



The Greater Dover Historical Society Inc.

OCTOBER 2011



President's Column by Madelyn Shermeyer

Since this newsletter will be the last one in 2011, I will re-cap some of the accomplishments of the Society for the year.

The Eisenhower family donated the bell from the United Methodist Church which was first located on N. Main Street in Dover Borough. The late Mr. Eisenhower bought the bell when the auction was held to remove everything from the church since a new United Methodist Church was built on Emig Mill Rd. in Dover Township. Harry Shermeyer built a moveable stand so that the bell could be moved around more easily in the archive storage shed.

The Board of Directors met and decided any articles donated to the Society must be from the Greater Dover Area and must be 50 yrs. or older. This decision was made because of the limited space in our archives.

In April Cindy Snyder displayed her antique kitchen gadgets. Many in the audience were heard to remark, "I remember that gadget". Cindy's presentation was interactive: the members were asked what they thought a particular gadget was used for. While some knew, many didn't. The interactive presentation made this program very lively at times. Afterwards, I received many favorable comments.

Our blacksmith shop was re-opened on the second Saturday of April and will be open the second Saturday each month through October.

Tom Miles volunteered to be the Society's web master at no cost to the Society. Mr. Miles has many, many years of experience in the field of computers. His ideas and experience with web sites will be a plus for our Society. We wish to thank Maureen App, BCO at Dover Township, for her valued help over the past years. It is due to Maureen's involvement that we were able to have our minutes posted on our website.

In June, Deputy Chief Glenn Jansen of the Dover Township Volunteer Fire Dept. made a presentation on Fire Safety in the home. Everyone attending was quite impressed with the information. He distributed smoke alarms to anyone attending and told me to make a list of anyone that was interested in receiving these alarms.

The combined Bloodroot Book I & II has been printed and is now ready for sale.

Litter pick-ups continued throughout 2011. Melanie Green has been the coordinator for the Adopt-a-Highway for the past few years. Thank you to all who have participated in the project.

At the Society's August meeting, David Shallcross from the PA Attorney General's Office, spoke on the topic of scams and frauds. He distributed many hand-outs to those attending. This too was an interactive presentation which elicited very positive comments from those in attendance. They certainly learned how to be more aware of scams and frauds.



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**FUNDRAISER ITEMS FOR SALE — available for purchase from “Our Store” on GDHS website or contact any
GDHS member**

Blacksmith Shop replicas \$12 — Bloodroot Book \$10 — Notepaper \$7 — Brookside Park booklets \$2 —
Trash Bags \$4 for pkg. of 25 bags or \$30 case of 200 bags

Orders can be placed by email to doverhistory@gdhspa.org

GDHS donations — a reminder to members that any donation or bequeath to the GDHS of memorabilia or other historical items should be at least 50 years old. If anyone has questions concerning any item to be donated, please contact our Assistant Archivist, Gayle Heagy.

**Dover Firemen's Fair 2011
Governor George M. Leader Display
How It Came To Be
By Jo Ott**

GDHS vice-president, Kay Stitley, had an idea for this year's Firemen's Fair and when she asked me to go to Providence Place to photograph the tuxedo worn by former Governor George Leader at his inauguration, my first thought was what a strange place for it to be. Providence Place is an assisted living residential facility located on Fox Run Road in Dover Township.

After I had explained how the Historical Society would use the photograph to the then-administrator of Providence Place, Karen Spangler, she invited me to take the photograph anytime and a day and time was set.

Upon arrival, I am led thru a maze of hallways, exchanging smiles and greetings with staff members and several residents along the way. We continue on and enter a small dining area called the Fireside, which is set aside from the larger dining room for family and other patient visitors to dine together in front of a large fireplace and in a more private setting. Beyond is a glass door and as it opens and I see what lies ahead and I am amazed.

Finished with wood paneling, mauve upholstered furniture, long library tables, and with eight beautiful chandeliers hanging from the ceiling giving off subdued lighting, the library of former Governor George M. Leader is a wonderful hidden treasure in Dover Township.

Once acclimated to the room, my eyes almost immediately gravitate to the very large portraits of the Governor and his wife, Mary Jane, hanging on the opposite wall and framed by the United States flag and the Pennsylvania flag on staffs that were in his office in the Capitol building. As my eyes move around the room I see photographs and ephemera everywhere, all from his WWII service, his service to the Commonwealth, his political campaigns and, of course, his Dover farm (**Willow Brook Chicks**). It is a surprising assemblage of the man's political and private life. Surprising, because of its location.

Karen left me to my photography project and when finished, being the opportunist I sometimes can be, I had to return to her office to ask if she thought the Governor would give permission for the Historical Society to borrow items for its display at the upcoming Dover Firemen's Fair. She said she would call him.

When I checked back with Karen she informed me the Governor said the Historical Society could borrow any items in his library. ANY ITEMS, I thought. Wait til Kay hears that one! The only stipulation the Governor added is that everything removed from the library be photographed by someone at Providence Place. When I told Kay the Governor's reply I thought I would have to pick her up off the floor!

The two of us visited the library a few days later and immediately became two kids in the candy shop. We wanted everything in sight. Sorrowfully, we could only remove items for which the Society could guarantee security, which meant selecting only smaller items that would fit in one of the three show cases the Society uses at the fair. The items chosen are too numerous to list in this report, so suffice it to tell that there were numerous photos, newspaper articles, plaques, invitations, including the Governor's invitation to John Fitzgerald Kennedy's inauguration; a seating chart, invitation and menu to a dinner for the Cabinet in the old Governor's Mansion; his Shriner's fez and much more.

The dozens of photographs taken in the library and of items borrowed were downloaded into my computer for different reasons. Many needed cropped and corrections made. Another trip back to the library to retake some photos was necessary due to the difficult lighting there. Some of the Governor's photos were scanned and then corrections and other adjustments, such as brightness, were made. One framed picture could never be photographed or scanned to my satisfaction. It was of the aircraft carrier Governor Leader served on in the U. S. Navy during WWII. I went online and after many hours of searching, found a clear photograph of the USS Randolph on a Navy website that could be printed on quality photographic paper. We ended with a clear and enlarged photo to display along with his Navy nameplate. An enlarged photo of the Governor's Naval Officer's uniform, on a manikin in Providence Place, was hung nearby.

There was no attempt to scan any of the old newspaper articles. The newsprint was already fragile at best and would allow only a little handling. There were many we wanted to use--some included photos with other dignitaries, including Presidents Harry Truman and John Kennedy; family; his inauguration and others. Working with Kevin at NeFra on East Market Street, I was able to acquire some very nice and enlarged prints of most of the newspaper articles we wanted. Kevin also was able to take many of the photos I took or scanned and enlarged them to sizes appropriate for their intended use. We were close to having a well thought out display.

It was show'n-tell time and as I watched her looking at each item being slowly removed from Ne-Fra's bag, I could tell Kay was surprised and even amazed. I remember her asking "how" when she saw the photo of the Governor's many honorary degree hoods hanging in a case in his library. This was a difficult photo to get just right because the case was glass so I was fighting that, the light in the room and the location of that cabinet.

It might have been just a little easier too if those upper torsos used for CPR training weren't lying on the table and in front of the cabinet. I was trying to not end up with a macabre photo!

Space limitations prevent listing the many GDHS members who assisted with setting up, manning and taking down this special exhibit. A big THANKS to you all.



GREATER DOVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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PRESERVING OUR HISTORY FOR OUR FUTURE