

TOWN JOURNAL

It Never Gets Old: Monmouth County Archives & History Day

and photos by Rick Geffken



Card, center, of the Historical Society of Highlands, Burden of the Shrewsbury Historical Society displays historic pictures and books at their respective tables Archives & History Day.



Lynn Humphrey, left, and Lorraine Stone represented Red Bank's T. Thomas Fortune Foundation.



County Clerk Christine Giordano Hanlon presents the 1st Place Award for Monmouth County Photography to Colts Neck's Emily McNeill. McNeill, a sophomore at Communications High School in Wall, won for her "Sandy Hook Lighthouse" picture.

ALAPAN - Resembling an alumni homecoming weekend more than a conference of academics, several hundred Monmouth County historians and authors recently gathered at the Manalapan branch of the Monmouth County Library for Archives & History Day. Old friends and colleagues from historical societies, museum groups, libraries, and historical societies mingled and greeted each other while more than 60 exhibition tables.

This year's event, held Oct. 14, was the 22nd annual and celebrated the "Inventors and Innovators in Monmouth County." County Clerk Christine Giordano Hanlon opened the morning's Plenary Session welcoming the approximately 300 people. "This is our best event for our special day honoring Monmouth County history," she said. "There is a lot of energy with new programs like the New Jersey RockNRoll Chorus and our photography contest for school students, both of which brought new enthusiasm."

County Clerk B. Swartz of the Monmouth County Library followed Hanlon, acknowledging the debt all local residents owe to former County Clerk Jane Clayton who was instrumental for the creation of the Monmouth County Archives.

Members of the serving Chosen Freeholders attended the gathering, including Director Lillian G. Burry, Deputy Director John P. Curley, Councilmembers Arnone, Serena DiMaso Esq., and Gary J. Rich Sr. The high school students from New Jersey RockNRoll Chorus brought a fresh spirit to the gathering, performing their a capella song "Monmouth County." The anthem was recently rededicated by George Joynton, a resident of Holmdel and the first official at the Monmouth County Archives. Written over 75 years ago by Cyril A. Smack of Sea Bright and his sister, Gertrude Scharfenberger, it was adopted as the official song of Monmouth County by the Board of Chosen Freeholders on July 5, 1939.

Scharfenberger received the M. Claire French Award for Leadership in Historic Preservation. Scharfenberger, the Middlesex County, was recognized for "Outstanding achievement" as an elected official in supporting historic preservation in Monmouth County through education, development, planning, rehabilitation, advocacy, and community leadership." Scharfenberger said he was pleasantly surprised by his award

and by the turnout at the event, noting the mix of very young and older people from all over the county. He drew laughs when he noted: "As a professional archaeologist, usually most of my clients are dead."

Archives & History Day host Gary Saretzky, who is the Monmouth County archivist, presented the Jane Clayton Award to John Belding, the Union Landing (Brielle) historian. "To me, obviously, it's a very exciting day. I am vitally interested in history, always have been since my days as a history major," said Belding during his acceptance speech. He also reiterated what many in the audience consider gospel: "It's most important that we have an appreciation for what we've been and who's been there before us and what they did."

The Two River area was well represented by organizations such as the Friends of the Monmouth County Library, the Historical Society of Highlands, the Keansburg Historical Society, the Parker Homestead, the Red Bank Public Library, the Shrewsbury Historical Society, the T. Thomas Fortune Foundation and the Tinton Falls Historic Preservation Commission.

Other recognitions went to Colts Neck's Emily McNeill, a sophomore at Communications High School in Wall. She won the first place in the Monmouth County photography contest with her dramatic sunset image of the Sandy Hook Lighthouse. The Monmouth County Genealogy Society's Barbara Carver Smith Award was presented to Beverly Yackel, Middletown, for her years teaching genealogy classes and editing the society's newsletter, The Monmouth Connection. The Innovative Archives Award was given to the Morristown National Historic Park Library and Museum.

Attendees at Archives & History Day received a 120-page book, "New Jersey in Focus: Inventors and Innovators in Monmouth County." The full-color publication showcases biographies and contributions of dozens of Monmouth County inventors. It is produced every year by the Monmouth County Archives, a division of the County Clerk's office.

During the lunch break, Monmouth County Historian Randall Gabriellan led a forum entitled "A Discussion of Inventors and Innovators in New Jersey."

The afternoon session concluded Archives & History Day with a presentation by featured speaker, Paul Israel, a Rutgers University professor and editor of the Thomas Edison Papers. Israel spoke about "New Jersey: A State of Innovation." His remarks and slide presentation noted that New Jersey was long considered "the Research State" primarily due to its leadership in three industries: electrical/electronics, chemical, and pharmaceutical.

The exhibit is now installed on the lower level of the Monmouth County Library Headquarters in Manalapan, outside the archives office. It will be open to the public until the summer of 2018.

Camper Grants Available

The Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey (the Federation) is accepting applications for "One Happy Camper" incentive grants up to \$1,000 for children to attend nonprofit Jewish overnight camp for the first time. Applications are evaluated and grants awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The Federation is looking to extend up to 60 need-blind incentive grants for summer 2018.

One Happy Camper grant recipients, like all campers, immerse themselves in the fun and traditions of camp while learning high-level social and life skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving,

leadership, and initiative.

According to the federation, research shows that Jewish camp is one of the most effective ways to engage children and teens in the Jewish community and strengthen their Jewish identity. In addition to One Happy Camper grants, the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey offers need-based grants and grants for special needs camp options.

More information about grants for Jewish summer camp being offered through the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey can be found at jewishheartnj.org/camp.