

# CORNERSTONE

*Lemont Historical Society's Newsletter*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 9, 1pm**

St. Patrick's Day Parade/Fest  
*Featuring the Chicago Stockyard Kilty  
Band and Lemont's own Irish Queen*

**March 16, 1pm-4pm**

Open Mic at the Old Stone Church

**March 26, 7pm**

General Membership Meeting

**April 6, 2pm-4pm**

Free Research Day - access to library  
resources, volunteers on hand to help.  
Stop in & bring your questions!

**April 6, 4pm-6pm**

Bill Uznanski Tribute Reception, join us  
for light snacks and a glass of wine

## REMINDER:

Membership Renewal is in March  
You can download the membership form here:

[MEMBERSHIP FORM](#)

### ONLINE

1. Complete the Membership Form
2. Email completed form to  
[lemonthistorical@gmail.com](mailto:lemonthistorical@gmail.com)
3. Pay dues through PayPal by  
clicking on the link next to the  
correct Membership Level

### IN PERSON

1. Complete the Membership Form
2. Bring completed form to the Old  
Stone Church
3. Bring cash or check



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

March 2019

Dear Members,

LAHS and the Lemont Community have lost two great friends, Charlene Counter and Bill Uznanski. They both have done so much for our society and our community. They will be missed terribly! Our deepest sympathy goes out to both of their families, and we will be forever grateful for all they have done for our society and our Village.

**“When a close friend unexpectedly leaves us, a piece of our heart is forever broken.”**

*By Chris Lumpkin*

Our PastPerfect post card project is progressing nicely thanks to Barb Bannon, Terry Blanz, and Pat Camalliere. The first of our Lemont-Homer Glen Rotary volunteers start on Wednesday. We are looking forward to working with the Rotary on this project as we begin archiving our collections.

**“In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours.”**

*By Mark Twain*

This has been the craziest winter I can remember and will be very happy to bid it farewell. With spring around the corner, LAHS is looking forward to sponsoring the Lemont Quarrymen Vintage Base Ball Team for the ninth season. You really should make an effort to come out to one of the home games and watch them interpret baseball as it was played during the Civil War. It is a great way to have fun and relax on a summer afternoon.

Also, with warmer weather on the horizon, our tour guides will again be conducting tours in and around the Village. A special thank you to our guides, Gail August, Susan Donahue, Doris Peterman, and Richard Lee, for taking the time to show off our beautiful Village and the surrounding nature areas. We would also like to thank the Village of Lemont for their continued support in promoting these tours.

I sincerely urge you all to attend our March general membership meeting on March 26. We will be looking for volunteers to form our nominating committee for our November election. Please try to make it. All the very best to all of you and your families for a happy spring and Blessed Easter!

Sincerely,  
Sue

Spring is  
Upon Us

# GENEALOGY CORNER

## Our Windows to the Past

*By Barb Bannon*

Since starting to write genealogy articles for the newsletter close to twenty years ago, I have covered many topics. I have written about searching resources, organizing genealogy, breaking through brick walls, and what mistakes not to make. That last topic was well researched - although unintentionally!

One thing about doing genealogy research that drives me crazy is that when I find photographs, I can't just look at them and try to identify the location or the people. I have to insert myself into that moment in time that was captured by the photographer. In Genealogy, it is often said that "a photograph is a window into the souls of your ancestors". I attempt to take that one step further and go through that window.

It is great to have all of the information from a newly discovered birth or marriage certificate to enter into my genealogy database but I am just as satisfied when I can add a scanned photograph of an ancestor. Winter is the perfect time to work on shrinking a stack of yet to be scanned photos that has been growing steadily.

Looking through the window of one picture from that stack took me back to second or third grade, walking to Singer Hill Grocery Store. The building is still there, 801 State St., I believe it's now a dentist's office. In 1910 Pete Mirkes, a cousin on my mother's side of the family, inherited the store from his father, I remember making many trips there. It was conveniently located halfway between our house and my grandmother's house, as was St. Al's where I went to school. This presented a dilemma, do I go straight home from school to do homework or do I walk to Pete's, get my favorite after school snack and go visit Grandma? Decisions, Decisions.

The photo I have captures the stores look more than a decade before my memories of it, and it brought to mind all of the grocery stores that were in Lemont in the 40's, 50's & 60's. The population at that time was less than one fourth of the current population yet we had about seven grocery stores and for most of the time between 1920 and 1960 there were 14.

The ones I remember were, Singer Hill Clover Farm Store 801 State, Hill Top Foods 606 State, Stanley Totura's at 210 Main, and also on Main was Wally & Ed's. Midwest Grocery was in the 200 block of Stephen, A&P Grocery in the 100 block of Stephen and Ordman's at 108 Stephen, moved later to 47 Stephen.

Closely looking at the photo I see the "animal cracker" boxes with the string handle, the individual cookies in the display case and the cool-aid packages. What I am hearing is the unmistakable sound of the old wooden floors, the sliding of the cooler lid and the ring of the cash register. I'm smelling the ground coffee, the fresh fruit and summer sausage in the meat case.

I'm now through the window of this photo, inside looking out, wondering if there are interior photos that will jog memories of the other old stores in town.

**You know you're a genealogist when:**

**You zoom in on old photos just to examine framed portraits spotted in the background!**



## Mailbox

If you have a general genealogy question please send it via regular mail or email to [lahs.genealogy@gmail.com](mailto:lahs.genealogy@gmail.com) with "Genealogy Corner Mailbox" in the subject and we will do our best to have the answer in the next newsletter.

**Q:** I am looking for a death record for someone that died in the late 1880's out of state. Would a death certificate be filed in the person's home county/state or in the county/state of death?

**A:** Usually the death certificate will be filed in the county/state where the person died. During 1850-1900 there were many states that had no requirement for statewide registration of vital records. If it cannot be found, check for a burial certificate filed in the home state, they may be filed separately. Also a good bet are probate records, those are filed in the court of the person's home state and would contain a death certificate/record.



## MORE FROM OUR WRITERS

### Update on the Library Project

*By Terry Blanz*

Last year, the Lemont Area Historical Society started an ambitious project. We decided to attempt to catalog all our objects, photos, books, etc. and digitize them. A large donation from the Lemont Rotary Club allowed us to purchase Past Perfect Software, used by over 20,000 museums nationwide. This year, the Rotary Club continued their support by committing their members to serve as volunteers on the project after the software is installed.

We started on a small project, assembling all our postcards and matching them with the information of who gave them to us and when. If an item is donated, a museum must decide on whether or accept it or not. If it is accepted, this act of donating something to a museum is called "Accession". All accessions are given a specific number and will be entered in the software. After many months, we have assembled over 250 postcards, many over one hundred years old. These will be scanned into the program.

Looking back at these postcards, several seem to jump out back from the past. There is a postcard of a drug store from around 1910, at 118 Stephen Street with a horse and buggy in the background. What struck me was the signage on the front windows in both English and German: J B Bodenschatz, Deutsch Apotheke, drugs, books, stationary, wallpaper, paints and oil, watches, jewelry, and silverware. If you visited that location today, you would be standing in [Hughie McClafferty's](#) Irish Pub.



Another postcard that I remember was one showing an electric streetcar or trolley (it looked like a train) running on a track down the middle of Lemont's Main Street circa 1900. The Chicago and Des Plaines Valley Electric Railway developed a line in 1898 that ran between Lockport street in Lemont to Carroll's Corner at Sag Bridge. The cost was five cents a ride. Today that track is gone, but it is forever recorded in our library.

You too can be a part of history. Consider joining LAHS as a member or as a volunteer. Remember we all have

three things to donate: our time, our talent, and our treasure.

# SOCIETY NEWS *by Susan Donahue*

## LAHS Volunteer Luncheon

### THE LAHS VOLUNTEERS

We have events galore and yet no one knows who we are  
It seems in some way we vanish clear out of sight, like magic.  
The only consistent feature of our beloved org  
Is that somehow we manage to attract volunteers –  
no rhyme nor reason just there they are.

They are young or of vintage years  
Who walk into our museum to aid us with their talents and ideas  
And yes they share them without any reward.

I want to make sure all of you know that  
Jack Ahrens poured the tea  
at the Volunteer Luncheon,  
a classy guy with hidden talents for all to see.

We are grateful to be so blessed.  
ALL OF YOU are our Pride and Joy!



We want to wish **Norma Johnson** a very Happy Birthday! On March 26<sup>th</sup>, she will be 98 years young! She is still doing her crossword puzzle each morning from the Tribune.  
*God Bless You, Norma!*

## SOCIETY NEWS *by Susan Donahue (continued from page 5)*

### A Tribute to Bill Uznanski

How do you say a final farewell to a friend? It is something we recently asked ourselves as we struggled to understand and truly accept that **Bill Uznanski** had passed away. Bill was one of those larger than life people. I met Bill at the museum when I first got involved. He had the quick quip and told me he figured when he first met me that I was shy and so he wasn't quite sure at first how to approach me. But one time he quipped and I answered him back. It surprised him and from that time on, of course, it was no stopping his wit. We both enjoyed the warm-hearted banter.

Our time spent with Bill was filled with memories...

- he was the "Showman" as the late Mayor McCarthy in skits with Rev. Clancy (Richard Lee)
- he sold popcorn along the Keepataw Parade route for the historical society, playfully boasting that he had *just made it* in order to boost sales
- he teased those who came into our programs at the museum by claiming the price of admission had doubled just as they came through the door
- as the MC at several Christmas programs, Bill jokingly promised not to help them sing so he wouldn't overshadow the choirs with his beautiful voice
- "Our Irish Giant" always *tested* the candy we gave out at the St. Patrick's Day parade; he laughed as I reminded him the candy was for the children
- No one will forget his time spent in the photo booth where he encouraged customers to push the limits with their outfits as he donned a boa that he claimed suited him perfectly



Bill Uznanski at Tag Days

As bookkeeper, I often worked with Bill in his treasurer capacity. He would come into the office as I sat at my desk and say, "Ok, kid I need to use the computer." His follow through was professional, but he loved to tease. "What do you mean it is your day off? That's no excuse," he would say to me on days I was not there.

I called on him when some of the candle light bulbs went out just before a wedding. "Be careful when you get on the ladder," he said. After a little more fun banter, he agreed to help with a reply, "Okay, I will bill you for the time and labor." His joking and eagerness to help will be forever missed. Whether it was last minute projects or emergencies, like when he helped me through my accident at the museum, Bill was the kind of person you could always count on.

Bill was dedicated and hard working with a purpose. He was loyal to his family who he loved beyond measure; to his friends; to our LAHS; and to the community of Lemont. I remember him telling me that when his family moved here he could not imagine a town would close off major streets for a parade like Lemont did and it blew him away. He and his family made Lemont their home, and he told me it was the best decision they could have made.

As I sit here writing this, I can't quite believe he is gone. Bill impacted each of our lives just by being himself. He took a part of our hearts when he left, and we are grateful that we were able to share in his life. This isn't goodbye... *until we meet again, Bill.*



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## SOCIETY NEWS *by Susan Donahue (continued from page 6)*

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### A Tribute to Charlene Counter

We regret to inform you that **Charlene Counter** passed away. She had been ill for some time.



Char, Gail, Norma

Char, Gail, Norma

Her dedication to our LAHS LIBRARY and our organization was steadfast. She worked among people like Norma Johnson, Helen Bittles, Bernice Johnson, and Gail Ahrens. Gail is the only one still involved.

Charlene was from the Class of 1955 of the Lemont High School, and it is this particular class that took time and effort to donate so many of our postcards that are now in our collection.

Char, as she was known to her friends, also took great pride in her involvement in St. Matthews Evan. Lutheran Church. She would often leave the museum and walk over to the church to see how things were going or to help out.

She would lend a hand with our fundraisers, too. I remember a particular "Lemont Street Fair" which turned out to be a very cold September Saturday. We were all dressed up like Eskimos - winter coats, gloves, hats, scarves, and some with blankets from home - as we manned the tables out in front. Char had this big warm smile and said to me, "So did you order this?" I replied, "No, I don't have that kinda pull with God. I thought it was you!" We both started laughing,

and I think those who didn't hear the exchange must have thought the cold had gotten to us. Some asked us if we were alright and others joined us thinking laughter might make them feel warmer.

We could also count on her to bake and donate her time when we prepackaged our fabulous, homemade cookies for our Christmas Choral & Cookie Fest. She was one of those well-organized people who handled any situation that happened with an air of confidence. We always felt we could rely on her for her common sense.

"Oh, hello Susan, so what is up? How can I help?" That cheerful and giving response to my calls is how I will remember Char.

I remember her love of family as she often spoke about them. At her wake, one of her sons said to me, "Oh, you belong to the Hysterical Society!" I shook my finger at him and said, "NO NO. We are the HISTORICAL SOCIETY!" He really started laughing as he said, "Oh no, that is just how my mom would respond when I said it!" Good memory. She will be missed!

## SOCIETY EVENTS *by Charmaine Drafke*

### Drinkin' with Lincoln



It was a cold February night as we collected our shirts at Smokey Row and gathered at Tom's Place to wait for the historical tour to begin. Honest Abe towered over the crowd as we began the stroll through town. Mr. Lincoln stood before each location to recall the history of the buildings and the establishments. He remarked on the odd gambling machines and unfamiliar motorized vehicles as we walked the streets of Downtown Lemont from Tom's Place to Hughie's, Canal Street Pub, The Vault, Nick's Tavern, and the Main Inn.

The annual fundraiser was another success!

Thank you to those who braved the cold and to the establishments that supported the cause. We couldn't have done it without you!



### Lemont Bartenders Reunion

No one knows Sunday Funday like bartenders and their patrons! Lemonters came out on a Sunday afternoon to see their



favorite bartenders, past and present. The reunion was held at Tom's Place, Lemont's oldest neighborhood tavern. Memories were shared of our little town's local watering holes and their infamous spirit slingers. And more memories were made!

### Jimmy Valentine at The Old Stone Church

The Lemont Area Historical Society celebrated the holiday of love with a silent film in the Old Stone Church.



Tickets included dinner and dessert donated by Buona Beef.



## A BIT OF HISTORY

### On Iwo Jima, Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue

- By Dan Smaczny, National Museum of the American Sailor Contract Curator

*"Among the Americans who served on Iwo Island, uncommon valor was a common virtue."*

— Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, March 16, 1945.

February 21, 1945, Iwo Jima, Japan, D-Day plus 2: "Corpsman Up!" While under heavy enemy fire, United States Navy Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class John H. Bradley rushed to the aid of a fallen Marine at the base of Mount Suribachi. Not wanting to expose anyone else to danger, Bradley denied assistance from other Marines as he tended to the infantryman's wounds and administered plasma. The Pharmacist's Mate then pulled his patient thirty yards to safety. Bradley would receive the Navy Cross for his actions that day.

Now known as Iwo To, Iwo Jima is a volcanic island, which is part of the Ogasawara Island chain, and is about 660 nautical miles south of Tokyo.[2] In 1543, Spanish sailor Bernardo de la Torre discovered the island, then in 1673

an Englishman named Gore christened it Sulphur Island.[3] They couldn't have known of its military importance in World War II hundreds of years later. Due to its strategic location between mainland Japan and American air bases in the Mariana Islands, the U.S. placed great importance on acquiring this territory.

After heavy bombardment, U.S. forces invaded Iwo island on February 19, 1945. Some of the fiercest fighting in the war took place there in locations nicknamed "Meat Grinder" and the "Amphitheater." After thirty-six days of combat, Iwo Jima was declared secure on March 26, 1945. There were more than 26,000 American casualties, including 6,800 dead and of the 20,000 Japanese defenders, only 1,083 survived.

The United States awarded twenty-seven Medals of Honor for action during the Battle of Iwo Jima, five of those recipients were Navy seamen. Four of the five were Pharmacist's Mates: Francis J. Pierce, George E. Wahlen, Jack Williams, and John H. Willis. The Navy's Hospital Corpsman rating has its roots in 1814 with the role of "Loblolly Boy," serving Surgeons and Surgeon's Mates. Some corpsmen, like Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class John H. Bradley performed "Field Medicine" where they supported the U. S. Marine Corps on the battlefield.



Firing on Japanese positions on the slopes of Mt. Suribachi, where the enemy kept up constant fire on the Marines, February 21, 1945

Bradley, recipient of the Navy Cross, the second highest decoration awarded by the U.S. Navy, took part in one of the defining moments of World War II. Around 1:00pm on February 23, 1945, Marines from Company E., 2nd Battalion, 28th Regiment, 5th Division planted an American flag on the summit of Mount Suribachi. This moment was immortalized by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal and was the model for the United States Marine Corps War Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.



Navy doctors and corpsmen administer to wounded marines at an Iwo Jima first aid station on February 20, 1945. Navy Chaplain, Lt. j.g. John H. Galbreath (right center).

## A BIT OF HISTORY *(continued from page 9)*

Many people are not aware that this event was the second flag raising on Suribachi that day. About three hours earlier Staff Sergeant Lou Lowry took a series of photographs of a flag being raised that was deemed too small resulting in the second, larger flag being planted.

For seven decades it was thought that John “Doc” Bradley helped with the second flag raising. “You know all about our battle here and I was with the victorious Co. E. 2nd Batt 28th Marines who reached the top of Mt. Suribachi first. I had a little to do with raising the American flag and it was the happiest moment of my life.”[8] On June 23, 2016 new evidence showed that he actually took part in the first flag raising.



Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class John Bradley toured the country on the Seventh War Loan Drive in May and June of 1945.

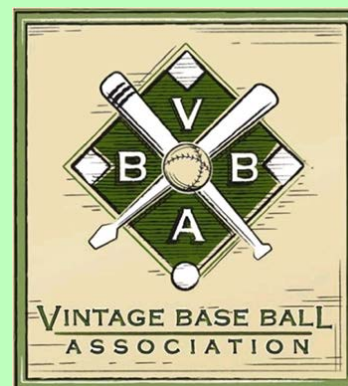
After the flag raising Bradley continued his corpsman duties. On March 12, 1945, he incurred shrapnel wounds in his legs and was evacuated. During May and June of 1945, Bradley and two other flag raisers, PFC Rene A. Gagnon and PFC Ira H. Hayes toured the U.S. on the Seventh War Loan Drive.

Bradley is just one of the many Americans and Japanese who fought for their countries with honor and courage on the two-mile by four-mile island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Battle of Iwo Jima veterans, their family members, current military, and dignitaries from both the United States and Japan return to “Sulphur Island” each year to honor those who fought and died there in 1945.

The USS *Iwo Jima* (LPH 2) (1961–1993), USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) (2001–present) and USS *Suribachi* (AE 21) (1956-1994) have all been commissioned by the United States Navy in remembrance of those who fought and were lost in the battle. Sailors on the USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) are constantly reminded of this as the ship's motto is “*Uncommon valor was a common virtue.*”

For information about the National Museum of the American Sailor visit the [National Museum of the American Sailor](#). Works Cited can be sourced [here](#).

## WHO IS READY FOR BASEBALL AND SUNNY DAYS?



LEMONT QUARRYMEN			2019 Schedule
May 5	2:15 PM 3:30 PM	Away	Creston Regulators Oregon Ganeymedes
June 1	Noon	Away	Sunset Hill Farm Colonels
Jun 9	2:00 PM	Away	At Naper Settlement Vs. Chicago Salmon
June 22	Noon	Home	Sunset Hill Farm Colonels Somonauk Blue Stockings
June 29	2:00 PM	Away	Blue Island Brewmasters
July 13	11:00	Away	<b>CANTIGNY RED OAK FEST</b> Dupage Plowboys Creston Regulators Aurora Town Club Somonauk Blue Stockings
July 20	TBD	Away	<b>LINCOLN FEST ON 66</b> McLean County Prairie Chickens Somonauk Blue Stockings Dupage Plowboys Creston Regulators North Bloomington Scrubs
July 27	1:00 PM	Home	Blue Island Brewmasters
Aug 11	Noon	Home	Creston Regulators Milwaukee Juneaus
Aug 17	TBD	Away	<b>MILWAUKEE FEST</b> Milwaukee Juneaus Rum River Rovers Milwaukee Grays
Aug 25	1:00 PM	Away	Somonauk Blue Stockings
Home field located at Mt. Assisi Field - 13900 Main Street, Lemont, IL 60439 Lemont Area Historical Society   (630) 257-2972   <a href="http://www.lemonthistorical.org">www.lemonthistorical.org</a>			