

BEN AVON AREA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

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Many people who ordered a copy of Dear Emsworth by Jim Knox added brief notes in their letters. The following are excerpts with local flavor. Some notes come from people who long ago moved away, yet the warm memories remain. Perhaps an old memory will come back to you as you read these. Send it to us if you like. These are lightly edited, so blame me for misspelling, etc.

Paul F. Troy wrote:

My parents, William F. Troy and Nellie Horne Folsom Troy had married in Lawrenceville in 1911. They lived in Ben Avon circa 1918-23 at 230 Park Avenue, where my first memories I recall. I was born 1916 in Montreal, Canada, where my father had been transferred from the American Bridge Company in Ambridge. He was a draftsman.

In 1923, my parents moved to Emsworth where they lived the rest of their lives. The move was influenced in part by my mother's uncle, Henry Folsom, a plumber by trade, who practiced in Emsworth and taught his craft to Mr. Boleky, who I remember.

I left Emsworth in 1936 when the Flood caused my loss of employment.

Jane Marsell Morgan wrote:

I was born in 1922 in Emsworth - Phil Marsell was my Dad. We lived in the same house at 320 Beaver Road (later 8320 Ohio River Boulevard) until 1967 when my Dad

passed. I got married to John Morgan in Avalon in 1944 and moved to Florida in 1953.

I remember walking to school each day and my sister, Ruth, was in Jim's (Knox) class and Jean was in mine. I have so many memories. The Foresbergs lived in Emsworth and we swam in their pool. Martha Bright lived close and the Doerrs, Hazeltines and Cooks also lived in Emsworth. We all went to Avonworth and Jim went to Bellevue H.S. If we could only go back to the innocence of those days. We didn't lock our doors. We do now. My Mom had a girl from the orphanage help us. Jimmy Johnson used to hold the tardy bell for my arrival at school.

From Diane C. Lawson:

I grew up in Emsworth [and] remember Mr. Knox from church. Muckle family. My mother who lived in Emsworth for over 30 years is looking forward to the book.

From Helen Gill & George Prentice:

We are Helen Gill & George Prentice, both born in Avalon. We both knew Jim Knox. I personally knew Jim all my life and his father, mother & sisters. My father John Gill came [from Ireland] to America with Jim's dad, and that goes back many, many years! My father was the street car motorman for many years and also lived on Eicher Road when he re-married after my mother's passing.

My husband and I have lived in Florida for the past 16 years, but still hold tight ties to Pittsburgh. I'm so sorry to hear of Jim's passing.

Barbara Crawford wrote:

My father's family, Hattman and Fuchs, were from this area. We have an extensive genealogical family tree if [anyone] is interested. My father passed away on February 19, [2002] at 75. He had a soft spot in his heart for Emsworth even though he and his family moved from there to Honolulu in 1941.

From Beverly G. Leonard:

I have not lived in Emsworth since 1952, but after reading the article in the Post Gazette it sure brought back the memories.

James P. Ransford wrote:

My mother was Dorothy Porter Ransford, daughter of Louse K. Porter and Sarah A. Ballard Porter.

From Bob Seelhorst:

I was born in Emsworth in 1925. I grew up there and graduated from Avonworth High School in 1943 after my neighbor, Jo Ellen Loop named the district.

I am still in touch with Larry Hazeltine.

My Dad, H. Charles Seelhorst was the chief air raid warden for Emsworth during World War II. I was a messenger boy. Many memories.

Say hello to Jean Ackerman for me. She lives in my grandmother's house on Greenwood Avenue.

From Craig D. Ballick:

My grandparents - Harry and Virginia Hill - lived at 2 Ohio Street for about 40 years, until 1966. That is where my mother grew up.

Carol White Stirr wrote:

I am so pleased that Jim wrote about Emsworth. Although it was in the middle of the depression when we lived there, I had a wonderful childhood in that little town and remember it with much fondness. I graduated in 1935.

I lived in Emsworth on Locust Street from 1929 to 1938. [I am] the daughter of Arnold and Ethel White and sister of Janet White (Buckley).

From V. Jean (Yohe) Jewell:

[Learned about Dear Emsworth] from a longtime friend, Carol Stirr. We were neighbors, growing up in Emsworth and my father was Ray Yohe, the Scoutmaster while Jim Knox was in the scouts. I can't wait to read about it all.

From Betty H. Stecklein:

My mother's maiden name was Donaldson and she lived in Emsworth in the late 1890s and I lived there 1950-1972.

Gerrie Vierheller wrote:

My mother and Aunt, who this is for, lived there with their family names Summers. They lived near a family named Winters. My Grandmother not only raised seven children, but also took care of 38 foster children in her lifetime. She was Josephine Summers. I know my Aunt will like the book!

Helen Grant Embersits wrote:

I'm sending all historical information to London to my grandchildren. Thank you for your efforts. My family lived on Superior St. Emsworth. My brothers went to school with Jim [Knox]. Had one of the first tennis courts – single and double. Free playing for everyone.

The letters remind us that local history and genealogy are closely related. Some of our local members are active in the Western PA Genealogical Society and we share information and pass on requests for help.

The following was sent with a request for information on Birth of the LST also by Jim Knox. Copies of this book can be obtained by contacting PA LST Association [Mary Pat Rickard] at (724) 573-0529

From Julie Geiser Keirney:

My father took a picture of LST 751 sponsored by Allegheny County as she was launched and my husband was in the convoy in the Pacific when she was hit. They took survivors aboard LST 623 after the Captain abandoned ship. They had to go back and torpedo her to sink her as they were underway in an invasion. The Captain (and officers, I think) was court martialed.

EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

Last year we started to implement a landscape plan donated by Ed Werley. Work continues this year. Plus we have added to the work list: reconstruction of the retaining wall behind the log house (Forest Avenue), application of a preservative treatment to the logs, and replacement of the entry steps.

The preservation and improvement work and the purchase of larger trees and

more shrubs for the landscape plan is supported by a \$5,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We appreciate the support of Dave Mayernik and his staff who identified which program was suitable, urged us to make the necessary application and then watched over the paperwork through the proper channels of the state bureaucracy. As local members are aware, Dave's tenure as a state representative ends this year based on a redistricting plan that leaves him as an "odd man out."

When the work is complete we will place a plaque on a boulder in the yard as a memorial to Gladys Phillips. While many people pitched in with time and money, Gladys was the force majeure in the 1984 effort to save the log house and establish our Ben Avon Area Historical Association. She authored the Centennial History of Ben Avon in 1992 which is still available for \$8.00.

Antique Show & Tell

Most everyone who came to our meeting May 22, 2002 learned something new or refreshed an old memory. The meeting announcement asked attendees to bring any odd or unusual antique so others could guess what it was. We also shared old photographs and stories of local families or properties.

Items included trivets for roasting meat that at first glance looked like basement floor drain covers, fold out cleats for walking on frozen ponds to ice fish, an "iron in a box" and a tiny glue pot.

Perhaps you scratch your head at that description. The event was more fun than can be easily described with my poor talents. We hope to do it again in 2003. See for yourself. Start thinking of what you can bring to amaze, or confuse, the crowd!

Memberships and Contributions

Please Join Us!

March, 2002 through June 2002

Jean Ackerman	Emsworth
Mrs. D. J. Buckley	Wichita KS
Charles & Sally Davis	Ben Avon
Helen Grant Embersits	North Branford CT
J. R. Hamilton	Kilbuck
Henry & Nell Herchenroether	Ben Avon
Brian Jensen	Ben Avon
Thomas Phillips	Ben Avon
B. J. Robertson	Emsworth
Robert C. Seelhorst	Indiana PA
Lawrence W. Snively	Rockville MD
Ruth W. Stevens	Avalon
Carol W. Stirr	Clearwater FL
Paul F. Troy	Oceanside CA

Ben Avon Historical Association c/o 136 Dickson Avenue, Ben Avon PA 15202			
Name:			
Address:			
Boro/Township			
Phone:			
Membership:	Family \$10	Indiv. \$5	Other
I would be interested in helping with:			
Articles for Newsletter			
Short Projects or Jobs			
Log House Maintenance			
Publicity			

We appreciate the support of all who make contributions in excess of their membership fee.

Archive Donations

Trudy File

Single Tree

Ben Avon Area Historical Association
c/o 136 Dickson Avenue
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Pittsburgh, PA 15202

