, late nineteenth-century developers from the Philadelphia area. Wells knew that if his vision of a summer resort town was to come to fruition, he would need both visitors and convenient transportation! At the time, visitors were only transported by local small ferry boats. Wells had an idea of a method that would transport a higher volume of visitors: railroad.

In 1888, the West Jersey Railroad Company reached an agreement with the Seven Mile Beach Company (a development corporation started by Wells and Siddall) for a sixty foot right-of-way with an additional 30 foot of roadway on either side, for a total of 120 feet running along Avalon's inlet beach from the north end of Seven Mile Beach to Hereford Inlet on the southern end. Once the agreement and tracks were in place, this layout would serve as the basic axis governing the entire island's

street and avenue plan. Because of this agreement, construction of the bridge crossing Townsend's Inlet began.

Included in the agreement was land for three stations: Eighth and Third Avenue; Thirty Third Street (Peermont); and Eighty-Seventh Street in Stone Harbor. Each of the three stations had a ticket office and a building to handle freight. The railroad also agreed to make a flag stop (the train only stops when a flag is raised) at the very northern tip of Avalon where George Rummel built the Hotel Leaming in 1890.

On May 4, 1896 the Pennsylvania Railroad consolidated all of its railroads and several smaller properties in southern New Jersey into the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad (WJ&S). There were two lines coming from its Federal Street Terminal in Camden. One of these was the main line to Atlantic City and other shore points via Winslow Junction using trackage rights on the ACRR's Cape May Branch to Woodbine and its Cape May line to Ocean City,

Wildwood and Cape May. The West Jersey Railroad Company greatly influenced the growth of Avalon as a resort community.

By the early 1900s, the Leaming Railroad Bridge was constructed, allowing train connections into Avalon. This increased traffic from Philadelphia and surrounding areas. In its heyday, the railroad brought as many as 700 passengers per train several times a day, especially on the weekends. These visitors to the island brought economic prosperity to the town. The train ran for forty five years, until 1933 when automobiles and commercial trucks took over as a more modern form of transportation.

Around 1944, the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad (which was a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and became part of the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore lines in 1933) lines merged with the Reading Railroad, and this effectively ended travel by train to the island.



Visitors exiting the train in Avalon in the early 20th century.

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Frank Weckerly
Rose Wells

The History Center Could not fulfill its mission without those willing to donate their treasured artifacts, nor without support from the membership of the Historical Society.

The following people and organizations donated historic objects, photographs or ephemera in 2016!

Avalon Fire Department
Avalon Police Department
Al Brennen via Bruce Tell from
Stone Harbor Museum
Alexis Chervenak
Rose Marie Chew
Craig Cunningham
Robert DeMento

Teri Dignazio
Linda Doering
Barbara Eckardt
Jacquie Ewing
Mark Farkas
Linda Texter Hall
Al Haring
Joe Hoffman

Elizabeth Hogan
Margo Locke
Suzanne Ludlam
Carol MacFeat
Susan McLaughlin
Rev. Dr. David Montanye on behalf of the
First United Methodist Church of Avalon
Brad Morris via Rehoboth Beach Historical
Society & Museum

Ed Palmer
Art & Sandy Ridler
Wilda Richardson
Matthew Sykes
Bill Sylvester
Beth Tipping
Meredith Wheaton
Carol Matt Winnemore



Join the Avalon Historical Society for their annual Holiday Open House on Saturday, December 3rd from 4pm to 7pm at the Avalon History Center. Enjoy food, music, good company and good cheer. View the restored gas lamp, new displays, and (of course) 2016's Christmas Ornament featuring the old "Welcome to Avalon" sign!



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