



**MARS AREA
HISTORY & LANDMARKS SOCIETY
(MAHLS)**



December 15, 2017

2017 News, Information, and Opportunities

Important Notice! The MAHLS annual membership banquet is scheduled for 6:00 PM, Wednesday, **January 10, 2018**, \$22.00 / person, at Luciano's Restaurant. Please RSVP to Chris Clutter at 724- 625-1115, or email her at cclutter@duganandassociates.com. Each person is asked to bring a re-gift, to gamble for another re-gift, by playing a card game. 2018 MAHLS dues may be paid at the banquet, or sent to our Mars mailing address.

Hello **MAHLS** Members and Friends:

"This place is s gem!" "There's nothing like this place anywhere around here!" "This was the best birthday ever!". Those were just a few of comments overheard this Summer Season from visitors to our MAHLS campus.

As usual, our group of dedicated volunteers outdid themselves in keeping the entire campus humming and beautiful.

So many first timers came to see us this Season, for the most part, recommended by folks to whom they had talked that had already been here and enjoyed their experience.

And the Support by the local MOM's Clubs was also outstanding. Many of them came, rode the train, walked around the campus, and then enjoyed a picnic lunch in our Pavilion. Thanks very much for your support ladies, as well as the many Dad's and Grandparents who came as well this Summer.

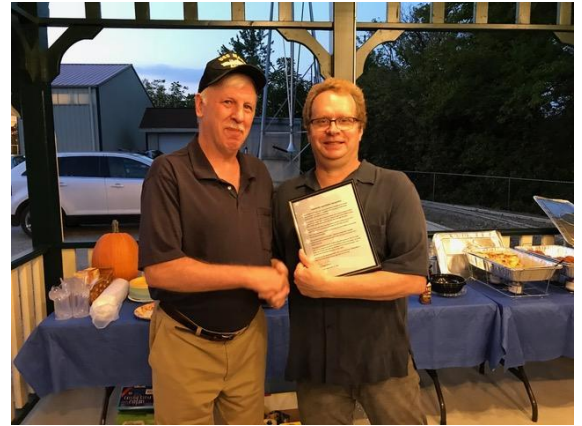
We hosted birthday parties, had visitors from many areas of the US, and we had a beautiful, rain-free, very well attended Mars Applefest Day!

This 2017 Season, was the debut year of our beautiful new **Pavilion**.



The **Pavilion** has become an attraction by itself, with its late 1800s architecture and colors, to match our train station, as well as finishing touches of a Mars street-sourced yellow brick walkway around the building, with clock on top. A true gem....all done by our MAHLS volunteers.

The **Pavilion's** main use is to serve as the loading depot for the **Mars Shortline Railroad**, however it also serves as a meeting and lunch point, as well a party facility. In September, we had a wonderful MAHLS family dinner and dedication of the **Swaney Station Pavilion**. The food, catered by Breakneck Tavern, was fantastic. Mars Mayor Hartung presented an award to MAHLS. Then President John Watson officially dedicated the Pavilion to Bill Swaney, who cut the dedication ribbon, and then "hung" on to it.



Nothing escapes the attention to detail of our volunteers. Hard working volunteer, Bob Jackson, constructed a very unique display in the Station, honoring Mars resident Clyde Penny. He also constructed Mars themed "then and now", framed pictures on the **Watson John** walls. It isn't every museum that can boast fine, handcrafted displays even in the bathroom.



NOW WE MUST PAUSE FOR A BRIEF COMMERCIAL:

Donations to MAHLS:

We THANK YOU for all the generous donations in 2017!

As always, **any and all donations are appreciated**...time, historical items from long-time residents, or financial. Donated items and financial contributions are tax deductible. Thanks so much for your donations this year.

The MAHLS Website and Facebook pages :

Our website and Facebook pages continue to be popular references for people to keep up with goings on at **MAHLS**. Charles Norton and Jeff Campbell do a great job of keeping these social media sites up to date. Check them out at: **Website:** marshistory.org **Facebook page:** www.facebook.com/marshistory

Being a member of MAHLS has many rewards!

As you can see from reading this Newsletter, the **Society** continues to be extremely fortunate to have hard working volunteers from a wide range of skills.

If you are reading this, and not a member, please consider joining MAHLS. No matter what your skill level or interest, there are many rewarding opportunities available at MAHLS...and of course you haven't lived until you've sampled Judy Ellis's baked goods at 10:30AM break-time every Friday. If you would like to join MAHLS, please contact our president, John Watson (724-272-9588), to discuss what arrangements might be suitable for you.

SO HOW DOES A SMALL TOWN LIKE MARS, PA. GET SUCH AN OUTSTANDING HISTORICAL ATTRACTION?

It all started with a vision a small group of local citizens had for preserving local history.

In the late 1970s, this group of Mars citizens who placed a high value on preserving the history of the Mars area, were becoming alarmed that historical items and documents were being lost forever.

So in 1980 this small founding group, consisting of Bill Swaney, George Lazzo, Lester Kennedy, Paul Forsythe, with John Walters as Counsel, formed the Mars Area History and Landmarks Society.

As luck would have it, just about the same time, the Mars School District was remodeling the old Mars High School, and moving its offices from an adjacent building (still standing on Grand Ave., across from the current Mars Post Office), to an office on Brickyard Rd.

Thanks to the efforts of the School Superintendent at that time, Dr. Rago, the new MAHLS was given the opportunity to rent that building and make it their headquarters and museum. Now, Mars history could be preserved at a central location, and area citizens had a place that they knew would take their cherished momentos and protect them forever.

Of course, also helping its growth was the fact that one of the MAHLS founders, Bill Swaney, also held positions in the Mars Volunteer Fire Dept. and the Mars Borough Council over the years.

It turned out there was a huge interest in the Mars area for preserving history, because when MAHLS was incorporated in 1982 there were almost 40 members. In addition to founders Bill Swaney and George Lazzo, one of those families joining MAHLS at that time, Chris and John Clutter, are still very active in MAHLS, with Chris serving as our MAHLS Secretary.



THE MARS AREA HISTORY AND LANDMARKS SOCIETY is a new, non-profit organization formed to preserve and display any material and information which may help establish or illustrate the history of the Mars Area. Our future museum site will be an asset in this endeavor. Membership is open to any person, not necessarily a resident of the Mars Area, who is interested in history and the preservation of our local landmarks.

If you are interested in joining us, please mail the form below.

Initiation Fee \$5.00
Annual Membership Dues \$12.00

Your annual membership is tax deductible. Make check payable to THE MARS AREA HISTORY AND LANDMARKS SOCIETY.

THE MARS AREA HISTORY AND LANDMARKS SOCIETY
Mars Professional Building
c/o Treasurer
Mars, Pennsylvania 16046

The MAHLS maintained their office and museum at Grand Ave. until the early 2000s, when it moved to its current location on Brickyard Rd.

THE MAHLS IS FORTUNATE TO HAVE TWO OF ITS FOUNDING MEMBERS STILL INVOLVED IN THE OPERATION OF THE SOCIETY

Very few 37 year old organizations can boast that not only one, but two of their founding members are still contributing to the operation of their organization. We are very fortunate to be able to rely on their skills and experience to guide our organization.

MAHLS Founding Member and Curator, Bill Swaney:

Bill grew up with a love for model Trains, Planes, and Automobiles. Moving from his boyhood home in West View, Pa., to Wexford, and finally to Mars in 1958, Bill stayed true to his early interests...Automobiles.

Graduating from high school in 1957, Bill immediately became immersed in the automotive profession. Following a two year stint in the US ARMY in 1956, as well as his marriage to his lovely and understanding wife Mary Lou, he began to build a reputation as a very knowledgeable and skilled mechanical / electrical technician in automotive repair technology.

Bill has owned and operated several businesses in the Mars area dedicated to automotive repair technology, and still plies his trade at his shop on the Mars-Evans City Rd. He is one of the most sought after experts in early to current automotive technology in the Pittsburgh area. One of his specialties is automatic transmissions. People come from near and far to have him diagnose and solve their transmission problems.

Fortunately for MAHLS, Bill also developed a strong desire to preserve history. Many of the artifacts found at MAHLS have been accumulated by, and donated to MAHLS, by Bill. He was also instrumental in obtaining and relocating the B&O Caboose to its present location adjacent to the MAHLS campus.

MAHLS Founding Member and long-time Vice President, George Lazzo :

From his early years growing up in Braddock Hills, George was surrounded by history. On the site of his High School there was a French and Indian War battle. At the request of one of his teachers, he designed and built a monument to honor that battle. His interests were in history as a young person.

After graduating High School in 1956, George learned a lot about mechanics and farming when he worked in landscaping and at an uncle's farm in Saxonburg, Pa.

The year 1959 was a big year for George....he enlisted in the Army, and got married. In the Army, his specialty was helicopter maintenance, which took he and his young family on a two year stint in Germany....where enjoyed learning about the history of the country.

Leaving the Army, he took a job with a heavy equipment company, and stayed with that company for 42 years. He learned a lot about all types of heavy equipment, including cranes and earthmoving machines.

Following the owner of his company from the city to the country, he moved to Mars in 1964, where he resides today.

From his parents, who endured the lean times of the 30s and 40s, George learned the concept of "never throwing anything away". Anyone who has attended a flea market with George can attest to his desire to save old things...as you look at some item on display, he will say "I have one of those", usually several times during the flea market visit. At MAHLS, he has taught us not to throw anything away...instead try to repurpose it.

His penchant for saving things, and his interest in history, made George a natural for joining the Mars group who founded MAHLS. George got to know a lot of long-time citizens of the area, and obtained both knowledge of, and artifacts from the area. He has been very generous with his collections, donating many items to MAHLS, including the Plymouth locomotive and various engines on display on our campus.

MAHLS is honored to be able to call Bill Swaney and George Lazzo a friend and founder of our Society.



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE:

Letter from our President and Resident Philosopher...

The Little Mars Steam Engines that Could!

Every train engine rides their own track that directs them on their life journeys. Like those engines, each member of the Mars Area Historical & Landmarks Society has traveled on their own separate tracks 24/7, year after year ...some longer than others! Our different "tracks of life" sometime run parallel to each other, intersect, or even collide with someone else's track. If you are lucky, your track runs in harmony with family and friends throughout the seasons. Our Society is where all our tracks get a chance to meet; like a round-house. (And, sometimes we even crash at the round-house!)

We have a great group of '*unique engines*'. All of us steam along for the impressive improvements of the Mars Historical Campus. We might not all run on the same steam, but we unite to power the output of the boiler. Of course, Judy's baking supplies the fuel for our steam! Our approaches may be different, yet our mission is one – to keep our gems shiny and not forgotten. We get the job done! Just look at the Mars Historical Campus, and you'll see a jewel in Butler County for anyone and everyone to enjoy. We are the Little Steam Engines that Could, Did, and Will! For 2018 and beyond, may your steam be plenty for life's uphill climbs, and may your downhill be pleasures to appreciate.

Sincerely,
John Watson

AND IN CLOSING:



MAHLS members enjoying dinner on a beautiful September evening at the Pavilion.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the **Mars Area History and Landmarks Society** sometime soon!

Mars Area History & Landmarks Society

Mailing address: PO Box 58, Mars, Pa. 16046
16046

Phone: 724-272-9588

Location: # 1 Brickyard Road, Mars, Pa.

Web: marshistory.org.

TREASURES FROM 2017 AT MAHLS



Come on John, we can't possibly do that!



Listening intently. Must be a good story.



Jeff is satisfied the train engineer can proceed.



Curtis and Keith making sure riders are safe.



Jim Nudi keeping the station shining!



Wait Pap, this deer just said something to me!



Precision cutting of brick for the walkway.



Laying a beautiful walkway isn't easy work.



One of our faithful VIP families each week.



Rita keeps a close eye on the train riders



The kids on the train really love this historical donation.



Judy and her baked goods...supplying the fuel that keeps our engines running on workdays! Thank you Judy!
(PS: Al, we all wish you a speedy recovery from your hand injury.)

