

# Leesport Area Historical Society



INCLUDING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE SCHUYLKILL VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

VOLUME 19, ISSUE 2

April, May, June 2023

## ROUTES OF OLD

As an elderly individual of the Leesport locale, I frequently reminisce about the changes that transpired and are most likely forgotten.

One of those changes is the Schuylkill Canal System which existed in the past. Traces of the canal are still evident around Leesport and nearby areas, along with many remains having been eliminated or destroyed. One of the destroyed items not existing anymore is the small Canal Boat Marina that was located adjacent to the highway on your right as you enter Mohrsville just before the new bridge on the left. On the right just adjacent to the large house (now an apartment building) is a small automobile parking lot which was the location of the marina and across the road still exists the remains of the canal ditch.

The road or highway I am referring to is the Shoemakersville Road from Route #61 through the underpass. Incidentally this road was originally Route #122, as was many areas of Route #61 from Crosskeys to Hamburg. I've heard many stories as to where the term Route #61 originated, interestingly half of #122 is 61.

Still in accordance with the subject of Canals, let's mention the canal bridge of Main Street in Leesport, near the Canal House. The canal ran east of the ambulance building on to the river. In my opinion it's a shame that nobody had the insight or desire to pursue the maintenance and the upkeep of the canal system from Hamburg to Leesport. It would have been a good tourist attraction with also being a money maker.

Another memory of mine which has not been destroyed is the quarry hole behind McDonalds. When I was in high school (a long, long time ago), my friends and I would take a bunch of kids in a vehicle, and we would drive to the quarry to go swimming. The quarry was filled with water and also, we were told that an engine and a car were at the bottom of the quarry. I assume it was a narrow gauge train track, since on the nearby river bank a small abutment still remains and this indicates the train crossed over the river at some point. At this time, I have no idea as to its further destination.

This article was submitted by a gentleman who wishes to remain anonymous, but may continue the story in the future.

## WEST LEESPORT

West Leesport was its own school district, not part of Ontelaunee Township. The West Leesport School only joined with Ontelaunee when Schuylkill Valley School District was created. Which joined Centre, Bern and Ontelaunee, townships and the West Leesport School. West Leesport School now serves as the headquarters for the Leesport Area Historical Society.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## HISTORY - IT'S ABOUT TIME

History is about time. Now is a good time to look into your history so you can pass it on to others. We make history every day, but we don't always remember history. The best way to record history is at the time it happens. Lately we are hearing a lot about the history of our great country. I find it amazing that the further we get from the event the more we want to change it so it meets our idea of the event. I think it's about time that we look for true answers by reading and studying our past. There is not more than one history. We can't change history. It is what it was.

Time can change me but I can't change time. Before we try to change history we must learn history. History is about time and as time passes the actual history can get distorted.

SO ... learn history and save history. It's not all pretty, but we can learn from it. It's about time. Our history is where we were, learn from it. Write down or tell someone your history. Don't let time change our history. Speaking of History, maybe it is about time that our organization gets a new president ... it's about time.

Rich

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT BARRY KAUFFMAN

Barry is an 8th generation Berks Countian who has lived in Bern Twp. for 50 years. Married with four children and nine grandchildren. Barry served for four years in the U.S. Air Force during the Viet Nam era. He became a Toolmaker while working at Western Electric and eventually worked for 25 years in the Machine Tool Industry, retiring in 2001 as President of the W.H. Jones Co., a West Chester based distributor of metal working tools and machinery.

In retirement, he has served as Vice President and currently as Trustee of the Berks County Historical Society a/k/a/ Berks History Center, member and Past President of the Governor Joseph Hiester Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Superintendent of Alsace Cemetery, Muhlenberg Twp., Executive Director of the Society for the Preservation of the Gruber Wagon Works, and Vice Chairman of the Bern Township Zoning Hearing Board.

His spare time is spent rooting for grandchildren's sporting events, engaged in historical and genealogy research as well as writing articles resulting from that research, including the book; Good Morning Thun, Good Morning Janssen. LAHS has been the recipient of Barry's knowledge and research by contributing articles for LAHS newsletters as well as presenting informational programs for LAHS. Thank you for keeping history alive Barry!



## HISTORY REPORT

Great strides have been made in 'putting away' the huge backlog of donations in our archive. We've had the room set up with various file cabinets and shelves for some time. Many thanks go out to Dex and Rosie Mengel, Sue Berg and Rich Strause, who all recently gathered one morning to sort and stash all the donations into the empty file cabinets and shelves. The archive room looks much more organized and less like a tornado had run through it. There is more to do yet, but the plan is to meet again soon to continue the effort. Once everything is sorted and consolidated, each file drawer and shelf will be inventoried and logged into our system.

High intensity LED lights were purchased to replace the 300 watt tungsten bulbs in the vintage globes in the archive room. They turned out to be so much brighter, using a fraction of the power of the tungsten bulbs, that we purchased more for both rooms on the first floor.

Jim Freeman  
History Chair

## 2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, April 2: 1-4 PM – Open House at the Museum

Saturday, April 1: Easter Flower Sale – 10 AM-6 PM

Sunday, April 2: Easter Flower Sale – 11 AM-4 PM

Friday, April 7: Easter Flower Sale – 8 AM-6 PM

Saturday, April 8: Easter Flower Sale – 8 AM -6 PM

Monday, April 24: 7 - PM LAHS Business Meeting - “Show and Tell”

Sunday, May 7: 1-4 PM - Open House at the Museum

Monday, May 22: 7 PM – LAHS Program - Bob Lee presents – “Wringer Center for Higher Learning”

Monday, May 29: 1 PM - Memorial Day Program at Leesport Playground (sponsored by Leesport Lockhouse Foundation)

Sunday, June 4: 1-4 PM – Open House at the Museum

Saturday, June 10 - Magical History Tour “Step Back in Time” – Lockhouse

Saturday, June 17 – Magical History Tour for Event Volunteers

Monday, June 26 - 7 PM – LAHS Business Meeting - “Show and Tell”



LEESPORT (EAST SIDE)

BUS TOUR!

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2023

BUS LEAVES AT 9 AM AND 12 NOON  
FROM THE UNION FIRE CO., LEESPORT  
(ONLY 40 SEATS EACH BUS)

RESERVE SEATING

CALL 610-926-5770

ARRIVE BACK AT LEESPORT LOCKHOUSE  
FOR

**“STEP BACK IN TIME”**

FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

FOOD – STRAWBERRIES – FUN

HISTORY OF WHAT IT WAS LIKE BACK IN THE DAY

9AM TO 4PM

# MEMBERS LIST

Binner Appliances  
Broken Arrow Transport  
Lawley's Disposal Inc.  
Vist Bank- Corporate Office  
Leesport Farmer's Market  
Schuylkill Valley School District  
SOS Business Machines, Inc.  
Leesport Borough  
Penny Hill Farm  
Insurance Offices Ltd.  
Baer's Accounting Services  
Cross Keys Millwork  
Steve Moyer Subaru  
Reitnour Inc.  
M/M Ronnie Adam  
Mabel Adam  
James Althouse  
Joseph Antanavage  
Drake Armao  
M/M Mark Baer  
Ruth Bagenstose  
Alysa Bainbridge  
Karen Bausch  
Jim & Bonnie Bausher  
Ruth Beamer  
Marlene Bender  
Lois Berg  
M/M Ron Bieber  
M/M Larry Blatt  
Oliver Blatt  
M/M Walt Bohnenblust  
Avalion Bossler  
Mary Ann Bowman  
Michael Brady  
Gloria Breidegam  
Ronald Buckley  
M/M Ben Bucks  
Isabelle & Lily Burch  
Kim Cherry  
Dennis Clemens  
Douglas Clemens  
Brett Crupi  
James Dailey  
Mary Danenhower  
Allen Daub  
M/M Richard Dautrich  
Ronald Davidheiser  
Jean Davis

Harry Deitz  
M/M Tom Dillman  
M/M Dave Dissinger  
Augustus Dorman  
Edith Dreibelbis  
M/M Terry Eddinger  
Barbara Esterly  
M/M Elmer Fair  
Brad & Robin Faust  
M/M James Freeman  
M/M Brian Freeman  
Terrance Fritz  
Louise Gabel  
Daniel Gassert  
Debbie & Pearl Gavaghan  
M/M Marty Goetz  
Oliver & Yvonne Graeff  
Forrest Graeff  
M/M Gary Gunkel  
Jean Haag  
M/M Mike Harle  
Sue Harman  
M/M Ray Haslam  
John Hayes  
M/M Niklas Hemdal  
Amy Hensley  
Lyn Heydt  
Robert Hill  
M/M Bob Hoffman  
Roger Hoover  
Jane Hornberger  
Richard Horst  
Brian Huey  
Debra Huey-Walker  
Eric Jackson  
Robin Jamison  
M/M J.J. Johnson  
Faith Jones  
M/M Jeff Kalbach  
Donald Kauffman  
M/M Barry Kauffman  
Richard Kaufman  
Steve Keiser  
M/M Ralph Kerschner  
Eldon Kibler  
Mae King  
Robert Kissinger  
M/M David Kline

Chris Knepp  
Marilyn Koenig  
M/M Richard Koller  
Raymond Kreider  
M/M Solomon Lausch  
Jane Lauser  
Carol Lied  
James Long  
Daniel Loose  
Margaret Loose  
Thomas Loose  
Robert Loose  
John Lutz  
Cody Madeira  
M/M Bill Mahon  
M/M Arlan Marks  
M/M Mark Mauer  
M/M George McCracken  
M/M Foster McCurley  
Allyson McKechnie  
Karen McQuaid  
George Meiser IX  
M/M H Dexter Mengel  
Frances Merkel  
M/M Edward Miley  
M/M Paul Miller  
M/M Glenn Miller  
Joyce Miller  
M/M Ronald Miller  
Kenneth Miller  
Jackie Miller  
Mary Miller  
Arlene Miller  
Kerry Mohn  
M/M Charles Moody  
M/M James Moquin  
M/M Carl Moyer  
Kim Murphy  
Brody Musser  
M/M Don Muzyka  
M/M John Nagle  
M/M Robert Noecker  
Gail Orr  
Diane Paxson  
Willow Peters  
Logan Peters  
Michael Potts  
M/M Robert Rahn

## MEMBERS LIST (CONTINUED)

Stan Raugh	M/M Steve Seyfert	M/M Jeffrey Sweitzer
Mildred Reber	M/M Whit Shoenfelt	Lisa Szymczyk
M/M Gary Reed	Janet Slawecki	Diane Thuss
Sue Reiber	Anna Smith	Bonnie (Kline) Troxell
M/M Jason Reitnouer	Tammy Smith	David Unger
Joyce Ann Rhoads	Jean Smith	M/M Rodney Wagner
M/M Norman Rickert	Susan Snyder	Terry Waid
Sandy Romich	Carl Solarek	Cindy Walls
Vincent Rose	Sandra Spatz-Wiszneaukas	M/M Ron Walls
M/M David Rose	M/M Jack Starzetski	Janet Weaver
Linda Roshong	Jay Stoudt	Thomas Werley
Marcia Rowe	M/M Karl Stoudt	Mike Werley
Charles Salvitti	Dana Stout	Judy Wert
Beverly Sander	Betty Strause	M/M Eric Weyandt
Rocco Santilli	M/M Randy Strause	M/M WM Whitehouse
Ruth Saylor	M/M Richard Strause	M/M Phillip Whitmoyer
Robin Schappell	M/M Ronald Strause	M/M Harry Yocum
M/M Jordan Schappell	M/M Ryan Strause	Phyllis Yoder
M/M Harry Schmeer	Joyce Strause	Henrietta Ziegler
Colleen Schulze	Ellia & Ethan Strause	Zachary Zimmerman
Paul Schumann	M/M Mark Stump	
M/M Jim Schwank	Joy Sweeney	

## BERKS ENCORE VISIT

Berks Encore Walkers will be visiting the Leesport Area Historical Society building and the Leesport Lockhouse on Tuesday, May 23 rd . They will be at the school at 10 am and will walk to the Lockhouse at 11 am (weather permitting). We need to have at least 2 members at the school for the tour.

## WHERE'S THE SNOW

As I write this article it is now January of 2023. Snowless so far with, as they call it, a possible dusting to one inch. Well, we've had a few dustings, but don't wake up too late or you may miss the snow even.

In the 1960's when we were tenants of Mamie Reeser things were a bit different. Mamie lived in the Reeser Farm House located at the end of Main Street before going into Bern Township. At that time there was a barn next to Mamie's house at the intersection of Main and Nichols Streets. Next to the barn was a vacant lot, later about the lot.

Snow storms in those days could be so massive they would be measured not in dustings, not in inches, but in feet. Yes, I said Feet! Two or three feet was often the case during a storm. Snow mixed with wind would cause huge drifts across Main Street that it required front end loaders to clear the road for auto passage.

We purchased that vacant lot in 1968 to build a house with a beautiful view. Needless to say, the road was fine, and drifting didn't occur anymore. We now had the problem at our back door! Snow piled up against the back of our house so we could not open our back door. Over the years we found numerous ways to solve this problem.

But Now, "Where's the Snow?"

## MEMORIAL DAY PROGRAM

"IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO SERVED" MONDAY, MAY 29, 2023 - 1PM.  
WALTER A. PEARSON MEMORIAL THE LEESPORT PLAYGROUND

## JANUARY'S SPEAKER

In January, Bradford Kissam, from the Friends of the Daniel Boone Homestead, presented a program on the life of the Boones in Berks County and the history of the Daniel Boone Homestead which was home to the Boones, Maugridges and Deturks. We were honored to have some Boone family descendants attend the program. Our programs are excellent!



## CHRISTMAS DINNER

Our annual Christmas Dinner was held on December 26, 2022, with 32 people attending and a good time was had by all.

The next Christmas get together will be held on Saturday, January 13, 2024 at the Ontelaunee Grange from 1-4pm. Further details will be sent out later in the year.



## MYSTERIES AT THE MUSEUM

We had several guesses for last issue's picture of Russ's Mobile Station. That was close but not correct. It is actually a clock that is a replica of a Mobile gas station that was given to us by Raymond Earnst. It is currently on display along with the original wooden sign for Russ's station in our museum along with other advertising items of businesses from our area. Good luck with the next mystery.



Next Mystery





2023

LEESPORT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ANNUAL EASTER FLOWER SALE

SATURDAY APRIL 1 – 8AM – 6PM

SUNDAY APRIL 2 – 11AM – 5PM

FRIDAY APRIL 7 – 8 – 6PM

SATURDAY APRIL 8 – 8AM – 6PM

LOCATION:

CORNER OF ROUTE 61 AND APPLE STREET

COURTESY OF STEVE MOYER SUBARU

PROCEEDS SUPPORT

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

AND

THE LEESPORT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

As of 2/20/2023 the General Account shows balances of

Harvest Moon Festivals = \$ 3,271.12

Acquisition Fund = 661.28

General Fund = 2,929.40

TOTAL = \$ 6,861.40

Capital Reserve Fund has Trinity Repair Fund = \$ 39,765.62

General Fund = 6,391.49

TOTAL = \$ 46,157.11

Leesport Area Community Days = \$ 11,645.59

Elaine Strause, Treasurer

LEESPORT AREA HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
128 MAIN STREET  
P.O. BOX 204  
LEESPORT PA 19533

[www.leesporthistory.org](http://www.leesporthistory.org)

LEESPORT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INCLUDING

THE COMMUNITIES OF

BERN, CENTRE & ONTELAUNEE

MEETINGS @ 7:00

ON THE FOURTH MONDAY

AT BETHANY E.C. CHURCH

308 MAIN ST, LEESPORT

PARKING IN REAR OF BUILDING