



Cornerstone

Lemont Area Historical Society
306 Lemont Street Lemont IL 60439
lemontahs@sbcglobal.net
www.lemonthistorical.org

Election 2012 Results CONGRATULATIONS!

President: Susan Roy
1st Vice-President: Rose Yates
2nd Vice-President: Richard Lee
Secretary: Susan Donahue
Treasurer: Gary Roy
Board Members:
Barbara Bannon, John Bushman, Carol
Garibay, Richard Homerding, William
Uznanski

January – February 2012
January 24: Gen. Mem Meet: 7pm
“Fire & Ice Program”
February 12: Vol. Appreciation Buffet

LAHS VOLUNTEERS HONORED FEBRUARY 12

The LAHS Board will be hosting a buffet on February 12 at the museum for all our faithful volunteers who have given of their time, energy, and talents to promote and further our organization in 2011. Look forward to seeing all of you there!

JANUARY 24 PROGRAM “FIRE & ICE”

On January 24, we will be honoring 125 years of the Lemont Fire Department and will be featuring a short film on the Lemont Ski Hill formerly located at the present site of the Hindu Temple. Please feel free to swap and share any photos or facts on either topic.

CHINESE NEW YEAR!!!!



YEAR OF THE DRAGON

We are starting the year off by celebrating Chinese New Year at Lemont House Restaurant. Lemont House is generously giving Historical Society Members 10% off between 1 and 4 pm on January 22. Hope you all can stop by for their delicious Oriental cuisine. (Coupon on next page)

LAHS EVENTS 2012 PARTICIPATING OR SPONSORING

St. Patrick's Day Parade
Civil War Picnic
Heritage Trail Days
Tag Days
Vintage Photos at Heritage

Fest

3 Quarrymen Home Baseball

Games

Keepataw Days Parade
Hayride and Bonfire at
Puckerville Farms
Lemont Street Fair
Fright Night
Christmas Choral Concert



CHINESE NEW YEAR
“Year of the Dragon”

Chinese New Year is the longest and most important festivity in the Chinese calendar. The origin of Chinese New Year is itself centuries old and gains significance because of several myths and traditions.

The Significance of the Chinese Dragon

Chinese around the world, proudly proclaim themselves "Lung Tik Chuan Ren" which may be translated as Descendants of the Dragon. Unlike the negative energies associated with Western Dragons, most Eastern Dragons are beautiful, friendly, and wise. They are the angels of the Orient. Instead of being hated, they are loved and worshipped. Chinese dragons have a horse's head and a snake's body. Often they have four jaws. Chinese dragons are divided into Heavenly Dragons, Earthly Dragons and Dragons in water.

COUPON CUT OUT

LEMONT HOUSE RESTAURANT

210 Main Street

Lemont

630-257-3080

January 22, 2012 from 1 to 4pm.

10% Discount to Lemont Area Historical Society Members

President's Message. .



Dear Members,

The Board Members would like to wish you and your families a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year! We are hopeful that 2012 is a year of personal and financial growth for all of us.

At this time, the Board would like to thank the following:

Richard Lee for his service as President for the last two years - Richard will continue as 2nd Vice President and remain active coordinating the Civil War Commission and his tours;

Joanne Pick for her service as 1st Vice President - Unfortunately, Joanne was forced to step down from her role due to her health. Please continue to pray for Joanne. Although Joanne has stepped down, she continues to be a contributing influence to the Board and especially to the Wedding Committee;

Rick Meyer for serving as Board Member for the last year - We are thankful that Rick's open heart surgery was successful and that he has returned to work. Rick also stepped down because of his health, however, he will remain our "forever volunteer D.J." for all of the Society's events.

Also, at this time, we would like to welcome our new Board Members, **John Bushman** and **Rick Homerding**. Both John and Rick are familiar faces in the Lemont community and we look forward to working with them in the coming year.

The motto of the Historical Society is to "Preserve, protect and promote the history of Lemont." When we think of Lemont history, we tend to focus on the quarries, limestone and canals. However, there is much more out there as well. If you have anything that you would like to share with

the Society or if there is a topic you think should be further researched, please let us know. We are open to all of your thoughts and ideas.

Again, all the best for a Great 2012!!!

Best regards, Sue

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012



Left to Right: Richard Lee, Susan Donahue, Gary Roy, Richard Hommerding, Susan Roy, John Bushman, Barbara Bannon, Wm. Uznanski, and Carol Garibay. Not pictured: Rose Yates and Doris Peterman. (Not a member yet baby Sweet William.)

Cornerstone is the official newsletter of the Lemont Area Historical Society, a not for profit organization as set forth by the provisions of the State of Illinois.

Cornerstone is published six times a year with a circulation of 200 issues. Issues are mailed or emailed to all members of the Lemont Area Historical Society.

Complimentary copies are available.

Publication offices for *Cornerstone* are located at 306 Lemont Street, Lemont, IL 60439. The editor may be contacted by writing to the Lemont Area Historical Society, 306 Lemont Street, Lemont, IL 60439, or leaving a message at the museum at 630-257-2972. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, although acceptance of copy does not imply that the article will be published. We reserve the right to edit and rewrite to comply with our style.

Information for Future Reference:

Lemont Area Historical Society

In the Old Stone Church at
306 Lemont Street
Lemont, IL 60439
630-257-2972
www.lemonthistorical.org

Museum Hours

10 am to 2 pm Tuesday, Friday
10 am to 1 pm Saturday
1 to 4 pm Sunday

Library Committee

meets 10 am to 12 noon on Wednesday.
Visits by appointment only.

The main floor of the museum is available for weddings, meetings, and events.

Board of Directors

Susan Roy, President
Rose Yates, 1st Vice-President
Richard Lee, 2nd Vice-President
Susan Donahue, Secretary
Gary Roy, Treasurer

Board Members

Barbara Bannon, John Bushman, Carol Garibay,
Richard Homerding, Doris Peterman, William
Uznanski

Committees:

Strategic Planning

Gary Roy, Susan Roy

Resource Center

Carol Garibay
Collections, Library, Genealogy,
Oral Histories, Photographs

Community Outreach

Rose Yates
Programs, Exhibits, Publicity, Tours,
Historic Sites, Web Site

Membership

Susan Donahue

Sunday Volunteers

Doris Peterman

Wedding Comm.

Joanne Pick, Carol Garibay, Susan Donahue

Building & Maintenance: Bill Uznanski,

Richard Lee. John Bushman

Web Master:

Paul Froehle

For information about membership in the Lemont Area Historical Society and memorials in the name of a family member or friend, see the membership application elsewhere in the newsletter.

“THE VAULT” OPENING

“THE VAULT” is a new business at 308 Canal Street. Aptly named for the bank that used to be there. Happy to say one of the new owners Bach, is now a family member of our organization. Wishing them all the best – Yes, there is really a vault behind the bar – and the photos from the infamous 1929 bank robbery that took place there that are on the walls are from our archives – check it out for yourself!



HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY

We wish Sue and Gary Roy a “Happy Belated 10th Anniversary” in business in Lemont. They own “Smokey Row” and a B & B upstairs from the antique shop on Stephen Street. We know they have embraced Lemont as their home and totally immersed themselves in our community. They currently sit on our Board of Directors as President and Treasurer. We wish them continued success.

CHRISTMAS 2011



Snuggling up to Santa who was mum if this group were naughty or nice

Genealogy Corner



By Barb Bannon

The Future of History

Everyone working on their family history, and even those with little interest in Genealogy, has heard of Ellis Island. The place many of our ancestors caught the first glimpse of the new land where they would start a new life. But this point of entry only became an official processing site for immigration on January 1, 1892, processing almost 450,000 persons in the first year. Many of us doing research find our ancestors immigrated earlier than 1892 at Castle Garden. From August 1, 1855 when it became America's first official immigrant examining, receiving and processing center, through April 18, 1890, Castle Garden welcomed approximately 8 million immigrants - most from Germany, Ireland, England, Scotland, Sweden, Italy, Russia and Denmark.

Ironically built to keep people out, Castle Garden was previously known as Castle Clinton. It began its interesting life as a fort to defend New York Harbor from the British during the War of 1812. Twelve years after the war the U.S. Army relinquished control to New York City. The former fort reopened in 1824 as Castle Garden, a public cultural center.

The fort and national monument is located in Battery Park at the southern tip of Manhattan in New York City. The structure also served as a theater, opera house, national immigrant receiving station, and aquarium throughout its long history. Today it is called Castle Clinton National Monument and serves as the ticket center for ferries to Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty.

Castle Garden welcomed its last immigrant on April 18, 1890. After its closing, immigrants were processed at an old barge

office in Manhattan until the opening of the Ellis Island Immigration Center. More than one in six native-born Americans are descendants of the eight million immigrants who entered the United States through Castle Garden.

In 1896 Castle Garden became the site of the New York City Aquarium until 1946 when plans for the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel called for its demolition. The public outcry at the loss of the popular and historic building, saved it from destruction, but the aquarium was closed and Castle Garden stood vacant until it was reopened by the National Park Service in 1975.

On November 25, 2011 Castle Clinton National Monument celebrated its 200th Anniversary and the battery has withstood the test of time. The walls of the original fort remain intact, located at the southern tip of Manhattan. The monument is under the administration of the National Park service and serves as a visitor center for Manhattan's national parks. Park ranger-led and self-guided tours describe the history of Castle Clinton / Castle Garden.

A free database at CastleGarden.org, provided online by the New York Battery Conservancy, allows you to search by name for immigrants who arrived in Castle Garden between 1830 and 1890. Digital copies of the many of the ship manifests can be accessed through a paid subscription to Ancestry.com and can also be obtained through your local Family History Center or National Archives (NARA) branches.

If not for the foresight of a group of people, this historic site from the War of 1812 would not have survived. On a smaller scale, but no less historic, our Old Stone Church dating back to the Civil War is in need of support. This oldest church structure in the village was built from donated stone from a local quarry. Local men donated their labor to move the stone from the quarry. Stone artisans donated their labor to construct the building which is now a National Landmark.

Donate is a word we hear all too often, but donations are what make historic sites available to teach the historians of the

Genealogy Corner Contin

future. Whether you are a descendant of ancestors that immigrated here or you are the ancestor of the future, this is your historic village. This village was built on the backs of laborers on the canal, the farms, the quarries etc. To keep this building a viable historic site please consider, yes, a donation of ideas, labor or money in support of our Old Stone Church and Historical Society to ensure it withstands the test of time for the **next** 150 years.

“Recognize and embrace the past, use it to shape the future”

Christmas Program 2011

St. Alphonsus Choir



Directed by Joseph Phillip Martano



St. Alphonsus Choir + Instruments

St. Patrick's Choir



Directed by Neal Wend



Fr. Kurt Boras, Pastor St. Patrick's, and Choir



Norma Johnson, LAHS Cashier, at program.



Society Page
by Susan Donahue



BELATED 90TH BIRTHDAY!

Wishing Emily Christian a belated 90th Birthday! Isn't it nice that so many of our members have reached that impressive age with the blessing of not only quantity but quality of life. Many more happy years, Emily!

GET WELL WISHES

We would like to extend our best wishes to Life Member Ellen Kucera and Claire Cimino for a complete recovery and return to good health.

DEEPEST SYMPATHY:

We extend to Gail August, faithful volunteer, and her husband Jim our deepest sympathy for the loss of the matriarch of their family, Helen August, and their niece Nicole. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them at this difficult time.

MEMBERSHIPS:

Reminder we now have membership renewals in March. Remember too that we really would appreciate those who do have email addresses to please forward them to us.

Renewed: Smokey Row Corporate

VISITORS:

We again had students from Stagg High School come into the museum to do the project of visiting a museum, learning

the history, taking photos, and then incorporating them into a scrapbook. They normally come in close to Christmas so this year it came and went and I figured the teacher had come up with a different assignment or was no longer teaching there. No, the students did come with only a few days to spare to turn in their assignments. I guess we all can relate to that from the past. They were interested and asked some thought provoking questions. This time there was a twist it had to also relate to U.S. history and, of course, with the Civil War, Lincoln, etc. we more than fill that requirement as a destination for inquiring minds.

FOSSIL NORTHSIDE MUSEUM



We often have visitors curious about our stone and fascinated by the fact that embedded in our stone our trilobites. I still remember the painter doing work on the window frames of the museum and coming in blown away by the fact that near one of the windows was an artifact. The next time you go past the museum or the other limestone buildings in town stop and consider not only the edifice but the hardships suffered by those early Lemonters to create these lasting treasures. We walk in their footsteps.



STEPPING BACK IN TIME

By Susan Donahue

As you already know from the last newsletter the first program we are having this year is one honoring the Lemont Fire Department, who last year celebrated their 125th Anniversary.

What an impressive history they do have from the beginning of volunteers to the present day salaried firemen. The dedication is the same.

Brief History: The Lemont Fire Department received a charter from the state of Illinois on March 14, 1886. Members of the first volunteer fire company were: J.G. Bodenschatz, R. C. Friedley, J. Gerharz, G. Losey, A. Kettering, F. Losey, A. Lott, J. C. Murphy, E. Mitchell, N. Pinter, J. H. Tedens, J. F. Bittles, J. Devine, J. Hayes, J. Hennebry, J. Keegan, N. Nicoles, C. Murrane, J.W. McCarthy, W. O'Neil, J. Ryan and J. Russell. Joseph Gerharz was appointed Marshall, now known as Chief.

Lemont's first firefighters hauled a hose cart to fires in town. Former Fire Chief Art Steinke said in 1958 that they used two hose carts. One was located at the Singer Hill station and one at Village Hall. "The hose carts had wheels eight feet in diameter. Each was a reel type cart, carrying 1,000 to 1,500 ft. of two and ½ inch hose. The hose would be taken to the nearest hydrant, hooked up and then stretched to the fire. Oh, yes, we had a lot of fun in those days," Steinke said.

The first line of defense at a fire was the chemical wagon. The chemical wagon held 60 gallons of soda and muratic acid. It was activated by rotating it. When it was empty, they had to refill it with water. When the fire whistle blew, anyone nearby with a team of horses would hitch up to the chemical wagon. If no horses were present, the men would have to pull it themselves.

The first fire station was on Singer Hill, at State and Eureka. They moved into the Village Hall when it was built in 1893. On June 8, 1956, they moved into new quarters built adjunct to the Village Hall. Clarence Losey, veteran firefighter, said he was part of the team that collected \$11,000 worth of donations to build the new quarters. Ambulances from either Gerharz or Markiewicz Funeral Homes were used to transport accident and heart attack victims to hospitals.

The Fire Department made its move in 1977 to the station on New Avenue.

Exerts from early years found in our archives:
**LOCKPORT PHOENIX ADVERTISER
AUGUST 8, 1901**

Village Council Meeting Minutes:

Bills submitted:

John McGraw: Hauling chemicals to fire:\$2.00

John Erickson: Repairing Fire Boxes: \$10.50.

LEMONT OPTIMIST NEWS

MAY 31, 1934

FIRE DEPARTMENT CALLED ON

WED. AFTERNOON (Ed. Note - Most unusual) The ambulance of the Boe Furniture and Undertaking Company, returning from Chicago with a casket, caught fire about two miles east of town, in front of the Franciscan Monastery. A passing motorist extinguished the blaze before damage was done.

**FIRE DISTRICT CELEBRATES 100
YEARS, LEMONT MET, Aug 7, 1986**

Lemont firefighters will demonstrate how they put out a fire as part of their two day celebration to be held at the fire house on New Avenue this Sat. and Sun. from 10am-4pm.

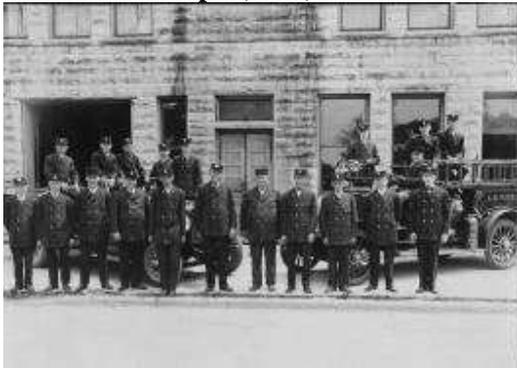
The demonstrations of firefighters in action will be part of the open house that will also include displays of the equipment modern firefighters use to fight fires and save lives. The equipment in some of the trucks will be laid out for easy inspection. Ambulance and rescue trucks will also be available for inspection. And, for four hours each day,

(Cont. Stepping Back in Time.)

there will be an emergency helicopter on display at the heliport west of the fire station. The paramedics will perform a simulated emergency call for a heat attack victim. And they will have an old car on hand to demonstrate how they go about getting someone out of a badly damaged automobile. The firefighters, Rich Stech, assistant fire chief, said, "will perform just like we would on an actual call."

Some of the bigger fires the department has fought: By far the number one would be the Union Oil explosion in July, 1984 as the most dangerous with major loss of live; Glen Eagles fire that destroyed their clubhouse; and fires in the State Street Plaza in 1961 that destroyed the Pick'n'Save and in 1981 the fire that destroyed Ordman's Park and Shop and the Walgreens store.

Lemont Fire Dept. (1927)



Front Row: Left to Right: Nick Schneider; Red Christensen; Fred Fries; Frank Sniegowski; Sam Gorski; T. Meiers: Chief Tom Ludwig; Paul Kettman; Wm. Fischer; Walt Sniegowski; Charlie Woods.

Top Row: Left to Right: Nick Kettman; Walt Tedens; Ed Forkel; Harry Boe; Jake Sierzula; Art Steinke; Frank Walters; Carl Erickson; Nick Schomig

**Lemont Area Historical Society
Membership**

- Student:\$10.00-----**
- Senior Citizen:\$10.00 -----**
- Individual: \$15.00 -----**
- Family: \$25.00 -----**
- Corporate:\$50.00 -----**
- Life Member:\$200-----**
- Old Quarry Club:\$250.00 -----**
- Friends of Keepataw:\$500.00 -----**
- Athens Marble Club:\$1,000.00 -----**
- Additional Donation _____**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

**Email
Address:** _____

**Mail to:
LAHS
306 Lemont Street
Lemont, IL 60439**

**ATJENS MARBLE CLUB MEMBERS
VILLAGE OF LEMONT
LEMONT TOWNSHIP
LEMONT PARK DISTRICT**

We thank you for your support!