



Montgomery Museum &

Lewis Miller Regional Art Center

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Beautiful Music was Enjoyed by Many

Arias and Airs
ARIAS AND AIRS



*Mary Ann Hinshelwood and Peggy Chafin
headed up the concert committee*

Our concerts, "Arias and Airs", entertained over 600 enthusiastic fans in Roanoke and Christiansburg on April 17 and 18. Many thanks go to the artists, Robert Chafin and Jack Hinshelwood's Celtibillies, for their generosity and for their outstanding performances.

Without the wonderful ideas and hard work from Mary Ann Hinshelwood and Peggy Chafin "Arias and Airs" would never have happened. We'd like to give them, and the entire concert committee, a heartfelt word of thanks. Jean Galloway designed the concert flyer, concert program, and the host badges.

In the Gallery . . .

IRMA GUY PILLSBURY EXHIBIT

Our current art exhibit features artist Irma Guy Pillsbury, a Christiansburg resident. A native of Illinois, Irma moved to this area four years ago from Maine where she was active in the arts community as a painter and sculptor. Her talents also include wallpaper design and cartoon design. Don't miss the colorful and whimsical work of this delightful artist! The exhibit will run through June.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY HERITAGE DAY

Plans for Heritage Day 2009 are underway. This special annual event will take place on the lawn of the Museum as usual. Exhibits, demonstrations, children's activities, live entertainment, food will provide lots of fun for the entire family. Mark your calendar for August 22, 2009 from 10:00-3:00.

The event committee would like to ask you to help find interesting participants and exhibitors. Artisans, history exhibitors, and traditional performers are encouraged to contact us. Additionally, artists will be included in the festival this year. If you have suggestions, please contact Jean Galloway (382-2668, events@montgomerymuseum.org or montgomerymuseum.org/pages/heritage.html).

History Exhibit . . .

PATRIOTISM IN CONFLICT AND PEACE

The museum will be showing a new history exhibit beginning in July. Covering those who have sacrificed for their country, this exhibit will look at the role of Montgomery County citizens as patriots. More than just soldiers and military history, this exhibit will also look at the patriotic acts of those "at home." Military uniforms and memorabilia, photographs, ration books, and more will be part of the exhibit. If you have items you would loan related to patriotism, military history, or items that illustrate the home front at times of war, please contact Sherry (sherrywyatt@earthlink.net) or Sue (382-5644, director@montgomerymuseum.org).

Meadowbrook Branch News *Fran & Don Poole*

MEADOWBROOK MUSEUM celebrated the completion of their two recent grants by having a breakfast catered by Meadowbrook Cafe in the Center in Shawsville. After the breakfast, we heard an interesting program given by Lois Henson on the families who settled in the Alleghany Springs area followed by a tour of the Museum to see the additions and renovations. It was well attended and we appreciated the interest shown by everyone who came.

The Museum received a lovely "popcorn" crocheted bedspread made by Blanch Thompson (owners of the Thompson Motel in Shawsville in the 1940s) from her daughter Peggy Thompson Patterson. Information and genealogy on the Bone, Bones, Boehn, and Elliott families was given by George Dewese, Theodore Bone and his sister, Ms. Mary Catherine Bone. Also, Mr. Dewese gave the Museum a number of P-38's (small can openers used by soldiers to open K rations) to sell to interested former soldiers and others as a fundraiser for the Museum.

We have had members of families that lived in this area ask if we have information on their particular family and also several requests for location of family graves. (We are doing a cemetery survey of this area.)

The Pooles presented a program on the history of Eastern Montgomery County to Mrs. Thompson's gift classes. The teacher and students then presented a program on the dedication of the new Elementary School under construction in our part of the county. Later, the two classes toured the Museum and asked many interesting questions. Next, we will join them on a bus tour of our area.

On the occasion of the birthday of the famous BARBIE doll, we have a new display of the collection of the late Frances Craighead Evans as well as a gift of the 1966 Barbie from Millie Barnett. Mr. John W. Kirby has given us his collection of pocket knives of his youth, a slide rule from his engineering studies and other interesting artifacts.

We welcome visitors to our Museum. Our hours are 2-4 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We are available by appointment at other hours.

Montgomery County History

Pre-Sale Deadline

May 15 is the deadline for purchasing the upcoming history of Montgomery County at \$45.00. Thereafter the cost will be \$65.00. Be sure to reserve your copy at the pre-sale price by completing the form available at the museum book shop.

Thank You

Arias and Airs ARIAS AND AIRS

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Warm Hearth Village
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Bob Poff
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Linda Wilson

The Midnight Syncopators

By Bob Shelton

Just before World War II, seven Christiansburg High School friends formed a band. It was known as the Midnight Syncopators. The members were: Archie Cromer, Clyde "Mouse" Collins, Charles Wesley "Pid" Lawrence, Jack Atkinson, A. B. "Ab" Slusher, George Wysor, and Allen Goodman, the band leader.

The band played the popular songs of the era for high school dances, nightclubs, and even played several times at the Hotel Roanoke. Archie Cromer said that the hotel paid big money, a hundred dollars a night.

One night the band was engaged at the Spanish Grill on the east-end of Radford. The grill was packed with men who were building the Hercules Powder Plant, and everyone was having a good time. A big man seated at the bar requested the band to play "My Blue Heaven." Allen Goodman said, "We just played that song." The big man walked up to Allen and said, "I want you to play 'My Blue Heaven'." Allen then said, "O.K., in just a few minutes." The big man came closer and said in a loud voice, "I want you to play 'My Blue Heaven', and I want you to play it right now!" Archie said that it was obvious that the man had one drink too many. Allen, not wanting to have a confrontation, turned to the band, and they played the song while the big man tried to sing along. The audience loved it, so the band played the song several more times.

The band lasted only a few years, but during that time, they made several 78 rpm recordings. None are known to exist today.



Archie Cromer is thought to be the last surviving member of the band. He is now 85 years old.

Charles Hampton "Hamp" Akers, a long time resident of Christiansburg, says he remembers the Spanish Grill. It was known as a rough place at times. He remembers being thrown out one night when things got too rowdy. The Spanish Grill does not exist today.

When war came, the band members were called to serve their country. They were ready to pay the price of freedom. Fortunately, all returned home after the war was over to begin a new life. But, the Midnight Syncopators remained only a memory of a happy time during their youth.

History Chat

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S MINERAL SPRINGS

Save the date--June 20-- for our second History Chat. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. at the museum for a continental breakfast and discussion about life and events in Montgomery County way back when. This chat will focus on the history of our local mineral springs resorts such as White Sulphur, Yellow Sulphur, and Alleghany Springs. Bring your ideas, information and questions on this topic or any other topic. Please feel free to bring a friend. Students (of all ages) are encouraged to participate.

For more information:
director@montgomerymuseum.org



An Interview with Bob Poff

Bob Poff, the youngest of Mildred and C.W. Poff's four children, was born at the New Altamont Hospital and grew up on South Franklin Street in Christiansburg. He and his wife, Annette, were childhood sweethearts who have been married for thirty-three years. They have one son, Robbie.

After graduating from Christiansburg High School, Bob earned a B.S. in Commerce at the University of Virginia. This degree has served him well through a varied career in many facets of business and real estate. His career began with work as property manager for his father at Sturbridge Square in Blacksburg. In 1978, Bob established his own property management company, Valley-Wide Management, Inc. and later started his own home inspection business, Inspections, Inc.

Bob and Annette are active volunteers with "Operation Christmas Child," a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief operation led by Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham. For the past six years, the Poffs have traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina, in the late fall where they give their time and talent for five weeks during the pre-Christmas season. Bob also serves as Area Coordinator for the Roanoke and New River Valley team, promoting the "shoebox ministry" to church and civic groups.

A life-long love of history (he originally thought of majoring in it in college) brought Bob to the Mont-



Bob Poff

gomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center Board of Directors in 1991. He ended his term serving as vice-president. He rejoined the board in 1999 as Treasurer, later serving as President and again as Treasurer. He was named board member emeritus as of January 1, 2009, but in February, Bob was again called upon to serve as Treasurer. Although Sara Brown promised in 1999 he would only be needed for two or three months, his talent, insight, and energy have made him invaluable to the museum. His service on the board now totals about thirteen and a half years and happily for the Museum it isn't over yet! Bob has helped to lead many important projects at the museum, and he has worked

extensively on the soon to be published history of Montgomery County.

To say that Bob Poff is an active member of our community is an understatement. His contributions include service as a charter member and past president of the Rotary Club of Montgomery County, former member of the Christiansburg Planning Commission, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent and Trustee of Cedar Springs Union Church, and Board Chair of Joy Ranch Children's Home in Carroll County. Bob enjoys collecting postcards and other ephemera of local interest and has an extensive and important collection, but he derives his biggest joy from opportunities for Christian service.

Mark Your Calendar

May/June Art Exhibit ~ Irma Guy Pillsbury

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon ~
May 7th at Meadowbrook

July ~ New History Exhibit ~
Patriotism in Conflict and Peace

July 4 ~ Ceremony at Craig Cemetery

July/ August Art Exhibit ~ Betty Moore

August 22 - Heritage Day

September/ October Art Exhibit ~ Ray Kass and Mountain Lake Workshop

November/ December ~ Membership Holiday Exhibit

Eat it Up!

A Hands-On Workshop featuring Seeds and Canning

To highlight our current "Sustaining Montgomery County" exhibit, the museum is pleased to partner with Virginia Cooperative Extension, Floyd Office, to offer a one-day workshop on May 30, 2009. Starting at 10:00, the Master Gardeners will demonstrate creativity in food preparation with the use of seeds. At 12:00 there will be a "hands-on" demonstration of the canning process. The workshop will be held at Montgomery Museum. There will be a small registration fee to cover costs. Please call 382-5644 or email Sue at director@montgomerymuseum.org to register as space is limited.



300 Pepper Street, S
Christiansburg, VA 24073

(540) 382-5644

www.montgomerymuseum.org

Museum Hours
Tuesday - Saturday
10:30 - 4:30

Branch Museums



Meadowbrook Branch

267 Alleghany Spring Road
Shawsville

Wednesday & Saturday
2:00 - 4:00



Riner Branch

Log Cabin at
Auburn High School
Riner

Open by appointment



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Lewis Miller Regional Art
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Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

Spring is always so welcome after the cold days of winter, bringing warmth, natural beauty, and the promise of fun summer days. We hope that the museum is a little like springtime – full of promise for learning and fun. The recent Arias and Airs concert was certainly a fun event and married several goals of the museum in its celebration of artists from our region. It also illustrated the diversity that can grow out of a single place. At the museum this summer we hope to capture some of that diversity and attract your attention so that you may join us to learn about and enjoy our area. Begin by viewing Irma Guy Pillsbury’s colorful art exhibit. Then attend the workshop on May 30th where you’ll experience a modern take on two traditional culinary practices – growing from seeds and canning your produce. Don’t forget to check out the Sustaining Montgomery County exhibit on historic food ways while you are at the museum. Next, attend the June 20th “History Chat” where good fellowship is joined with good talk about our local history. This chat will focus on the local mineral springs resorts – an appropriate summertime topic! The summer will be capped by Heritage Day on August 22nd where food, music, exhibitors, and re-enactors come together in one of the museum’s most popular events.

See you at the museum,
Sherry Wyatt