

**Harrington Park Historical Society**  
**Newsletter**  
**P.O. BOX 105, Harrington Park, NJ 07640**

**President's Report**

**Notes, Narration, and Natter**  
*from Gerri Gibney*

It's not December, the regular calendar year-end month, but for the Society, it is almost the end of another Society year as the month of June approaches. As we look back over the activities of our year, we can remember some fabulous guest speakers that brought us through the American Revolution to riding on a roller coaster in the now extinct Palisades Amusement Park. We are proud of the two Harrington Park History Days sponsored by the Society, one in 2004 and one in 2005, both very successful in that they made people aware of the Society and many roles; proper storage and archiving of Harrington Park documents and artifacts; on-going research, restoration, and maintenance of the Old Burying Ground and very shortly the Perry Cemetery; public awareness of local history and history at-large through our lecture series; a long-range goal for a permanent home for our collection in a Northern Valley Museum; and in general, a common interest and purpose among all members, and in the collection of papers and artifacts which are now part of the permanent

collection of the Society. We would also have to include in our recollection of accomplishments a great evening of music, delicious food, and conviviality shared by all at our fundraiser for the "Old Burying Ground." Certainly, we'd need to add to our list the tremendous amount of work and diligence that has been put into the on-going research, restoration, and maintenance of the Old Burying Ground. And, as an added treat, a "History Hike" conducted at the cemetery. Townsfolk have financially supported our effort at the cemetery by generously donating to our "Build the Retaining Wall" fund. Our membership has grown. In conjunction with the town's Centennial of Incorporation, the Society made a series of "picture boards" celebrating the history of various facets of life in "HP" which were displayed at the Library and enjoyed by many at our History Day programs.

All in all, I would say, a jammed packed, fun-filled, historical good year. It didn't just happen though, behind all these wonderful events and memories were a good group of dedicated people who love their "jobs" and made it all happen. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude for their service.

These marvelous memories are now part of our



**Figure 1** View from United Water Company's patio, site of 2004's fund raiser.

history, and with one meeting left in our year, we are already planning and dreaming of the year ahead. Some exciting ideas are already afoot. If last year was great, we're going for greater in 2005-2006. We have started working on the programs, and we have lined up a talk on the history of submarines, their use in WW II, and their place in the nuclear age. We'll hear about the "Women of the Hermitage," and in another talk about the women who saved the Palisades. Brought back by popular demand is "Tea and Tales" a meeting with an informal format where we will be entertained, engrossed, and informed by long-time residents of Harrington Park who will share their remembrances. Later in the year we will learn the progress made at the Old Burying Grounds. That's just the beginning. Our December holiday meeting will again be off-site at the '76 House in Tappan, where we will enjoy lots of good food while being entertained by two 18th century singer/musicians. We are awaiting final word from United Water to have our cocktail reception again at their facility on Friday, September 30th. Be sure to reserve that date on your calendar, it was one of the social events of the HP season last year.

But, I am getting ahead of myself... At our May meeting, Society member Anne Kruger delighted all of us with her story of Miss Clara Eckerson, a life-long resident of Harrington Park. Anne's special gift of story-telling and her enthusiasm and love for this special lady gave us a glimpse into Clara's service-filled life to her community and her church, and, in addition, gave us a glance into a long ago Harrington Park, for which we thank Anne for sharing with all of us.

If you were unable to attend the May meeting, and would like to read about the "Tea with Clara Eckerson" presentation, be sure to check-out the minutes of this meeting which will be available at our June meeting.

During the upcoming Society year, we will be expanding our efforts to raise funds for the retaining wall at the Old Burying Grounds. It is estimated that we will need at least \$30,000 to build this wall - that's a low end estimate. We are in the process of

writing-up a grant from the State of New Jersey. In addition, we have an ambitious program we will be



**Figure 2:** Anne Kruger shows a Clara Eckerson quilt

working on over the ensuing months, involving the school children of Harrington Park, which we believe will be both beneficial for them and our Society. The program is in its infancy at this stage, but as we further develop this plan, we will keep you advised. There is plenty of opportunity here for you to help, especially if you enjoy working with children, and have a love of teaching. Believe it or not, we have more in the hopper too - I told you it was going to be an eventful year...

Right now, we have another opportunity available, and that is we would very much like to have a "jazzy," or "serious," or "knock your socks off" or all of those combined, mast head for this newsletter. If you are graphically creative, we need your help. Please call me, or speak with me at the meeting. The next time we go to print, we'd love to be sending out your design.

The town newsletter has our June 6th meeting time as 7:30 P.M., which is the correct time for the general meeting. However, Society members are invited to come at 7:00 P.M. to attend a business



meeting, at which time the "financials" of the Society will be presented to the membership. Questions and comments will follow.

Lastly, the Annual Members' Pot Luck Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, June 4th at 4:00 P.M. at George and Gerri Gibney's, 154 LaRoche Avenue. Your spouse, kids, or a friend are invited too! We'll supply beverages, hot dogs, hamburgers, and chicken. All you need to bring is your appetite and your favorite dish for a barbecue to add to the feast! This will be a true Pot Luck, so you don't need to let me know what you are bringing, however, please let me know by May 31st, if you are planning to attend (201 768-2615). Thanks!

Your faithful servant, Gerri Gibney

### Old Burying Ground Survey [Davis Ross 768-3621 - ross05@optonline.net]

About 91 years ago the first of the known inventories of the Old Burying Ground was completed. We call that the "DAR" inventory, named after the David Demarest Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, River Edge, NJ April 1957 typescript copy of "Inscriptions from Harrington Park Cemetery copied from Original Records made in 1914." The Rev. Edward Kelder of Englewood Cliffs copied the inscriptions of gravestones which already had been enumerated in 1910. The Rev. Kelder's copy of the inscriptions was the only printed attempt prior to the present to describe the headstones, as opposed to listing the names of the individuals.

In order to have a modern version of the DAR inventory we (**John Mager, Davis Ross, and Matthew Ross**) have instituted a comprehensive survey of the Old Burying Ground, conducted in March, April and May, 2005. We have completed the first phase of that survey in which we have photographed each head- and foot-stone; noted the type and color of stone used; measured its above ground dimensions; copied the legible inscriptions as they now appear; noted both decorative designs and irregularities of the stones' surfaces; determined the angles of lean from N-S and E-W planes (for stones that are still standing); determined

the distance from each headstone to its neighbors to the north, south, east, and west; and recorded its global position as indicated by a GPS receiver.

A comparison of the inscriptions as recorded in 1914 with those still readable by us in 2005 disclosed a few discrepancies. For the most part, the Rev. Kelder and the DAR's transcriber had been quite careful and accurate. Still, in at least one instance, we found one headstone whose inscription – albeit greatly eroded, had been missed. This was for Justin Henry Demarest, an infant who died in 1849. We found the hitherto unrecorded poignant inscription:

*"These ashes poor, this little dust  
Our Father's care shall keep  
Till the last angel rise and break,  
The long and dreary sleep."*

For the first time since beginning to work at the Old Burying Ground in 2003, we have done some shallow probing for subsurface remains of headstones and footstones. We have found several "stumps" of headstones which can be identified based on their relative position to extant headstones as listed in the 1914 survey. As a consequence we have identified the 2 headstone locations for the missing Revolutionary War veterans Harmin Blauvelt and Alexander A. Blauvelt. In addition



Figure 3 A surprising find "RFD"

while searching for 2 other missing stones listed in 1914, John Mager discovered a buried large fragment of one marked "RFD" that had not even been catalogued in the DAR

listing. That even the compilers of that list thought they might not have produced a complete account can be seen in rather poetical sentence from their

preface: *"It is said that in it [the Old Burying Ground] lie buried some of the unknown heroes of the War of the American Independence with no stone to give their name or to mark their last resting place, and only the sighing of the wind in the trees overhead, tell of their deeds."*

We have begun the second stage of the survey – continuing to probe for other missing head- and foot stones, constructing a computer database to record the results of the survey's 1<sup>st</sup> stage, and preparing schematic diagrams and maps of the site. If anyone is interested in joining that effort or would like to learn more about the process, please call or email Davis Ross.

### **Society By-Law Revision** [Davis Ross]

The Executive Committee has completed its study of the original by-laws of the Society and has prepared a revision for submission to members. We attach to this Newsletter a copy of the proposed revised by-laws. Because the original set – copies of which will be available for consultation at the June 6, 2005 and September 12, 2005 public meetings – did not specify how they might be amended, the Committee has decided to follow the procedure set out in the revision, viz: to circulate the changes not less than one month prior to the public meeting at which a vote might be conducted, which in this case would be September 12, 2005.

### **Archivists' Corner** [Ingeborg Nebel and Ethel Johnson]

In September we will have a new poster board exhibit at the Library. To remember the end of World War II (August 1945) there will be pages from the POST BUGLE, a publication of American Legion Harrington Park Post No. 30 to keep the "boys and girls" in the service informed of home town news. You will see letters written to the editors by the service personnel - very moving and sometime humorous - always with the common thread of how much they miss Harrington Park. We will keep you informed when the boards are on exhibit.



### **Members' Corner** [Lorraine Wolfangel-Hall 767-9027]

**New members** We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our newest members. Please add their names & addresses to your membership lists, and introduce yourselves at upcoming meetings and events:

**Jennifer P. Arbolino**, 3804 N. Hamilton Ave., Chicago, IL 60618-3918

**Greg & Susan Evanella family**, 216 Brook St (784-5752).

**Ellen King**, 5 Hazel Street (784-6310)

**Dr. Edward J. and Mrs. Ruth S. Zajkowski**, 393 Lynn Street

**Returning members:** Also thanks to **Gabriel Schaff & daughter Susan**, 55 Columbus Avenue, for renewing their support

**Deceased members:** We express our sympathy for the family and friends of members who have died during the 2004-2005 year: **Bill Durbec; Carol Jennings; and Marty Potter.**

**Cemetery donations:** The Society would like to acknowledge the generosity of members who



contributed to the fund for restoration of the Old Burying Grounds in the past year:

**Jennifer Arbolino; the Betancourt family; Carol & Dominic Carini; Greg & Susan Evanela; Paul Hoelscher; Ethel H. Johnson; Dennis Jones; the Kruger family; Regina Potter (in memory of Martin Potter); Lawrence & Mary Sunden; the Lola-Terranova family; and the Wolfangel & Hall family.** And, we thank nonmembers **Martin L. & Linda S. Wymbs** for their generous donation too.

**Marchers Sought for Memorial Day Parade:** Any and all members are encouraged to march in the Memorial Day parade behind the Historical Society's banner. Participants gather around 9:00



**Figure 5** Last year's "centennial" motif; this time it will be "1945"

AM in front of the Harrington Park school where the parade begins. This year's theme will be the 1940s, commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II. Feel free to dress in period costume (information for costumes, call Lorraine, 201-767-9027). Come and support our growing presence in the this important annual Borough event.

**Members Opinion-of-the-Month:** Is there a period of American history you'd like to hear about at one of our future meetings? Perhaps you would like to know more on a topic we've already covered? Maybe you, or someone you know, is a knowledgeable historian and would be willing to talk on a topic? Please relay your thoughts and suggestions to Gerri Gibney (768-2615) as soon as possible. Topics for the 2005-2006 lecture schedule are being planned right now.

**Honoring local Girl Scouts:** Two local Girl Scout troops were acknowledged at the May 2d meeting of the Society. Congratulations to Studio B-2 (formerly "Cadettes") Troop #789, led by **Chris Avillo & Mary Petillo**; the girls attended two meetings and researched town history as part of an effort to earn their Bronze Award. The 13-year olds (**Alexandra Avillo, Colette Biggie, Kelsey Dugan, Dana Errico, Heather Fuhrman, Caitlin Fullam, Min Jeung Kim, Ashley Lee, Juliana Luchkiw, Michelle Petillo, Caitlin Powers, Eileen Rooney, and Jillian Seroka**) wrote up data sheets – much of which related to town history – which were distributed at the Memorial Day Parade and later at the public library in 2004.

In addition, we commend five girls (Society member **Stephanie Hall**; and **Eileen Lee, Erin McHugh, Angela Muscariello, and Sara Orbe**) from Junior Girl Scout Troop #702 who attended a work session at the Old Burying Ground, which included a talk by Society secretary Davis Ross. The girls and one of the leaders spent time picking up debris at the site. The girls earned an hour of community service and the start to the "Local Lore" (History) badge. These 11-year olds, together with their former Scout leader **Barbara Muscariello**, and Troop #789 received Certificates of Commendation from the Society.

**Special thanks to volunteers:** Thanks especially to the many members (excluding Executive Committee members whose virtue is their only reward), who have donated time and energy during the 2004-2005 year on projects ranging from providing refreshments at the public meetings, working on display boards and other things with the Centennial Exhibition committee, helping with mailings, and working at the Old Burying Ground:

**Barbara Budinich, Paul Budinich, Stephanie Budinich, Clare Gorek, Gerard Gorek, Ann Hackett, Tom Hackett, Anne Kruger, John Mager, Sue McKaba, Silvia Papagian, Esther Ross**

**A friendly reminder:** Current memberships expire at the end of the summer, August 31<sup>st</sup>. Kindly mark a reminder on your calendars to renew your membership when the new year begins in September 2005. Thanks to all of you for your support and participation!

## **Serendipity at April 16th's HISTORY DAY by Caryl Block**

While we were going through the Community Church records Anne Kruger had brought in (part of the Clara Eckerson collection), I happened to be looking at the Cradle Roll cards (for children too

Please fill in the following form and return the card to

*Ruth Ward*  
*Harrington N.J.*

Baby's name *Henry Christian Block*  
Date of baby's birthday *Jan. 18th*  
How old *Eleven Months*  
Father's name *John F. Block*  
Mother's name *Katharine Block*  
Residence *Harrington Park New Jersey*

(See other side)

young for Sunday School) and I saw my dad's name facing me. Needless to say I was thrilled, because it was part of my history as well as the church's. Why

was it serendipitous? Because all the other cards had the child's information facing away from me. I later went through the cards and located my two uncles' and aunt's Cradle Roll registration cards as well.

### ***Upcoming Events***

**Saturday, May 21, 2005, 10-12:00 noon. Old Burying Ground Cleanup** [bring rake, work gloves. For info call Davis Ross 768-3621]

**Monday, May 30, 2005, Memorial Day Parade.** Come join the line of march behind the Society's banner. Assemble at school 9:00-9:15 AM

**Saturday, June 4, 2005, Annual Pot Luck** dinner at George & Gerri Gibney's, 154 LaRoche, 4:00 PM [Bring a dish of food enjoy the social occasion]

**Monday, June 6, 2005,, Quantmeyer Room, Library 7:00 PM Membership meeting followed by 7:30 PM "History of the New Jersey Historical Society and The Collections"**

#### ***Officers of the Society:***

**Gerri Gibney, President (768-2615)**  
**Regina Potter, Vice President (784-9628)**  
**Davis Ross, Secretary (768-3621)**  
**Bart Talamini, Treasurer (750-6408)**

#### ***Other Members of Executive Committee:***

**Andrea Betancourt, Fund Raising (750-3330)**  
**George Gibney, Public Relations (768-2615)**  
**Ethel H. Johnson, Archives (768-6357)**  
**Ingeborg Nebel, Archives (767-1521)**  
**Lorraine Wolfangel-Hall, Membership (767-9027)**