



Lake and Legacy

Theatrical Drama in Eagles Mere

The Eagles Mere Playhouse's 20-year run of Director Alvina Krause and her group of Northwestern University student actors -- some of whom later became Hollywood and Broadway stars -- was a memorable part of Eagles Mere history, but often forgotten were several other periods of theatrical presentations sometimes involving well-known performers.

As early as 1896, the Chautauqua community began offering dramatic presentations in what was then a canvass-walled structure called "the Auditorium." In 1900, an actor named Frederick Truman played all the roles in a Chautauqua presentation of *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*.

By 1939, after the old auditorium had been replaced near the Forest Inn by a permanent structure that became the Eagles Mere Playhouse, a touring group called the Jitney Players began presenting plays. The group had been travel-

An advertisement for a 1900 Chautauqua theatrical production

ing for years performing in various local theatres. The May 9, 1939 edition of the show business newspaper *Variety* said, "The Jitney Players will establish a summer theatre at Eagles Mere during the coming season." The manager and star actress of the group was Ethel Barrymore Colt, the daughter of famous actress Ethel Barrymore and the niece of legendary actors John and Lionel Barrymore. The 27 year old Colt had appeared in several Broadway shows including George White's *Scandals*. The *Variety* article said she "would manage the company and play ingenue roles" in Eagles Mere.

The June 12, 1939 edition of the *New York Daily News* reported, "Ethel Barrymore Colt is assembling a new review which will be a cavalcade of entertainment from 1787 to 1935. The Jitneys will play it at their summer theatre in Eagles Mere."

The first play that summer,

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EAGLES MERE MUSEUM

Lake and Legacy

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The Eagles Mere Museum is an entity of the Borough of Eagles Mere, and contributions are tax deductible.

Annual memberships are \$50. The membership form can be found on page 12. Please send donations to PO Box 276, Eagles Mere, PA 17731. Payments may be made online at www.eaglesmeremuseum.com.

Museum Mission

The mission of the Eagles Mere Museum is engaging, informing and inspiring people as they learn about the history and heritage of Eagles Mere.

Museum Hours 11 a.m.—4 p.m.

May: Saturday and Sunday

June-August: Tuesday-Sunday

Please consult our website www.eaglesmeremuseum.com for details.

Like us on Facebook to find out what's happening at the museum!



Continued from page 1

beginning July 6, 1939, was the comedy *Accent on Youth*, directed by Henry Gresham, followed the next week by *Streets of New York*, according to the July 9, 1939 *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Each play ran Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

In addition to performances in Eagles Mere, the Jitney Players took their plays to other communities. In August of 1939, they went to Cazenovia, New York to present another performance of *Accent on Youth* in a high school auditorium. Colt and co-star Douglas Rowland drove 173 miles in a truck to New York for the performance.

In 1940, the name of the group was changed from “The Jitney Players” to “The Eagles Mere Players.” The first play in July of that year was Eugene O’Neill’s *Ah Wilderness* with guest star Taylor Holmes who had acted in more than 100 Broadway plays and numerous silent movies.

The group also traveled to Hershey, Pennsylvania in 1940 to perform the play *Her Cardboard Lover*. Their return to the Eagles Mere Playhouse was immortalized by legendary theatrical caricaturist Al Hirschfeld in a drawing published by *The New York Times*. It showed members of the company unloading props, costumes and furniture from their truck at the side door of the playhouse. The young actress in the foreground carrying a lamp is Dolly



Ethel Barrymore Colt who managed the Jitney Players

Haas. She was a guest star with the Eagles Mere Players and, according to the book *The Hirschfeld Century*, the cartoon artist was apparently infatuated with her. Featuring her in one of his drawings was probably his way of flirting. Not many relatively unknown actresses got a Hirschfeld caricature in *The New York Times*.

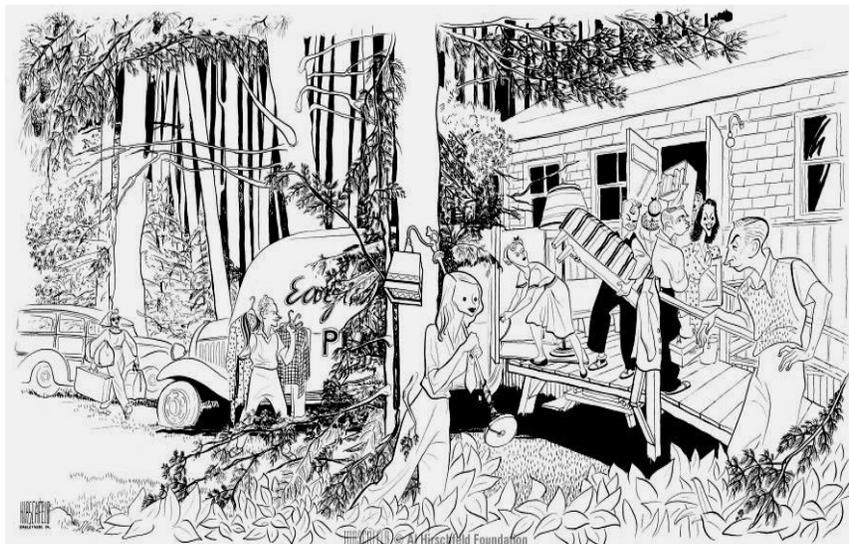
A couple of years later, Dolly became Hirschfeld’s wife. And in 1945, she became the mother of

their daughter Nina whom Hirschfeld later saluted repeatedly by hiding her name somewhere in the details of his drawings.

During World War II, the Eagles Mere Players gradually faded away, but Colt continued to perform as an actress until 1972, five years before her death at the age of 65.

Near the end of the war, in 1945, Alvina Krause arrived in Eagles Mere, leased the little summer theatre, and staged a total of 178 weekly plays until 1963. Among the young actors she directed during that period were Patricia Neal, Jeffrey Hunter, Paula Prentiss, Robert Reed, and Tony Roberts all of whom later became Hollywood stars.

After Krause retired and the big hotels closed, the Eagles Mere Playhouse continued until 1970, often with well-known guest stars including Kim Hunter, Rosemary Prinz, and Jean Kean. The old Playhouse, the last surviving building at the Forest Inn, was finally demolished in 1987.



Hirschfeld’s 1940 drawing of the players returning to the Playhouse from Hershey. The pictured actors are William Prince, Dolly Haas, Bettina Cerf, Robert Adams, Harry Gresham, Rosalind Gould, and Douglas Rowland.

To revive theatrical drama in Eagles Mere, Ann Klotz and her husband Seth Orbach in 1984 formed the Ensemble Theatre Community and presented several plays each summer with young student actors for the next 27 years at Eagles Mere’s DeWire Center.

Joe Mosbrook

Imagine a Mansion



The homes in and around Eagles Mere are beautiful. Most are old with a few new ones added here and there. Once “off the mountain” there was a house that rivaled our beautiful cottages, according to T. Kenneth Wood who wrote “A House in the Clearing” in the Muncy Historical Society’s magazine *Now and Then* (Vol. IX, No. 3, January 1949, pages 75-77, used with permission). Mr. Wood wrote that when it was built “there was nothing in Eagles Mere then or now to compare with it.”

The house is gone now. A family pictured in front of that house shows “the mansion” in its last years. (photo courtesy of Linda M. Rooker whose daughter Angela found it pressed into the corner of an old steamer trunk). In fact, in 1949 when Mr. Wood wrote about visiting the site, he referred to it as

“a ruin.” Several hikes have been conducted to view the site over the years.

The House’s Significance

Why remember a stone house in a clearing? It seems that this house was something special. Uncovering what used to be and imagining what it was is the soul of “history,” an umbrella term comprising past events as well as the memory, discovery, collection, organization, presentation, and interpretation of events, structures, and people. It can be intoxicating to be summoned into the past.

Memory, ruins, pictures, written description – all of these play a part in reconstructing the beautiful stone house in the clearing that was referred to as “The Stone Mansion.” Were the stone masons

or their sons emotionally involved in their house-building, or were they simply plying their craft? They might have worked for George Lewis. According to Mr. Wood, the house was built by a contractor named Caleb for Emile Geyelin before 1849.

Picture the scene: it is around 1850. We are traveling on a dirt road around a mountain with green trees and rocky outcroppings. The carriage comes around a bend and there, above the road maybe thirty or forty feet up a steep bank, a house comes into view – a treasure of a house. The house had a “great mullioned Bow window” all across the whole south end of the living room which had a ceiling two storeys high.” Mr. Wood includes a detailed description of the house, the particulars of which are from a written remembrance of the house

Continued on page 5

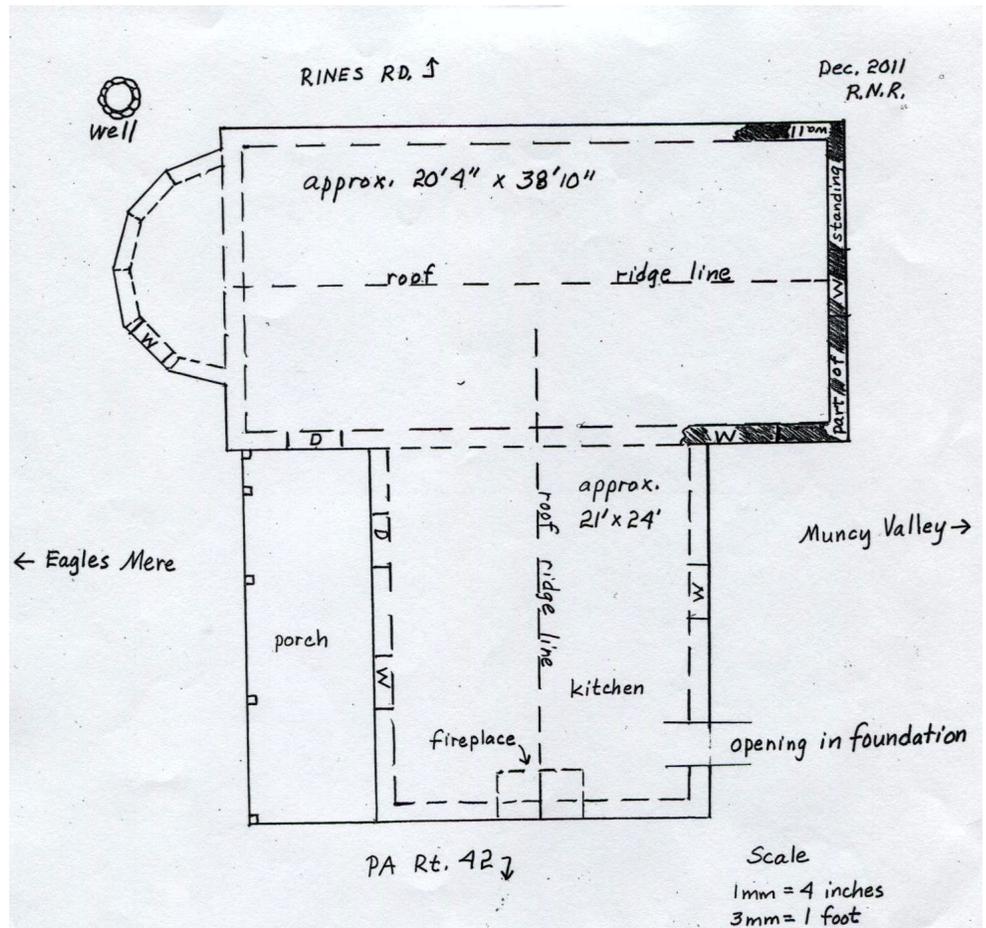
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by Mrs. Ida Burkholder. Ida goes on to relate that both the living room and dining room both had wood paneling on the walls all the way to the ceiling and had "large deep windows and also double doors with glass which led to a wide porch overlooking the fields and mountains."

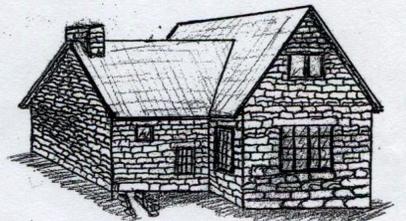
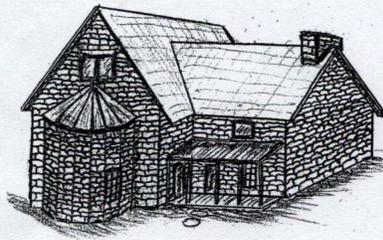
The large kitchen had a big fireplace. On one side was a "small winding stairway" which led to a bedroom. But the mansion had an unusual feature. There was a tower built on to the outside walls. There were "double doors leading to the outside [from the tower] and a single door leading to the kitchen." Mrs. Burkholder describes a winding stairway to the second story. Upstairs there was a landing at the second floor and a large window. Off of the landing was a door which led to five bedrooms.

Look outside. Mrs. Burkholder paints the scene: "There were flowers in a walled garden and a vegetable garden and all the land between the house and the mill pond was cleared and kept mowed to the water's edge. I especially remember the beautiful laurel all around the place and across the road on the bank of the creek."

According to her account "...Mr. James Francis and his family from Philadelphia were the first to live in the Mansion." The next tenants were the Thomas Haywood family (parents of Henry Haywood of Eagles Mere). "Horatio Jones, son of Judge John Richter Jones and William Aiken of Philadelphia, came next (to carry on the lumber business for Mr. Geyelin) taking rooms for an office and sleeping quarters with the Wallace Little fami-



Mansion
Stone House



Illustrative graphic by Ruth Rode

ly who lived in the Mansion at the time. Mr. Little later settled on the outskirts of Eagles Mere. Mrs. Little was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. Peale and a sister of Christopher and Fred Peale who lived all their lives in Eagles Mere." Mr. Geyelin later sold the Mansion to the Penna. Power and Light Company of Towanda. Concludes Mrs. Burkholder,

"We were sorry to see the place destroyed as it had been there so long and was so beautiful."

Just imagine!

Mary Anne Grabarek

Carolyn M. Hirsch *"I paint for the pure joy of it!"*

We now know from research that art supports mental well-being and boosts a good mood. Carolyn Hirsch found this joy while living in Dallas, Texas. Her neighbor and friend invited her to join some watercolor classes she was teaching, and it was then that her passion for watercolor took hold. "I love it because of the way the colors react with each other...always a surprise."



Born in 1936, Carolyn grew up in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. She attended the Baldwin School and continued her education at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts as an economics major with a minor in mathematics. Although only taking the requisite art appreciation courses, Carolyn loved sketching but never tried painting until she arrived in Texas. Her subjects vary, but she most enjoys landscapes, houses, and animals.

Carolyn is one of five generations who have been coming to Eagles Mere since the 1930's. She often visited her grandparents, George and Ada Peter who summered here at the Crestmont Inn. After she married John

Hirsch, they rented and eventually purchased a home in Eagles Mere, spending nearly twenty years summering here until their move to Dallas.

In the late 1990's they bought a Crestmont Condo, and Carolyn jumped right into working for several community organizations, especially those that involved plants and flowers. The Civic Club's flower shows were of particular interest, and she helped design several posters and entered flower arrangements of her own. The Conservancy also played an active role in her life. She served several years on its board while designing T-shirts and working in the Community

Garden. Carolyn served as a Crestmont Condo Association board member overseeing Buildings and Grounds for many years. Through it all, Carolyn always found time to paint. She enjoyed painting en plein air with friends in fine weather or working inside during the dead of winter, often setting goals for herself. "There is such an abundance of ever-changing landscapes, flora, fauna, and interesting people and events that I will probably never run out of fresh material."

Many of us have her watercolors prominently displayed in our homes. Join us in celebrating Carolyn Hirsch's art, both past and present, in a special museum exhibit upstairs. This "Joy of Painting" opening will be on June 25th at 3:00 p.m. with her art on display throughout July. Carolyn will be at the opening to share some of her reasons why she chose to paint specific themes and to answer any questions you may have. Do stop by to say, "Hello." Carolyn and the museum board look forward to seeing you.

Joan Werner

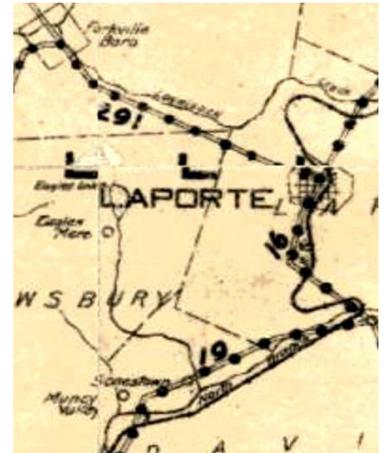
An Eagles Mere Education

On July 1 the Eagles Mere Museum Shop will offer a new book about Eagles Mere schools. *Mere Schools* by Barbie James tells about the educational opportunities available in Eagles Mere many decades ago. The book includes pictures and interesting descriptions of what school was like in Eagles Mere.

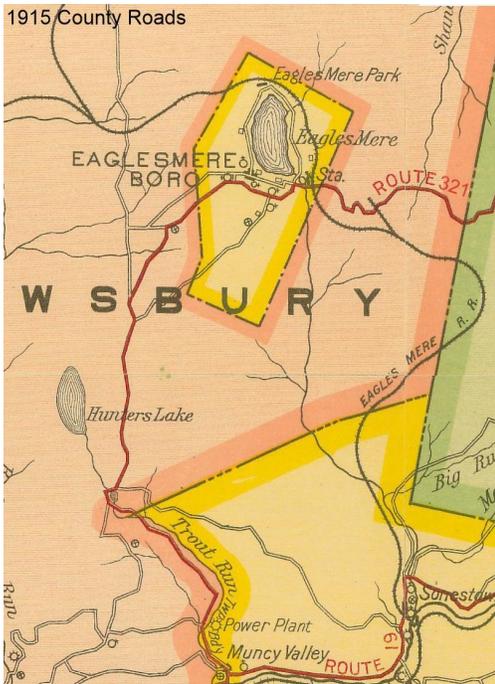
The Evolution of Eagles Mere Area Highways

by Jack Leo

On the 1911 road Map of Pennsylvania (which showed state highways as adopted under the Sproul Road Bill of 1911) no numbered roads ran to Eagles Mere. Route 19 ran from Muncy to Nordmont following Muncy Creek. Route 16 ran north from Benton to Jamison City, then west into Davidson Township and north through Nordmont to Laporte. Route 291 ran north from Montoursville following the Loyalsock Creek through Hills Grove into Forksville and on to Laporte.



1911 Area Roads

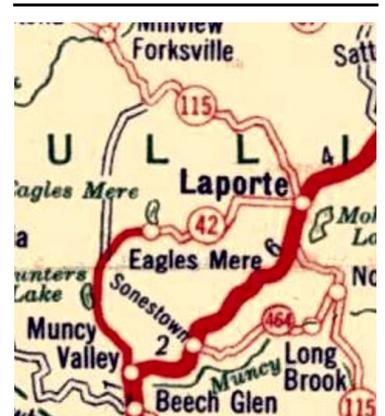


1915 Area Roads

On the 1915 road map of Pennsylvania, what is now Route 220 was designated as Route 19; and what is basically Route 42 was Route 321.

By 1930 US Route 220 and PA Route 42 were the route numbers.

The 1932 USGS Quadrangle Map as updated to 1944 showed that Route 42 going up the mountain continued on what is the current alignment north of Rines Road. The original highway jogged right on Rines Road and then left going north on what is the now abandoned old Muncy Valley-to-Eagles Mere Road. Then Route 42 turned right onto Laporte Avenue and ran up to Eagles Mere Avenue, then turned right and headed east out of town to Laporte. The Devil's Elbow still existed

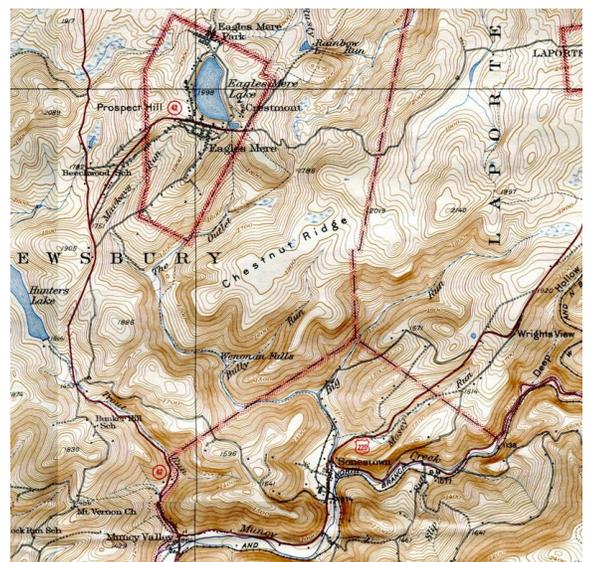


1930 Area Roads

on that map.

PA 42 was originally designated in 1927 to run from US 1 in Oxford north to the New York border in South Waverly. When first designated, the route ran concurrent with US 120 (now PA 61) between Reading and Centralia and US 220 between Laporte and South Waverly. In 1928, the concurrencies with US 120 and US 220 were removed, splitting PA 42 into two sections. The southern section ran from the Maryland border south of Chrome north to US 222 (now US 222 Business) in Reading, while the northern section ran from US 120 (now PA 61) in Centralia north to US 220 in Laporte.

From 1911 to 1987 all state highways in Pennsylvania were defined as legislative routes, while some were posted as traffic routes. Major routes were assigned 3 or 4 digit numbers while minor routes were given 5 digits in which the first 2 digits represented the county.



1944 Area Roads

From the Museum Files: General Horatio Gates

If you watched the AMC series *Turn* about George Washington's spies during the Revolution, you may remember General Horatio Gates' name being mentioned frequently but perhaps wouldn't have connected that name with Eagles Mere. So here is a little historic tidbit from the research material of the Eagles Mere Museum you might find interesting:

George Lewis (who founded the glass works at the lake) was a close friend of Brigadier-General Horatio Gates (hero of the first battle of Saratoga during the Revolutionary War). Gates moved from Virginia to an estate called Rose Hill Farm in Manhattan in 1790 and em-

ployed one George Edkin, Jr. as his gardener or landscape manager. According to Egle's *Notes & Queries*, George Edkin, Jr. "...became a student of horticulture and gardening while in the employ of General Gates." General Gates died in 1806, and George Edkin stayed on in the employ of his wife, Mary (Valence) Gates. Mrs. Gates made her will in 1806, naming George Lewis as one of the coexecutors and providing "...Mr. George Edkin, my faithful steward, ... all my stock and farming utensils of what kind soever." In the course of settling the Gates estate, George Lewis offered employment to George Edkin, Jr., and in about 1810 the Edkin family settled on Lewis

lands in the area of what is now known as Broad Horizons or Keystone Observatory. Edkin built his large stone house east of what is now appropriately known as Edkin Hill Road, and his numerous descendants included many other Shrewsbury Township families such as Andrews, Corson, Craft, Houseknecht, Little, Taylor, and Warren.

There is another, much more indirect connection with Gates: Judge John Richter Jones, who purchased the 2,000 acre Mount Lewis Estate in 1845, was the son of Horatio Gates Jones who was named after General Horatio Gates.

Jack Leo

MAKE HISTORY HAPPEN

Learn more about Eagles Mere this summer!

June 25

"The Joy of Painting: Carolyn Hirsch"
Upstairs Gallery, Eagles Mere Museum
3:00-5:00 PM

Join us in celebrating Carolyn Hirsch's art in a special exhibit that will be on display through July. Carolyn will share some of the reasons she chose to paint specific themes and will answer questions. There is no admission charge for this event.

June 26

"Art from the Archives: John Wesley Little"
Upstairs Gallery, Eagles Mere Museum
3:00-5:00 PM Reservations required at museum.

Joan Werner will display two J. W. Little watercolor paintings dating from the time he began teaching art for the Chautauqua during the summer of 1898. This presentation will be followed by a watercolor workshop for ages ten and up. This event is limited to ten participants, and there is a \$10 charge for materials payable when reservations are made.

July 19

"Joe Mosbrook Presents Topics from Eagles Mere's History"
David A. DeWire Center (or other location as announced)
5:30-7:00 PM

Joe Mosbrook will present portions of several videos he has developed on Eagles Mere history. Between videos there will be an opportunity for questions and conversations.
Donation \$15 (\$10 for members)



President's Message

Spring 2022

Dear Members of the Eagles Mere Museum,

Greetings to you as we begin another season at the museum celebrating Eagles Mere's past and finding new ways to enrich our understanding and appreciation of our town and its heritage. We have met the challenge of opening our doors and welcoming visitors even as health conditions and restrictions continue.

This year we welcome Gavin Siegfried as the new business manager at the museum. He is working in the office to ensure a smooth operation. We also depend on our other museum staff to help us extend the hand of welcome to our visitors. The museum board of directors continues to provide leadership for program development and financial oversight. Your generous support of the museum through membership dues and donations enables us to keep the doors open and the building intact.

This summer look for some great programs and enhanced media connections to make your online and in-person visits to the museum interesting and informative. If you have not already joined you can go online at eaglesmeremuseum.com or use the form in this newsletter to renew your membership or give a donation.

I wish you good health and a pleasant summer season in Eagles Mere; Please stop by or visit the museum online. We would love to see you!

Sincerely,

Bob Grabarek

Thanks to our Volunteers

We wish to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who keep our museum informative and amazing.

Cheers for our Train Engineers, under the guidance of Bob Grabarek, who enabled our guests to enjoy the train room during the weekdays in addition to the weekends. Thanks go to Owen McGinnis who ran the trains weekdays in July and Jake Alley who took over in August. Bob worked many hours also, reflected by Emily Tull, who wrote in our guest book, "Bob G in the train room is the best. "

We thank the weekend volunteers: Peter Hodgson, Barry Hopkins, Rick Liebert, Richard Melzer, Fred

Weeman and Peter Glaubitz. We are grateful for our Docents working in the main gallery during busy hours making our visitors feel welcome, answering questions and adding tidbits of information. They helped our wonderful shopkeepers of 2021, Elaine Olsen and Rose DiRocco Hodges.

Thank you: Rob Bidelspacher, Karen Gardner, Susan Glaubitz, Tom Graff, Joan Gruver, Dale Hastings, Ruthie Hild, Mary Gibbs Smith, Linda Roman, Kathleen Deasy, Lee Middleton, and Kate Albertini for working many hours. Also volunteering were: Arnie Dahm, Vivien Fuller, Nancy Hoffman, Barbie James, Jill Johnson, Diane Spahr, Barbara Swinick, Linda Borish and Marria Walsh. We

truly appreciate your time, interest and support of our museum.

We say goodbye to Lisa Frey, our Assistant Treasurer, who has helped keep the museum running smoothly for many years and welcome Gavin Siegfried who is taking over her position.

Dawn Schellenhammer wrote in the guest book, "We thank you for keeping history alive." The Laydens noted, "Grateful for historic preservation, thank you all!"

You may join this special group of volunteers by calling me at 570-525-3276.

Trudy Whitmoyer

Eagles Mere Museum Members 2021

LIFE

This category was established in 1999-2002 to help with the museum's start-up. We thank you for your continued support and donations.

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(continued on page 11)

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Writt, Renee and Bob

Eagles Mere Museum Memorial Donations 2021

The museum gratefully acknowledges a generous donation made by Ruth Gass in memory of Clyde S. Gass.

The museum gratefully acknowledges a generous donation made by Art Repke in memory of Judith McEvoy Repke.

The museum gratefully acknowledges a generous donation made by Sue and Ray Schreckengaust in memory of Alice Weeman.

The museum gratefully acknowledges a generous donation made by Janet and Homer Selby in memory of Dorothy Chase Korb Carter.

Thank you, Eagles Mere Foundation!

Foundation grants are an important source of support for operation of the museum. In addition, a recent grant supported a redesigned and improved website.

Dear Eagles Mere Friends,

You can stand, pretty much, on any street corner in Eagles Mere and find a piece of our history. Maybe it's a building, a plaque, the remnant of a wall or set of stairs. We walk the trails and Laurel Path, swim or boat at the beach, go to concerts, play tennis or games on the Field of Dreams, watch the 4th of July parade and the water carnival and gather for town parties, just as generations before us have done. Our village is full of wonderful memories, and the Museum and its board are dedicated to keeping those memories alive and available to all, both in our exhibits and behind the scenes. Preserving other parts of our history is the reason the Eagles Mere Museum was established.

Our mission is to preserve this history and our unique legacy. We also want to celebrate our present (because eventually, it will be our past) for the benefit of future generations who will look to Eagles Mere as their special place.

Our present activities and our very future depend heavily on our members' financial support. Thank you for your meaningful and continued support.



Eagles Mere Museum
PO Box 276
Eagles Mere, Pa. 17731

Eagles Mere Museum Membership Form 2022

Help build Eagles Mere memories and become a member.

Membership privileges include a 10 percent discount on purchases at the museum shop.

2022 Membership Application (January 1—December 31, 2022)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____ Email _____

Phone _____

Captain Chase Circle (\$1500)

Cottager (\$250)

Lewis Glass Guild (\$1000)

Friend of the Museum (\$100)

EMRR Engineer (\$500)

General Member (\$50)

Membership includes spouse/partner and children under 20 years old

Donation \$ _____

Would you like to receive the newsletter via email? Yes No

Would you like to volunteer? Docent Publicity Exhibits Events

(Please check one or more.)

Membership Collections management

Mail this form to PO Box 276, Eagles Mere, PA 17731.