



The Half Moon

- The Newsletter of the Newtown Historic Association -

Welcome

The Newtown Historic Association presents this newsletter to the Newtown community with the goal of providing news and information on related historic and preservation events in our area. We welcome any suggestions for future articles.

Officers

Brian Rounsavill, *President*
David Callahan, *First Vice President*
Jeff Marshall, *Second Vice President*
Michael DiFiori, *Recording Secretary*
Mary Callahan, *Corresp. Secretary*
Marge Torongo, *Treasurer*

Board of Directors

Harriet Beckert
Paul Gouza
Bronwyn Jones
William Mahler
Joanne Nardo
Geno Peruzzi
Susan Thompson
David Walton
David Mahler - *Parliamentarian*

Newtown Historic Association

P.O. Box 303
Centre Avenue & Court Street
Newtown, PA 18940 USA
Phone: (215) 968-4004
www.newtownhistoric.org

Research Center Hours

Tuesdays 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Thursday 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
And also by appointment
Admission is free

April 2012 - Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Newtown Historic Association will be held on **April 16th at 8:00 PM** at the Half Moon (Court) Inn. In keeping with tradition, the Annual Business Meeting includes Election of Officers and Board Members – and reports from all committee chairmen. Following the Annual Business Meeting, a presentation entitled, **“Treasures from the Attic: Selected Items from the NHA Archives”** will be given by Harriet Beckert & David Callahan. The lecture will showcase items from the archives that are interesting and unique to the Newtown community.

Officers - 3 year term (4/15)

David Callahan – President
William Mahler – 1st Vice Pres.
Paul Gouza – 2nd Vice Pres.
ChaChaWilliams – Recording Sec.
Mary Callahan – Corres. Sec.
Marjorie Torongo – Treasurer
Directors – 4-12 to 4-13 Term
Keyna Crawford
Geno Peruzzi
David Walton

Directors - 2 year term (4/14)

JoAnne Nardo
Brian Rounsavill
Susan Thompson

Directors - 3 year term (4/15)

Barry Fleck
Bronwyn Jones
Jeffrey Marshall

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Joseph & Pamela Arbeiter, *Holland* – Life Member
- Donna Curran
- David & Elizabeth Danner
- Jim & MaryJo Garner
- David & Andrea Page
- Joseph & Diane Richerts
- Cathy Hill Scaramuzzo
- Dorothy Sconyers
- Valarie Staley – all of Newtown

Spring Cocktail Party

Invitations will soon be going out for our Spring Cocktail Party at the Half Moon Inn to be held on **Saturday evening June 9th from 5:00 to 8:00 pm**. The cocktail party will be a **fund raiser for restoration of the Bake Oven** in the cellar of the Half Moon Inn which collapsed earlier this year. Unfortunately this was not covered by insurance and it will be quite costly to rebuild. Anyone wishing to bring their favorite hor's d'ourves would be welcome – any questions please call Mary Callahan 215-968-3914.

April Social Event

We are having a **Spring Social Event on Friday, April 20th from 5 – 7 pm** – come out and meet people and learn what the NHA is all about. We had a great time at our last one. Beer, wine and goodies.

Bake Oven Collapses at the Half-Moon Inn

During the 5.8 magnitude earthquake that struck the east coast in August 2011, we lost the oldest intact bake oven in the State of Pennsylvania, which is located in the basement of the Half-Moon Inn. The bake oven suffered significant damage as seen in the photo at right.

The Newtown Historic Association is in the process of soliciting bids and raising the funds that will be required to rebuild the bake oven.

It is known that the Half-Moon Inn had a series of three bake ovens which were chronicled during an extensive archaeological investigation that was conducted in about 1978.

The first bake oven was built in 1730, when the original structure was constructed. It was located in the right-rear of the first floor fireplace at the main entrance to the Half-Moon Inn. Although the opening is still visible, the bake oven was removed in 1740, when the room was added on the rear of the building (the current meeting room).

In 1740, the second bake oven was built in the basement, where it was used until 1810. At this time, 1810, the third bake oven was added to the front of the building, which is visible today from Court Street, when that addition was constructed.

Again, the Newtown Historic Association is asking for contributions to help rebuild what was the oldest intact bake oven in the State of Pennsylvania.



Bake oven before collapse, c.1980.



Bake oven after collapse, 2012

Gift Recognition Opportunities

Amount	Purpose
\$1,000	Repair the historic bake oven
\$500	Upgrade the Half-Moon Inn heating/cooling System
\$350	Build custom display case for Reading Railroad replica train
\$250	Archival supplies for the Research Center
\$250	Support toward gardens & grounds maintenance supplies

Market Day

Market Day will be on Saturday, October 6th this year and we are always looking for people to volunteer to help. Please contact Bronwyn Jones to see where help is needed. 215-504-8038 mbj4a@aol.com. An hour of your time can make a huge difference.

5th Grade Historic Walking Tour

The Newtown Historic Association will be conducting the annual Fifth Grade Walking Tour on **Wednesday, June 6th**. Approximately 500 children from Wrightstown Elementary School, Goodnoe Elementary School, Newtown Elementary School, and St. Andrew's Elementary School will take a self guided walking tour through the Borough and Township visiting 10 historic sites. This is a very popular event with the children and enables them to learn about their local Newtown heritage. Hopefully the weather will cooperate as the children have a great time. This tour is coordinated by Peg Walker - a NHA member. If you would like to work a shift at the Half Moon Inn, please call Mary Callahan 215-968-3914. We always need volunteers.

Historic Walking Tour

We will be having a walking tour on **Friday evening, June 8th** leaving the Half Moon Inn at **6:30 PM**. This tour will be guided by Jeffrey Marshall, VP of Resource Protection at the Heritage Conservancy. The tour will feature Liberty Street and surrounding areas.

January Dinner Meeting

The January Volunteer Recognition Dinner meeting was held on **Sunday, January 29th** at 6:00 PM at the Temperance House, 5 S. State St., Newtown. Homeowners who had their houses open for the 2011 Open House Tour were all honored – and also a volunteer from our Research Center – Rebecca Woodward.

February Meeting “Lucretia Mott”

The February meeting was held on **Monday, February 20th** at 8 PM at the Newtown Theatre in conjunction with the Newtown Library Company. We had re-enactors portraying Lucretia Mott, John and Abigail Adams, and the choirs of the Macedonia Baptist Church and St. Mark’s AME Church. It was very interesting and informative program and the theatre was almost full.

March Meeting “Washington’s Crossing of the Delaware – as seen from a Soldier’s Perspective”

The March meeting was held on **Monday, March 19th** at 8:00 PM at the Half-Moon Inn. Our speaker was John Godzieba, the George Washington of the current era who spoke on the life of a revolutionary war soldier. He was accompanied by Denis Cooke and Dominick D’Iorio both members of the Fifth Pennsylvania Volunteers who also spoke about the Battle of Trenton and Washington’s crossing of the Delaware. All of the above are “Friends of Washington’s Crossing Park” whose efforts are to raise funds for education and other services.

Tavern Night

The tenth annual Tavern Night was held on **Saturday, March 10th** at the Half-Moon Inn. It was a wonderful colonial event, which had lots of colonial cheer. The evening featured 18th century music, dancing, along with delicious food catered by Joseph’s Garden Grille, accompanied by colonial side dishes. Singing, dancing and merriment carried on until midnight, and a good time was had by all!



John and Joanne Godzieba & Dave Callahan



Matt Held, coorganizer



Jim Baniewicz, Tavern Night Chair

Clean Up Day

Clean Up Day was held this year on **Saturday, March 24th** at 8:30 AM at the Half Moon Inn. We had about 15 people helping volunteer to restore some luster to the many historical items and furnishings in the Half-Moon Inn. No experience is necessary! Join us next year and roll up your sleeves and give us a helping hand. Come out and help – it is a great time to meet people and make new friends.

Corporate Members

We are proud to highlight our corporate members:

- David J. Witchell Salon & Spa
- DeFrehn Corporation
- First National Bank of Newtown
- Friends Home & Village
- Harold Beck & Sons, Inc.
- Holland Floor Covering
- Law office of Paul R. Beckert, Jr.
- Johnson, Kendall & Johnson, Inc.
- MeMaMates
- Newtown Hardware House
- Peruzzi Automotive Group
- Stuckert and Yates
- Triumph Physical Therapy
- Waitkus Design Landscape Architects
- Kevin Zlock, PC

Upcoming Events

- **Annual Meeting, April 16th 8 pm**
“Treasures from the Attic”
- **April Social, April 20th 5 – 7 pm**
- **Cocktail Party, June 2nd. 5:00 p.m.**
- **5th Grade Historic Walking Tour, June 6th. 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.**
- **Historic Walking Tour, June 8th 6:30 p.m.**
- **Market Day, October 6th**
- **General Membership Meeting, “Stories from the Newtown Cemetery”, Sunday, October 14th 2p.m.**
- **General Membership Meeting, “Lincoln’s Assassins November 19. 8p.m.**
- **Open House Tour, December 1st.**

Your Membership Dues in Action – Saving the Centre Avenue Bridge



Centre Avenue Bridge Date Stone, c. 2005.

A few months ago, it was learned that PennDOT was going to undertake major renovations that would destroy the historic integrity of the Centre Avenue Bridge, which would probably result in the bridge being removed from the National Register of Historic Places on which it was placed in 1988 by PennDOT

A small group of concerned citizens was formed that was supported by the Newtown Historic Association. The group raised funds and hired Mary Sue Boyle, a consultant who was familiar with this type of project specializing in historic stone arched bridges. She guided the group through the process of challenging

PennDOT's decision to reconstruct the Centre Avenue Bridge.

As a result of these efforts, PennDOT postponed the project indefinitely. In the appeal process, it was discovered that the Centre Avenue Bridge was rated in PennDOT's engineering report as an 8 on a scale of 1-10 (10 being perfect).



Centre Avenue Bridge, c. 2011.

As Kathryn Ann Auerbach, a Preservation Consultant, expressed in her letter to PennDOT that was published in several local newspapers ([the full letter is available on our website or by clicking here](#)):


“We have a resource that is accorded the honor of inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and that contributes to a National Register Historic District. These designations

are in place to assure that the proper historic treatments for restoration are carried out on buildings and structures recognized as important to our heritage, not only in this county, but also the nation. The original builders of the bridge gave us an inspiring structure that has lasted over 200 years. The current and future citizens of Bucks County deserve the best and most respectful treatment of this historic resource so that it can inspire for another 200 years.”



Centre Avenue Bridge, C. 1900.

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