

Newsletter

Volume 5 Issue 5 May 2007

MESSAGE FROM
PRESIDENT
LOU MCCALL

Dear Members;

Please Pray for Sean McQuade's Full Recovery

I believe few of us would argue that Wenonah is one of the "richest" places to live based on history, family and volunteerism. Many of us know the families in town that have become part of the town's fabric. Many are our fellow Historical Society members, who like yourself, exemplify the family values that have built our community and differentiate it so. Unquestionably the Forsman family is included in that fabric.

It was a tremendously disturbing and sad day when we learned of the April 16th horrific shooting and senseless death and violence that incurred that day on the Virginia Tech campus. We were all overcome when we heard about it and speechless when many of us quickly found out that one of our member's families and closest of friends was so tragically affected by the Virginia Tech massacre.

Chuck and Lorrie Forsman's grandson Sean, a senior at VT and just two weeks away from graduation, son of Jody who grew up here in Wenonah, was shot in the face on campus by the gunman. I believe Jody and Grandmom and Grandpa would easily and proudly say Sean has

always been a model son, grandson, student and athlete. It seems like only yesterday that I remember Sean being that sweet little kid in diapers. Horrifically, Sean, like the others shot that day clearly did not deserve what happened to them that tragic day.

Sean, now 22 and a senior majoring in mathematics, was in that German language class when the gunman entered and started shooting, killing or injuring 20 of the 24 students in the class.



Grandpa, Grandmom and Mom rushed off to Sean's bedside as soon as it happened and have kept a constant vigil.

We all hoped and prayed as Sean went from making it through the first hours, then days and now weeks. Today Sean remains the last person hospitalized with injuries from the Virginia Tech shootings and just recently was upgraded to good condition.

I would like to ask all of you to continue to keep Sean, Jody, Chuck and Lorrie and all of the Forsman family in your prayers asking God for a full and complete recovery as soon as possible.

You can learn more of Sean's tremendous struggle and updated details, including information for fundraisers to help Sean on a web site set up to help disseminate such information at: www.seanmcquade.faithweb.com

Currently in the works are plans for putting together a dinner/dance "VT Hokie Night" to raise funds for Jody and Sean. Please keep June 28th open. More information will follow as Vicki is just getting it off the ground.

The recent family photo to the left shows (left to right) Sean, sister Morgan, Mom Jody, and Grandpa Chuck and Grandma Lorrie.

PROGRAM FOR MAY 2007

Patricia (Clunn) Wellingham-Jones grew up in Wenonah during the '40s and '50s. Her father was Norman Clunn, a regional bank president. The book she wrote and donated to us about her youthful experiences has been used as a Historical Society fund-raiser for quite some time. For our program this month Pat will relate some of her collection of poetic stories. Most are reflections of childhood memories while living in Wenonah..

In her poems she refers to her Wenonah experience "at a time of more woods, only the lake to swim in, and fewer cars". Pat's poems should bring back happy memories to those native to Wenonah and be of great interest to our members who have adopted Wenonah as their own. .

THE LITTLE HARDWARE STORE AROUND THE CORNER

3 EAST MANTUA AVENUE

Levander Bateman built the store building in 1884. Very little information on him is available other than he operated a general grocery store on the premises. This was a short-lived enterprise as the store and property were deeded to Richard J. Clark in September of 1888.

The store was expanded with honest goods and honest prices. The stock consisted of dry and fancy goods, notions, furnishings, boots, hats, caps etc. During this period he was in competition with Turner and McCormick who had similar goods. He outlasted them and eight other competitors until 1912. He was quite active in the community serving on the town council and various church boards. His

sons Herbert and Jim were born in the house. Later Herbert would operate the coal yard business at Maple Street and the railroad where the borough public works garage is today. Jim Clark became a semiprofessional baseball player

The newly formed People's Rural Telephone Company put their "central office" in his store serving the thirty telephones within the town. Five years later when the Delaware and Atlantic Telephone Company wanted to house their exchange in his building Clark refused them permission because they wouldn't provide an operator.

Richard Clark eventually sold the business and the building to John Madara. He was a glass blower at Whitney Glass Works in Clayton. He continued the dry goods and grocery business successfully until 1920 when he sold it to a Norman Brown.

The business continued under Brown's leadership until 1925 when it went up for public sale. The advertisement for the sale gives insight into the business. Listed was the store stock of shoes, hosiery, hardware, notions, dry goods, groceries, a meat cutter, refrigerator display, and

everything to be found in a general store. The ad said "This is one of the best residential and business properties in town located at the Wenonah station and across from the Military Academy Park".

Bill Seiders at this time had a hardware store in the northern part of the Grosscup building, being formerly owned by John Viereck. He was seeking a new location. Milton Webb, a salesman for Winchester-Simmons Hardware Company, was persuaded by him to go into partnership in the 3 East Mantua Avenue building and to create a new hardware store. Mr. Webb, with the consent of his wife, also was talked into moving to town. They moved into the apartment next to what would become the hardware store. Soon after moving they

were assessed \$500 for the concrete paving on Mantua Avenue which was their welcome to the town.

They called the store "THE LITTLE HARDWARE STORE AROUND THE CORNER".

The Winchester Simmons Company was the forerunner of our present True Value, Ace

and other hardware chains. The stock was quite varied: sporting goods, tools, hardware cutlery, paints and building materials. The barn in back was made a warehouse. The enterprise was quite successful despite the depression. However in 1935 the academy closed and this was a disaster to all the businesses in town and the area. The store closed in 1937.

The store was then leased to Mr. A.H. Williams who opened up a Fairlawn grocery store which was unsuccessful and closed in two years. After this Charlie Hill opened a hobby shop, which went out of business in 1940. The store was then turned into an apartment unit. During this period Mary Bilderback, formerly a piano teacher at the academy, taught music in the second floor. Many children from Wenonah started their musical careers with her.



In 1949 Mr. Webb sold the building to Jim and Eleanor Ross. Eleanor's father was Charlie Hohlweg who owned Charlie's, later renamed the Tall Pines Inn. Jim and Eleanor successfully created the Jim-El Sweet Shoppe, which was in business for fifteen years. This was basically a luncheonette and coffee shop serving breakfast and lunch. Many years later Eleanor after returning from Florida opened up a similar shop in Swedesboro under the same name.

After this it became Marge's luncheonette under the ownership of Marjorie and Bill Fox. At one time Bill Fox had a riding academy in Wenonah. Marge's became an institution in Wenonah. In the morning for breakfast there was an influx of workers from Atlantic City Electric, Bell Telephone and other locals. For lunch were those from Marmac and Newton Tool Works and the schoolteachers. It was a gathering place for the community, So many fond memories. Sadly Marjorie died of cancer but fortunately Bill Fox's sister Gladys Clark was able to take over the management of the store. Interesting is the fact that Gladys' husband was Herb Clark who was born in the building and whose father was Richard Clark the early owner.

The next owners were George and Jane Bowker who ran the business under the name of The Carriage Shoppe. They ran it for several years but Jane's ill health caused it to have to close. Several attempts were made to reopen but unsuccessfully. Realtor Roy Duffield then bought the building and did extensive renovations. In 1989 he leased the store part to Mary K Hair Design who have conducted an outstanding business there since that time.

The building over the years has been one of the focal points and historic centers of the town. Indeed it's message is that it would be good to have a coffee shop again as we did years ago. This is something that is lacking in our community. For those who remember, we know.

Archives of Milton H. Webb

RECOLLECTIONS BY MILTON WEBB

The railroad held a great fascination for the kids of town. There was nothing more awesome than the third rail that carried the electricity to propel the

trains. On several occasion a dog would get too close and that was the end of the ball game or it would be severely burned. Each year a representative of the railroad would come to school and lecture the students on the danger of this potential killer. We were told there was more electricity in the third rail than the electric chair at Trenton. Lois Fink, who was noted for his intelligence, doubted this and spread the word that the agent was lying to us. Unfortunately there was no way to disprove this theory and it was a mystery for years.

Many a penny was put on the tracks to be flattened out becoming quite a collector's item. The well-equipped boy, along with his marbles, carried a flattened coin. The meaning was not as great with the girls of the class.

The railroad station was a haven in the wintertime, a great place to get warm. In the middle of the waiting room there was a big steam radiator that heated many a pair of cold gloves, Mrs. Phallis, the station mistress was always very nice to the kids and never objected to us coming in the station. Probably she was lonely and liked to have company. This must have been a tradition as Mr. Tuft, a stationmaster for many years, also was a kind person. I didn't know him as he was before my time.

The Phallis family lived in the apartment in the station. They were very big, tall people and it is a wonder that they all fit in to so small a space.

It was with great sadness that the steam trains were replaced with diesel locomotives. It just wasn't the same. Steam engines blew off big clouds of vapor and emitted black sulfur smelling clouds of smoke. Even the whistle seemed more commanding. Soon after the diesels arrived passenger service ended.

So many times we went to Philadelphia on the train. We liked to go to the foot of Market Street in Camden and get on the ferry to Philadelphia. You would walk up the hill to Front Street and take the trolley. The alternative was to get off in Camden and take the bridge train and subway.

We went to Woodbury High School on the train, walked up Cooper Street every morning. Passed by Ace Motors, Snelbakers, The Woodbury Times building.

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PO Box 32
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

Stamp
Here

WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2007

Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAILED TO YOUR HOME
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INTERESTING PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- INFORMATION BY KNOWLEDGEABLE WENONAHIANs

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

AMOUNT PAID \$ _____

CHECK _____ CASH _____

BRING FORM AND PAYMENT TO MEETING, OR MAIL. THANK YOU

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

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