

# BEN AVON AREA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXIV - Number 1 August, 2008



**Save This Date**  
**Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>**  
**Hometown Antiques Road-show**

Bob Lanza and Joyce Kuruce of Antiques and Uniques in Bellevue will lead a discussion about items brought to the meeting by the audience. Each guest will present their item, tell what they know about it (history, significance, value) and then Bob or Joyce will add a couple of minutes of expert appraisal comments.

We will meet from 1 to 4 Sunday afternoon at the Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon. Three hours can cover a lot, but obviously limits are necessary. The rules are:

- One item per guest (a couple may bring two)
- Pre-register by calling 412-364-1123
- Item must be at least 50 years old
- Item must be handled by one person
- NO children

These shows are usually popular so pick an item and call to get a number. We will go in order just like the bakery.

### **Cowboys on Perrysville Avenue** by Diana Hartman

Hill by the River (Ben Avon) has a special meaning when you live ON the hill. Ask anyone near or above Perrysville on a snowy day. Ask my friends that huff and puff their way up our

driveway. Ask my father who thought our house was fine for a "starter home" but, twenty years later, is still waiting for us to purchase a "real house" on flat land. There is something special about looking down onto Ben Avon early on a spring morning. For all its faults, we love our hill.

When you invest your life savings into the down payment of your house, it is hard not to claim the house as yours and yours alone. But, as we were reminded in the summer of 2002, we are but caretakers of property that had been beloved by many for many years prior.

It began with a letter, a letter from Sewickley. Louise Yeiser of that borough to the north, wrote us after a trip she took to the John Heinz History Center. Louise was trying to locate the Ben Avon home of her great grandfather, Howard Payson Joslin. She found it; thereby finding us. The Joslin name was not unfamiliar to us. Several years before, in a labor of love, my mother-in-law, Lois Hartman researched the historical records of our home. The list of owners, beginning in 1800's, reads:

Ruff  
Fortune  
Waddington  
**Joslin**  
McClelland  
Davidson  
Hartman

There it is, right in the middle. A family name from Louise's history: Joslin.

Louise had an aunt, Jane Kaiser, who as a child had frequently visited her Joslin grandparents at their Ben Avon home. In the summer of 2002, Jane was living in St. Louis and came to Pittsburgh to visit Louise. Together they came to our house in Ben Avon and brought with them some amazing stories and photos of our house. Because of their family's diligence, we now have photos of our home from the early 1900's. Among the stories: Cowboy Howard Payson Joslin (photo).



*my partner buying and taking care of cattle; in the spring of 1878 we crossed the Blue Mountains North to Pendleton, bought horses at the Umatilla reservation near Pendleton, and completing the purchase of our herd from ranchmen along the Columbia river, crossed the mountains back to Grande Ronde Valley, picked up the portion of the herd that wintered there, and took up the six months trail for Cheyenne, following up the west bank of Snake River, crossing the herd over the Green River and through the South Pass, Rocky mtns, through Shirley Basin, down the Sweetwater River, across Laramie prairie to Cheyenne. We had a grub wagon about 60 horses and some 10 cowboys, most of whom were picked up in Grande Ronde Valley."*

Howard Joslin owned our home from 1906 until his death in 1936. Prior to settling in Ben Avon, HP (as Louise refers to him), drove cattle across the Oregon Trail. According to his granddaughter, Jane, he was the first to drive cattle across the Trail. Excerpted from his diary,

*"The winter of 1877-8 I spent in Grande Ronde Valley, North Eastern Oregon, with*

In addition to being a cowboy, HP was an avid and famous florist. After he planted himself in Ben Avon, he planted daffodils all over our piece of hill by the river. They still come up. Every year. Lots of them.

We also acquired photos of the Joslin family taken on the front porch of our (well, their) home 100 years



Top: Josh Thomas, Andrew Haller, Thad Morris, Thomas Sharpe, Mark Hartman, Ben Herchenroether, Max Angell  
Middle: RJ White, Matt Haider  
Bottom: Leigh Hartman, Becki Lasher, Jon Hartman

ago. So I looked around for photos we had taken on our front porch and I found a special one taken 12 years ago at my son's 6th birthday party. If you look closely you'll see some recent 2008 Avonworth graduates:

Thomas Sharpe, Mark Hartman, Ben Herchenroether, Max Angell and Matt Haider. Ben Avon cowboys in their own right - ready to blaze their own trails.

Jane Kaiser has since passed away, but not before generously sharing her Joslin photos and memories. Louise still lives in Sewickley and has many more memories to share. You can go to <http://sneakpeeks.typepad.com> to check out her stories.

I can't help but wonder of this house of ours on the hill (of which we are merely caretakers), who will be sitting on the steps 100 years from now and what will be their Oregon Trail?

### **Annual Report**

from  
Dick Herchenroether

Here we are at the end of another year or BAAHA. Our new office on Camp Home Road continues to be more organized. Look for an open house before another year goes by.

The success of BAAHA depends volunteers who give their time in monthly meetings and on projects and also those of you who send money. Board members are:

Jean Henderson, Vice President  
Trudy File, Secretary  
Darlene Phillips, Archivist  
Tracy Ferguson  
Ken Jaros  
Bob Kiser  
B. J. Robertson

The web pages are a joint effort of Jeff Cieslak and Lloyd Corder. I am often surprised at the impact of the web. Take advantage of their work at <http://benavon.com/BAAHA> and don't forget the newest tech aid is the addition of email [baaha@benavon.org](mailto:baaha@benavon.org) which many of you have used to order books or ask questions. When we hear from you it is always a nice surprise.

Our June, 2008 financial position improved over the 12 months since June, 2007 even with the full year of rent expense. Note also an expenditure of \$3,250 for an awning at our new office. We purchased this to be cooperative with the building design theme but we also hope it will draw the attention of local citizens to our existence. It fits with our mission to promote interest in local history.

But the best part is a supporter contributed the entire cost. We agreed to the stipulation not to name the contributor but we have privately expressed our appreciation. I think it is fair to say thank you on behalf of all of you as well.

### **A Note on Naming AVONWORTH**

I received the [March] newsletter and wanted to make a comment.

The Avonworth name was created by Jo Ellen Loop, my neighbor on North Avenue in Emsworth. She won an award for inventing the name which we (all students) were allowed to suggest. I remember it very well. Just a note to refresh memories.

I lived on North Avenue until I graduated in 1943 and went into the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division in WWII.

Robert (Bob) Seelhorst, Indiana, PA

*Thanks for writing, Bob! Part of our role is to clear up our faulty memories. Ed.*

## Financial Report

Ben Avon Area Historical Association  
July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008

### INCOME/EXPENSE

#### INCOME

Checking Interest	\$ 62.17
Certificate Interest	337.03
Mailing list dues	1,140.00
Donations	10,728.00
Items for sale	<u>315.00</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>\$12,582.20</u></b>

#### EXPENSES

Postage and supplies	\$ 191.00
Rent	3,600.00
Awning purchase	3,250.00
Maintenance	0.00
Electric service	100.00
Publishing	212.00
Program/Education	70.00
Preservation	750.00
Property Insurance	<u>560.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b><u>\$8,733.00</u></b>

**NET INCREASE**     **\$ 3,849.20**

#### BALANCE SHEET

	<u>6/30/2007</u>	<u>6/30/2008</u>
Cash	\$127.00	\$127.00
Checking	4,872.93	8,385.10
CD	<u>7,649.77</u>	<u>7,986.80</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$12,649.70</u></b>	<b><u>\$16,498.90</u></b>

Note: Balances include \$3,225 from the 1992 Ben Avon Centennial Committee surplus.

Dick Herchenroether, President & Treasurer

## Donor Clubs

Founding Members based on contributions in the  
Feb., 2007 through June, 2008 period.

### Benefactors

Lynn Evans  
Trudy File  
Mary Ann & Ed Graf  
HJ Heinz Foundation  
Dick & Sue Herchenroether

### Patrons

Dave & Mary Chalmers  
Brian Jensen  
Betty Jane Robertson

### Subscribers

Jane & John Angelini  
Jim & Bonnie Bass  
Richard D Batchelor  
Janet White Buckley  
Jean Clem  
Lloyd & Patty Corder  
Mary Ellen & Dave Davisson  
Kathleen Elder  
Tracy & Jack Ferguson  
Marie Hamilton  
Bernadette & Herb Hartle  
Dan & Wendy Herchenroether  
Henry & Nell Herchenroether  
Peter & Susan Herchenroether  
Harvey & Barbara Hinch  
Martha B Huddy  
Ken & Karen Jaros  
Bill & Mildred Johnston  
James D Little  
Gene L McBride  
Frank & Rose Meacci  
Bill & Barb Millar  
Jack & Penny Nieri  
June Byrne Paclawski  
Thomas Phillips  
John & Lou Seifarth  
Marjorie T Simonds  
Mary Witul  
Jane & Bob Winter  
Mary & Al Zamba

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

## **Emsworth Ramblings**

by Kathy Donovan

*Kathy recently did an oral history interview. She also shared some memories she typed up for her family. The following are selections about her life in Emsworth. I think her thoughts are a nice contrast to those of Ralph Stroyne in our March issue. – Ed.*

When I was born in April of 1934, my parents lived in a small apartment on 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Lawrenceville. We moved several times in the next few years. I remember living in an apartment on Mintwood Street. We had a kitchen, a living room-bedroom, and we shared the bathroom with the other tenants. Then we lived on Penn Avenue, in a spot which is now a gas station. We then moved to 45<sup>th</sup> Street down the hill from St. Mary's School, which I later attended.

We moved to Emsworth, over the Easter break, in March of 1942, Jim and Tom were still small. We all loved it out here "in the country." We were the City Mice who came to live with our Country Cousins. Everything about it was nice. We had a bigger house, HOUSE, no apartment. We also had a big yard. It was like being on a 200 acre farm, after the postage stamp yard we had in Lawrenceville. The house really belonged to two of our aunts, my Dad's sisters. When they bought it, Aunt Elma worked for the phone company, in Bellevue. Aunt Myrtle worked downtown in a department store. Unfortunately, four months after they bought the house, Aunt Myrtle had a massive stroke, at work, and died. That left Aunt Elma to fend for herself, with the kids. Mom and Dad talked things over with Aunt Elma and decided that they would take over part ownership, to help her, so she wouldn't lose the house.

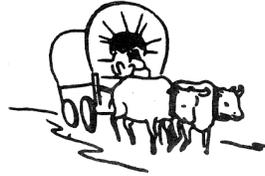
During WWII, we collected newspapers and tin cans for the war effort. I remember going around the neighborhood with a wagon, gathering newspapers and cans and taking them to the collection area; I think it was the Borough Hall. All of us friends would try to out-do each other; see who could collect the most. There was no prize, we just liked to tease each other.

I used to baby-sit for our neighbors, the Knoers. They moved next to us when I was 12. They had a little girl, Barbie, and were expecting their second when they became our neighbors. I always loved kids, so I became their sitter. In all, they had nine children, six of them were girls, who were all born before they had three boys. When girl number four, Margie, came along, I was asked to be her Godmother. I was a senior in high school at the time. That was a real honor for me since I was only 17.

When I started at Sacred Heart, I was in second grade, and there were two grades in one room. I got to know practically everyone in the whole school, because there were probably only about 100 kids, from start to finish. Sister would teach one class while the other class "studied." Then, it would reverse.

During my high school years, I worked at Latshaw's Drug Store. That was fun. I liked making sodas and sundaes. Sometimes, we would have to deliver prescriptions to customers. Mr. Latshaw always let us make ourselves a Coke or a cone when we were done working before we went home. If he wasn't there, Mrs. Latshaw would come out (they lived behind the store) and make sure we only made small Cokes or cones, and not a drop over what she thought it should be (she measured them).

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



**Renewing Members – THANK YOU!**

Robert Seelhorst	Indiana PA
Beatrice Stefan	Kilbuck
Evelyn Myers Wilcox	BA
Ed & Jan Steinhauser	BA
Dave & Dee Young	Kilbuck
Helen J Calhoun	BA
Paula Templeton	BA
William B Sample	Georgetown TX
Fred & Gloria Karn	Ohio Twp
Renee Miskimmin	BA
Eleanor Schaffner-Mosh	Greensboro NC
George & Roberta Maruschock	BA
Norma Sappie Grooms	Lavale MD
Bill & Nancy Trondle	BA
Al & Mary Zamba	BAH
Janet White Buckley	Wichita KS

A special thank you to those who provided this issues' content. Without something to print we have nothing to send.

<b>Ben Avon Area Historical Association</b> c/o 136 Dickson Avenue, Ben Avon, PA 15202	
Name:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Local Municipality:	
Phone:	
Email address:	
Members (\$10/\$20)	Subscribers (from \$50)
Patrons (from \$200)	Benefactors (\$500+)

The month/year on your mailing label indicates the last time we received a contribution from you.  
 Thank you for supporting BAAHA