

HELLERTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November 2012

www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

Issue 4

Enthusiastic Crew of United Way Volunteers Bring 'Day of Caring' to Wagner Grist Mill

By Dianne Borovies, *Special to The Valley Voice*

The spirit of volunteerism permeated the day and the adage, "many hands make light work," was never truer than on September 27 at United Way's Day of Caring for Heller-Wagner Grist Mill. Day of Caring is an annual event that highlights the spirit of volunteerism throughout the Lehigh Valley. This is the first year Hellertown Historical Society, an all volunteer and non-profit organization, participated by being host to Day of Caring volunteers.

Volunteer teams of employee groups from Buzzi Unicem USA Inc., Guardian Life, and Children and Youth Services of Lehigh County signed in at the Miller's House at 8:30 AM as drizzle and clouds threatened to disrupt the day's planned outdoor work projects. After coffee, the group received a tour of the Grist Mill, its museums, and the Pony Bridge. By the conclusion of the tour, the sun began to shine through the clouds, and teams reported to both indoor and outdoor duty stations.

Historical Society members worked alongside the volunteers and supervised the sorting of archival items in The Miller's House and Grist Mill Museum. Another team thoroughly cleaned the Barn Museum. One squad attacked the brush and weeds next to the Pony Bridge while the largest team spent the morning tirelessly scraping peeling paint from the recently repaired and refurbished 1860 Pony Bridge.

After a lunch break in the Tavern Room where Society members served the employee teams, everyone returned to work for an afternoon that focused on painting. By the end of the day, the Pony Bridge railings, Tavern Room railings, lampposts, planter pots, water pump, and, as one volunteer commented, almost anything that didn't move, were painted. Another team

continued to inventory items in the Grist Mill Museum, and others pitched in to clean upper and lower levels of the mill.

At 3 PM, the Day of Caring was scheduled to come to a close. The group posed in their Day of Caring T-shirts and received a big round of applause and thanks from Society President, Earl Hill. One dedicated team had become so engrossed in their project that they stayed after most of the others had left and continued to inventory museum items. Several volunteered to return to help with ongoing projects.

Hellertown Historical Society was blessed and privileged to benefit from these United Way Day of Caring volunteers.

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Hobo Lifestyle Featured at Final Night of 2012 Speakers' Series

The past 145+ years of hobo history which began at the end of the Civil War and peaked during the Great Depression was presented by past Hobo King "Redbird Express" (Karl Teller) and past Hobo Queen "Double B" (Betty Roberto) on Tuesday, September 11, in the Tavern Room.



"Double B" (Betty Roberto) & "Redbird Express" (Karl Teller)

Redbird, a retired truck driver who has also ridden several freight trains, and Double B presented a lively account of the history and stories of the hobo lifestyle. Those present learned the differences of the hobo (one who travels seeking work and food), the tramp (one who travels but does not work) and the bum who does neither! Redbird and Double B told of life in hobo camps called "jungles" and explained how every traveling hobo is expected to contribute something to the constantly simmering hobo stew.

Stories included tales of travels on freight trains from Quakertown to Bethlehem as well as more distant points. Double B and Redbird told of their experiences at the National Hobo Convention held annually in Britt, Iowa, where they each have been elected Queen and King respectively for a year. After lively presentations and sharing of various hobo-related items and clothes, the team entertained numerous questions from a very interested audience. The evening passed quickly, and everyone present learned much about the unique world of the hobo from this dedicated team who travel the region to share hobo lore and history.

The Pony Bridge Reopens to Foot Traffic

Sunday, November 18, 2012, at 2:00 P.M. will mark another milestone in the life of Hellertown's Circa 1860 Walnut Street Pony Bridge. A brief ribbon cutting ceremony at the bridge entrance will officially reopen the bridge to public foot traffic. Due to weather related deterioration of the 12- year-old red oak support beams and flooring, the bridge was barricaded off from the public in recent years for safety reasons. The reopening ceremony will include a brief history of the bridge as well as the public announcement of the name of the generous benefactor who funded the replacement of the rotted wood support beams and flooring with longer lasting white oak. Society members were aided by professional carpenter Mark Repsher and his team, the donation of a dumpster by Sam Donato of IESI Bethlehem Landfill, and countless hours of volunteer labor provided by both Society members and United Way Day of Caring teams. After the ribbon cutting, which is open to the public, light refreshments will be served in the Tavern Room.

The bridge formerly spanned Saucon Creek and was initially traveled by horses, buggies, pedestrians, tractors, and finally cars. Originally designed and

patented by Francis J. Lowthorp in 1856, it was fabricated by the Beckel Foundry and Machine Shop of Bethlehem, PA. In the 1970's, the bridge was moved to an adjoining spot near the woods to allow the construction of a new structure safe for school buses. The initial bridge restoration was a major Hellertown Historical Society project in the late 1990's and was completed in 2000 by Society members with the aid of Lehigh University engineering students. The restoration included the dismantling of the cast iron high truss bridge and reassembling it at its current location. Today the bridge is the only one of its kind believed to still exist in America. The bridge is visited by historians and the general public and serves as a beautiful backdrop for photographs.

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DECEMBER LOTTERY

Our lottery returns once again for the month of December. The donation for each lottery ticket is only \$5. Two tickets are enclosed for you to buy (or sell). Each ticket brings you three ways to win on the **EVENING** number during the month of December:

- \$50 if you have the exact number
- \$10 if your ticket is one number above
- \$10 if your ticket is one number below

Please return ticket stubs and money for sold tickets in the enclosed envelope. You can also drop off sold tickets and money (or pick up more tickets to sell or buy) at the Miller's House any Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday morning or call the Society at 610-838-1770.

Please help to make this important fundraiser a great success!

Tavern Room Available for Events

There are still openings for booking events for the Tavern Room for November and December of this year. We already have several holiday parties booked as well as some events for 2013. Please share the word with your friends, neighbors, and relatives. It amazes us how often we hear, "I had no idea this beautiful room existed!" The room, actually two rooms, is available for daytime and evening events on weekdays and weekends. This year has seen enhancements and updating to the rest room and the air conditioning and heating as well as the addition of a service sink area and a projection screen. If you haven't seen the Tavern Room recently, feel free to stop by for a visit.

Upcoming Holiday Events



The Society's Annual Holiday Open House will be held Saturday evening December 7 at 7:00 P.M. in the Tavern Room.

Join us for a festive evening of socializing, reminiscing, lively music by the musical duo of *Norris and James* along with their "*Lehigh Valley Idols*" and lots of good food, and fun. A highlight of the evening will be the 2012 Fundraiser Raffle for the Joseph Sofka Watercolor of the Grist Mill grounds and buildings. It is not too late to obtain your chance to win. Two raffle tickets with a suggested donation of \$5. each are enclosed with this newsletter. Mail to our office or bring to the Open House. Visit our website and the Raffle Page, www.hellertownhistoricalsociety.org to see a color rendering of this beautiful painting. The upcoming fundraiser for 2013 will be announced that evening. Tours of the Grist Mill, the Miller's House, the Barn, the Wash House, and the Museums will be offered. The evening is FREE with donations appreciated.

The Trains Are Back ~ Every Saturday and Sunday from November 24 thru December 23 from 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. in the lower level of the Miller's House.

Come see a 144 Square Foot Train Display complete with buildings set up in a room featuring railroad pictures and memorabilia. The display is open to the public and is a very family friendly event as well as a favorite of model train enthusiasts.



FREE with donations appreciated.



Visits and Pictures with Santa Claus ~ Sunday, December 16, from 1:00 – 4:00 P.M. beginning in the Tavern Room.

The goal is to introduce families with children to the Grist Mill, the Tavern Room, and the Train Display. The event will be FREE with donations appreciated. A picture with Santa in the Tavern Room will be followed with a visit to the basement of the Miller's House to view the Train Display and receive a holiday treat.

We are searching for a Santa Suit and a willing Santa to fill the suit as well as volunteers to help with the event. This is your opportunity to give just an hour or two to help bring the holidays to kids and families of our community. Call 610 838 1770 and leave your name & number for "Santa's Visit".

Thanks to Those Who Have Served.....

As the end of the year approaches, we say thank you to several who have served our Society tirelessly over many years. William Frey who served on the Board of Directors for 31 years and was the Society's Treasurer for 20 years has stepped down from the Board. Erika Hill who served on our Board for 20 years and as the Society's Secretary for the last 5 years, is stepping down from the Board but will remain very actively involved and continue to take the lead with the Society's Newsletter which now comes out four times a year. Earl Hill is completing his three years as President in December but assures us he also will remain very active and continue as a Board Member. Stella Pastenak, who served as Treasurer for 11 years has moved along with Marcella Dimmick to Emeritus Status. Both Marcella and Stella have seen many changes over the history of the Society. Hellertown Historical Society members and Hellertonians owe a resounding round of thanks to these hard working citizens who have actively participated and continue to participate in the preservation of Hellertown's heritage. We express sincere thanks to each of you.

Society Wish List

In an all volunteer non-profit organization, the wish list *often* exceeds the budget, so please help us spread the word about our needs. For more details, to make a donation, or to volunteer, please call 610 838 1770 or email us at info@hellertownhistoricalsociety.org

- Portable Microphone and Speaker System
- Digital Projection System
- Video Camera to Record Events
- Mannequins for Displaying Vintage Clothes
- Picnic Tables and Benches
- Outdoor Garden Benches
- *Outdoor Directional Signs to Our Buildings
- *Outdoor Glass Enclosed Bulletin Board/Case
- Gently Used Vacuum Cleaners
- Small Under Counter Refrigerator
- Folding 5' and 6' Long Tables
- *Bricks or Pavers to Complete Walkways
- Split Rails for Fences
- Volunteers, Volunteers, Volunteers
- * Possible Eagle Scout Projects



Come Christmas Shopping at the Mill!

See our selection of hand-made decorated pottery made in the USA by *Westerwald Pottery*. All of the stoneware is blue and gray in color, with Hellertown imprinted on each piece. The following is a list of the pieces available and prices:

Qt. Batter Bowl	\$20.00	Sm. Pie Plate	21.00
Bean Pot	26.00	Planter	24.00
Heart Candleholder	11.00	Qt. Jar	20.00
Mug	14.00	Qt. Pitcher	21.00
Oil Lamp	14.00	Salt Crock	20.00
Pickle Crock	21.00	Soup Mug	16.00
Lg. Pie Plate	24.00	2 Qt. Utensil Crock	26.00

Congratulations!!

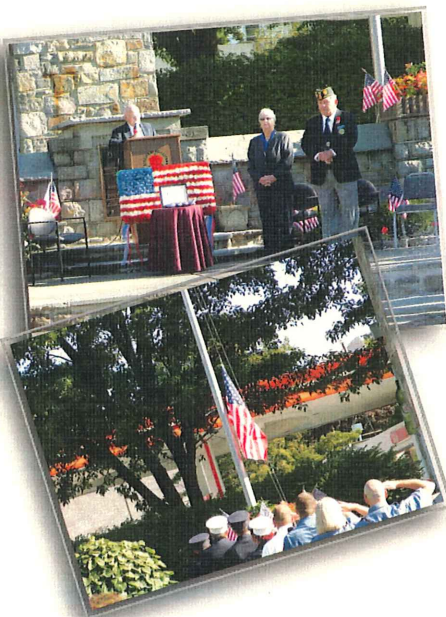
The Hellertown Historical Society wishes to welcome the following new officers effective January 1, 2013:

Dianne Borovies, President and Gloria Michael, Secretary. Continuing for another term of three years is Francis Hudock, Vice-President and Gilbert Stauffer, Treasurer.

We wish them all much success!

9-11 Commemorated at Flag Raising & at Speakers' Night

Society members remembered and honored the victims and heroes of September 11 by participating in a special flag raising ceremony at Detwiller Plaza the morning of 9-11 and at the opening of the final night of the Society's 2012 Speakers' Series.



The flag which was raised at Detwiller Plaza was donated anonymously to Hellertown Historical Society by one of our members. This special flag had been flown at the Flight 93 National Memorial Site near Shanksville, PA. The morning's ceremony included a history of the flag and remarks by Mayor Richard Fluck and Representative Robert Freeman. Local law enforcement, fire fighters, and first responders attended in uniform, and Saucon Valley brass ensemble provided music.

The flag was retired from Detwiller Plaza at 5:00 P.M. and honored with remarks and The Pledge of Allegiance prior to the presentations by Speakers at the Society's Speakers' Series. The flag and its certificate are now on display in the lobby of Borough Hall through December 11, 2012. The flag will ultimately be on display in the Tavern Room at Heller-Wagner Grist Mill.

