



Laurelton, PA Celebrating 200 years 1811-2011

Part IV

People living in Laurelton today might be surprised to know that for two decades there was a bank operating at the corner of State Route 235 and Weikert Road. The Laurelton State Bank was located at the busy intersection directly across the street from Pursley's Store. At the time Laurelton was a lively and growing community. This was likely a result of the investment the state of Pennsylvania was making at the nearby institution off Route 45 at the intersection with Route 235.

The establishment of the Laurelton State Village in the late teens and early 1920's created enthusiasm among the residents of the West End. As the state institution grew it became a tremendous asset to the community. Not only did the facility provide employment opportunities during its construction, it also provided long-term employment to many people who helped to operate the facility during the nearly eight decades it was a part of the landscape. It was in fact the largest employer the West End had, or has ever, known. The loss of this state institution was a serious blow to the residents of Laurelton and all of Hartley Township.

LAURELTON STATE BANK

The Laurelton State Bank was incorporated in June 1920. The corporation purchased the home at 10 Weikert Road in July 1920 from David C. and Mary Johnson. The bank was located on the east side of the first floor. There was an apartment on the second floor and one on the west side of the first floor.

In 1921 Leroy Yagel was President and C. E. VonNeida was Vice President of the Laurelton State Bank. In addition to Yagel and VonNeida, the board of directors consisted of Charles M. Showalter, Clyde C. Shirk, E. Hoyt Walter, Henry H. Herbster, Daniel H. Pursley, John Pontius, and David C. Johnson. The cashier of the bank was Aaron S. Hassinger (1895-1983).

A native of Vicksburg, Hassinger was the son of Charles and Annie (Troxell) Hassinger. He graduated from Mifflinburg High School and later from Susquehanna University. Hassinger began his banking career at the Shamokin National Dime Bank. He relocated to Laurelton where he became cashier of the Laurelton State Bank soon after it was organized. By the time he retired in 1968 Hassinger's banking career had spanned five decades.

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The Millmont Times

DECEMBER 2011

Hartleton Mailbox by Postmaster Gail Hanselman

Hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving....It sure was a beautiful Thanksgiving weekend!! And now it's getting cold just in time to welcome in.....December and you know what that means.....It's Christmas time!!!! Are the children in your family counting down the days?

I know that the new way of communication is email and texting...but I also know people still love to receive hand written mail and this is the season of giving....so go ahead and send those Christmas cards....give a little love by making someone's day, let them know how much they mean to you.

If you need a gift idea...stamps make a wonderful gift and since the price of stamps will change from 44 cents to 45 cents in January, I'm sure your family and friends would love to be well stocked for the New Year. And now that the stamps are all forever stamps you won't have to worry about buying more than they could use before the change on January 22, 2012.

Also with December may come snow....the weather has just been so unpredictable this year.... warm then really cold and then back to warm again with lots and lots and lots of rain....so I guess we'll have to wait and see if all that rain comes in the form of snow...lots and lots of snow....if so, remember to keep your mailboxes clear of snow so the mailman can pull in and out without any issues.

**ORGANIZING BANK
AT LAURELTON
Charter Applied For and
New Institution Soon to
Be Reality.**

In addition to a new bank at West Milton and Allenwood, Union County is to have another at Laurelton, to be known as "The Laurelton State Bank." The people of the west end believe that a bank is no longer a luxury, but a necessity, and plans are now under way to have a first-class banking institution in the thriving west end of the county.

The organization committee is composed of L. E. Yagel, C. M. Showalter, H. H. Herbster, Mart T. Emery and A. N. Sampson. This committee will have charge of the organization work. The subscription list will soon be completed and all matters pertaining to the Laurelton Bank will be turned over to the duly elected officers of the bank.

Editors Note: The above newspaper article is from the February 21, 1920 issue of the Lewisburg Saturday News.

Hassinger and his family lived on the first floor (west side) of the bank building. Aaron and his wife, Ruby (Martz) Hassinger, were the parents of three children: Aaron M., Effie Jane, and Jean.

In February 1929 The Mifflinburg Telegraph reported that the Laurelton State Bank had deposits of \$152,000 dollars. That was up from the \$10,000 they had on opening day over eight years earlier.

Sherman L. Kreisher (1895-1973) was the assistant cashier at the bank by 1933. Born in Lewis Township, Kreisher was the son of Jacob and Sarah (Lepley) Kreisher. He was married to the former Pauline Stout. They were the parents of three children: Sherman Jr., George, and Donald. Sherman Sr. was an educator prior to assuming the assistant cashier position at the Laurelton State Bank. He retired from the Lewisburg National Bank where he was also assistant cashier. He was killed in a tragic automobile accident at the intersection of River Road and Route 15 north of Lewisburg.

Others who were known to have served on the Laurelton State Bank board of directors, in addition to those named above, included: H. G. Lukens, Clayton Hackenberg, Floyd Walter, John J. Bartley, and Mrs. Laura M. VonNeida.

Laurelton resident Raymond E. Middleswarth Jr. recalled opening his first bank account at the Laurelton State Bank when he was around nine or ten years old. The funds he put into his savings account were money he earned while hauling vegetables from the garden and doing odd jobs on the farm of Dan Pursley, and for Dan's mother, a.k.a. "Grandma Pursley". Middleswarth also earned money by mowing grass for residents in Laurelton.

The Laurelton State Bank served the banking needs of families living in the West End until it was absorbed by the Mifflinburg Bank in 1941. The teller's cage that was used in the bank is now owned by the West End Fair Association, and can be seen in their office located on the grounds.

LAURELTON STATE VILLAGE

When state officials were first considering where to situate an institution for feeble-minded women of childbearing age, several sites around Pennsylvania were under consideration. In the end it came down to two sites, and one of those was located in Union County. At the end of the decision making process the site north of Laurelton, located on state forestlands at the east end of the Seven-Mile-Narrows, was chosen. One of the determining factors was that there was no need for the Commonwealth to purchase any property, since the land was already under state ownership. One disadvantage to the Union County site was the requirement to find tillable farmland, and the financial burden that placed upon the state to acquire such lands.

Dr. Oliver W.H. Glover, along with fellow Laurelton resident David R. Pursley, were both instrumental in assisting the state obtain farmland in close proximity to what became known simply as the "Village". Glover and Pursley, along with others, were able to raise \$3,000 to purchase, and donate, 250 acres of tillable land adjacent to the institution.

Pursley was a contractor who was later responsible for construction of some of the buildings on the grounds of the Village. In 1927 his workers erected the dairy barn as well as a hay barn and sheep fold. Dr. Glover was a member of the board of trustees of the institution from May 1915 until his death on Thanksgiving Day 1949. Years later a cottage near the hospital building was named in his honor.

Farmland was an important aspect of the institution since officials wanted to be able to grow and harvest their own supply of fruits, vegetables, and root crops. They also needed farmland in order to raise and feed their livestock, which included milk cows, pigs, and poultry. Planting, harvesting, and canning seasons also provided opportunities for some of the resident girls to find meaningful work. The institution also provided numerous training opportunities to residents in their agricultural programs, including raising stock, and the cultivation of fruits and vegetables.

Dr. Mary Wolfe (1874 - 1962), one of the founders of the institution, was among the group who helped to select the site of the institution. She was a native of Lewisburg and the daughter of Charles S. and Martha (Meixell) Wolf. A 1896 graduate of Bucknell University, Wolfe continued her education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, graduating in 1899.

Following her graduation from University of Michigan she served as assistant physician at Norristown State Hospital. In 1901 she was selected chief physician of the women's division at Norristown and served in that capacity until 1910. Upon leaving Norristown, Wolfe opened a private sanitarium near Holmesburg, PA.

In 1913 when Pennsylvania Governor John K. Tener was looking to establish a new state institution he chose Mary Wolfe to oversee the site selection process. A pioneer in the field of mental health, Wolfe was appointed superintendent of the Pennsylvania Village for Feeble-minded Women of Childbearing age on July 15, 1914. As plans for the new institution were being

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BIRD TALK

by Jim McCormick

One might think of a Thanksgiving feast in the usual sense of a large meal of delicious festive dishes, a gathering of family and friends, and a time to reflect on what we should be thankful for in our lives. While all that is true, this Thanksgiving I was treated to another feast, a feast of the senses, the sights and sounds of nature.

Thanksgiving Day was a beautiful day for many reasons. The day started as a pleasant morning; I stepped out into the clear air and was greeted by a gentle breeze. The sky was blue and nearly cloudless; the warmth from the sun surrounded me. The entire month of November had been unusually, pleasantly warm.

As I was nearing the Covered Bridge, I noticed a group of Blue Jays on the road, possibly feeding on crushed corn kernels from the recent harvest. They seemed to be unusually silent for Jays. They flew up into the treetops as I approached, then scattered in various directions, still mostly silent. Jays are rarely silent unless nesting. I turned onto a side road that ran through the stand of trees, being drawn in by all the activity there. First I saw a bright red male Cardinal, then a female flying from the lower bushes up to the higher branches. Another female and another male appeared nearby. This by itself is not all that unusual, of course; it was just something I noticed. As I looked around I saw more Blue Jays passing through the area. I looked toward the tree tops and heard the familiar 'Ak, Ak, Ak' sounds of Nuthatches as they combed the bark of nearby tree trunks for their breakfast. I then heard the familiar 'pip' of a Downy Woodpecker in the same general area and watched as a male and a female flitted about the smaller branches lower to the ground. Seemingly hard to believe, I then heard the equally familiar sound of a Red-bellied Woodpecker in the higher reaches of the tree trunks. A small group of Titmice made a brief appearance then moved on; I just love to watch these little creatures as they make their way through the branches. To add to this incredible mix of local winter birds I heard a rather slow, deep, thudding coming from the lower trunk of a tree nearby. I was pretty sure I knew what it was and wasn't disappointed when a Pileated Woodpecker flew up and landed somewhere farther down the road. In the midst of this beautiful weather and surrounded by all these birds, my eyes caught sight of something I was stunned by. I saw a bird sitting out in the open that was familiar to me but it seemed totally out of place on a late November day. It was a male Eastern Towhee! The Towhees had left sometime in late September, so what was this male doing here now? I'll probably never know. As I've said many times the behaviors of birds in the winter season are rather strange. It is not uncommon to go for long distances and not see a single bird, then, you will find a large mix of birds all in one place. I have thought about this for some time and have not come up with an explanation. I once thought there might be some local food supply ripening in that one place, but that seems unlikely. It's also interesting to watch as different species seem to simply tolerate each other's presence during the non-breeding season. We have been extremely lucky this fall season with the weather being this mild so far, but we all know that can't last too much longer, so enjoy each day and get out and find your own feast of the senses!



Photograph of Eastern Towhee courtesy of Jim McCormick.



Field Notes, by WCO Dirk Remensnyder

I was speaking to a hunter whom I knew and he was relating to me how his young daughter had made the statement "Daddy you never get any deer when you hunt." The next day he was able to arrow a nice large racked buck, which succumbed to the arrow wound in the middle of a farm pond. With no wind blowing to create waves and no small boat to be had, the hunter recalled his daughters statement, stripped down and swam out into the pond and retrieved his buck.

An individual was recently stopped for late spotlighting and in the back of his truck was a 4-point rack which he admitted he shot in the 2010 season and did not turn in for a mistake kill.

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The photograph above shows some of the men involved in the farm program at the Laurelton State School and Hospital. These men were gathered at Wehr's Dairy near Mifflinburg for a chicken and waffle dinner in January 1955. Front row left to right: Sherman Heims, farmer; James Pollock, farmer; Arthur Houtz, farmer; Harry Davis, dairy herdsman; Alvin Shoemaker, farmer; and John Mitchell, farmer. Back row left to right: William Z. Sleighter, steward; Samuel Z. Haire, farm manager; Harold Hackenberg, swine herdsman; James Hackenberg, farmer; Bruce Shirk, farmer; and Winey Mensch, farmer.

This photograph was published in the January 20, 1955 issue of the Union County Standard-Journal and was provided to me courtesy of Rebecca "Becky" Wenrick of Aaronsburg.

drawn she played an active and enthusiastic role in overseeing the project.

The site of the Village was a bucolic, or rustic, setting for a state institution designed and built to house and care for feeble-minded women between the ages of 16 and 45 years. The first of its kind, the institution was intended to detain, segregate, care for, and train feeble-minded women of childbearing age.

Once the site was chosen, plans were drawn for the erection of multiple cottages. The first major construction projects on the grounds were Cottages 1, 2, and 3, which were completed by 1918. Each of the three cottages contained a total of 25 rooms, and were constructed of native mountain stone, quarried from nearby state forestlands. The first cottages were furnished and ready for occupancy by December of 1919. The first female was admitted to the institution on January 2, 1920.

Subsequent cottages, including Sleighter and Edgett (both built 1926), Showalter (1928), Linn (1938), and McClure (1952) were spaced around a central open mall at the base of Stone Mountain. The impressive Wolfe Building, or A Building (1937), was built at the south end of the mall while Moyer Hall (1928) was built to the north of the mall.

In August 1927 a railroad spur was built from the main line at Laurel Park northward through Laurelton then on toward the Village property. Nearly three miles of track were laid from Yagel's Mill to the heat plant. This spur essentially followed the narrow gauge line that was used by the Laurelton Lumber Company decades earlier, and was used primarily to transport coal to the heat plant. Steam generated at the heat plant was piped to the cottages, laundry, kitchen, cannery and other building's on the property.

The Great Depression slowed construction as well as expenditures at the state institution. In 1938 a building spurt took place at the Village thanks in large measure to federal and state monies allocated for various construction projects. During that period of time the administration building, two additional cottages, hospital, recreation building, addition to heat plant and steam tunnels, and a sewage plant were constructed. These buildings were erected during the administration of Governor George Earle, who was on hand for groundbreaking ceremonies held at the institution. Governor Earle's mother was a longtime member of the board of trustees. It was during the 1930's that a reservoir was constructed north of the institution. The large dam captured water from Stony Run for use at the institution.

The impact this institution had on the nearby community of Laurelton, both in construction jobs as well as full time employment is undeniable. In May of 1938 there were 710 girls in residence, 110 on parole, and a waiting list of 600 girls. There were 122 employees at Laurelton during this period, and the institution encompassed a total of 1,413 acres.

After more than 20 years at the helm, controversy surrounded the departure of Dr. Mary Wolfe in 1940. Wolfe was regarded as a formidable superintendent. She was also a registered democrat who became a thorn in the side of republicans who wanted her replaced. In 1940 Republican Governor Arthur James was in charge in Harrisburg, and the board of trus-

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tees of the Village was made up primarily of republicans. Her future was sealed at a June 1940 trustees meeting when members split 4-4, with one absentee, on the motion of whether or not to retain her services as superintendent of the Laurelton State Village.

On September 1, 1940, Wolfe retired and took up residence at Lewisburg, where she owned a home. She died October 18, 1962. With the exception of a hiatus during WWI she had been at the state institution from its inception, through its construction, and then as superintendent, having spent more than two decades of her life actively involved in the affairs of the Laurelton State Village.

Dr. Wolfe was succeeded by senior physician, Dr. Effie C. Ireland. Ireland was a native of Jeanette, Pennsylvania, and like Wolfe, she was also a graduate of Bucknell University (1924). Ireland attended the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, and was employed at the Harrisburg Hospital before her appointment as physician at the Laurelton institution.

The Village was practically self-sufficient when it came to food, as they were able to grow a large percentage of what was consumed at the institution. The tillable farmland surrounding the institution also provided a means of supplying food for the dairy herd, pigs and other animals raised on state owned land. In 1950 the institution was producing 50% of its food costs, while at the same time supplying other state institutions with their surplus. Wheat, corn, and oats were planted and harvested for use by the dairy operation. Vegetable and root crops such as potatoes, tomatoes, beans, carrots, and onions were grown on state owned lands for use by the institution. The 1949 potato harvest was so bountiful that the Laurelton State Village shipped an estimated 200,000 pounds to other state institutions.

In the 1950's Bruce Folk was responsible for the dairy herd, and during his tenure the Village was the recipient of awards for both quality and production of the milk produced by their herd. Harold Hackenburg was in charge of the pig farm and butchering operation. The farm manager was J. Frank Snyder, while James Pollock headed the truck garden.

It was estimated in 1951 that 90% of the girls in residence were able to perform some type of labor. At that time the resident population was around 915 girls with an additional 200 on parole. The cannery at the Village employed as many as 55 to 60 girls, while the kitchen and bakery employed an additional 100. There were 120 girls employed in the fields as well as grounds keeping and another 55 working in the laundry. The girls were also instructed how to do other routine work at the institution including – sewing and cleaning. The girls produced a majority of the clothing they wore on a daily basis at the facility.

In the mid 1950's several employees leveled allegation of mistreatment by staff members against the residents. Those claims had the institution in an uproar and soon controversy enveloped the superintendent (Ireland), her assistant, Dr. Catherine Edgett, the board of trustees, and numerous employees. After a short time state and local politicians were involved in the matter before it spread to Harrisburg and the head of the Department of Welfare (Harry Shapiro) and eventually into Governor George Leader's office. Storm clouds brewed as a stream of charges including administrative malpractice and the barbarous mistreatment of inmates were leveled. Much of the hullabaloo surrounded residents housed in Johnston Cottage, which at that time housed girls who were incorrigible.

Ireland and Edgett were both on the hot seat as the head of the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare investigated the allegations. Soon a committee of state House and Senate members were investigating the matter on site and holding weeks of hearings in Harrisburg. The controversy eventually led to the retirement of both Ireland and Edgett.

Life for the residents at the Laurelton Village was more than just work. Some of the girls attended home economics classes. A new education building was constructed in 1969, one of the last major building projects on the grounds of the state institution. Recreation was also a part of life for residents. The recreation hall, later named Moyer Hall, was built in 1938. Residents were involved in various activities including chorus, operettas, drama club, and Christmas plays. The choir also traveled outside the institution into neighboring counties to perform. Religious services were offered to the girls, and some folks may remember going to the Village to watch a movie with the resident population on "movie night".

When the order was handed down that the girls were no longer permitted to work in the fields, dairy, and other operations at the institution it came as quite a shock. Many of the girls were distraught, and some actually shed tears, when they were no longer permitted to carry out the duties, chores, and responsibilities they had performed for years.

A radical change took place at the institution in 1969 when the decision was made to admit males into the resident population. Previously only females were admitted to the institution, and henceforth there was a mix of both sexes.

The state owned and operated institution experienced several name changes during the eight decades it was in operation. In 1923, under an order by Governor Gifford Pinchot the name was changed from the Pennsylvania Village for Feebleminded Women of Childbearing age to the Laurelton State Village. Thirty-eight years later (1961) the name changed to the Laurelton State School and Hospital. The last name change occurred in 1976 when the facility became known simply as the Laurelton Center.

In 1977 plans were announced to demolish buildings on the grounds, including Cottage 4. State representatives and other elected officials intervened and the Department of Welfare dropped plans to raze any of the beautiful mountain stone buildings. However, some cottages were shuttered and the resident population continued to decline. In 1982 the Department of General Services held a public auction of much of the state owned farm machinery that had been used at the Laurelton Center.

In 1996 the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare announced plans to close Laurelton Center and transfer the

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Biography of Leona (Sholter) Wirt - Centenarian



Leona (Sholter) Wirt, currently a resident of Riverwoods in Lewisburg, will be celebrating a significant and noteworthy milestone on the 12th of this month – her 100th birthday! Born in the small village of Weikert, in the Tight End of Union County, on December 12, 1911, Leona was the oldest of three children of the late Asa R. and Verna T. (Erdley) Sholter. Her two younger siblings were George J. Sholter (1913- 1997) and Joseph R. Sholter (1928-1991). The youngest sibling, Joe came into the family while Leona was attending high school. Growing up he sometimes referred to his older sister as “Mama Sis”.

Leona, like her siblings, was born in the house located at 5536 Weikert Road, next door to the present day Weikert Post Office. This is the same house where her father, Asa, was born (1887) and where he died (1967).

Her mother’s side of the family, the Erdley’s, were natives of the Middleburg area of Snyder County. Her father’s side of the family were residents of the Tight End of Union County for many years. They (the Sholter’s) were some of the earliest settlers in that section of the county as Leona’s father (Asa), grandfather (George), and great-grandfather (John Sholter) spent most of their lives in that area.

Asa Sholter was a well-known businessman in the Tight End, having owned and operated a general store in that community for many years. During his tenure as retail merchant in Weikert his store was located at three different locations. His first store was located in the building that is now occupied by the Watsontown Rod and Gun Club. His next place of business was a building that he and his father built adjacent (north side) to the gun club. This property is referred to as the “Tin Shanty”. Asa’s last place of business was the now vacant store building located at 5540 Weikert Road.

Owning and operating a small retail business in a remote and sparsely populated section of the county was not without its challenges. The hunting, fishing, and camping seasons always brought an influx of people into the area, and consequently an increase in business to the family owned and operated store in Weikert.

Leona stated that when the search for iron ore in the Weikert area was at its peak, it provided employment opportunities to numerous men living in that community. She remembered that some of the old mines were dug into the hillsides, and had cave-like openings that a person could walk in. The zeal to quarry iron ore in and around Weikert was so forceful that the railroad constructed a short spur line to the mine in order to aid the operation.

However, when the mining ventures failed to produce quantities and quality of ore the operations ceased, and men who were employed in the mining business lost their jobs and their way of earning a living. Asa Sholter ran a friendly hometown business where he was well acquainted with his customers, extending credit for many who purchased their goods from him. While it was a courteous gesture on Sholter’s part, there were times when it left this small businessman at a serious disadvantage. Leona recalled the times when her dad was forced to work outside the store in order to meet his personal financial obligations. Asa’s carpentry skills proved useful during those rough times.

It was a nearly one-mile trek from her home in Weikert to the Hironimus Schoolhouse when Leona began attending at age five. The schoolhouse and the nearby church shared the same name and were located on opposite ends of the cemetery. The names of some of the teachers she had during her eight-year attendance at the one-room schoolhouse include Louis Pursley, Grace Johnson, George Aumiller and Milford Johnson. While she particularly enjoyed the teaching style and the personality of Grace Johnson, memories of Aumiller revolve around his firmness.

The move from the grammar school at Hironimus to the Hartley Township High School in Laurelton was not without its challenges. Since there was no school district sponsored transportation in the extreme west end of the county; during her freshman and sophomore years, she, along with her parents had to find an alternative means of getting to school each day. Transporting her back and forth from Weikert to Laurelton in a vehicle was not an option, and peddling a bicycle six miles over rough and hilly terrain from her home to the schoolhouse was also out of the question.

During her freshman and sophomore years at the Hartley Township High School, Leona walked to the Weikert Station in the morning in order to catch a ride on the eastbound passenger train. When the train stopped at the Glen Iron station she disembarked before heading to the Hartley Township High School in Laurelton. If she had sufficient funds, she could pay for a taxi ride on Bogenreiff’s hack from the station to the schoolhouse. Otherwise she would walk from Glen Iron to the schoolhouse. It was during those first two years of high school that Leona was forced to skip her last afternoon class so she could trek back to the Glen Iron Station in order to catch the west bound passenger train for Weikert.

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Transportation improved during her junior and senior years after Cecil Hironimus entered into a contract with the school district to transport Leona and other Tight End students to and from the high school each day in his touring car.

Graduating from the Hartley Township High School with the class of 1929, Leona expressed an interest in becoming a nurse. While her father was not pleased with the thought of his daughter leaving home for the big city of Philadelphia to pursue a nursing career, he nonetheless conceded. While living in Philadelphia she secured a job working for a handicapped doctor. This doctor referred to Leona as the "Nittany Lioness" after she made it clear to him exactly where the small village of Weikert was located relative to the more familiar area of State College.

Although she enrolled in classes and even purchased uniforms, Leona did not take any college nursing courses. Instead, after briefly living in the City of Brotherly Love, she returned to the Tight End of Union County. Asa was happy that his daughter had returned to Weikert.

As a young girl Leona enjoyed helping her father in the store as she had opportunities to interact with the many local people who patronized her father's business. Penns Creek along with the large tracts of nearby state forestlands were enticements that attracted many outsiders to that section of the county during the hunting, fishing, and camping seasons. Their arrival was not only good for Sholter's Store, it also opened opportunities for Leona to meet many new people, some of whom she has remained in contact with throughout her life.

One individual she had an opportunity to meet in Weikert was a young man by the name of Benjamin Wirt. A Northumberland County native, he found his way to Weikert when he, his family, and friends traveled to the Tight End on camping excursions. He eventually turned his eyes, his interest, and his attention in Leona's direction. Although it took place more than eight decades ago, she still has a little sparkle in her eye when she recalls the time Ben gazed at her from a distance while she was out on a limb picking cherries from a tree that was located across the road from Sholter's Store in Weikert.

When Ben and Leona met he was attending classes at Susquehanna University. As a member of a fraternity he invited Leona to accompany him to dances and other activities held on the campus. He traveled from Selinsgrove to Weikert so he could pick her up and take her to events at the college in Selinsgrove. They corresponded almost daily while Ben was in college, and they dated for about 18 months before discussing wedding plans. When they decided to marry, they thought the best way to proceed was to elope. Their plans were a closely held secret and only a few people knew of their intentions.

The night they eloped Ben was staying at the home of David and Emma Libby, which was on the west side of her father's store. They had prearranged the time they were to meet that night. Leona managed to get out of her home unnoticed and Ben was able to exit the Libby house without being spotted. Together they left the village of Weikert. However, before she left the house Leona drafted a letter to her parents so they would know where she was headed, and what she about to do. They went to Frederick, Maryland, where they were married on December 30, 1931. Leona had celebrated her 20th birthday only days earlier.

By the time they were married Ben had graduated from Susquehanna University and was teaching school at Herndon. When they returned to Pennsylvania, Ben went back to his job, and they went to housekeeping a short distance from the school where he was teaching. Eventually the couple was blessed with the birth of two daughters, Connie and Frances. Ben Wirt spent his teaching career at Herndon, Kulpmont, and Sunbury.

While they lived in Northumberland County, they never lost touch with Weikert as they maintained a cottage in that rural West End community. The cottage was located only a short distance from where Leona was born and was a quiet peaceful place to spend the summer months. Since it was close to her dad's store Leona was always ready to lend a hand. Years later when her brother, Joe, took over the store from his father she also helped him tend to the business when she was needed.

With two children, four grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren, Leona considers herself to be blessed. Considering the average life expectancy of a female born in 1911 was only age 54, she has certainly belied those statistics. She credits her longevity to the fact that "she lived right, ate fairly normal, and I didn't often have to take any medicine."

At age 95 she was still able to wade in Penns Creek at the Spinning Wheel. A place she was quite familiar with, having spent many a summer day there during her youth. Before glaucoma robbed her of her vision she regularly corresponded with military service men as well as friends of hers that are spread across the country. Paul Boyer of the Sunbury Daily Item wrote an article about Leona corresponding with soldiers from WWII up to the Gulf War.

In 1997 Commonwealth Secretary, Yvette Kane, recognized Leona and 80 fellow residents of Northumberland County for having voted in 50 straight elections. At the time Leona had voted in Northumberland County for 63 years.

For those who would like to honor Leona with a birthday card on her 100th birthday you may do so by writing to her in care of Connie Bastian, P.O. Box 115, Weikert, Pa 17885. Since Connie calls everyday in order to read newspaper articles and other items of interest to her mother, she will be happy to pass along any birthday greeting this centenarian receives. Happy 100th Birthday Leona!

TLS

Editor's Note: My thanks Leona (Sholter) Wirt of Lewisburg, Bill and Connie (Wirt) Bastian of Weikert, and Jeff Bastian of Mifflinburg for their help with this article.

The small photograph in the upper left hand corner of page one shows a winter view of one of the mountain stone cottages on the grounds of the Laurelton State School.

Recipe of the Month

by Janice (Dorman) Shively

Crab Won Tons

1 C. or a 6 oz. can of crabmeat
½ C. ricotta cheese
1 T. chopped parsley
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
1-package small won ton wrappers
Vegetable or peanut oil for deep-frying
Preheat oil to 350° F.

Stir together the first five ingredients. Place about 1 tsp. of mix in the center of won-ton wrapper. Dip your finger in a bowl of water and go around all four sides of the won-ton wrapper. Pull two corners of wrapper together and then pull

the other two corners up to meet at the point. Squeeze the air out as you seal the seams together. It's important that they are sealed or the filling will ooze out the sides while frying. Deep fry in small batches for about 2 minutes. Yields: about 20 won tons.

This recipe was shared with me about 20 years ago by my co-worker and friend Donna Prince, of Middleburg. It's easy to prepare, and makes a great appetizer for your holiday gatherings. There is no need to buy expensive crab meat, as the canned meat is adequate for this recipe. The won tons are best right out of the deep fryer. They can be re-heated at 350° for about 7 minutes if you have any left over. ENJOY!



(Continued from page 5)

193 residents to other state institutions by June 30, 1998. That news came as a shock to the 400 employees. Efforts to find a new use for the state institution began shortly after the announcement. A task force consisting of 25 local leaders was empanelled to assist state officials in their efforts.

Following a series of hearings the task force settled on two acceptable uses for the facility. Those two recommendations from the task force to Governor Ridge in April 1998 included Hickernell Springs Resort and Hampton Laurelton Associates L.P. When the decision was made to sell the property the asking price was nearly \$4 million dollars. A deal between the state and Hampton Laurelton Associates L.P. fell through in September 2000. The Hickernell Springs Resort plan also crumbled when the state balked at putting any money into their project.

An exciting use of the former state institution arose in late 2002 when Gary Ream, then owner of the Woodward Camp, expressed his desire to purchase the property. However, like earlier proposals, the Woodward Camp deal collapsed and once again the Laurelton Center was on the market.

The state advertised the 50 building, 623,426 square feet of space, and 340 acres in September 2004. Once more there was hope that someone would come forward and get the property onto the tax rolls, while at the same time create employment opportunities for folks living in this end of the county. When Firetree Ltd., a drug and alcohol treatment center, announced plans to purchase the property local residents were quick to express their reservations about such a facility in close proximity to their homes. Concern from local, county, and state politicians, as well as the public scuttled Firetree's plans.

In 2005 the state finally found a buyer for the property. Gary Murphy, head of Mountain Valley Inc. purchased the former Laurelton Center for \$1,632,500.00. Murphy's proposal to turn the former state institution into a convention center, restaurant, dude ranch, along with other outdoor recreation activities have yet to come to fruition. While the property has been returned to the tax rolls, for the most part the mountain stone buildings and the beautifully landscaped property, eight decades in the making, remain off limits.

TLS

Editor's Note: My thanks to the following people who provided information used in this article: Laurelton residents Raymond E. Middleswarth Jr., and Lois (Shirk) Pick; Becky Wenrick of Aaronsburg; and Lulu Hoffman of Millmont.

Sources: The Biennial Report of the Laurelton State Village at Laurelton, Union County, Pennsylvania for Period Ending May 31, 1950; The History of the Laurelton State Village written by Dr. Mary Vanuxem in 1938 and published in Volume II of the Union County Heritage (a publication of The Union County Historical Society); The Mifflinburg Telegraph; and The Lewisburg Saturday News.

From the diary of the late Elder Greene Shively, born in White Springs in 1870 and a resident of Millmont from 1918 until his death in 1954:

Saturday December 25, 1943—CHRISTMAS - 13 above at 9, clear. Mother and I ate fried potatoes and mush for dinner. We are going to have our Christmas dinner tomorrow when Edmund's and Kenneth and his wife will be here. Edmund's came to our place this evening. David's called this evening, and Miss Blackford (Mrs. Charles Blackford's daughter) is home for a visit.

Penlines From my Kitchen to Yours

by Lucy Hoover

October 24, 2011

Paul and Mary Weaver of Mifflinburg had a public auction. Clayton and Lucinda Zimmerman of Mifflinburg were the buyers of the home. The greenhouses were sold separately to different buyers and will be moved elsewhere.

October 28

Clair and Lucinda Zimmerman of Lewisburg have their fifth son, named Marvin. Grandparents are Aaron and Susie Zimmerman and Daniel and Alice Burkholder.

Leon and Linda Hoover's baby, Kendra, is still doing well since her bone marrow transplant. They will need to be very careful that she isn't exposed to too many germs for the next six months.

October 20

Samuel and Alice Horning of Mifflinburg are having public auction to sell their farm equipment. They will be moving off the farm on November 1. Their son Leroy and his wife Mary-Ann will take over and Sam and Alice will move in the house they are vacating.

November 5

Our friend, Sonny (71), of Schuylkill Haven had one day surgery yesterday. He is at our house to recover.

November 8

Aaron Martin (76) of Lewisburg had a stroke on Sunday and passed away tonight.

Our neighbor, Vernon Martin, had surgery and will need to wear a sling.

November 12

Today was the wedding of James Zimmerman and Mary Martin, both of Mifflinburg.

Thank You!

I would like to thank the following people for making monetary donations toward the publication of this newsletter: Randall Boob and Leroy Wenrick of Laurelton; Pauline Shively, LuLu Hoffman and Seibert and Connie Teichman of Millmont; Billy and Lindy Mattern, Edna Ammon, and Franklin and Helen Raker all of Mifflinburg; and Robert and Jeanne Jolly of Weikert.

I would like to welcome the following new subscribers: Patricia Heilner of Harrisburg; Robert Boop of Clearfield; Edwin Martin of Millmont; Jerry Martin of Lewisburg; and Donald Moore of Spring Mills.

Thanks also to everyone who renewed their subscriptions for an additional year. Your support is what helps to make this newsletter possible, and is greatly appreciated!!

I would also like to thank Ronald Keister of Laurelton for providing me with copies of some unique photographs of the Laurelton Lumber Company and the Lincoln Chapel Church, all of which will be featured in a future issue of this newsletter; Bob and Jeanne Jolly for donating back issues of The Mifflinburg Telegraph; and Billy Mattern for providing information about the L & T Railroad that will be used in a future issue.

Remembrance

Karen Lynn King, 42, of Millmont for the past 20 years, passed away early Sunday morning, October 30, 2011, at her home after a long and courageous battle with a prolonged illness.

She was born March 25, 1969, in Lewisburg, a daughter of Gail A. (Wetzel) Walter, of New Berlin, and the late Kenneth R. Walter. On March 2, 1991, in United Church of Christ, Kratzerville, she married Frederick W. King, who survives. Karen and Fred were the proud parents of two daughters, Sarah and Jessica, both at home.

She was a 1987 graduate of Mifflinburg Area High School and was proud of her business education. Karen's sense of business and the ability to find or seek bargains was a god-send to her family. Karen managed her household with a sense of management that would make any corporation executive proud to have known her.

During Karen's life, she worked at Tara-Lee Sportswear, New Berlin. Upon the closing of the plant, Karen became a child caregiver at her home. Children from throughout western Union County were well cared for by Karen while their parents worked. Many parents thought of Karen as part of their family, and she was well loved.

Karen was a member of United Church of Christ, Kratzerville.

She loved handicrafts and was a talented cross-stitcher. During her illness, Karen remained busy and sold her plastic canvas creations at businesses and yard sales. Many people said they had never seen such beautiful handiwork.

Karen enjoyed supporting her husband's hunting hobby and would accompany Fred to silhouette shoots. This became a family event that everyone looked forward to during the years. She enjoyed watching NASCAR events, with her favorite driver being Jimmy Johnson. Karen also enjoyed spending time with and caring for her nieces.

Surviving, in addition to her husband of 20 years and her mother, are two daughters, Sarah L. King and Jessica A. King, both of Millmont; one sister and brother-in-law, Chrissy L. and Jason Lamey, of White Springs; three nieces, Gabby and Kassie Lamey, of White Springs, and Erica Hollister, of Northumberland; two sisters-in-law, Kim King, of Mazeppa, and Susan Trego, of Northumberland; mother-in-law, Thelma King, of Mazeppa; and extended family in the York area who she traveled to see frequently.

She was preceded in death by her paternal grandparents, Raymond and Sarah Walter; maternal grandparents, Harry and Arlene Wetzel; step-grandfather, Charles "Chap" Wilbert; and several of her beloved pets, Bella, Bear and Bob the catfish.

Editor's Note: Karen's passing was the fourth time this year that residents of Millmont mourned the loss of a neighbor. A rather tragic number for a community of this size. In January we lost Helen Wert, in April we lost Delphia Shirk, in October we lost both John Weaver and Karen King.

Blessings from the Bible

By Brenda Weaver

*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Psalm 103:1-2*

“The holidays will be hard.” People remind me. I already know they will be very hard. My soul mate and best friend is missing. People mean well. They want me to know they care. And I am glad they *do* care. But rather than reminders of the obvious, I want ideas of how to cope, how to *enjoy* special holidays even in my grief.

I braced for the first holiday without my husband—Thanksgiving Day. Despite my great loss I knew I had much for which to be thankful. Like the Psalmist, I wanted to bless the Lord.

My favorite kitchen helper didn’t hold the turkey while I stuffed it. And I lifted the bird into the oven myself. I congratulated myself when I had the job accomplished by 7:10 a.m. (*Bless the Lord, O my soul!*)

It felt right to spend the day with John’s parents. I carried the delicious-smelling turkey into their warm and welcoming home. (*Bless the Lord, O my soul!*) How pleasant to work beside my mother-in-law and my daughter in the kitchen. Soon the table was covered with an autumn tablecloth and dishes of steaming food. There were ten of us, not enough to miscount really, but somehow we did. I felt a stab of pain as my daughter removed the place setting next to mine, leaving a gaping hole. But soon John’s father was thanking God for the food and our blessings. I remembered John was enjoying the splendors of Glory. (*Bless the Lord, O my soul!*)

Late in the day the sun dipped below the trees. Twilight tinted the sky and the puddles pink. I walked on a quiet, country road with my teenage son and two of my grandchildren. Chilly, I sorely missed the presence of my tall husband. I remembered the warmth of his arm around my shoulders. “I’ll walk beside you so my coat will keep you warm,” my four-year-old grandson said. Then he reached up to put his around me. His small arm didn’t blanket my shoulders like his grandpa’s would have. But he kept his arm in place the rest of the way back to the house. Though my shoulders were still cold, my heart was warm. God knew I missed my tall friend, but in love He comforted me through my small friend. And as twilight died away into dusk, I thanked the Lord for a happy—though sad Thanksgiving Day.

Later still, in darkness, my daughter and I stood at his grave. Nearby, lights glowed from the windows of the houses in our small village. I let my grief flow forth in all its turbulence as I wept for a long time. This time it was my daughter’s arm around my shoulders. Relieved by my tears, I was able to end the day comforted again.

Sorrow punctuated my thankfulness throughout this first holiday; but I endured, I knew the love of family and friends, and I had a chance to express my profound grief. A deep settled peace, far beneath the crashing waves of grief, lulled me into peaceful sleep. (*Bless the Lord, O my soul!*)

Prayer for Today:

Oh Lord, I want to thank You for the many blessings You’ve poured upon me and my family. You know and understand our grief. You see our tears. You’ve promised to one day wipe them all away. I would never have chosen to lose my husband, and the children would never have chosen to lose their father, but we trust You to care for and comfort us. We know You can. We believe You will. Bless You, Lord, O my soul!

Post Script:

“Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.” Proverbs 12:25

I finished writing this article today and sent it out to friends and the editor of The Millmont Times. But my heart felt hollow. On this day I was having trouble feeling thankful. The day slipped away and not enough things are crossed off my “to do list.” I did take care of some things, but it is not pleasant to remove one’s husband’s name from utilities accounts or order checks without his name above my own.

Weary, I checked emails before climbing those 16 stairs to bed. (On evenings when I used to complain to John about being too tired to climb them he would grin and say, “If you take two at a time there are only eight.” And I noted that our son, Stan, did just that over an hour ago, his long legs landing him upstairs with swift grace.) To my delight I found seven emails from friends or family members. (I feel my thankfulness returning!) As I read them I remembered advice John and I had been given by a wise man many years ago: “People are more important than things.” Unfinished tasks may still clutter my list, but I’ve connected with, or been blessed by, friends and family today. Why, I even babysat my grandchildren for several hours, giving my daughter and son-in-law rare time alone. And I enjoyed spending time with my daughter on her day off from school.

Maybe I can try those stairs two at a time...!

Good night.

2011 CHRISTMAS AT THE HARTLETON UNION CHURCH

On Friday, December 16th at 7:00 pm, the Joseph Gobin Camp 503, Sons of Union Veterans, and the Ladies Auxiliary of Camp 503, will create a Christmas tribute to our Civil War ancestors. Joining the Camp Gobin members will be Tom Stickley, portraying Union Surgeon, Dr. Theodore Christ as well as other reenactors from the area. A special tribute to the Civil War will be delivered by John Deppen and Pastor John Lee, portraying Rev. Wm. McCormick who will lead the prayers.

The Sons of Union Veterans are charged with keeping the mission of the Grand Army of the Republic alive. The GAR was formed after the Civil War by the veterans of that war.

A special night is planned which will include the singing of the Christmas carols that were popular with both the Union and Confederate armies. Letters from Civil War soldiers will be read by members of the reenactment community. The importance of Thomas Nast, the 19th century political cartoonist will be shared – he is credited with giving us “Jolly Old St. Nicholas” which he created for Union soldiers.

All are welcome to come to the Union Church in Hartleton where you will have an opportunity to experience a Civil War Christmas tribute, view the beautiful luminaries placed by the supporters of the church, meet some wonderful reenactors and learn about our soldiers who were away at war.

A time of refreshments and fellowship will follow the church service. For more information please contact Linda Estuipinan Snook, 966-5052 or Laurie Hughes, 922-4771.

Notice to mail subscribers

Some of you have probably noticed over the last few months that your newsletter arrival is not as timely as it used to be. The postal service has made changes in the way the mail is moved from the Millmont post office to your door. Previously, local mail was taken directly from the Millmont Post Office to the outlying offices including Hartleton, Laurelton, Swengel, Weikert and Mifflinburg. With the change that has taken place all mail must now go to the Harrisburg office before it can be delivered to you.

Looking Back

The newspaper article below was originally published in the December 28, 1922 edition of The Mifflinburg Telegraph.

THE COMMUNITY FAIR AT LAURELTON, DEC. 15th

Hartley Township can boast of having a Fair all its own. This year it was held in the high school building in Laurelton on December 15th. The Fair is different from most fairs in that many of its exhibits are sold and the funds raised are used for community betterment. Last year the receipts went toward buying new books for the Library. This year a sum of \$68.28 was turned over to the Fire-Engine Fund of the district. In all probability the money next year will be used to equip the Consolidated Schools at Laurelton with Delco-Light which has been so thoroughly demonstrated by Bly Bros. of Milton by generously furnishing light for this Fair and for other entertainments in the past.

Persons who are particular about the quality of goods they buy should make it a point to be present at this Fair each year because then they have a chance to buy prize-takers. This year all of the cooking exhibits were sold, including cakes, candies, pies, cookies, doughnuts, jellies, and home-made canned fruits and vegetables. Among the agricultural products sold were eggs, apples, potatoes, onions, corn, oats, and wheat. The needlework department had only one article for sale but their display of local sewing, knitting, crotcheting, embroidery, and tatting was worthy of a great deal of praise. The corner of antiques and relics showed an interesting and costly collection, though none were for sale. The exhibit of school work presented some excellent examples of Penmanship and drawing. A number of pieces of wood-carving, a collection of stuffed animals beautifully arranged to represent a Hunter's Paradise, a Fish Pond, and Fortune Teller were other attractions which added greatly to the spirit and enthusiasm of the day.

In the evening the judges affixed the awards. The Gold Ribbon for the best exhibit of the fair was given to an embroidered table cover submitted by Mrs. S. I. Gettig. A Blue Ribbon was also attached to this for being the best in the needlework department. In the other departments blue ribbons were given to a silk shawl, (100 years old) owned by Hannah Showalter, to a bunch of onions presented by the Pennsylvania Village, to a cake made by Mrs. Calvin Crossgrove, to the Hunter's paradise arranged by W. J. Irvin and to a pencil drawing by Paul Reamer. A list of the articles to which red ribbons were awarded and a detailed Financial Report of the Fair are posted at each of the post offices in Hartley Township: Weikert, Glen Iron, and Laurelton.

The evening program, consisting of readings by Professor Rassweiler of Bucknell and musical numbers by local talent, was well attended. The large auditorium formed by taking down the partition between two school rooms was filled to overflowing.

The various committees wish to thank all persons who either directly or indirectly contributed to the success of this Fair.

At the next Parent Teacher Meeting, to be held near the last of January, preliminary arrangements will be made to make the Fair next year an even greater success than this year.

Watch for it! The Hartley Township Community Fair is now a regular event which comes every year near Deer Hunting Season.

The Millmont Times is distributed during the first week of each month, and is available through mail subscriptions. Mail subscriptions are \$10 per year (12 issues). The newsletter is also available at Koch's Country Store in Hartleton, PA. Telephone 922.0452. The single issue cost is \$1.50.

Internet subscriptions can be obtained FREE by visiting:
www.millmonttimes.com

All of the newsletters published between January 2004 to the current issue are now available on the website.

Please use the following address if you are interested in contacting the editor, subscribing to the newsletter, making a donation, sending a gift subscription, or changing your address: Tony Shively, Post Office Box 3, Millmont PA 17845, telephone: (570) 922.4297 or E-mail: tshively@dejazzd.com

Are You Moving?

If you are planning to move, or if your post office mailing address is about to change, please notify The Millmont Times at P. O. Box 3, Millmont, PA 17845, as soon as possible. This newsletter is distributed bulk rate each month, and therefore it will not be forwarded by the United States Postal Service to your new address. All undeliverable newsletters are disposed of by the United States Postal Service. If there are any changes in your postal mailing address you can contact me at (570) 922.4297 or you can send an email to: tshively@dejazzd.com

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 - Matt Klauger | 7 - Ivan Oberholtzer | 22 - Robert Page |
| 1 - Eli & Anna Shirk - 1960 | 8 - Ruth Ely | 23 - Kurwin Martin |
| 1 - Terry Witmer | 8 - James Gross | 24 - Shirley Boyer |
| 1 - Kyle Blyler | 8 - Nicole Gross | 24 - Ernest Boney |
| 1 - Robert Katherman | 8 - Catherine Martin | 24 - Jeremy Beaver |
| 2 - Tom and Cindy Potoeski - 1978 | 9 - Cheryl Shively | 24 - Charity Yarger |
| 2 - Robert Wagner | 10 - Wilma Brubaker | 25 - Donald L. Shively |
| 3 - Thelma Pontius | 11 - David Schneeberg | 25 - LaRue Lyons |
| 3 - Marian L. Zimmerman | 11 - Nancy Heckman | 27 - Colin Camp |
| 3 - William "Bill" Levant | 11 - Curvin Hoover | 28 - George Sholter Jr. |
| 3 - Myrna Walter | 11 - Mike Hackenberg | 28 - Fred & Margie Yarger - 1950 |
| 3 - Gordon Libby | 12 - Leona Wirt - 100! | 28 - Etta Zimmerman |
| 4 - Mark Hartman | 13 - Dennis Susan | 28 - Phares Zimmerman |
| 5 - Jacque & Julie Libby - 1959 | 13 - Robert Vanatta | 29 - Bob & Bernice Dluge - 1948 |
| 5 - Gordon & Polly Libby - 1960 | 14 - Levi Martin | 29 - Charles & Lois Feaster - 1957 |
| 5 - Perry & Brenda Klingman - 1987 | 14 - Joe Schnure | 29 - Linda Dorman |
| 5 - Kimmy Smith | 15 - Jane Benner | 29 - Bob Wagner Jr. |
| 5 - Perry Klingman | 15 - Terry Mensch | 31 - Jayden Beaver |
| 6 - Mary Doebler | 16 - Galen Graham | 31 - Leon & Lydia Zimmerman - 1992 |
| 6 - Betty Motter | 17 - Oscar Maust | |
| 6 - Sandra Wagner | 17 - Anna Maria Maust | |
| 6 - Doris Fultz | 19 - Donna Maust | |
| 7 - Orvis & Betty Wallace - 1940 | 21 - Donald & Betty Zechman - 1956 | |
| 7 - Melvin & Doris Walter - 1956 | 21 - Anthony Guida | |

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