



# *Turkey Tracks*

*Newsletter of the New Providence Historical Society*

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## **The WASPs of World War II** *Forgotten Stories of Female Aviators*

Come hear the story of the amazing WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots in WWII) at the Society's Annual Dinner on Thursday evening, **April 20th** at the Murray Hill Hotel & Suites. Our speaker, Carol Simon Levin, will share the story of these intrepid women through the perspective of Ann Baumgartner Carl, the Jersey girl who trained as a WASP and went on to break down many aviation barriers for women.



During World War II, more than one thousand women volunteers completed the WASP military pilot training program, enduring difficult Texas weather, snakes, spiders and scorpions, as well as the hostility of some male instructors. Graduating WASPs piloted every kind of military aircraft, tested and overhauled airplanes (some with defective parts or dangerous reputations), delivered more than 12,000 planes, and flew over 60,000,000 miles, often towing targets that soldiers shot at with live ammunition! Thirty-eight of them died serving their country.

Ann Baumgartner Carl not only succeeded as a WASP, but also became the only American woman to test-fly experimental planes during the war. Come hear her story and those of her fellow WASPs!



# President's Letter

The year 2017 is the 50th anniversary of the moving of a salt box farmhouse that became our Salt Box Museum. and its volunteers have worked diligently on recording, preserving and reporting the history of our town. And the work only seems to be intensifying.

This year, our annual high school scholarship will be named for Howard P. Smith, the first President of the Historical Society, who was instrumental in the establishment of the Salt Box Museum.

On February 16th, we had the first in our *History Talks* series, given by Edward Eckert on the history of the legendary Bell Labs. This talk was sponsored by Wells Fargo. Three additional talks are planned for the rest of 2017. Special thanks to Colin duSaire for coordinating the talks.

On April 20th, we will have our Annual Dinner at the Murray Hill Hotel & Suites with speaker Carol Simon Levin, who will share with us the struggles and triumphs of the WASPs of World War II.

The second in our *History Talks* series will take place on April 29th, between 1 PM and 5 PM. Karen Thornton will lead a series of five 40-minute interactive genealogy sessions in the Mason Room at the New Providence Memorial Library. Participants will need to sign up for a specific session and bring their iPads or laptops. See the website for further details.

On May 6th, we will again hold the Salt Box Craft Fair on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum. In addition to our treasure tables, we will have vendors and a bake sale. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to stop by for some bargains and treasures. We also need items to sell and volunteers to sell them!

On Saturday, September 16th, the Salt Box Museum will host the New Providence Book Festival on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum, which will feature a large array of New Jersey authors, who will be available to sign and discuss their books. This event will also include a bake sale as a fundraiser.

This of course segues into a call for volunteers. There's always lots to do. If you're interested, just give us a call at 908-665-1034 or come to a trustee meeting. There are a wide range of things to help with. Whatever your talents, we can probably use them.

Happy Anniversary!



Linda Kale  
President



# How It All Started

In the mid-1960s, John D. McGeehan DDS, Frank Robina, DDS and Juan J. Ryan, Esq. had purchased land, which had an old salt box farmhouse on it. They planned to build an office building, which would require the demolition of the house previously owned by the Garrison, Dickinson and Geung families.



However, few wanted the historical structure destroyed. So, the New Providence Historical Society was quickly formed in 1966 to save the old house. The three men donated the house to the society, on the condition it would be moved off the property.

So in 1967, the salt box farmhouse was jacked up and moved to its current location, one year after the formation of the society. The house was transported across Springfield Avenue and rotated 180 degrees on June 14, 1967. Thus, the house's address changed from 1351 to 1350 Springfield Avenue.

Howard P. Smith was the first President of the Historical Society, and a key player in the moving of the house. Smith and other volunteers worked on the house themselves, using few contractors. Other volunteers included, Gus Fernald, Don Pierson, Harry Newell, Dayton Parcells, and Bill Clark. As Smith said in a 1969 interview, "You end up with a half dozen workers and four hundred cheerers."

Today, we still cheer for Smith and all the others for their labors, which served as the foundation of all our activities ever since.

A new postage stamp (pictured right) designed by J.R. Bale, was created to commemorate the museum's 50th anniversary. A limited number of these will be available for purchase. The Salt Box Museum is a treasure worth visiting again and again.



## Salt Box Craft Fair - Saturday, May 6th

The Salt Box Craft Fair and Sale is scheduled for May 6th from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with May 13th as the rain date. Proceeds from the fair support the Society's scholarship program and maintenance of the museum.

**Vendors:** Any vendors interested in renting space at \$25 per eight-foot space should call 908-665-1034. (Vendors are responsible for supplying their own table and chairs.)

**Donations:** Please call 908-665-1034 to arrange for a drop off time for any items to be donated for our Society's "Treasure Tables." We would appreciate having these items by April 25th, so they can be priced in time for the sale. Once again, we need and request your support.

**Volunteers:** Members, please mark your calendar for baking, pricing, selling, set-up, clean-up and hosting at the Salt Box Museum.

# History Talks: History of Bell Labs

On February 16, 2017, the first in a four-lecture series was given on the History of Nokia Bell Labs by Edward Eckert in the Conti Room in the New Providence Library. With 30 years experience, Mr. Eckert serves as the Bell Labs Corporate Archivist and Sr. Manager, IIS Intellectual Property Services. In addition to his intellectual property duties, Mr. Eckert also manages and curates the Bell Labs Technology Showcase museum with its collection of over 40,000 items at the Nokia Bell Labs headquarters in Murray Hill, New Jersey.

Mr. Eckert shared an astounding number of innovations delivered by the Laboratories over the past decades. While many were aware of the invention of the transistor, Bell Labs also developed satellite technology, video, virtual reality, 3D modeling, and found the evidence for the Big Bang Theory.

The program was standing room only, with over 130 in attendance.



## 2017 Calendar for Upcoming Historical Society Events

April 6, 2017	Thursday	Trustees Meeting
April 20, 2017	Thursday	Annual Meeting & Dinner
April 29, 2017	Saturday	History Talks: Interactive Genealogy Sessions
May 6, 2017	Saturday	Salt Box Craft Fair, 9 AM - 3 PM (Raindate: May 13)
September 16, 2017	Saturday	New Providence Book Festival on the Museum grounds
September 21, 2017	Thursday	History Talks: Grounds for Sculpture
November 16, 2017	Thursday	History Talks: NJ Sharing Network

Other events, such as open houses will be added, so check our calendar at [www.newprovidencehistorical.com](http://www.newprovidencehistorical.com).



## The Changing Face of New Providence

The 232 multi-family unit New Providence Apartments and Gardens has been sold for \$55 million to Madison Hill Properties LLC.

The Max Challenge, a physical fitness facility, opened at 1275 Springfield Avenue.

Yoga Essence opened at 43 Floral Avenue in late 2016. This old building, with a second floor apartment, received major renovations earlier, and was once the home of Bantam Press, among others.

Construction on Barth's on South Street continues.

# Member Notes:

**Jean Holmes** (86) died on February 13th, 2017 at Overlook Hospital. Jean had been a member of our Society for many years and very active in the N.P. Senior Citizens Club, where she was a Trustee. She was a parishioner at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, where she was an Usher and dedicated office volunteer.

**Edwin Len** (92 ) died on December 24, 2016. He was a World War II veteran.

**Frances Blessing** (92) died on December 25, 2016. She was an active member of the Senior Citizens Club and the New Providence United Methodist Church.

## New Members:

Robert Davis  
Percy Jarvis Jr.  
Helene & Carlos Langezaall  
Charles Magistro  
Tracy L. Robinson  
George S. Ross  
Allen Swanson  
Leslie Wald

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**Proposed Trustees - Class of 2017: Pat Anelli, Margaret Maurer and Barbara Pape**

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## Membership Renewal Application

Our annual dues run from April 1st to March 31st, our fiscal year. Please fill in the requested information and mail your check to Margaret Maurer's attention at the Memorial Library address, New Providence Historical Society, 377 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974. This will enable us to keep our membership and mailing lists current.

Be sure to include your preference for Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Mr. *and* Mrs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships (Many corporations will match contributions.)

Individual \$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Business Sponsorship \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_

I will volunteer to help:

Computer \_\_\_\_\_ Research \_\_\_\_\_ Museum \_\_\_\_\_ Lawn Sale \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Clerical \_\_\_\_\_ Grounds \_\_\_\_\_ Restoration \_\_\_\_\_ House Tours \_\_\_\_\_

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## Reservations for Annual Dinner

**Murray Hill Hotel & Suites**

**April 20, 2017, Hors d'oeuvre at 6 PM, Dinner at 7 PM, Cash Bar.**

Number of reservations \_\_\_\_\_ @\$36.00 for NP Historical Society Annual Dinner

Amount of Check \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please make check payable to **NP Historical Society**. Reservations must be received by April 5th. Check for dinner and membership may be combined. Send checks to the Mason Room, New Providence Memorial Library, 377 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974, c/o Margaret Maurer.

## New Providence Historical Society Officers & Committees

President	Linda Kale
Vice President	Rick Anderson
Corresponding Secretary	Carol Smith
Recording Secretaries	Kerry Lee
	Sarah Jane Vignali
Treasurer	Gail Souren
Displays	Ann Powers
	Barbara Pape
Grounds & Property	Rick Anderson
Annual Dinner Coordinator	Kerry Lee
Membership	Margaret Maurer
<i>Turkey Tracks</i> & Website	J.R. Bale
Computer Archivist	Colin duSaire

## Trustees

Rick Anderson, Patrick Anelli, J.R. Bale,  
Linda Kale, Margaret Maurer, Barbara Pape,  
Gail Souren, Carol Smith. (One vacancy at this time.)



## Museum Hours

March to November  
First Sunday of each month  
1 - 3 PM  
Or by appointment  
Telephone: 908-665-1034

## Mason Room Hours

Tuesday & Thursday Mornings  
10 AM to Noon  
Telephone: 908-665-1034

## Website:

[newprovidencehistorical.com](http://newprovidencehistorical.com)

*Turkey Tracks* is also  
available in color on the  
website in PDF form.

## Facebook Page:

[facebook.com/NewProvidenceHistoricalSociety](https://facebook.com/NewProvidenceHistoricalSociety)



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Memorial Library  
377 Elkwood Avenue  
New Providence, New Jersey 07974