

Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society Newsletter

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February 01, 2015

Dear Members:

This newsletter is a bit different. It is an overview of what we've done in the past year, and where we plan to go in the future.

First, we'd like to thank the many members who worked very hard to make this a successful year. We might add that we also had fun doing all this work. We had lots of laughs and happy times.

The most important thing that happened in 2014 has been our acquiring the Fort LeBoeuf Museum, the Judson House, and the George Washington Statue and Park. After many, many months of negotiation, nearly everything is done, and we will receive the final papers in the next few months. These properties, along with the Eagle Hotel, which we already own, will be operated as the *Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society Campus*.

Last year our museums opened April 1st, and for the first time all the buildings were open at the same time, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. In addition to the uncounted number of people who visited the museums during Waterford Days, the Ghost Walks, and Colonial Christmas, there were over 600 people, from 20 states, Canada, China, the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, and Sweden, who were given guided tours and signed the guest books.

The first special event we had was our Gala Fund Raiser to introduce our campus to dignitaries from all over the region. Our special thanks to Craige Pepper Victor for all she did to make this event a success.

Next, on the third full weekend of July, was Waterford Days. Kathy Williams spearheaded this event. We are planning to further expand this event, and if you feel you can help in any way, contact Kathy at 814-882-8190. We particularly need someone to head up the non-profit part which includes food vendors, clubs, and churches.

A Paranormal Event was sponsored by a paranormal radio station from Cleveland. They paid us well to allow them to conduct a night investigation in our buildings. (They say they found some interesting things here.) They are going to do this again and plan to have a lot more people attending.

We had Ghost Walks every Saturday night in October. JoAnne Lenart-Weary and Kelly Clark and their committee conducted scary, but not too scary, tours around town, including the cemetery, narrating historical as well as supernatural incidents that occurred in Waterford's past. Despite some nights of bad weather, there was a profit of \$1,800.

Colonial Christmas was the first weekend of December, and everything looked beautiful. At the Eagle Hotel there were theme decorated Christmas trees, toy train displays, musical performances, breakfast with Santa, and a wonderful Christmas shop on the second floor!

At the FLB Museum, there was more music and costumed reenactors.

The Waterford Garden Club helped decorate the Judson House with swags, wreaths, and trees in each room and candles glowing from every window. Dulcimer players and other costumed musicians played period music in the living room, while colonial ladies served wassail and cookies to the visitors touring the house.

We received three grants from Casino Funds during the year. The first was for \$1,900, and was used to put historically accurate handrails on the front steps of the Eagle Hotel, a rain gutter across the front, for repairs to an addition at the rear of the hotel, and to purchase a riding mower and a push mower. The second grant, for

\$900 was to purchase fireworks to celebrate Waterford Days. The third grant was for \$9,600. So far we have installed more efficient lighting at the FLB Museum and we bought cash registers for all three facilities.

We now have a computer and printer in each building. Kathy Williams' employer, Larsen Texts, donated these to us. We also now have an answering machine at the FLB Museum.

We recently negotiated a new lease agreement with Mike Troyer at the Sugar 'n Spice Restaurant in the Eagle, which was satisfactory to everyone involved. This is a secure, steady source of income for us, and we are the only historical society in the region to have such an agreement. We might add that Mike is a great tenant.

After charging specific admission fees at the museums last year, we feel that asking for donations will probably result in more income if we explain our situation to visitors as they come in the door.

We are in urgent need of museum tour guides for the upcoming season. We will be planning training sessions for mid-April. Come and learn! For further information contact Rosalee Holzer at 814-796-4055, or Judy Nelson at 814-796-4817, or Jim Edwards at 814-449-0607. We are sending out letters inviting local organizations to tour our campus.

We recently joined an association called the Historical Center Affiliates Program (HCAP). Belonging to HCAP entitles Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society members to free admission (up to four people per visit) to the John Heinz History Center and Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum in Pittsburgh. Other perks are also available with this membership. For additional information contact either Judy Nelson (814-796-4817) or Jim Edwards (814-449-0607).

We are proud to announce that our treasury has grown due to the hard work on the above projects and through members asking that memorials be sent to the Historical Society in their beloved ones names. We have \$40,000 in our special account. This sounds like a substantial amount of money, but when we receive title to the buildings, we will need to pay a significant insurance bill that we didn't have before, as well as major renovations, maintenance and upkeep costs that we did not have. So we must continue to work together to keep our society well and thriving and our buildings looking good.

In addition to our major events like Waterford Days, Ghost Walks, and Colonial Christmas, we are planning monthly "Mini Events". We plan to have "Fireside Chats" on the first Saturday of the month at the Judson House, with speakers discussing various phases of local history. Later in the year there will be seminars and demonstrations on handicrafts and "lost arts" like candle making and soap making. For information call Judy Nelson at 814-796-4817.

Since we are updating our records, we are sending all newsletters by U.S. Postal Service this month. Included is a membership information form that we would like you to fill out and send back to insure that all information is correct (**even if you have already paid your dues**). There is also a form showing where and how members can volunteer. As you know, we are a 100% volunteer organization. Please, look this over and let us know what your interests are and what you can do to help us grow. These forms will also be available on our web site – www.fortleboeufhistory.com. Look for the forms under the "Join Us" tab.

Important addresses, phone numbers, etc.

1. Fort LeBoeuf Historical Society, Box 622, Waterford, PA 16441
2. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fortleboeufhistoricalsociety>
3. Web site: <http://www.fortleboeufhistory.com>
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