

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ASBURY PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Where the Past  
Meets the Future*

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## Discover Historic Asbury Park This Fall!



*The Asbury Park Post Office at 801 Bangs Avenue was designated a State Historic Site in 1986.*

### *A Great Time of Year to Explore Our City's Many Landmarks*

It was a summer season to remember, here in a city that drew record crowds to its beach, boardwalk and boulevards in 2016. Even as exciting new attractions like The Asbury Hotel, House of Independents and Feshhalle Biergarten continue to define the Asbury Park experience for a new generation — and the waterfront offers its timeless recreational appeal long after the Labor Day weekend — the transition to autumn stands as the best time to take a closer look at the many fascinating layers of A.P. history.

Asbury Park boasts numerous state and national historic sites, landmarks and monuments — many more than most visitors are aware of — and we've put together a guided tour that continues on Page 3.

### *Crane House receives \$14k grant toward heating, A/C*

Earlier this year, the Asbury Park Historical Society applied to the city for a Community Development Block Grant, with the intent of dedicating funds toward the ongoing rehabilitation of our headquarters at the historic Crane House. In September, Vice President **Jim Henry** reported that a grant of \$14,186 was allocated to our organization, from the Housing and Urban Development funds awarded to the city. Plans are for the grant to be applied toward the installation of new heating and A/C systems, in order to enhance the visitors' experience and year-round operations — and, while the grant is cause to celebrate, it represents less than half the estimated cost of the climate control work to be done on the circa 1878 house. The APHS welcomes your donations, toward the improvement of our community resource!



## **That's the Ticket: Enter to Win Our 50/50 Drawing!**

One of the most popular fundraising vehicles of the year will soon yield a lucky winner, as the Historical Society prepares to select a winning entry in our annual **50/50 Sweepstakes**. There's still time to purchase tickets prior to the drawing which will be held during our monthly

meeting at the Stephen Crane House, November 17 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets, priced at \$5 each or \$20 for five, can be obtained from any of our trustees (see back page for contact info)...or stop in at **Asbury Galleria** (inside the Grand Arcade at Convention Hall).

## Looking Back on a Super Summer 2016



On July 13, the Asbury Park Historical Society took delivery of a special addition to the front property of our historic **Stephen Crane House**: a concrete Wishing Well that once decorated the majestic (and much-missed) **Mayfair Theatre**! APHS member **Jerry List**, Hardware Store of A.P. employee **Joe Zaviglia**, Interlaken Borough Historian **Bob Waitt**, APHS member **Steve Merlin** and Society trustee **Andy Skokos** took on the task of moving the heavyweight piece of memorabilia to its new site, and restorative work has commenced on the item donated by the Palumbo family.



In August, the Crane House was graced with a visit by a real representative of living history: **Milton Edelman**, the veteran photographer who turned 94 years young on August 15. Milton, who chronicled local life for decades through his sought-after postcards, portraits and news images, generously donated a trove of his old negatives to the APHS, to be catalogued for future reference.



On August 9, a bus tour chartered by the **Newark Museum** took a guided tour of historic Ocean Grove and the fast-changing Asbury Park waterfront. The day trip concluded with a visit to the Crane House, where APHS trustee **Frank D'Alessandro** presented the 25 ladies with a slideshow on the life and legacy of Stephen Crane.



APHS trustees **Teddy Chomko** and **Susan Rosenberg** were all smiles on August 21, as another successful edition of our Art on the Boardwalk event raised more than \$1,500 toward the ongoing programs and operations of the Historical Society. The annual art show/sale event coordinated by Teddy and **Joe Lemme** was blessed with great weather, and momentum that promises room to grow in summers to come.

*Continued on Page 5*



## Discover Historic Asbury Cont. from Pg 1

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), a division of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, is charged with listing sites that qualify for the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. The Trenton-based office considers dozens of sites and properties each year, nominated by applicants who submit a detail-intensive proposal. SHPO staff visit the property and make recommendations, after which the application is reviewed by board members who accept it, reject it, grant a Certificate of Eligibility, or render a non-committal opinion. Applications approved by the state are then reviewed by a national committee, while those that are not named to the State Registry are able to further pursue the nomination process and re-submit their application for consideration in a later year.



We begin our tour at the train and bus hub of the **James J. Howard Transportation Center** — a modern building which, while not historic, sits within a proposed **New York and Long Branch Railroad Historic District** that runs from Perth Amboy down the North Jersey Coast railway line, and was granted a Certificate of Eligibility in 2004.

The station brings visitors to the bustling and re-energized Cookman Avenue, which relatively few visitors know is part of an **Asbury Park Commercial Historic District** (or Turn-of-the-Century Commercial Historic District) that is roughly bounded by Main Street, Lake Avenue and Bangs Avenue — with numerous buildings of interest on the 500, 600 and 700 blocks of Cookman and Mattison Avenues, including the historic bank building at **649 Mattison** (pictured above) that currently hosts the restaurant Skcratch.

A genuine Asbury landmark and a center of local life for much of the 20th century, the **Steinbach Building** between Cookman and Bangs sat vacant for years after it was named to the State and National Registries of Historic Places in 1982. Here in the new century, The Sackman Group refurbished the old flagship department store into condominiums with ground-floor restaurants and retail, and it was the Sackman organization that steered through the campaign to name the Commercial District to official recognition by the state and federal governments in 2014.

The Sackman company is reportedly at work on renovating the **Savoy Theater**, the century-old playhouse hidden away inside the **Kinmonth Building** (710 Mattison Ave.).

Heading out onto Main Street, we encounter a bit of living history at the grand **Asbury Park Post Office** (801 Bangs Ave.; see page 1), the still-busy facility that was named to the New Jersey State Registry in January 1986.



Meanwhile, at **601 Mattison** (pictured above), the building that formerly served as the city's Post Office still stands as host to the restaurant Fish Urban Dining — and a plaque on the facade identifies the site as the official summer office of President Woodrow Wilson during his campaign for a second term in the White House, 100 years ago as of this election season.

Housing such neighborhood favorites as Vinnie's Convenience Store, Gold Lee Chinese and Plaza Garibaldi, the **Winsor Building** (400-420 Main Street) is a little-known addition to the city's roll of historic places, having been named to the state and national lists back in 1989.



Heading north on Main brings us to the gateway of the proposed **Sunset Lake Historic District**, a designation (considered by SHPO in 2003) encompassing Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Avenues between Main and Webb Streets. A walk past many of the gorgeous old homes within this district would include the **George Wurt Summer Home** (above; 306 Eighth Ave.), a beautifully restored private residence that was named to the State and National Registries in late 1989.

*Continued on Page 4*

## Discover Historic Asbury Cont. from Pg 3

Continuing toward the waterfront, we can't help but notice two of the city's iconic structures, both of them designed by famed New York architect Whitney Warren: the **Berkeley Hotel** (submitted 1981) and **Convention Hall**, which was awarded New Jersey historic status in December 1978, and made the national registry in March 1979. A more recent landmark, the 1962 **Fifth Avenue Pavilion** (home to the space-age Howard Johnson's that now houses McLoone's restaurants) was submitted in 2003.

At the opposite end of the famous boardwalk is the **Asbury Park Casino and Carousel**, both of which were granted a Certificate of Eligibility in January 1990, years before present-day developers iStar and Madison Marquette were involved in their stewardship. While the majority of the badly deteriorated Casino complex was razed, the surviving structures (also designed by Warren) remain a favorite backdrop of selfie-taking visitors and wedding parties, with the Carousel House pressed into occasional service as an entertainment venue and (for the second time) a skate park facility.

Continuing from the Carousel to Cookman, we are reminded of the importance of preserving our city's architectural heritage, as we pass the former sites of two greatly missed landmarks: **Palace Amusements** (201-2017 Lake Ave.) and the **Mayfair Theatre** (Lake Ave. and St. James Place). While both were named to the state and national registries (in 1974 and 2000 respectively), each met the wrecking ball — the Mayfair in 1975, and the Palace in 2004 — to eventually make way for planned residential projects.



Passing the city's **Civil War Memorial** (actually a monument to "The War of Rebellion") at the corner of Cookman and Grand Avenue, we continue north on Grand, a neighborhood that's home to our historic **Public Library** (First and Grand Aves.) and many of Asbury Park's places of worship. Among the most beautiful is **Trinity Church** (pictured; 503 Asbury Ave.), the Episcopal congregation that received state and national recognition in the spring and summer of 2014. The proposed **Library Square Historic District** (roughly bounded by Bergh, Emory, Third and Sewell Aves.) was considered by SHPO in early 2003 — and Second Avenue in the vicinity of Grand features several sites of interest, including the **William S. Gahagan Cottage** (510 Second Ave.), granted a Certificate of Eligibility in August 2006, as well as the **Jersey Apartments** (212 Second Ave.) and **Britwoods Court** (216-218 Second Ave.), both of which were considered by the state office in July 1991.

We end our tour at the most recent Asbury Park landmark to be named to the State and National Registries of Historic Places: our own headquarters at the **Stephen Crane House** (508 Fourth Ave.), the former Arbutus Cottage (and Hotel Florence) that is very likely the oldest still-standing residence in the city. The one-time home of the famed 19th century author is open for tours every Sunday (12-2 pm) and by appointment, with numerous scheduled public events (see page 6). Call **732-361-0189** to arrange individual or group tours — and ask about guided tours of Asbury Park's many points of interest, by members of the APHS.

*Research/Photos by Susan Rosenberg, Newsletter Editor*

## Crane House, West Side Music Books Announced

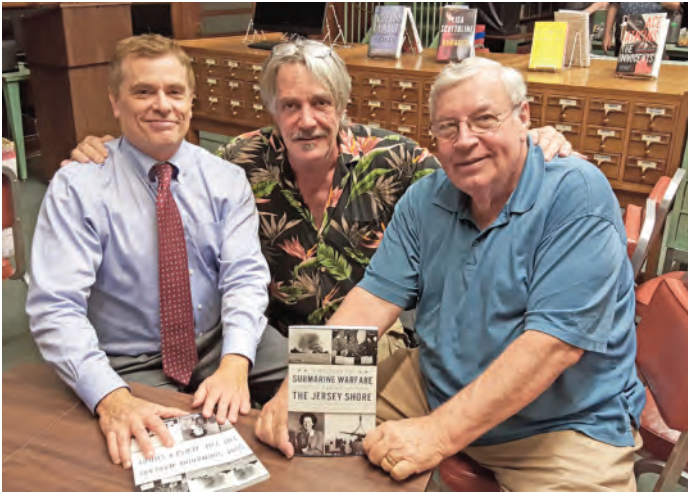
At a recent meeting, the APHS board of trustees approved a project that represents the first endeavor of its kind for the organization: a self-published book, entitled "**The Stephen Crane House: Sketches from the Life of an American Home.**" Tentatively slated for publication in the late spring/early summer of 2017, the book was proposed by **Tom Chesek**, "writer in residence" at the Crane House and the author of the 2015 volume **Legendary Locals of Asbury Park**.

Through fascinating vignettes, the book will trace the history of the city's oldest standing residence — a place that helped nurture the Women's Christian Temperance Union; served as an art school, a seasonal inn, a boarding house, a playhouse and a museum, and achieved National Historic Registry status as the sole standing home of Stephen Crane, the poet-journalist-author of **The Red Badge of Courage**.

Organized into chapters, each titled after a pertinent Crane piece, it's an examination of the many lives of this modest wooden cottage, the people who owned it or lived under its roof.

Another aspect of Asbury Park's cultural legacy — the rich jazz, gospel and R&B music scenes that flourished in and around Springwood Avenue in the 20th century — will be the subject of a book project from our friends **Charlie and Pam Horner**, the music historians and scholars who curated a celebrated exhibit last year at the Monmouth County Historical Association. The Horners (who will co-produce an encore Night of Acapella Harmony at **Monmouth University** on March 4, 2017) are working closely with **Madonna Carter Jackson**, daughter and archivist of the late photographer Joseph Carter Sr. — and they're on the lookout for additional material on the performers, club owners and personalities who made beautiful music on the West Side of town.

# Looking Back on a Super Summer 2016



Asbury Park Historical Society President **Don Stine** (center) poses with authors **Harry Ziegler** and **Joseph G. Bilby** during a September 1st book launch event at the city's **Public Library**. The prolific producers of numerous volumes on the history of Asbury Park and the Jersey Shore were there to introduce their latest collaboration, *A History of Submarine Warfare Along the Jersey Shore*, with an informative slideshow and lecture sponsored by the APHS. The book is available now at the Crane House and at area retail outlets.



On September 8, Historical Society trustee and treasurer **Mary Damato** had the honor of placing the memorial wreath at the plaque commemorating the **S.S. Morro Castle** maritime disaster of 1934. The ocean liner, which caught fire under mysterious circumstances and ran aground just off Convention Hall with a significant loss of life, is remembered each year by the APHS, who funded and placed the permanent marker several years ago. A major ceremony is being planned by the Society for September 2019, the 85th anniversary of the event that led to increased safety regulations on the high seas.

Recently, Asbury Park's boardwalk redeveloper **Madison Marquette** submitted plans for an extensive refurbishment of the **Fifth Avenue Pavilion**, the space-age 1960s-era structure (of which the distinctive Howard Johnson's building, now home to McLoone's restaurants, is a part) that houses the long-unused rooftop entertainment venue dedicated as **The Arthur Pryor Bandshell** in 1962. Plans call for the scaling back of the seating capacity to 200 seats, the establishment of two rooftop dining establishments, and the enclosure of the entire complex in a way that will transform it into a "year round" attraction. After a public letter writing campaign by the APHS, and the efforts of our trustee (and newest member of the City Council) **Eileen Chapman**, the Historical Society received assurances that the performance space would continue to bear the name of Pryor, the groundbreaking trombonist and bandleader known as Asbury Park's first music superstar.



The Asbury Park Historical Society would like to thank our two youthful volunteers, **Jessica Cresanti-Daknis** and **Deanne D'Elia**, for their efforts and talents in helping remodel and refurbish the historic parlor in the Stephen Crane House. Both are students with interior design degrees, and both are advancing their careers in historic preservation through volunteer projects like the parlor restoration, for which they were extremely helpful.

The young women are pictured here at the 2016 **Oysterfest** in Asbury Park, the three-day annual event (presented by the **A.P. Chamber of Commerce**) that extends the season for open-air fun past Labor Day each September. The Historical Society was once more among the many food purveyors, merchants and organizations who pitched a tent alongside the iconic Carousel House, on a warm and sunny weekend in mid-September.

# Free public events at the Stephen Crane House



**SAT. OCT. 1:** Asbury Park Mayor Emeritus **Ed Johnson** opens a new series of “Lights! Camera! Politics!” events with a look at Presidential Election Scandals, as Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman star in *All the President’s Men* (1976). Asbury Park Press publisher **Tom Donovan** and Sony Pictures Classics co-founder **Tom Bernard** introduce the Oscar-winning film that screens at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.

**SAT. OCT. 29:** Our annual Halloween program honors the 100th birthday of author **Roald Dahl** with a screening of his adapted story *The Witches* (1990), starring Anjelica Huston. Shows at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.

**SAT. NOV. 5:** “Lights! Camera! Politics!” continues with Henry Fonda in *The Best Man* (1964). New York Post film critic **Lou Lumenick** introduces the Oscar winning film that screens at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.

**SAT. NOV. 26:** Our annual birthday-month salute to **Stephen Crane** boasts the return of **The Arbutus Theater of the Air**, in a new “radio play” adaptation (details TBA) from one of Crane’s short stories. A short film presentation is also on the agenda, for the event that commences at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.

**SAT. DEC. 3:** Asbury Park Mayor Emeritus **Ed Johnson** concludes the “Lights! Camera! Politics!” series, and introduces Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman in *Wag the Dog* (1997). The film screens at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.

**SUN. DEC. 4:** The Frank Marcus play *The Killing of Sister George* is read by a cast of actors under the direction of **Michael T. Mooney**, in an event that begins at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.



**SAT. DEC. 17:** Crane House host **Frank D’Alessandro** presents the 2016 edition of our traditional *Season’s Readings from the Crane House*, an afternoon of stories, verse and song in celebration of the holidays that begins at 3 pm, with doors opening 2:30.

Follow us on Facebook for updates on other possible events here in Fall 2016...including spoken word and poetry events spotlighting the talents of **Edmund White**, **Laura McCullough** and **Bill Watkins**.

## The Asbury Park Historical Society

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**Join up or renew your membership today!**

contact **Kay Harris**, Membership Chair, at [kayharrismck@msn.com](mailto:kayharrismck@msn.com)

*Your generous donations of funds, historical materials and period furnishings are greatly appreciated for our community programs!*

Donations via PayPal to [antichay@gmail.com](mailto:antichay@gmail.com)

Call the Crane House at 732-361-0189 or address correspondence to:

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