

# The Half-Moon

The Newtown Historic Association, Inc. Newsletter

## NHA Celebrates the Holiday Season

The Newtown Historic Association's Holiday season swings into high gear with a full calendar of events. Anchored by our 39th Annual Open House Tour, this year's holiday schedule includes a tour of Tyler Hall, historical marker dedication and new candle-lit "Gala Event" scheduled for the Friday night preceding the tour. All proceeds go toward the Thornton\Hicks renovation and restoration project. See the following articles for details on all the events.

### *39th Open House Tour*

Mark your calendar, Saturday, December 1, 2001 is our annual Open House tour in Newtown. Christmas comes early, as we tour 12 homes and historic sites. The hours are 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, tickets are \$15.00, free transportation with food and drink provided at the Court Inn. This year's tour features the Tyrol House (1792); Whitehead House (1810); Newtown Borough Council Chambers (1854); Newtown Fire Association (founded

1824); Briggs House (1886); Blackfan House (1874); Samuel Bunting House (1880); Molloy House (1852); Torongo House (1986); Olde St. Andrews Church (1880); Court (Half Moon) Inn (1733) and the Stocking Works (1889). Tickets may be purchased in advance from the NHA at the Court Inn and the Newtown Hardware House after November 20, 2001.

### *"The Gala Event"*

Launching this year's Open House Tour weekend is a candle-lit evening at the Court Inn on Friday, November 30th. The Inn will be decorated for the holiday season and members and guests will be entertained from 6 to 9 p.m., with live music, elegant food and open bar. Tickets are \$125.00 per person which includes admission to the homes on the Open House Tour. This event will feature a pictorial preview of this year's houses with all proceeds going to the Thornton\Hicks renovation project. Invitations will be mailed shortly. Please plan to

attend this new and exciting event. Further questions should be directed to Maureen Harrison at 215-579-8260.

### **Market Day Success**

Highlighted by a touch of patriotic flair, this year's Market Day was a very successful event. With the support of many people the 23rd annual Market Day was a go, despite the recent tragedies in NYC, D.C. and PA. A steady crowd of patrons enjoyed folk music, colonial craftsman and artisans. Children made candles and toys in the backyard of the Court Inn. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this years event possible. A special thank you goes out to the Market Day Committee of Dave and Mary Callahan, Laurie Gouza, Gail Blandy and Jeanne Haeckel.

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## *"Historic Newtown" Book Signing*

Co-editors, Paul Gouza, Dave Callahan and Brian Rounsavill will be on hand for a book signing at the Newtown Bookshop in the Village at Newtown East on Friday night, November 9, 2001 from 7 pm to 9 pm.

The NHA's new book entitled "Historic Newtown," the latest in Arcadia's "Images of America" series, features over 225 rare, never before seen turn of the 20th century photos from the archives of the NHA and other donors. Since June, more than 1,275 books have been sold. Be sure to purchase a copy for a holiday gift. Books can be purchased at the Court Inn and the Newtown Hardware House for \$18.99 (plus tax).

## Thornton\Hicks House Update

According to project director, Dave Callahan, the Thornton\Hicks renovation and restoration project will begin this month stabilizing, repairing and restoring the roof and front wall of the Lauer property. Earlier this year, the NHA received a matching grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to help support this project. NHA members, family, friends and the Newtown Community were

challenged to match this grant. At press time, we are still accepting donations to meet our goal. A special thanks to all those members and friends who have generously donated to this project. Further contributions can be made to Newtown Historic Association, P.O. Box 303, Newtown, PA 18940. Please mark check Thornton\Hicks.

## Calendar of Events

### General Membership Meeting "Tour of Tyler Hall"

Monday, October 15, 2001  
7:30 pm, Limited Seating.  
Call 215-579-0298 for reservations.

### PA Historical Markers

Saturday, October 20, 2001  
10:00 am, @ The Stocking Works.

### "Historic Newtown" Book Signing

Friday, November 9, 2001  
7:00 pm, @ The Newtown Bookshop, 2829 South Eagle Road, Village at Newtown East.

### The "Gala Event"

Friday, November 30, 2001  
6 - 9 pm.

### Open House Tour

Saturday, December 1, 2001  
10 am - 5 pm.  
Tickets \$15.00

## Red Cross Donation

With the generous donations of patrons at this year's Market Day, the NHA collected over three hundred dollars for the American Red Cross. Thanks for your support!

## Research Hours

### OPEN - Tuesday

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

### OPEN - Thursday

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

## Two Historical Markers

On Saturday, October 20, 2001, a special dedication commemorating two Pennsylvania historical markers will begin at the Stocking Works and then proceed to the Bird in Hand. Featured signs include the first weather satellite and the Loyalist raid of 1778. This dedication is sponsored jointly by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and the NHA with the support of Newtown Borough will start at 10:00 am at the Stocking Works located at 301 South State Street. Local officials and dignitaries will be on hand for this ceremony.

## Wanted: Librarian

The NHA is looking for a new librarian for our Barnsley Library. Mary Kester has retired from the position and we thank her for years of dedicated service.

Qualifications for this volunteer position are: 4 to 8 hours a week, flexible days and evenings with experience with Dewey Decimal system is required. If interested, please leave a message at 215-968-4004.

We are also in need of volunteers for typing, computer entry, and anyone who has experience in being a registrar, archivists or curator.

## Visit Newportville-Fergusonville

"A Hidden Historic Community"

An open invitation has been extended to NHA members and friends from the Newportville-Fergusonville Civic Association to visit the quaint historic community of Newportville-Fergusonville. For more information, please call Loretta Lankford at 215-788-2983.

## New Board Member

NHA recently welcomed Dave Walton of Newtown to the Board of Directors.

## Digging up the Past

by Brian E. Rounsavill

The internet has enabled family history to become America's most popular pastime. Typically not abundant with bandwidth, historical associations are however a rich source of local history and genealogical information. Family documents, land deeds, ledger books, tombstone transcriptions and other historical reference materials contain a wealth of information that can provide long-lost clues for many families. We are extremely fortunate to house such a collection here in Newtown. The NHA's Barnsley Room of Newtown History contains thousands of volumes, photographs and rare documents. Individuals interested in researching their family, property or local interests can often find answers to their questions tucked away on the dusty shelves of a historic association. Such an occurrence happened to me recently which enabled me to locate the grave of my great-great-great-great-grandfather who passed away in 1777. A

transcription of a burial ground from 1922 was uncovered in a box of documents in the basement of another historic association and a copy was passed on to me by a benevolent volunteer. Although the burial ground was long ago abandoned and now sits in the center of a development, this clue allowed Paul Gouza and I to locate the cemetery and literally dig up the grave marker of my forefather which had been buried by the sands of time almost a century ago.

Without the documents that have been preserved in historic association archives, the histories of many families would undoubtedly be lost forever. The Newtown Historic Association was founded to preserve the heritage of our community. We encourage anyone with a local tie to Newtown to visit our Barnsley Room of Newtown History and browse through our vast resources. One never knows where their roots may lead.

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 215-968-4004. Contributing article by Brian E. Rounsavill.  
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