



# The New Town Crier

Official Newsletter of the Historical Society of Bloomfield



BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY 07003

October 2013

## SAVE THE DATE

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

### **BLOOMFIELD CIVIC CENTER**

84 Broad Street,  
Bloomfield, NJ

**8:00 PM**

### **The History of the Ampere Parkway Area of Bloomfield**

**Presented by former Bloomfield  
Mayor Ralph G. Conte**

Delve into the past of Bloomfield's South End with former Bloomfield Mayor Ralph G. Conte. Using vintage maps and photos, the presentation will explore this fascinating neighborhood from the perspective of an Ampere Parkway native. Mr. Conte served as mayor from 1963–1965. He grew up in the Ampere Parkway section of town, attended Carteret school, South Junior High, Bloomfield High School (Class of 1947), Seton Hall University and Fordham University School of Law.



## **HSOB newsletter wins prestigious prize**

The HSOB is proud to announce it was recently awarded a Kevin M. Hale Publication Award from The League of Historical Societies of New Jersey for our newsletter, "The New Town Crier." HSOB President Jean Kuras was on hand to accept the award at The League's meeting this summer. The winning edition of the newsletter was a special retrospective edition that featured celebratory activities organized for Bloomfield's Centennial (1912), Sesquicentennial (1962) and Bicentennial (2012).



*December 19, 1945 finds Public Service Railway 2654 eastbound at Ampere Parkway and Bloomfield Avenue. Photo credit: P. Stingham Photo - Frank Miklos Collection. Destinations: the Newsletter of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society, June 2000, Vol 15, No. 1*



## **Morris Canal Hike through Bloomfield**

The November Morris Canal hike is fully booked. If you would like to get on the waiting list or be notified of future hikes, email [morriscanal@gmail.com](mailto:morriscanal@gmail.com).

We are planning another hike for the Spring. The excursion consists of three miles of walking, with a bus ride back to Wright's Field. Cost is \$2, which includes maps and photos. Visit [www.hsob.org](http://www.hsob.org) for more information.

# HALLOWEEN COMES TO BROOKSIDE SCHOOL



*Brookside School 1st Grade Class Halloween Picture, circa 1933.*  
Photo courtesy of John Weidle.

Even in the depths of The Great Depression, Brookside Elementary School (which has since been converted into Brookside Manor Apartments) didn't stint on Halloween fun and class photos.

One can presume that costume ideas were inspired by popular radio programs and the Saturday morning serials kids would be watching in movie theaters (50¢ to spend virtually the whole day in the cinema!) Such short films back then included Clancy of the Mounted, Fighting with Kit Carson, Gordon of Ghost City, The Mystery Squadron, The Perils of Pauline, The Phantom of the Air, Chandu the Magician, Tarzan the Fearless (with Buster Crabbe), The Three Musketeers, The Whispering Shadow (with Bela Lugosi), The Wolf Dog (with Rin Tin Tin), Pirate Treasure and The Red Rider (with Buck Jones). Although Frankenstein was released in 1931, none of the kids seemed to have emulated that particular look.



Pennsylvania native John Weidle writes, "The girl in the middle of the front row of the first grade photo wearing the wizard(?) costume was my mother Patricia Fornoff. She is also in the second grade photo, front row, second child from the right."

Please drop us a line at [HSOB1812@gmail.com](mailto:HSOB1812@gmail.com) if you can identify any of the other children in these photos.







*Brookside School 2nd Grade Class Halloween Picture, circa 1934. Photo courtesy of John Weidle.*



## ***Beloved Board member passes away...***



HSOB Past President and Trustee Mr. Richard West, better known as Dick, passed away on July 25, 2013 at the age of 81. Born on March 31, 1932, West proudly identified himself as a lifelong resident of, and advocate for, his hometown of Bloomfield.

West graduated from Bloomfield High School and Rutgers University. He taught U.S. History from 1956 to 1992 at Passaic Valley High School in Little Falls, N.J. and received numerous grants, certificates, awards and acknowledgments from the state, county and local educational organizations, including two grants from the N.J. State Dept. for innovative teaching.

West served Bloomfield as an elected Town Councilman-at-large from 1965-67. He was also elected to four consecutive terms as a member of the Bloomfield Board of Education from 1975 to 1987, serving as Board President from 1986-87. He served as a longtime member of the Bloomfield Democratic County Committee as well as Town Chair. During his tenure in public office, West was an outspoken advocate of various causes including adult education, a municipal swimming pool, library expansion, school redistricting and curriculum expansion involving mathematics, science and computer science. Besides the HSOB, West served in leadership positions in several local civic organizations, including as Trustee of the Bloomfield Public Library, member of the Board of Directors of the Bloomfield Adult School and Director of the Bloomfield Senior Citizens Association. He was also President of the Bloomfield AARP, Troop and Scout Master of Troop #25, a lector at St Valentine's Church and a member of the Knights of Columbus. West is survived by his wife, Jean; his three children, Richard West Jr., Robert West and Debra Abrams; and his grandchildren Megan and Matthew.

### ***From the President~***

*The Historical Society learned with great regret and sadness of the passing away of Dick West this summer. How we admired and valued Dick's work on the Board for so many years! When Dick's notable, distinctive voice called out, "Madame President!" I think I sat up a little straighter. With his wealth of information and a twinkle in his eye, Dick contributed so much to the Society's work and welfare. He will be greatly missed.—Jean Kuras*



*General Joseph Bloomfield*

### **THE NEW TOWN CRIER**

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF BLOOMFIELD

90 Broad Street  
Bloomfield, NJ 07003  
Tel: 973-743-8844  
E-mail: [info@hsob.org](mailto:info@hsob.org)  
[www.hsob.org](http://www.hsob.org)

#### **OFFICERS**

Jean Kuras, President  
Joseph Barry, Vice President/  
Program  
Mary Shoffner, Corresponding  
Secretary/Hospitality  
Anne Carlino, Recording Secretary  
Emma-Lou Czarnecki, Treasurer/  
Membership  
Dorothy Johnson, Museum Curator

#### **TRUSTEES**

Ava Caridad  
Richard Rockwell  
Mary Shoffner  
Richard West †

#### **PAST PRESIDENT**

Ina Campbell

#### **NEWSLETTER STAFF**

Ava Caridad, Editor  
Nicholas D'Angelo, Layout  
Richard Rockwell, Assistant Editor/  
Photo Digitizing

### ***The Welcome Mat***

A cordial welcome is extended to the following new members of The Historical Society of Bloomfield. We hope to see you at our next meeting:

Bill & Cindy Hergenhan  
*Bloomfield*

Donald Marshall  
*Bloomfield*

Susan Ketner  
*Salisbury, NC*

Virginia Richert  
*Bloomfield*

### **Leave a gift for your great, great grandkids...**

Essex County residents over the age of 65 can tell their life stories on video—a gift to younger generations of family members and friends.

Bloomfield resident Gene Nichols, a retired public relations professional and journalist, is offering “Life Story Cam” videos as a free community service. The 15-minute videos are a way to keep alive the memory of valued elders.

All videos will be shot in the Bloomfield Public Library board room. Nichols will provide a list of advance questions designed to draw out the subject’s personal history. Subjects are encouraged to bring photographs, which Nichols will scan on the spot and mix with interview footage.

Ninety minutes of video will be edited down to 15 minutes. Nichols will upload the video to the internet and give each subject a free DVD copy. For more information, call Nichols at 347-560-8056, e-mail him at [lifestorycam@gmail.com](mailto:lifestorycam@gmail.com) or visit [www.lifestorycam.com](http://www.lifestorycam.com).



### **Under Glass: A Victorian Obsession**

Experience an in depth exploration of a unique segment of the Victorian decorative arts. Glass domes and the objects displayed under them are revealed and discussed in detail: seashells; wax flowers and fruit; art formed of human hair; skeleton leaves and phantom bouquets; wool work; glass whimsies; seed, paper, muslin and silk work; automata—mechanical, musical masterworks— and much more. Social commentary of the times enriches the exploration of these beautiful art objects created from 1837 to 1901 and preserved under these domes. John Whitenight presents. October 21, 2013 at 8:00pm, 82 Union St., Montclair, NJ. Presented by The Northern NJ Chapter of The Victorian Society in America. Free for NNJVSA members, \$5 for non-members.

### **Take An Up-close Journey into Bloomfield’s Past**



Visit The HSOB Museum! Dedicated to the culture, people and history of Bloomfield, the HSOB Museum’s collection consists of furniture, clothing & accessories, tools, household articles, paintings, toys, posters, memorabilia, dioramas, maps, newspapers, postcards, letters, deeds, documents, books and much more! Located on the 3rd

floor of the Children’s Library at 90 Broad Street, hours are Wed. 2:00pm–4:30pm, Sat. 10:00am–12:30pm and by appointment. PH: (973) 743-8844.