

# Wenonah Historical Society

PO Box 32  
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090-0032

## Newsletter

Volume 1 Issue 8 November 2003

### A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT ROCCO DOTO

Dear Members,

Hello everyone. The October meeting was one of our best-attended meetings. There were more than 60 people in attendance. (and numerous spirits). I guess the South Jersey Ghost research group appeals to a lot of people especially during the Halloween season. I apologize for not being there but my wife and I were out of Town.

The program for the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting is "Landmark Lucy", by Margaret Westfield of Westfield Architects and Preservation Consultants. Margaret's company was responsible for the restoration of this Historic landmark in Margate. We are also very lucky that the New Jersey Council for the Humanities is sponsoring the program for us. The meeting is open to the general public, so please feel free to bring a friend.

Vicki McCall, Eileen Caraker, Jack Sheppard and I had a very productive meeting with Mayor Capaldi and other council members related to the Train station Community Center. We were assured that everything is being done to expedite the complete replacement of the roof.

The October Wenonah Newsletter reiterated this and the roofing contract has been awarded.

Once the roof is complete we have been told that other needed repairs will be attended to by Borough Council. I can assure you that we will work closely with borough officials to make sure our "Town Jewel" is preserved into the future. Once the new roof is on we can get started preparing the upper

### WHS OFFICERS 2003

**President:** *Rocco Doto*  
**Vice Pres.** *Jack Sheppard Sr.*  
**Secretary** *Eileen Caraker*  
**Treasurer** *Carol Wiltsee*  
**Corr. Sec.** *Betty MacLeod*  
**Trustee** *Vicki McCall*

**Meetings second Friday of the month at the Wenonah Community Center except June, July and August**

rooms of the train station for our Wenonah Museum. We will be looking for lots of volunteers.

I look forward to seeing you at the November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### NOVEMBER MEETING PROGRAM

Guest speaker Margaret Westfield, RA is a historic architect in Westfield Architects & Preservation Consultants. She will present a slide show about New Jersey's famous

seashore landmark Lucy the Elephant.

The presentation will cover the initial construction and rich history. Illustrations of the progressive decay that threatened her with demolition is followed by the details of the thirty-year restoration campaign that ultimately secured Lucy's place as one of New Jersey's premiere tourist destinations.

### DECEMBER CHRISTMAS MEETING

Our annual Christmas Party will be Friday December 12<sup>th</sup> at the Community Center. Wine and Cheese at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner at 6:30. "Chef Bud" will cater it. The cost is \$15.00 per person. Please bring a door prize (unwrapped). RSVP to Betty MacLeod at 468-6981 or Lucy Schulz at 468-5392 before Friday Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>.

### TIDBITS FROM THE ARCHIVES

In 1886 our Schoolteachers' Salary ranged from \$25.00 to \$55.00 per month. For the 1891/92 school year the total school expenditures were as follows: Teachers salaries (\$1,000.00), fuel (\$20.07), mortgage (\$500.00), Incidentals (\$263.61). A receipt dated December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1889, indicates \$5.00 was paid for sweeping the schoolhouse for 15 weeks.

By Jack Sheppard Sr.

Two years ago on November 30, 2001, as the representative of the Wenonah Historical Society I sat in on a meeting with officials of the NJ Department of Transportation at which the TEA 21 railroad restoration grant was reviewed.

The following is a copy of the description in the grant application of areas needing rehabilitation to restore our unique and invaluable railroad station community center.

*NJDOT TEA 21 Grant Application by Municipal Clerk Dawn Human Grant for “Rehabilitation and Operation of a Historic Transportation Building”. The grant was announced in August, 2001*

*The train station is over 110 years old and has always been the unofficial heart of Wenonah, as the entire community was designed around it. The station received a minor renovation approximately 25 years ago but is suffering some serious structural problems which could threaten the longevity of this important landmark. Renovation plans include the following:*

*Roof replacement - involving the replacement of underlying wood sheathing and use of reproduction historically correct shingle material. Shingles are currently missing, cracked and damaged. We lose more with every storm and water leakage is a problem.*

*Stucco work - The stucco material on the exterior of the train station is buckling and crumbling due to water damage, exposure, pests and insects, etc. We would like to re-*

*stucco the facility, but repairs to the most seriously damaged areas would be welcomed.*

*Exterior wood trim - the exterior wood trim is original to this facility and is in the advanced stages of rot. Every area of damage allows the stucco, the jersey stone foundation, and other areas and weather conditions to affect the structure.*

*Termite damage - Some inner walls in the basement area need to be replaced due to past termite damage, as do some floor joists. The evidence of termite activity is clearly evident in the crumbling wall areas along the stairways.*

*Plaster repairs - Water damage, train vibrations and shifting of the facility have caused some cracks and splitting in the plaster wall and wainscoted areas. Minor repairs are needed here,*

*Re-pointing of Bricks - The mortar material between the bricks has long since eroded and has caused water infiltration to the structural center of the facility. Loss of the original bricks is in an intermediate stage and immediate attention is necessary in order to preserve the*

*original building materials and features. The chimney is falling apart and is an area of water infiltration.*

*Replacement of corner moldings and other woodwork - During the previous informal restoration attempts, damage was evident in some corner moldings. Other cornices and rosettes have been missing for many years, but the oak is solid and restoration and duplication is possible with financial assistance. This would restore the elegance*

MISSION OF THE WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The objectives of this Society shall be:

1. To acquire and preserve historic documents, records, artifacts and memorabilia of the Borough of Wenonah.
2. To locate and acquire a suitable place for the storage and display of such materials.
3. To encourage the protection and preservation of historical landmarks and points of interest within the Borough of Wenonah.
4. To encourage historical and genealogical research, and publication of its results.
5. To encourage interest in history generally, and in Wenonah history in particular, among the youth of Wenonah.
6. To make all information and acquisitions of the Society available to the public.

and integrity of this structure.

Installation of a sprinkler system - The facility currently houses many historical artifacts and municipal documents. However, it was constructed in a period where firewalls and sprinkler systems were unheard of, Therefore, this structure is very susceptible to the threat of fire. According to our local Fire Chief, without a sprinkler system or firewalls, fire would spread swiftly through this wood and plaster facility and its complete destruction would be the likely result in a very short period of time. Installation of these features could save this historic transportation facility for another 100 years,

Redesign and Reconstruction of landscape areas between Mantua Avenue and the facility - New lighting, plantings, benches and paving work would be done at this site in order to restore the outside aesthetics of this facility. Reproduction lighting would be used and existing crumbling and deteriorated planters would be replaced with acceptable reproductions. Existing benches, which suffer from many years of weather and use, would be replaced with the more user friendly, and historically correct looking, cast aluminum benches that currently accompany the reproduction light fixtures in nearby Wenonah Park. Our local Environmental Commission has been involved in many projects where historically native plants are utilized for landscaping purposes. We will be considering their recommendations for this area as well. In addition, curbing would be added to the west side of N. East Avenue, along the front entrance of the train station. Currently, there is no distinguishable entrance path and some deteriorated railroad ties are imbedded in the ground to distinguish the asphalt street from the concrete sidewalk. Curbing would distinguish the entranceway to the building and provide for a safer pedestrian path.

Restoration of the passenger platform - This area is filled in with a combination of asphalt and concrete. It is cracked, uneven and very unstable. The Borough is seeking assistance in restoring the 16 x 110 ft, platform with the same antique style pavers that would be used in sections of the pedestrian paths around the building and crosswalks. The asphalt pedestrian trails could then be tied in to this area. More stable footing area expands the feasible use area of the facility and provides a clear and safe area differentiating the passenger area from the tracks. The installation of a cast aluminum fence for this area (the length of the patio only) would also be very helpful in protecting those using the building from their exposure to the tracks which still have moderate use by slow moving Conrail trains, mostly in the evening hours, Such a fence is shown in old photos protecting residents from walking near the infamous electrified "third rail".

Obviously, due to passage of time, it has been two years since the approval of the grant; most everything costs more including the work to be done on the station. At a recent meeting of the TEA-21 committee I was advised there may be need to apply for additional funds from the Community Block Grant program to complete all of the desired repair and improvement items. For that reason all that will be completed this year will be the roof work.

At the same meeting we were advised that the roof work will start almost immediately, must be completed within 60-days of granting the contract, and the building may be closed for approximately 48-hours at some time during the roof installation work.



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Wenonah Historical Society  
PO Box 32  
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

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# WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2003

### Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER MAILED TO YOUR HOME
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INFORMATIVE PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- NETWORK OF KNOWLEDGEABLE HISTORIANS
- HISTORICAL FIELD TRIPS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT PAID \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK \_\_\_\_\_ CASH \_\_\_\_\_

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

WHS PO BOX 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

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