



Montgomery Museum And Lewis Miller Regional Art Center

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A Recent Museum Reception

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*Sue Farrar, Mary Hinschelwood, Wilma Jean McKenzie,
and Jackie Shelton (a Larry Middleton photo)*

History Chat

Do you like to “talk history” or maybe just listen and enjoy the good old stories? Either way, come be a part of history at the Montgomery Museum. The first of a series of events called, HISTORY CHAT, is scheduled for Saturday, March 28th, at 10:00 am. This will be an informal event with long time residents and local historians leading the conversation. You may bring your local history questions or memories. Members and their guests, including children are invited to attend. Chatting and visiting are encouraged. A light breakfast will be served. There will be no charge for this event.

For more information:

director@montgomerymuseum.org



Meadowbrook Branch News

Fran & Don Poole

Our tour of five historic churches in our area in October was a great success. The pastors and docents were gracious hosts and the participants enjoyed the trip. We visited First Baptist Church in Elliston, Lafayette United Methodist Church, Midway Baptist Church, Piedmont Pentecostal Holiness Church in the Otey Community and Mount Calvary Baptist Church on Den Hill Road. All were so very interesting and had different features that were of great interest. Lunch was served at Camp Alta Mons, the United Methodist District Camp. Among our group was a couple from Connecticut looking for a place to retire and they had chosen the tour to become more familiar with our area. We received a very gracious note from them complimenting the tour and the places we visited. The tour was in conjunction with Montgomery County Parks and Recreation and Kemvia (parks & Rec director) did a great job as usual. We hope that the other churches in our eastern part of Montgomery County will send us their church history so we can plan another tour covering five more churches in our area. Dot King will be contacting them.

We received word that our paperwork for our matching grant from the U. S. Department of Agriculture has finally been approved and we hope that by spring all the new equipment and construction improvements will be underway or finished. We have had a number of visitors this fall including the kindergarten classes and 5th grade classes from Shawsville Elementary School. They surprised us with their knowledgeable questions and comments. We have also received many interesting gifts and valuable papers to be scanned and added to our collection. We recently received a post civil war maternity coat from the 1890's. We are in the process of finding a dress form to display the coat and making repairs to one sleeve.

Work on the "Country Store" continues, The Longs of "Big Spring Mill" have donated an old scale from the 1930's used to weigh grains which were sold to the public. Herb Harless is restoring the scale. We are looking forward to the much needed new lighting which will help the display, new flooring and curtains to enhance the display artifacts. Now with the approval of our grant monies, we should see progress with the anticipated improvements.

Most of our members have renewed their membership for 2009. We also have several new members. If you would like to join, please send your membership fee (the basic one is only \$20) to P. O. Box 426, Shawsville, Va. For questions, call at 268-5047 or talk to one of our Board Members - Herbert and Ann Harless, Jim and Becky Smith, Linda Wilson, Dale Mull, Dot King or Don and Fran Poole.

In the Gallery . . .



"Shift of Focus" by Yonsenia White



"Night Crossing" by Byron Kelly



Arias and Airs
ARIAS AND AIRS

THE CELTIBILLIES, led by Jack Hinshelwood will be performing Appalachian and Celtic music. The Celtibillies have entertained thousands of music fans since 1994 including those on their recent 10-day, 1,500 mile tour of Alaska.

Coming in April
An Evening of Musical Extravaganza

European opera star Robert Chafin, born and bred in Christiansburg, son of board member Peggy Chafin will sing the Arias. Celtibillies' fiddler and lead singer Jack Hinshelwood, son of board member Mary Ann Hinshelwood, will play the Airs (Celtic and Appalachian) with the other three award-winning musicians in the group. This combination of performances is truly a unique entertainment opportunity.

You can hear the concert on April 17 at the new Taubman Museum of Art, with a cocktail reception followed by a visit to the art galleries. Or you can hear the same concert on April 18 in Christiansburg High School's auditorium. Look for details to come about performance times and ticket purchases. Just plan to be there!

Robert and Jack are donating their performances and we'd like to offer an early THANKS to them as well as our earliest sponsors:

- Simmons, Wilson & Neel (Joey Simmons)
- Rosa Linkous, IMO Clovis Linkous
- Wade's Foods (Scott Wade)
- Fred and Emma Jackson
- Jean Galloway
- Townside/Coldwell Banker, (Wayne Elliott)



ROBERT CHAFIN of Hannover, Germany is a leading European opera singer with a beautiful tenor voice. Robert travels extensively, singing lead roles in operas throughout Europe. A native of Christiansburg, Robert will be performing locally to benefit the Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center.

Please consider sharing your ideas and efforts by joining the Concerts Committee at the Museum. Call or e-mail Peggy Chafin, pbchafin@aol.com, 382-0269, or Mary Ann Hinshelwood, mah@mahinshelwood.com, 382-6402, to get committee meeting dates.

Also, consider writing a check to "Montgomery Museum" for "spring concerts" to help raise the money needed to pay the cost for the venue and promotion of the concerts. Mail it to 300 S. Pepper St., Christiansburg, VA 24073. You may make your donation in memory of a loved one. Your contribution will be acknowledged in the publicity announcements.

Going to the Barbershop

By Bob Shelton

When I was about four years old, my father allowed me to go to the barbershop by myself. It was a short distance up the sidewalk on Main Street from my father's store, Lawrence and Shelton Drug Store, to the barbershop, which was owned by Edward Lacy Jennings. There were four barber chairs and usually three barbers. They were Stewart Cox, first chair; "Monk" Lavinder, second chair; and Mr. Jennings. The fourth chair was usually empty except when sometimes an older gentleman would sit there and tell hunting stories. It was fun to go there and listen to all the talk. I usually went on a Saturday morning. It was their busiest day since most people came to town on Saturdays to shop and transact business.

Haircuts were 25 cents for children 12 years old and under. I usually had to wait a while before it was my turn, and I would try to get in Mr. Cox's chair if I could. He had a small bench that he would place across the arms of the barber chair for boys my size. Mr. Cox and my father were friends, so I knew him better than the other barbers.

The shop had a white marble tile floor with lots of hair around and under the barber chairs. On the wall behind the barbers were tall mirrors and white sinks. Lots of different types of hair tonics were on a long shelf above the sinks. Some men got a shampoo, shave, and a haircut. I just got a haircut. A big pot-bellied stove kept the shop warm in winter. On the wall facing the barber chairs was a wind-up clock, the pendulum ticking away the hours. Under the clock was a row of ten or twelve wooden armchairs for customers to sit in and wait their turn. Men did a lot of tobacco chewing back then, so there was several big brass spittoons placed within easy spitting distance from the armchairs. My mother told me not to touch the spittoons as they were nasty, and I never did. I have wondered how often a spittoon needed to be emptied and who got to do it.

In the back of the barbershop was the shoeshine chair. It was taller than the other wooden chairs and had footrests. The person getting his shoes or boots shined put his feet on the footrests so the shoeshine boy could polish and shine his customer's shoes or boots. The shoeshine boy would make a big show by popping the shoeshine cloth many times. He usually hummed a tune as he worked. If he did a good job he got a two-bit tip. The usual fee was 10 cents.

I remember seeing Roy Woolwine get in the barber chair, and it was something I will not forget. Roy had an accident with a train. He had lost both legs, and as

such, he had improvised a way to travel about. He had mounted roller skate wheels on the bottom of a wooden Coca-Cola bottle crate in which he sat. He wrapped a cloth around his gloves to protect his hands, with which he used to propel himself. When he rolled into the shop that morning, the steel wheels made a lot of noise on the marble floor. I could not help but stare. It was the first time I had seen half a man sitting in a Coca-Cola bottle crate. He proceeded to roll to an empty space between the waiting customers, and he politely backed his crate between two chairs and waited his turn.

As I sat there, I began to wonder how Roy was going to get up into a barber chair. Finally it was my turn. I got up in Mr. Cox's chair and was now high above Roy. I kept wondering how Roy was going to get in the barber chair. When his turn came, to my surprise, he simply lifted himself out of the crate and took a few steps with his hands toward the barber chair, which had been lowered for him, and he reached up and grasped the chair arms and lifted himself into the seat. I was amazed!

Roy visited the barbershop often, and I saw him climb into the chair several times as well as seeing him move about Main Street. Not having two legs did not seem to hinder him very much. Juliet Blount said that she remembered Roy Woolwine and seeing him move about the town in his Coca-Cola bottle crate.

When I look back and remember growing up in the little town of Christiansburg, with all of its pleasant people and exciting times, I am sorry that my children and grandchildren have missed such a wonderful age and the experience of going to Jennings's Barbershop.

Sustaining Our County History



*Slusser's Chapel apple butter making on Aug. 30, 1963
(from the D. D. Lester photo collection)*

An Interview with Bob Shelton

Museum Board Director Emeritus

Born in Christiansburg in 1934, Bob Shelton was the eldest child of Edith Dobbins Shelton and Frank Akers Shelton. He had a happy childhood and enjoyed the freedom and safety of a small town. He attended Christiansburg public schools, and after graduation from Christiansburg High School, he worked in his father's store (Lawrence & Shelton Drug Store), where he became acquainted with many people. Bob entered VPI (Virginia Tech) as a cadet in 1952. A year later, he enlisted in the army for two years before returning to VPI, where he began to study forestry. In 1960, Bob began his career with Nationwide Insurance; he was an agent for thirty-eight years.

Bob first saw his future wife at the age of sixteen while she was picnicking at the Blue Ridge Parkway's "Smart View" picnic area. He thought Jackie Lucas was the prettiest girl he'd ever seen. Some time later he discovered where she lived when he spied Jackie, the daughter of a Riner farmer, playing basketball in her yard. When he phoned Jackie asking her to go to the Saturday races at Victory Stadium in Roanoke, he got turned down twice, but the third time was the charm! They were married in 1956 just a few days after Bob returned home from his army service. The Sheltons set up housekeeping in the garage apartment at the corner of Alleghany and Miller Streets. Jackie taught at Floyd High School for two years, then for two years at Auburn High School. Their son Todd was born in 1961 and their daughter Susan Lynn (now Mrs. Rick Weaver) was born in 1962.

Bob's first connection with the Montgomery Museum began while his father, Frank Shelton, served as a docent. Frank loved to talk history, and usually brought his friend Hassell ("Hack") Thompson to the museum with him, to have a history-talking partner. Bob would stop by and listen. After Frank went into a nursing home, Bob took his place as docent, and would bring his dad back to the museum for visits. Bob served nine years on the Museum's board of directors and eleven years as a docent. He is currently an Emeritus member of the board.

One of Bob's special interests at the museum has been Christiansburg's historic Craig Cemetery, where his paternal grandparents are buried. The Craig Cemetery



Bob Shelton

was deeded to the Museum several years ago and in 2002, Bob and the late Clovis Linkous, another great friend of the Museum, surveyed and published a guide to grave sites in Craig Cemetery.

Asked what he enjoys about serving as docent, Bob says he likes to learn about our town and county. He thought he knew its history before, but he keeps learning more from books in our library and gift shop, such as those written by Roy Kanode. Bob helped Roy with photos and history stories for the second edition of the Christiansburg history book.

Bob continues the tradition of "history talks" at the museum offering guests and other volunteers alike a wealth of informative and often humorous tales. He is a master storyteller, whose inquisitive mind is always on the chase for research material for his next story. Bob's stories have appeared in written form in the museum's newsletter and several more will appear in the upcoming county history, *Virginia's Montgomery County*.

Mark Your Calendar

March Art Exhibit ~ Christiansburg High School Students Reception March 6th ~ 6:00-8:00

April Art Exhibit ~ Auburn High School ~ Reception April 3rd ~ 6:00-8:00

May/June Art Exhibit ~ Irma Guy Pillsbury

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon ~ May 7th at Meadowbrook

New History Exhibit ~ Those who Serve (Military) End of June

July 4 ~ Ceremony at Craig Cemetery

July/ August Art Exhibit ~ Betty Moore

September/ October Art Exhibit ~ Ray Kass and Mountain Lake Workshop

November/ December ~ Membership Holiday Exhibit

